



Sacramento Writers

JULY 2025 NEWSLETTER

CWC SACRAMENTO BRANCH

THIRD SATURDAY MEETING

Poetry in motion: A genre for all

As Johnny Tillotson sang in the 1961 hit “Poetry in Motion” (“...a wave out on the ocean could never move that way...”), branch members will gather on **Saturday, July 19, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento, from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.** for an exciting session on Open Poetry reading.

This will be the first meeting with our new president, Sandra Navarro. Light refreshments will be provided. Following announcements and introductions, a micro-workshop “**Cross-training for Improved Writing Health**,” will be presented by Karen Holladay Durham. A long-time member who has presented to the club many times, Karen writes in several genres, including fiction, nonfiction and poetry.

Karen will also facilitate the **Open Poetry** segment, drawing on her experience at similar events. Attendees are asked to respect others and help create a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere by following these “Rules of Engagement”:

- Poetry reading sign-ups will be on site, and will end when the meeting begins at 1:00 p.m.
- Each poet will have a 3-minute time limit, to begin when you start to speak.
- The 3-minute limit includes reading the title(s) and includes multiple poems. There will be no time to explain; let your work speak for itself!
- Practice ahead of time to ensure you won’t be cut off by the timer!

After the Open Poetry Readings, attendees are welcome to stay for **Query Practice** with San Francisco agent Michael Larsen. Offered as a member benefit thanks to Michael’s generosity, the focus will

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There will not be a CWC Sacramento First Friday meeting in July. Enjoy your holiday!

be on refining the first paragraph of your draft query to be added to the second and third paragraphs the group has already drafted. Please refer to Michael’s article, “**The Hooks, The Book & The Cook: The Three Parts of an Irresistible Query Letter**” on our website. If you need help with your query draft, please contact Michael at epml@aol.com.

We have to pay for this room, so we have to charge an admission fee of \$15. You can pay on the day or get your ticket here: [BOOK ONLINE](#)



100 YEARS OF WRITING EXCELLENCE

Sex, murder, and monsters in the Capital City

Hopefully, you've already heard the news about our upcoming October CWC Centennial celebration, "100 Years of Writing Excellence in Sacramento." From celebrated authors to accomplished journalists, the



*Awards presenter
Alison Linton,
Executive Producer
of Streaming,
KQVR-TV, CBS
Sacramento*

event promises an inspiring exchange of history, ideas, and stories.

The star-studded line-up of speakers and attendees includes a former president of the Sacramento Press Club, a Pulitzer Prize winner, a Pushcart Nominee Poet, a literary agent, and the executive producer of streaming for a local TV station.



*Author Kiyo Sato,
recipient of the 2008
William Saroyan
International Prize
for New Writing,
Nonfiction*

Author Kiyo Sato, 102 years young, will be on hand as a special guest, so consider bringing her book, [*Dandelion Through the Crack*](#), (later republished under the title [*Kiyo's Story*](#)) to get an autograph.

You'll be treated to a rare display of books by early members, artifacts from when our club started in 1925, a jazz band representing the decades, and a slide show of early magazines as print markets evolved from the early years. A buffet will be on hand. You will hear the greatest and funniest magazine and newspaper titles published by

members in the early and mid-century years. Greater Sacramento Literary Awards will be awarded in accordance with our mission.

Our club at 100 has the widest lens to tell the story of writing in the early years. Many members' books were made into movies, and one inspired a popular TV series. One member sold more than 2,000 articles. Another wrote music and piano instruction materials still in use today. Another authored a nationally-syndicated column. The illustrator of one early member's book was a native Sacramentan who went on to be an internationally-acclaimed artist.

Writers, poets, reporters, editors, and publishers will all appreciate our shared history. To this end, we are seeking businesses to be listed as sponsors in support of this once-in-a-lifetime event honoring writing in the community. Contact Kimberly A. Edwards, kimberlyedwards@comcast.net, for sponsor information. More details to follow.

Don't forget to save the date: October 18, 2025, 12:00–3:00 p.m., North Ridge Country Club, Fair Oaks. Tickets are \$65 and will be available closer to the event. [Explore more event details, speakers, and agenda on our website.](#)

Participate in our centennial with a video birthday message



By Christina Brabham

We're collecting **100 birthday wishes** to mark CWC Sacramento's big birthday—want to add yours?

