

# Author discusses memoir and apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto

Submitted by Wendy Constantine



Photo courtesy Maya Blum Photography

Leslie Buck followed a dream, leaving a local landscaping business to travel to Japan and learn from master gardeners, later writing a memoir about the adventure – “Cutting Back: My appren-

ticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto” (Timber Press, 2017).

Buck will speak about her experiences and her New York Times reviewed book, which recounts her challenging but ultimately reward-

ing pruning apprenticeship in the best gardens of Kyoto, at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16 at the Montelindo Garden Club meeting at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive in Orinda.

## College Advisor

### Tell Me More about UC Berkeley!

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

The University of California at Berkeley, fondly known as, “Cal” is the first institution of the University of California system; founded in 1868, its nickname is clearly tied to this education milestone in California’s history.

Hustle and bustle characterizes the UC Berkeley campus community and adds to its unique culture. Students encourage campus engagement, community action and political activism. There are over 1,200 clubs and organizations built around the diverse cultural, political and social viewpoints represented in the student body. Shops and restaurants lean toward the entrepreneurial and student-oriented, and mass transit into San Francisco is plentiful and inexpensive.

Since its founding, Cal has nurtured its faculty, students and alumni to scholarly achievements comparable to Ivy League and other highly selective universities. A short list of laudatory successes includes 29 Nobel Laureates, and 1,300 of its graduates have received National Science Foundation fellowships, more than any other college in the U.S. Cal is second only to MIT in its production of Sloan Research Fellows. If you are a chemistry enthusiast, you may know that eight elements of the periodic table, including berkelium, were discovered at Cal. And if you are a physics enthusiast, you might know that Cal is the home of the world’s first cyclotron.

Given the 17 percent admit rate in 2017, it is not surprising that those who get into Cal usually stay. About 98 percent of freshmen return for their sophomore year, a retention rate also comparable to other extremely selective colleges. Students typically graduate within four years, although the 72 percent four-year graduation rate receives a boost from California’s community college transfer students who enter as juniors.

All of Cal’s academic departments are world class; the most popular majors include social sciences, biological and biomedical sciences, engineering and language studies. Students who declare one of the less popular majors may receive a more personal experience than those who declare one of the most popular ones – a fact of life in most public and even some private colleges nationwide. All students must choose an undergraduate division when they apply. But unlike most other large public universities, Cal does not allow freshmen to enroll directly into their first-rate, Haas School of Business. Those interested in business are advised to check undeclared—pre-business administration as their major. The undergraduate program is a general business degree with concentrations (accounting, business communication, finance, marketing and organizational behavior) instead of majors.

UC Berkeley’s career center is excellent with more resour-

ces than most diligent students would ever have time to use. There are more than 15 internship and career fairs on campus and over 900 employers participated in the job and internship fairs last year. This is one of the few universities that hosts internship fairs during the fall and the spring. That said, a student must be proactive and use the plentiful resources available, as there is little hand holding at Cal. For this reason, scholarly minded students with well-honed study and time management skills as well as those adept at self-directed study are the ones most likely to find academic success at Cal.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Reach her at (925) 385-0562 (office) or (925) 330-8801 (mobile), or online at [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) or [Elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:Elizabeth@doingcollege.com).

## Super blood moon shines over Lamorinda



Big, bright and rusty red, early rising Lamorinda watched a super blue blood moon hanging low in the western sky on the final morning in January. Overslept? The next blue moon (second full moon in a given month) appears March 3. The next total lunar eclipse (blood moon) visible in North America is two years out – Jan. 21, 2019. The next supermoon event is Nov. 25, 2034, and the next super blue blood moon won’t happen until Jan. 31, 2037. Don’t wait up. – C. Dausman

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## Local libraries join forces to offer ‘One Community, One Book’ to teens

