

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley presents
The last (but not least) in our Summer Staged Reading Series
THE VILLAGE THAT VOTED THE EARTH WAS FLAT

By Rudyard Kipling, adapted by Vicki Siegel

Aug. 17 8 p.m.

Directed by Vicki Siegel, assisted by Matthew Surrence

Three newspaper men, an MP and a theater entrepreneur who have run into a speed trap in the village of Huckley enact a very amusing revenge. Some might call it justice – perhaps too much justice.

“By the grace of God, Master Ridley, I mean to have it so that when Huckley turns over in its sleep, Reuters and the Press Association jump out of bed to cable.”

Cast:

Narrator	Stanley Spenger
Olyett	Craig Eychner
Woodhouse	Daniel Wexler
Pallant, proprietor of inn, La Fone	Joseph O’Loughlin
Bat Masquerier	Alan Badger
Dal Benzaguen, reporter	Lisa Drostova
Ingell, Rector, Sexton, Lawyer	Matthew Surrence
Winnie, waiter, correspondent, editor, Gubby dancer	Nayla El-Haber
Police, Speaker of House, manager, Gubby dancer	Morgan Brown
Lawyer, doctor, whip, Irish MP, curator, film guy Gubby dancer	Colin Johnson
Woman of Flat Earth Society	Vicki Siegel
Musical accompaniment	Debbie Messersmith

A Little More Info:

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in Bombay, British India. He is best known for his works of fiction including *The Jungle Book* and *Kim*, short stories and poems such as *The Man Who Would Be King*, *Gunga Din* and *If*. In 1907, Kipling was the first English writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1913, when *The Village...* was written, Kipling was living in Sussex. At the end of the Edwardian era in England, just before World War I, there were great changes in the political and social life of England. The new mass media decried the injustice of class divisions and the great gap between wealthy and poor. Kipling, the “great interpreter of Empire” also had something worth saying about the corruption of the upper class and its institutions, and the power of the media, with all its flaws, to redress the imbalance.

Vicki Siegel is an actress, writer of *A Hot Day in Ephesus*, the musical based on *A Comedy of Errors* which was produced by the Curtain Theatre in Mill Valley in 2009. She has appeared as the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Curtain; Mrs. Candour in *School for Scandal*, San Francisco Free Civic Theater; Lady Plymdale in *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, Masquers Playhouse and several Subterranean Shakespeare readings.

Matthew Surrence directed "Dido, Queen of Carthage" (Christopher Marlowe, Subterranean Shakespeare) and appeared in several of the Subterranean Shakespeare readings. He wrote "06: A Not Entirely Untrue Tale of San Francisco," a vaudeville melodrama about the 1906 earthquake, and "The Agony of the Leaves" (with Janet Silver Ghent), produced at Playhouse West, Walnut Creek. His article "What's in a Name?" appears in the Summer 2010 issue of *The Sondheim Review*.

Watch for the Actors Ensemble production of Shakespeare’s **The Winter’s Tale**, directed by Jeremy Cole, opening Oct 21, and our **Winter Staged Reading Series** beginning in October and November

In the course of the tale the village people are entertained with a lavish dinner 'dinner for five hundred and drinks for ten thousand' and persuaded to vote that the Earth is flat, the story is splashed all over the newspapers, a popular music hall song is written about it, and Huckley and the J.P. become a public laughing stock. Background. As Charles Carrington (pp. 404-406) explains of Kipling: His considered opinion on the routine of politics is to be found in "The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat" Politics, he said, was 'a dog's life without a dog' Possibly as relevant today as it ever was, this story tells the tale of an English village, Huckley, that is beguiled into voting the Earth was flat. How? And why? That is what this beguiling tale of Kipling's sets out to tell us; how the local Huckley squire, Sir Thomas Ingell, having lured two newspaper proprietors, a reporter and an MP into committing a speeding violation, has the tables turned on him by their making his village (and, thereby, him) an international laughing stock - with the help of Bat Masquerier, music hall proprietor, example of The Totally Amoral Soul and Personal 0 votes. Rate! Rate! Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was an English journalist, short-story writer, poet, and novelist. "The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat" is one of Kipling's rare humorous stories. A group of friends out for a motor jaunt find themselves up on a trumped up speeding charge exacerbated by some outrageously insulting sarcasm from a country town magistrate. Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was an English journalist, short-story writer, poet, and novelist. "The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat" is one of Kipling's rare humorous stories. A group of friends out for a motor jaunt find themselves up on a trumped up speeding charge exacerbated by some outrageously insulting sarcasm from a country town magistrate.