Many of you have already shared your info for the **100 Faces in 100 Days** project. Now it's time to record your short video! [Sign up here](#) to schedule a

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session with Christina Brabhamor email her directly at sassydewit@gmail.com.

We'll record before/after First Friday or Third Saturday events, or you can submit your own 10–20 second video (.mp4 or .mov) via USB or AirDrop (iPhone users).

Here's a sample video from our secretary, [Teri Lown](#), to show what hers looks like. And here's one from [Bernard Wozny](#), our past president and webmaster.

Tips for your video:

- **Format:** .mp4 or .mov
- **Length:** 10-15 seconds, (20 seconds max) so pretty short with just a couple of sentences spoken
- **Optional:** These will be publicly accessible, so using your name is your choice. Please, no verbal promotions of books, but you can have a copy of your latest book with you in the video.
- Say whatever you want about being part of CWC or about being an author or a resident of Sacramento in general.
- Or, simply wish CWC-Sacramento a Happy Birthday!

For more information, see our [“100 Faces” page](#) on the CWC Sacramento website. Thanks for being part of this milestone!

A SIZZLING SUCCESS

Sacramento Book Festival 2025 is in the books!

By Tim Schooley

The Sacramento Book Festival 2025 took place on Saturday, May 31 at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center. By all accounts, the festival was a hot event, both because it was the warmest May 31 in Sacramento in a century and because our authors sold a ton of books and our attendees reported having a wonderful time.

We can't thank enough the numerous CWC members who showed up as authors or turned up as volunteers. Special thanks to our CWC members who served on

UPCOMING EVENTS

July/August 2025

Note: There will be no First Friday meeting in July.

July 19, Saturday

CWC Saturday Meeting, 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., “Cross-training for Improved Writing Health,” Open Poetry Reading, and Query Practice with Michael Larsen, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento. Pay \$15 at the door (cash preferred) or [Book online here](#).

August 1, Friday

CWC Monthly Networking Meeting, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Viktoriya Nikola, YouTube Author Interviews, Denny's Restaurant, 8841 Greenback Lane, Orangevale. Zoom session available starting at 10:00 a.m.: Meeting ID: 817 3734 0307 Passcode: 227171

August 16, Saturday

CWC Saturday Meeting, 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Mini Lesson, Open Narrative Reading, and Query Practice with Michael Larsen, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento. Pay \$15 at the door (cash preferred) or [Book online here](#).



Sacramento Book Festival 2025

the Book Festival Committee: J. Scott Coatsworth, event lead; Judith Starkston, author wrangler; Lois Buchter, grant specialist; Tim Schooley, chair and publicity prospector; and honorary member Bel Sikes, social media coordinator. And a shout out also to our new club secretary, Teri Lown, who braved the heat to coordinate volunteers on the day of the event.

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What we heard over and over from many of the estimated 5,000 people who came despite the heat: it's about time Sacramento held a book festival!

More than 140 local authors turned up to sell their books and many to speak in author panel discussions. The author panel room was packed all day long with attendees anxious to hear from our speakers.



The morning got off to a great start with club members Kathy Kanika Marshall and RoseMary Covington, joined by BJ Davis, on the Black Women Write panel. Other club member speakers included J. Scott Coatsworth and Amy Rogers (SciFi/Fantasy); Karen Phillips and Cindy Sample (Mystery/Crime); Shelley Blanton-Stroud, Judith Starkston and Tim Schooley (Historical); and Michele Drier (Romance).

Our club member panelists were joined by writing luminaries, including James Rollins (keynote speaker), Simon Woods, James L'Etoile and Terry Shamas (Thriller); Cara Black (Mystery/Crime); Catriona McPherson (Historical); and Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson and Brian Patrick Avery (Children's).

Perhaps the thing we should be most proud of was the success of our fundraiser. We asked attendees to bring new or gently used children's books to donate to Mustard Seed, a school for unhoused children and their families. And boy did they deliver! Mustard Seed left at the end of the day with a car so overflowing with books that two boxes were left behind for us to deliver to them later. Local literary organizations also had their day in the sun: 916Ink, Sacramento Library, and Friends of the Library/Book Den.

A final note. We heard from so many authors about how successful the event was for them—many sold

out their books, obtained new readers, and networked with fellow authors. But we've also listened to critiques. So, the book festival committee will be looking to hold next year's Sacramento Book Festival in an entirely indoor venue, with ample parking. We look forward to having you participate in or attend the 2026 Sacramento Book Festival!

