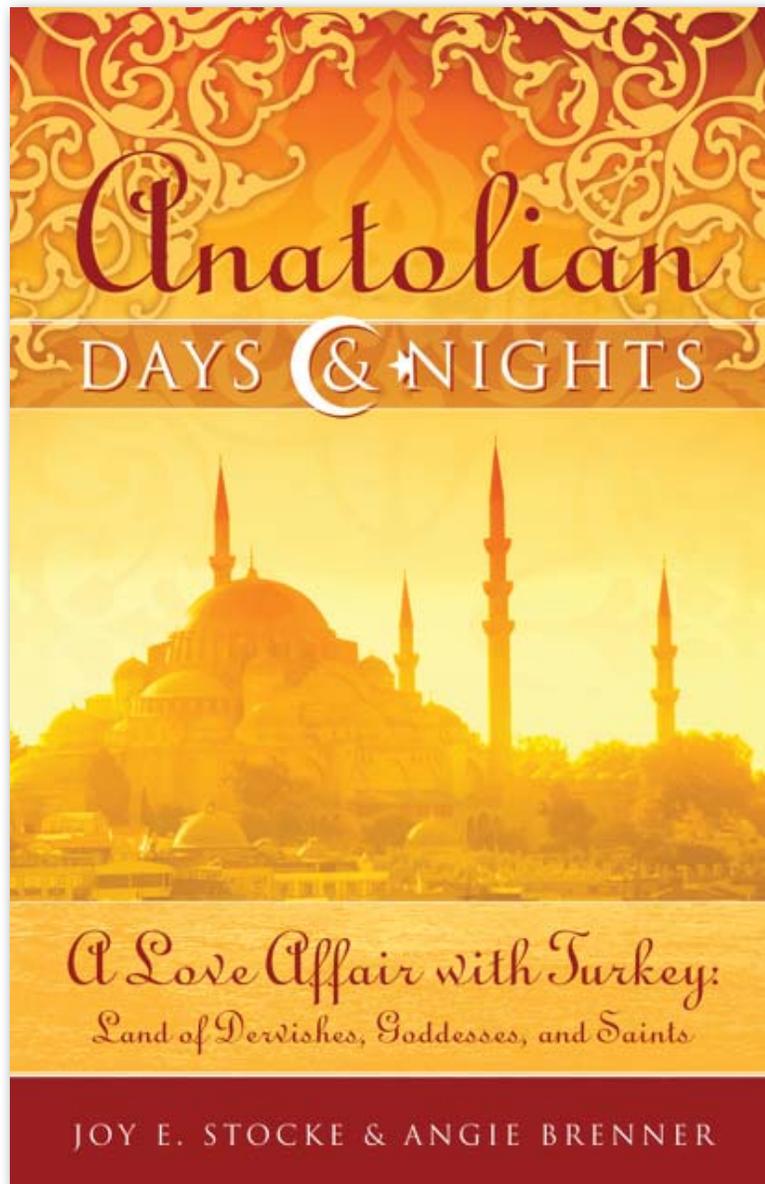


Media Kit



**Wild River Books Announces Third Printing of
Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey,
Which Continues to Captivate Readers**

For media inquiries, contact Kim Nagy at Wild River Books
kim@wildriverbooks.com | 609-903-3038

Anatolian Days and Nights

A Love Affair with Turkey

Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints

By the time the wise woman reaches the bridge, the crazy woman has crossed the water.

—Turkish proverb

Introduction

Published by **Wild River Books** on March 1, 2012, *Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints* is part memoir, part travelogue, co-written by Joy E. Stocke and Angie Brenner, editor-in-chief and West Coast editor of the online literary magazine *Wild River Review*. The book depicts the authors' 10-year journey through the complexities and contradictions of ancient Anatolia and modern-day Turkey.