By John T. Miller

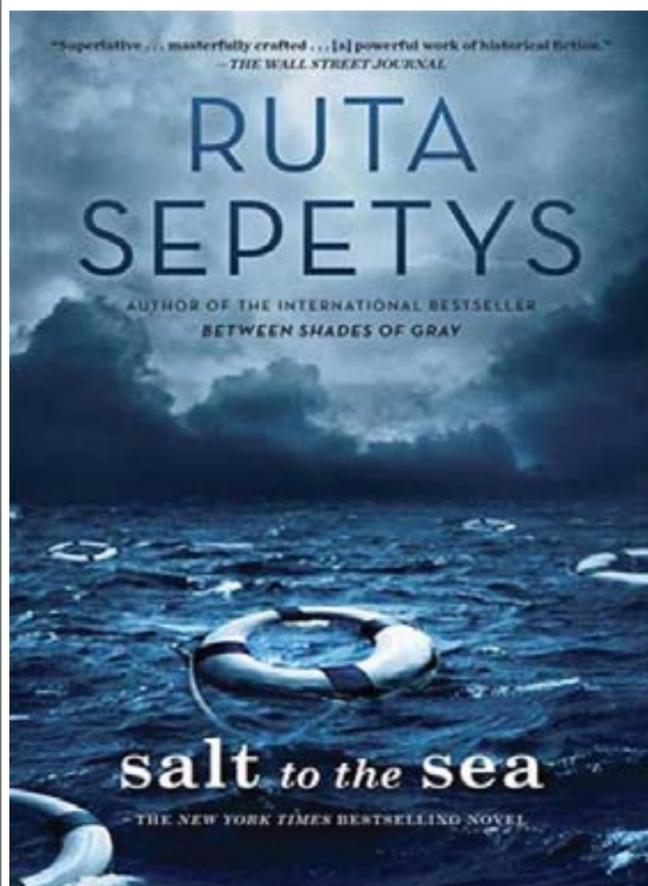


Image provided

In a collaborative effort between the high school libraries of Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte, and in conjunction with the Contra Costa County Library, the Lamorinda communities are invited to participate in the “One Community, One Book” Lamorinda Teens Read event.

Ruta Sepetys’s latest work of historical fiction “Salt to the Sea” – a story of a group of teenage refugees in East Prussia fleeing the wrathful Soviet advance after the collapse of the Nazi Reich at the end of World War II – has been chosen to read during the month of February.

The books are available through any of the public libraries in Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda or at Acalanes, Campolindo, or Miramonte high school libraries, or in displays that will be set up around the three towns.

The books are available due to a generous grant from the California Teachers Association/Institute for Teaching and the help of Orinda Books, which brokered the purchase of 500 books. While the novels are being offered for free, they can also be purchased through any local bookstore.

The concept developed from a brainstorming session between the Moraga branch librarian Geneva Moss and Campolindo High School librarian Sarah Morgan. Their idea was to focus on teens and ask partners in the other cities to collaborate.

Joining them in the effort are Acalanes High School librarian Barbara Burkhalter; Miramonte librarian Susan Williams; and county branch librarians Sierra Campagna of Orinda and Vickie Sciacca of Lafayette.

Baker is enthused by the effort.

“This is a really fun event,” she says, “with all six of our libraries working together to make it happen.”

The event kicked off last Thursday at the Open House for the Acalanes District, with presentations in the library promoting signing up for the free book.

Programs related to the book will take place at the local branches of the Contra Costa library during the month.

A movie about the Wilhelm Gustave – the boat that sank with many refugees on board – will be shown at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Lafayette Library, with a discussion following.

Later in the month, four refugees from the community have been invited to speak on a panel at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20 at the Moraga Library. They will talk about their experiences fleeing and escaping their country and how their lives are now.

The Orinda Library will host a lecture and discussion at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28 with Dr. Shir Gal Kochavi, an assistant curator of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at UC Berkeley, addressing a theme from the book of Nazi-looted art.

Throughout the month of February, the Orinda Library will host a Scavenger Hunt. A teen advisory group of volunteers have created this hunt around issues dealing with Nazi-looted art.

“Another exciting tie-in,” says Baker, “is that most of the U.S. history teachers are beginning a unit on World War II this month and the book is appropriate to the subject. They will be running in-class book talks and encouraging the students to read the books.”

Submit stories and story ideas to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com)