BRANCH PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking forward to our next 100 years

By Sandra Navarro



Welcome to our new Membership Year! It's been 100 years since CWC Sacramento's founding, and we are celebrating our centennial anniversary with gusto in many ways. You have already marked

your calendar for our October 18th birthday extravaganza at North Ridge Country Club, Fair Oaks, and you are eager to learn the date and details of our winter holiday festivity as well as our spring Sacramento Book Festival. While these special events will anchor our year, our "Second Saturday" meetings and our "First Friday" meetings portend to be no less memorable. As you read this newsletter, think about how your creativity and enthusiasm can propel CWC Sacramento forward into our next 100 years.

Best wishes,
Sandra S. Navarro

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Get to know Sandra Navarro

The most direct way to learn about Sandra S. Navarro is to talk with her. Second best is to read her publications, described by Sandra as "narrative nonfiction." Barring that, one might read one of her "book summaries," such as the following:

"For most of us, we are not what we eat. Rather, we are formed by memories of food made in the kitchens

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of our childhood. A recent dinner guest commented on my apron. ‘Old school,’ he said. My guest’s comment triggered thoughts of my mother during my mid-century childhood. This book highlights aspects of my mother’s cooking and kitchens which seem antiquated, interesting, or even amusing today, fifty to seventy years hence.” (From: *She Always Wore an Apron: Tales of My Mother’s Mid-Century Cooking and Kitchen.*)

Here is another sample: “Stories about Ohio pioneers, early settlers and their nineteenth-century descendants, stories previously hidden in family archives and forgotten in public records, come to life in this remarkable collection. The reclaimed narratives spotlight family strife, canal building and tragedy, opposition to a courtship, a run-away child, death in a county poorhouse, preservation of prized meerscham pipes, an abused woman’s escape, and the evolution of a village hotel and country schoolhouse.” (From: *Hidden Stories About Ohio Pioneers, Early Settlers, and Their Nineteenth Century Descendants.*)

And a third: “Since the age of eight, Sandra had longed to be a Girl Scout camp counselor. After graduation from high school, she was selected to work at Camp River Ranch in the foothills of Washington’s Cascade Mountains. She had accurate expectations of what was to come during the summer of 1967. Or did she? Sandra’s camp log and excerpts from letters record her unexpected experiences and subsequent coming of age.” (From: *Coming of Age at Camp Riber Ranch, 1967.*)

Sandra has been an active member of CWC since 2013, serving as a Board officer in 2014-2015 and in 2017-2018. She is delighted to return to Board service in 2025.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

A new year of membership benefits

Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30, which means it’s time to renew your membership and

remain active in this vibrant community of writers.

Your \$45 renewal gets you access to so many amazing things—monthly speaker events, workshops, critique groups, resources, and opportunities to share your work. It also supports the club’s mission to empower writers across all genres and experience levels.

Renew today by sending your check to:

CWC-Sacramento

P.O. Box 1231

Orangevale, CA 95662-1231

Please be sure that your name appears on your check and note any changes in address, telephone, email, or genre in the past year. Or, [renew online here](#).

No website yet? Here’s a good place to start

Do you have a website yet? If not, CWC Sacramento has information you need to help you build yours.

Under **Member Resources** on the CWC Sacramento website, scroll down to **Build a Website**. You’ll find information on and a link to [WebsiteSetup.org](#). There you will find step-by-step instructions to build your website. Included are: Choosing the right website type, selecting your platform, and choosing a domain and host.

WebsiteSetup.org is a free online service that helps beginners create their own websites, blogs, and online stores. There are links to guides, informative articles, and tools, as well. And, if you get stuck, you can get in touch with the web developer, and she’ll help you out.

Past president’s message



by Bernard Wozny

Now is the opportunity to welcome Sandra Navarro as President. More to the point, you can help her to drive this club forward.

You can be involved in change. You don’t have to be a radical.

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You need to work with others and be part of the community.

Be with us and attend meetings. There is nothing that compares to togetherness.

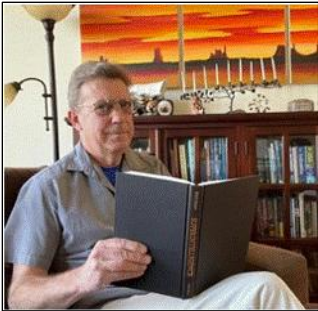
You must always voice your opinion. Tell the board what is good and tell them what is not so good.

Above all, help other writers. Always remember, we are Writers Helping Writers.