Brenner and Stocke weave their stories about their interactions with colorful local people while fearlessly exploring Istanbul and Turkey's borders with Syria, Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Georgia, and Greece. They experience the rituals of the Turkish bath (21st Century-style); find romance on the Bosphorus; explore Istanbul's Grand Bazaar and meet a Sephardic Jewish Antiques dealer; search for the origins of Anat, the mother goddess; enjoy sumptuous Turkish cuisine; witness the Whirling Dervish ceremony in Konya, celebrating sufi mystic poet Jelalludin Rumi; and encounter Turkish soldiers at gunpoint on the Syrian border.

Talking Points

The authors are available for media interviews, book signings, lectures, and book club groups (in person and via skype) to discuss a variety of subjects:

- **The Anatolian Days and Nights Journey** — an intimate portrait of a country as experienced by two women who travelled "where angels fear to tread."
- **How women travel differently than men** — the rewards of traveling with women friends.
- **Traveling in a Muslim country after 9/11** — the unexpected warmth of an Islamic culture.
- **Turkish Highlights** — Rituals of the Turkish Bath 21st century-style, Romance on the Bosphorus, Surprises of the Grand Bazaar.
- **Ethnic Turkey** — the cultures and cuisines of the Ottomans - Greek, Armenian, Jewish, Kurdish.
- **Search for the Mother Goddess** — religion's earliest roots and how those stories resonate today.

"In their vivid memoir, Joy Stocke, a travel writer from New Jersey; and Angie Brenner, a former travel bookstore owner from California, document their travels through Turkey, spanning nearly 10 years and stretching from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean coast, and from the Iranian border to Istanbul...Every destination on their itinerary is home to ghosts of Turkey's past, but the friends also take time to enjoy "whitewashed façades tinged sienna in the late afternoon sun" and "breeze[s] rustl[ing] through the cobbled streets." Over-eager guides embody the country's tumultuous national identity—a mélange of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Armenians, Turks, and more—and descriptions of the past weaved into the present provide a rich portrait of the region."

— **Publishers Weekly**
May 28, 2012

"There is a lot to be said for two women, one married with children, the other single, who choose to travel through a country where such a thing provokes shock, distrust, and assumptions about the flexibility of their moral character. The two handle awkward or frightening situations with grace and intelligence."

— **Philadelphia Inquirer**
May 27, 2012

News, Events and Awards

Since its publication in March 2012, *Anatolian Days and Nights* and its authors Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner have been earning acclaim and selling out events and readings across the United States and in Turkey. One of the highlights of the Spring/Summer tour were two live segments on Milwaukee's most popular morning show, "The Morning Blend," on June 26th. The authors were interviewed by hosts Molly Fay and Tiffany Ogle (pictured), then did an in-studio cooking demonstration of one of their favorite Turkish dishes.

Joy and Angie continue their book tour this Fall with a number of events across the U.S. On October 11th, Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner will be speaking at the 11th Women's Wellness Conference, The Power of Pink, in Torrance, CA. This full-day conference promotes the health and well-being of a woman's body, mind and spirit.



Stocke and Brenner on set with hosts of Milwaukee's "The Morning Blend."



**Cookbook Coming:
By Popular Demand, Anatolian Cookbook in the Works**



Stuffed Eggplant, Peppers and Tomatoes (Dolma); and Bulgur Pilaf

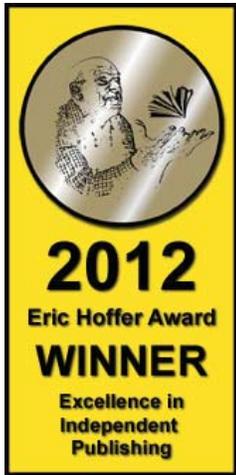
On the Spring/Summer Tour, audiences kept requesting recipes for dishes they read about in the book. Soon Angie and Stocke were teaching book clubs how to make dolma, vegetables stuffed with fragrant rice and lamb, cacik (cucumber-yogurt sauce), flat bread, patina salitasi (velvety eggplant salad), pan car salastas (world’s best beet salad), and the perfect baklava. From California to New York, people asked them, “When can we buy the cookbook?”