Remember, your words must be read.

bpwozny@gmail.com

Members' announcements



Every other year, each CWC branch may nominate one member for the **Jack London Award**, recognizing exceptional service to the club. For 2025, CWC Sacramento is nominating **Bernard**

Wozny for this prestigious award. The honor is given solely on outstanding contributions to the CWC or the branch (rather than on writing achievements.) The CWC president will present the awards at the annual corporate meeting. Congrats Bernard!

Members' corner

By Bonnie Blue

A warm welcome to our new members:

- **Jeff Galvin** writes poetry and philosophy.
- **Lisa Thomas** writes children's literature (middle grade) and women's fiction.
- **Sandra Mohsan** writes self-help, children's fiction, and poetry.
- **Tandra Wright** writes nonfiction and cookbooks.
- **Harry Steinberg**
- **Shirley Smith** writes Christian, memoir, and nonfiction.
- **Shelley Blanton-Stroud** writes historical fiction, historical mysteries, and essays.
- **Jesse Sanchez** writes family history.

- **Shyreece D. Pompey** writes Christian living, realistic memoir, nonfiction, cancer, and other works of overcoming adversity.
- **Mike Sintetos** writes novel-length fiction, literary, and coming-of-age.

New members are invited to share a brief (200 words max) bio and a jpeg headshot for our website's Members page. And you can include a link to your own website in your bio! Please send it to sacramentowriters@gmail.com. You can have your published books listed in our Members' Books section by sending a description and a picture of its cover to Bernard at bpwozny@gmail.com

Critique Groups

Looking for a Critique Group? Sharing your work with thoughtful, like-minded writers is a key step toward getting it ready for the world. Email Bonnie at sacramentowriters@gmail.com. Your name and genre will be collected and linked with other interested members. Your newly formed group can get help with getting started on our website under Members Resources then select Critique Group.

Services from our Membership (in case you have a need)

Editors:

- **Gini Grossenbacher:** <https://www.ginigrossenbacher.com>
- **Janey Ranlett:** Search for Janey Ranlett on Linked-in
- **Rebecca Partridge:** <https://www.ripartridge.com/>

Other Services:

Audiobook voice actor: **Dina Kouremetis**, <https://www.denakouremetis.com>, 415-235-2891.

JUNE 21 MEETING RECAP

Andrea Fleck-Nisbet: How to successfully publish your own book

by Teri Lown

Even if the Spaghetti Factory staff were delayed getting food to our buffet, club members happily used

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the time catching up with each other. The large turnout was there to hear Andrea Fleck-Nisbet, CEO of the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA), give a shortened version of her half-day workshop on how to navigate the world of self-publishing.

She said statistics show that writers are seeing the benefits of the self-publishing model. Since 2014 there has been an 88% increase in the number of authors seeking to manage their own destiny. In 2025, 36% of books are being independently published as opposed to 52% published by the Big Five houses. The trend continues to flip in favor of self-publishing. But with over four million titles out in 2024, selling a book is harder than ever.

Andrea recommends using the IBPA Publishing Map, a guide to publishing models and author pathways. The IBPA website has this and lots of other valuable information to educate yourself about the process.

Pitches and log lines head her five-point list for success. Honing a pitch, the hook, helps the author concisely and clearly describe the book in a manner designed to catch attention. The pitch includes a synopsis: the where, when, who and why of the story. Craft your pitch first. The log line is a shorter version of the pitch, a sentence or two. Your author tone and expertise are the “special sauce” that makes the book unique.

Publishing production elements should meet certain criteria. The IBPA website has listed industry standards that ensure a professional look. For example, you need a half-title page, title page with copyright, table of contents, index and dedication, acknowledgment page and about the author.

Production elements can be checked against the Publisher Professionals Network (PPN) for their description of the important tasks. The book interior includes professional design, legible font, margins, headers, and footers. The front cover should have subdued colors and text that is legible in print and digitally. The spine of the book holds the title, subtitle, author name, publisher name. The back cover should

include competitive pricing, and the ISBN bar code, the industry standard.

Andrea advised building a publishing task list. Craft a mission statement for the book that is clear and actionable. Identify goals: why write and publish? Who is this book for? What does successful publishing look like to you? How will you measure that success?

Her sage advice: always vet your publishing partner.

Financial planning includes finding potential investors, considering personal funding, seeking private equity, raising capital in joint ventures, crowdsourcing, or taking out a small business loan.