Thrilled by the response, the authors reached out to their Turkish-American friends, part of a vibrant diaspora, to learn how they have adapted family recipes and simplified ingredients from local markets for their home kitchens in the U.S. And friends have responded, sharing precious family recipes, anecdotes as well as bringing the authors into their kitchens for intimate cooking lessons. Now the authors are testing recipes and gathering stories for a companion cookbook to Anatolian Days and Nights, hoping to bring one of the world’s greatest cuisines into American kitchens.



Eric Hoffer Award 2012 - Honorable Mention

The *U.S. Review of Books* recently announced the winners of the 2012 Eric Hoffer Awards, giving *Anatolian Day and Nights* an Honorable Mention in the Culture category. The Eric Hoffer Award for short prose and books was established at the start of the 21st Century as a means of opening a door to writing of significant merit. It honors the memory of the great American philosopher Eric Hoffer by highlighting salient writing, as well as the independent spirit of small publishers.



In bestowing the honor, the judges wrote: “*Anatolian Days & Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey*, Joy E. Stocke & Angie Brenner, Wild River Books - This is more a memoir than a travelogue, but it inspires the reader to travel to Turkey nonetheless. The two authors meet in Istanbul to help a mutual friend run a pension for the summer. While this experience turns out differently than they had expected, it leads to a strong friendship and a 10-year exploration of the country. Accented by one author’s illustrations and with descriptions of Turkish baths, whirling dervishes, the beauty of the Mediterranean, and the values and traditions of an ancient culture, the book truly celebrates ‘a love affair with Turkey.’”

Anatolian Authors Draw Overflow Crowd at PEN’s World Voices Festival in NYC

Authors Brenner and Stocke (pictured) sold out their “Rumi Comes to Tribeca” event on May 5, 2012, part of PEN American Center’s World Voices Festival. More than 70 people attended the afternoon of Sufi poetry, literature and sacred Ney music in the jewel box of Murta Kupcu’s Double-Knot Gallery in New York City.



Foreign Translation Rights

Wild River Books has signed foreign translation rights for “*Anatolian Days & Nights*” with the literary publisher, Lambook, based in Warsaw, Poland, and Pegasus Publishers in Istanbul, Turkey.

Read *Wild River Review’s* in-depth interviews with Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner.



Authors' Biographies

Joy E. Stocke is a founder and Editor-in-Chief of the online literary magazine, *Wild River Review*. She has published fiction, nonfiction and poetry, and has written about and lectured widely on her travels in Greece and Turkey. She is the author of the memoir *Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses and Saints*, co-written with Angie Brenner, March 2012. Her essay, Turkish American Food, is the first of its kind to appear in the second edition of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* (OUP, 2012). Her book of bilingual poems, *Cave of the Bear*, translated into Greek by Lili Bitá, was published in 2000 by Pella Publishing.

Stocke has interviewed Nobel Prize winners Orhan Pamuk and Muhammad Yunus, Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Muldoon, Roshi Joan Halifax, anthropologist and expert on end-of-life care; Ivonne Baki, President of the Andean Parliament; and Templeton Prize winner Freeman Dyson, among others. She is currently working with Harriet Mayor Fulbright, widow of Senator J. William Fulbright and President of Harriet Fulbright College, on Mrs. Fulbright's memoir.

She is on the board of the Princeton Middle East Society, and a member of the Turkish Women's International Network. Stocke graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with a Bachelor of Science in Broadcast Journalism and is a Lindisfarne Fellow.

Photo: Stocke (left) and Brenner at Hasankeyf, above the Tigris River.