The budget, called a profit and loss statement, will consider the book price and royalty rate against specific costs and expenses. Sales channels should include being in touch with your audience so you can utilize different printing options to manage inventory.

Marketing will encompass building your brand on a website and through social media. You need to get reviews, trade or fee-based, as well as blurb quotes from a reviewer who endorses the book, and reader reviews.

A proposal to present Andrea’s full program at a future date was well received by the audience, especially because we ran out of time for Andrea’s entire talk on Saturday afternoon.

JUNE 6 MEETING RECAP

George Hahn: Science fiction writer shares basics

By Julia Markel

George T. Hahn shared the elements of science fiction that distinguish it from regular fiction, in his presentation “How to Write Science Fiction.” The presentation was for CWC Sacramento’s First Friday Networking Meeting, held June 6, 2025.

George has written and published nine science fiction novels and one novella since 2014. He started writing in 2009, after he retired as an engineer.

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In science fiction, humans may be the same or evolved, there may be alien characters, there may be fantastic locations (other times and worlds), it will include new technology, and it will be based more in reality or distinguishable from fantasy.

“Science fiction is something that could happen,” George said. “Fantasy is something that couldn’t happen.”

Good science fiction has an underlying concept, is not fantasy, has limitations, and includes something strange or different.

George advised reading a lot of science fiction to start. Then, you should have an idea for a story. You should also consider how complex you want it to be. It needs to be based on science, but not too much science.

“Don’t bore the readers with a lot of technological details,” he said.

If you have a scientific background, you can build on that for your information. If not, then you’ll need to do research.

When placing your elements in the story, there are specific things to consider.

If there are aliens, they will have distinct characteristics based on the environment they evolved in. Gravity, atmosphere, the star’s spectral type, and extinction events would all play a part.

If space travel is involved, they could go no faster than the speed of light, so great distances could take decades. It’s important to consider how they would handle that and what affect it would have on the travelers’ lives.

If you include artificial intelligence (robots and computers instead of informative AI), consider what the results would be if they became conscious and how that would affect your story line.

“As humans, we can override our DNA,” George said. “We have free will. Would robots be able to do that?”

Future technology could drive the plot, or it could be

part of the background of the story. Travel, medical progress (or issues), entertainment, and artificial intelligence are all things to consider.

You should think about and plan the characteristics of the world that you build in your story. Technology would be different. If it’s based on another planet, gravity, atmosphere, rotation, and climate would differ from Earth. Based in space, the characters would need to address gravity issues.

George shared different resources that he has pulled from for his writing. He listed the titles of some books and magazines for science fiction writers. He said that he had taken some classes from Great Courses, an online service that offers courses on several different topics. YouTube also offers some videos on writing science fiction. World Science Festival videos are another level of science that, George said, usually requires some scientific knowledge to get the most from them, but that are free.

*George T. Hahn is the Vice-President of and webmaster for the Elk Grove Writers Guild. His newest book, *Energy Unlimited*, is a prequel to his *Library Ship Saga* series and is available on Amazon.*

Join a community that writes together

Are you not yet a member of the CWC-Sacramento? If you’re looking for a supportive community to grow your writing skills, share your work, and connect with other writers, being a member of the California Writers Club-Sacramento gets you access to a vibrant network of people and resources. Our monthly meetings feature expert speakers on craft and publishing, and we offer critique groups and other member-only resources. Plus, you’ll be joining a statewide organization with a century-long legacy of championing California writers.

Annual dues are just \$65 for new members (\$42 for students), and renewals are only \$45. Ready to find your people and fuel your writing goals?

Visit cwcsacramentowriters.org and click “Join Us” to get started.

YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Meet Wendy Rose



Who is the invisible hand behind our monthly newsletter production process? Wendy Rose is a Sacramento-based content strategist and writer who has spent more years than she'd like to admit

wrangling words into clear, compelling marketing copy for corporate enterprises. She specializes in storytelling and translating tech jargon into actual human language, earning brownie points if it includes a dash of “thought leadership” and a sprinkle of “ROI.” Wendy volunteered for the role of CWC newsletter editor to use her expertise to serve the local writing community and support our club’s mission. Fun fact: Wendy is a food judge at county fairs in Northern California and at the state fair.

Do you have an idea for an upcoming newsletter?

The deadline for submissions is the 23rd of each month and we publish on the following 1st of the month. Email your submissions to: sacramentowriters@gmail.com

CWC Sacramento leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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