Angie Brenner is West Coast editor of the online magazine, *Wild River Review*. Her many interviews include Nobel Prize winners Muhammad Yunus and Orhan Pamuk, artist James Hubbell, journalist Stephen Kinzer, and writers Pico Iyer and Elif Shafak. She has traveled extensively through Turkey, Ecuador, Africa, and Vietnam and written numerous articles about her experiences.

Brenner left the security of a managerial job in the health care industry in 1986 to start a unique travel planning service, Journeys by Angie, where she created personalized travel itineraries for clients. In 1988 she bought and operated a travel bookstore, World Journeys, in Del Mar, California.

For 10 years, Brenner attended trade shows such as the annual American Booksellers Association convention and worked directly with authors to promote their books, learning the publishing business inside out and becoming an expert on travel literature. She also gave packing demonstrations, which won her recognition in *The Wall Street Journal* and a feature in a San Diego television news segment. She has lectured frequently on all aspects of travel at travel agent meetings, women's clubs, and annual corporate meetings.

In 1997, Brenner closed her own travel bookstore to write and travel, and teach yoga near her home in Julian, California. She is author of the travel memoir, *Anatolian Days & Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints*, co-written with Joy E. Stocke.



**From Kitchens to Desks to Schoolyards
Co-Authors Talk about the Power of Girlfriends, Travel, Cooking
and the Secretary to their Ongoing Success**

**Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner Celebrate Collaboration at the
11th Women's Wellness Conference, The Power of Pink in Los Angeles, CA
Sponsored by Providence Little Company of Mary Foundation**

September 23, 2013: Los Angeles: On October 11th, co-authors of *Anatolian Days & Nights* (Wild River Books, 2013) Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner, CA will be speaking at the 11th Women's Wellness Conference, The Power of Pink, in Torrance, CA. This full-day conference promotes the health and well-being of a woman's body, mind and spirit.

Whether boarding a plane to meet in Istanbul or heading "home" to their communities on different coasts, Joy Stocke (who managed a busy writing career and demanding family life in New Jersey between trips) and Angie Brenner (who owned a travel bookstore in San Diego), remained co-authors, business partners, adventurous travelers and close friends for over a decade, and learned what it means to truly "make it."

"Success really comes down to community and friendships," says Stocke. "The latest research shows how important building connectedness is to our health--and our community grew as we travelled. Through over ten years of travelling together, Angie and I have seen that hospitality, kindness, sharing, family, and friendship are universal. Those qualities form the key indicators of success for all of us, especially women, where it often starts in the kitchen"

The two authors have enjoyed material success along the way. Praised by Publisher's Weekly, their award-winning memoir, *Anatolian Days & Nights* is already in its third printing, and celebrated on the review circuit.

The women will be speaking on the secret power of friendship in both women's personal and professional lives--and their continuing collaboration as they announce plans for their new book, *Anatolian Kitchen: Turkish Cooking for the American Kitchen*.

What's their personal recipe for success?

Take ownership (and turns): During their writing process, the two authors played to their strengths, owned individual projects based on their expertise and covered for one another based on the demands of their lives.

Cooking: "After long days, we'd decompress by cooking Turkish food and reviewing our work-in-progress. Often, it was at this time when some problem would be resolved," comments Brenner.

Laugh: "We never EVER stopped laughing," says Stocke.

The authors were interviewed by hosts Molly Fay and Tiffany Ogle in Milwaukee's most popular morning show, "The Morning Blend," on June 26th, and then did an in-studio cooking demonstration of one of their favorite Turkish dishes.

Wild River Books is an outgrowth of the online literary magazine Wild River Review and brings the finest literary voices to print through traditional and digital formats. **For interview requests and review coverage: Please contact Kim Nagy: 609-903-3038 or kim@kimnagy.com**



Press Release

Wild River Books Announces Publication of *Anatolian Days and Nights*, an Intimate Memoir of Friendship, Self-Discovery and Travel in Turkey

**Authors Angie Brenner and Joy Stocke Capture the Heart and Soul of Contemporary Turkey
on a 10-Year Odyssey through One of the World's Most Fascinating and Misunderstood Countries**

Los Angeles, California – March 1, 2012 – When Angie Brenner and Joy Stocke met on a balcony of a guesthouse in a small resort town on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, little did they know that their lives were about to change. Soon, they discovered a shared love of travel, history, culture, cuisine and literature, and began a 10-year journey through the beauty, complexities and contradictions of ancient Anatolia and modern-day Turkey.

Wild River Books, the publishing arm of the online literary magazine, *Wild River Review*, will release *Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints* on March 1, 2012. Stocke, the editor-in-chief of Wild River Review, and Brenner, the magazine's west coast editor, weave their voices together in vignettes reflecting on their travels and interactions with colorful local people from every walk of life.

The co-authors believe that two women traveling together offer some inherent advantages, especially in a Muslim culture. "It's a wonderful way to meet both men and women in Turkey," says Brenner. "The men are curious about American women and invite you to tea or for meals. But we can also hang out with Turkish women, which a man traveling with us could not do, certainly not in the villages and tribal areas. So we get to go underneath the societal constraints and see both sides of the culture." Asked about the dangers of two Western women traveling in a Muslim country, Stocke observes, "We never felt unsafe in Turkey. We're Americans, Midwestern women who love adventure and travel. We're used to following our intuition and going where our hearts and minds lead us. But we're not careless. We don't view ourselves as being particularly brave, but it's a mistake to compare Turkey with its neighbors in the Near and Middle East."

Anatolian Days and Nights is receiving praise from early reviewers. "Compassionate, nuanced, tender and informative, this book will change your perspective on contemporary Turkey," says Elif Shafak, author of *The Bastard of Istanbul* and *Black Milk*. "[The book] is an intimate, clear-eyed view of a fascinating country," observes Alan Drew, author of *Gardens of Water*. "Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner have captured the contradictions of modern-day Turkey, while exposing the complex web



of history at the heart of our human story.” The authors also explore: the rituals of the Turkish bath (21st Century-style); romance on the Bosphorus; surprises of the Grand Bazaar; the search for Anat, the Mother Goddess; Turkish cuisine; Whirling Dervishes and their roots in Sufism; and the vision of mystic poet Rumi.

Brenner and Stocke kick off a national book tour the first week of March on the West Coast, shift to a series of reading, signings and workshops in early April on the East Coast, then move on to the Midwest in June. Go to **Anatolian Book Tour** for updates. *Anatolian Days & Nights* is available through bookstores via Ingram and Baker & Taylor, and Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites, as well as all major digital book formats.

The authors also are offering a Book Launch Tour of Istanbul and Cappadocia Turkey, May 19 through 29, 2012. For more information and registration, go to **Our Turkey Tour**.

For more information on scheduled events and booking arrangements, visit www.anatoliandaysandnights.com or contact: Amy Constantine, 609-213-6580 or at anatoliandaysandnights@gmail.com. Wild River Books: PO Box 53, Stockton, NJ 08559. For media interviews and more information about the authors, contact: Scott Busby or Kelly Campbell, The Busby Group, 310.475.2914, scottb@thebusbygroup.com or kellyvc@thebusbygroup.com.

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Wild River Books is an outgrowth of the online literary magazine *Wild River Review* and brings the finest literary voices to print through traditional and digital formats. We welcome authors who are committed to the craft of writing and storytelling and are willing to devote the writing and editing time necessary to turn prose into art. We are especially interested in fresh perspectives and stories that speak to the interconnectedness of people and societies, what binds us, what breaks us apart, and what forces ultimately elevate us.

We nurture new writers of merit and additionally publish established writers whose work deserves to be read by a new generation. We handpick the finest authors and work with them to secure underwriting and funding partners (one recent project was generously funded by Princeton University, Department of Hellenic Studies) for ambitious works of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and memoir.

Wild River Books, PO Box 53 Stockton, New Jersey 08559 U.S.A.

Media

TODAY'S ZAMAN

US storytellers paint portrait of Anatolian days and nights

ISTANBUL - Upon a short visit to İstanbul in 1906, a young Virginia Woolf commented with certainty that "No Christian, or European, can hope to understand the Turkish point of view."

May 6, 2012 / Latifa Akay

Over a century after Woolf's observations on what she saw as a yawning cultural gap between the East and the West, a reading of Joy Stocke and Angie Brenner's recently published joint memoir, "Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints," would be more than a good starting point for those seeking to gain an informed insight into a nation deemed by the two authors as one of the world's "most fascinating and misunderstood countries."



Angie Brenner (L) and Joy Stocke think Turkey is one of the world's most fascinating and misunderstood countries.

"Angie and I didn't plan to fall in love with Turkey," Stocke notes in the introduction of the book. Yet throughout the course of the American pair's frank narrative of over a decade of exploration in Turkey -- an experience that took them anywhere and everywhere, from the flourishing cosmopolitan heart of İstanbul to rural Anatolian villages and the borders of neighboring Syria, Georgia, Armenia, Iraq and Iran -- it becomes clear that fall in love with Turkey is just what they did.

Travel memoirs of Westerners in the Middle East have been written before and will be written again, yet the honesty and storytelling finesse with which "Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints" is related sets it a shelf apart from more idealistic counterparts. The memoir took a total of three years to craft with the two seasoned writers -- Stocke is the founder of the online literary magazine Wild River Review, while Brenner is the West Coast editor of the same publication -- identifying themselves more as storytellers than authors.

"Storytelling is a long-drawn process," Stocke told Sunday's Zaman during a cross-Atlantic Skype interview last month. "There is a narrative arc within the wider arc of writing so it takes longer; each story needed to be crafted like pearls on a strand." Despite their writing experience, putting pen to paper and writing a memoir with two voices proved an unexpectedly difficult conundrum for the two writers. "We have very different writing styles, so it took us a total of three years to get the voice of the book right," Stocke related. "First it was going to be narrated in the third person, then it was going to be one character and one voice and then finally it came to us writing alternating chapters," she said.



“We have different skills in language so we also edited each other’s chapters. Joy can get caught up in literary flights of fancy and get lost in the story and language, whereas I like to get to the punch line. Joy is in the air, and I am in the earth,” Brenner added.

Speaking with Sunday’s Zaman in the lead-up to a 10-day Turkey tour in late May that will see the US-based duo take part in a number of events in Cappadocia and İstanbul, Brenner, who once upon a time had a long-term Turkish boyfriend whom she describes simply as being “no prince,” said that despite the authors’ status as outsiders in Turkey, that the two were under no false illusions about Turkey.

“We all have views of other places which we shape through our own prisms, and of course when we first came to Turkey we viewed it through rose-tinted glasses. This was one of the reasons we took so long to write to write the book,” Stocke explained. Indeed whilst the two authors weave enchanting tales of summers by the Mediterranean Sea, the delights of Turkish cuisine, the mesmerizing beauty of a whirling dervish ceremony in Konya and the warmth of curious locals, they similarly record the headache of bizarre and impromptu marriage proposals, their experiences meeting members of a women’s rights organizations in eastern Turkey fighting against the practice of honor killing and a face-off of sorts with armed soldiers on the Syrian border.

Yet ultimately the two writers praise the warmth of Muslim culture and reflect that contrary to the not uncommon Western perception of Turkey as a dangerous and conservative landscape, that they never felt unsafe there.



Drawing by Angie Brenner

“This was actually one of our main inspirations for writing the book,” Brenner said, explaining that they had long since grown weary of concerned questions as to the safety of their favorite travel destination. “After 10 years my mind is so boggled by the questions from friends asking if it is safe to go there,” she said, adding that the pair decided to include a chapter on reactions following 9/11 to highlight that like in most countries, people in Turkey were outraged and saddened by the attacks. “I knew instantly that many people would be afraid of Islam and any country associated with it, and this only made us more determined to write our story. We are American women and a product

of this country, and we hope we can be a role model, let more of us do this,” Stocke added.

Indeed the subject of women was one the two writers were keen to discuss. “We do believe that there are advantages to travelling as women in a Muslim culture. When we go to small villages we can hang out with the women there in situations men would certainly not be able to, so we get a



privileged glimpse beneath societal constraints. We met so many strong women in such situations,” Brenner said adding that the culture of hospitality and curiosity made the pair feel safe in Turkey, “It’s nice to feel somebody has your back, and that is how we feel in Turkey,” she said.

Commenting on the writers’ experience meeting with founding members of the pioneering women’s rights organization the Women’s Consultation and Solidarity Center (KAMER), a Diyarbakır-based body dedicated to raising awareness about the crime of honor killing, Stocke said that she strongly believes that when talking about honor killing, it is important to remember the tribal nature of the tradition and the fact that it exists not just in the Middle East, but across the world. “Many people have the bad habit of lumping religion with culture when in reality these are two completely separate things. We do hope we are writing from a proactive point of view,” she said, adding that while it is a mistake to judge any country on a single component of it, that it is very important to address such issues if change is to take place.

Writing as women

On the subject of writing under the label of “women writers,” Stocke said that to make a political statement she would describe herself as a woman writer, but that she likes to think of herself as a writer first and then a woman. “This is always an interesting discussion, and the way I like to look at it is that I knew I wanted to be a writer when I was 8 years old, a kid, a girl but still not formed as a woman. On my tombstone, to my husband’s horror probably, I would like the order to be writer, mother and then wife,” Stocke mused.

Brenner was similarly hesitant to prescribe to the label of a woman writer, “When writing this book I don’t think we ever thought of it as a work of ‘women writers’; however, interestingly, when people see two women writing together there is often an assumption that this is in some way a ‘girls only’ affair, which is very much not the case,” she said. Stocke added that while there can sometimes be the perception that women must have experienced trauma to want to travel, she and Brenner took to the road to learn more about the world and find their own answers. “We wanted to feed our souls, which is something that I think is universal for men and women,” she said.

Hailed by Turkish author Elif Şafak as a work that will “change your perspective on contemporary Turkey,” “Anatolian Days and Nights: A Love Affair with Turkey, Land of Dervishes, Goddesses, and Saints” strikes a satisfying balance of accessibility coupled with evocative storytelling artistry. Stocke and Brenner begin a 10-day tour of Turkey on May 19 that will include a lecture on “Peace Building through the Art of Storytelling,” at İstanbul’s Boğaziçi University on May 22.

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Talking Turkey (the country)

March 31, 2012 / John Wilkens

SAN DIEGO - “*Anatolian Days & Nights*” is about the 10-year odyssey authors Angie Brenner and Joy Stocke took through what they consider one of the world’s most fascinating and misunderstood countries: Turkey.



Brenner, who lives in Julian, will be at Warwick’s Sunday at noon as part of the store’s “Weekend With Locals” series. She answered questions by email.

Early in the book there’s mention of your wanderlust. Where did that come from?

Joy and I talk a lot about growing up on opposite shores of Lake Michigan — Joy in Milwaukee and me a “clipper” ride across in Muskegon — and how we imagined what lay on the other side. I’d spend hours looking through the family’s National Geographic magazines. I never remembered a time that I didn’t want to go to those places. Years later, I learned about a great aunt who had taken a car across country from Michigan to California in the ‘20s or ‘30s and thought, what a great adventure that would have been. So maybe it is in my blood to want to go.

What do you most enjoy about traveling?

Doing research for a trip (or a book) is really fun, and it is one of the reasons I became the owner of a travel bookstore. But when all the plans are done and you’re off, usually something unexpected happens that requires you to rethink an itinerary in mid-trip. It’s been very empowering to know that I can work my way through difficult situations even when I don’t know the language.

Joy and I travel because we’re curious about the world and have been on a quest to understand the threads of our humanity. But to be fully honest, we also travel for the fun of it. By taking advantage of opportunities to meet new people, we now have lifelong friends all over the world.

What do you learn about yourself when you travel?

Often I learn that I have more in common with people from very different cultures than I do with many of my American peers. We always think of people as being different from us because of their culture, religion, traditions, or habits. Hospitality, kindness, sharing, family, and friendship are universal.

Why Turkey?

I knew very little about Turkey when in the early ‘90s a friend asked if I’d like to join her weeklong gulet (a Turkish yacht) sailing trip along Turkey’s Mediterranean coast. At the time, many people’s perceptions of Turkey were tied to the Oliver Stone movie, “Midnight Express,” about an American who attempts to smuggle hashish out of Turkey and is arrested and thrown into a Turkish prison. So I was warned that Turkey was a very dangerous place.

Since I wasn’t planning on breaking any laws, I saw no reason not to go and was intrigued by the perceptions of those who had never set foot in the country. Then I’d learned about the Whirling Dervish Festival in Konya in Central Turkey and Joy was the only person I knew willing to travel in the middle of December, through a snowstorm, to attend it with me. Each trip would be cause for planning another. Joy’s research in mythology and goddesses brought us to Trabzon on the Black Sea,



the land of the Amazons, Jason, and Medea, then to the southeast in search of Daphne and Apollo.

What's the biggest misconception about the place?

Many Americans tend to lump Turkey with all Middle Eastern countries, or I should say, all Islamic countries. This is a mistake. It truly is a bridge between the east and west; Kemal Ataturk, the founder of Turkey's Democratic Republic, set in motion a vision to align his country with the west. Are there problems? Of course. But I think people are often surprised to visit Istanbul and find a vibrant, sophisticated city with a healthy economy, and a world-class cuisine considered one of world's top three along with French and Chinese.

What if any similarities did you notice between Turkey and San Diego County?

That's a tough comparison, but I'd say it is how life often revolves around water. Turkey has access to the tourist draw of the Aegean and Mediterranean seas as well as the Black Sea to the north, and has within her borders the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

"Maybe it happened, maybe it didn't." What's the significance of that phrase?

This is an expression that every Turkish person knows and understands. I think it's an important point that writers and readers must consider in a memoir. As Joy and I say in our book, "memory is framed within our reality." And, I'd add, our experiences.

In our travels, Joy and I experience the same events but sometimes have differing perceptions on a person or situation. While writing the book, we'd go back to our journals and compare our observations. In any memoir, the writer must have license to make alterations to tell their story so that the reader is entertained. However, it's crucial to stay to what you know is fact. If you decide to stray too far away from the truth, it's better to turn your story into fiction.

You trade off writing sections of the book. How did you decide who wrote what?

We created the chapter outline early in our writing process. As our travels continued and time passed, we took out some chapters and added a few, such as the short chapter titled Before and After, which addresses our reaction and travel plans after the events of 9/11 that we felt was important to the context of our narrative.

Some chapters easily belonged to Joy or me. Our story begins on a balcony of a pension overlooking Kalkan Bay on Turkey's Mediterranean Coast. Since I arrived first, it was natural to tell that part of our story through my eyes. Joy was drawn to Turkey through her research on early religions and wanted to follow the roots of Anat, the great goddess of Anatolia, which is how Turkey is known to all Turks. So she took on those chapters.

Why do you think people read travel books?

The simple answer is the longing to be transported to other places whether they plan to go there or not. I think this is a very human experience.

What do you hope they get out of reading yours?

Our goal has always been to show a complex country that we've learned to love by telling our stories in beautiful, descriptive prose that can be read today or ten years from now. We want our readers to be enlightened, surprised, and most of all entertained.