

100 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN SACRAMENTO



First meeting of the California Writers Club Sacramento
Empire Room, Senator Hotel, 12TH & L
October 31, 1925

EVENT OF THE YEAR (a Once-in-a-Century Event)

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Noon - 3 PM

North Ridge Country Club

Buy tickets at CWCSacramentoWriters.org

The California Writers Club is a non-profit organization. Donations welcomed; Donors' names will appear in the program.

Special Partners & Friends

Crocker Art Museum
California State Library
Sacramento Public Library
Center for Sacramento History



Founded 1909

OUR PAST

When Mary Mills West came to Sacramento to teach writing in the early 1920's, she encouraged a group of writers to join the California Writers Club in Oakland. This club was inspired by Jack London and friends, and the Alameda Press Club. Because of travel challenges to Oakland, Sacramentans were urged to form their own "branch" of the California Writers Club.

So in 1925, 31 poets, photographers, composers, playwrights, novelists, and journalists became charter members of "Branch #1," the California Writers Club Sacramento. They focused on craft, critiques, and speakers, e.g., Hildegarde Hawthorne, Nathaniel's granddaughter.

The branch promoted writing through panels. Plays and book adaptations reached audiences through radio, t.v., and life performances. In one year, 66 members sold 570 articles or books. One member had articles in eight magazines at a time.

Amparo Campeón wrote for the Spanish-language *El Hispano*. Doubleday bought *When You Need a Lawyer* and *Married Today, Single Tomorrow*. Psychiatrist Walter Bromberg wrote *Crime of the Mind*. Members penned suspense, romance, gothic, and confessions. Leo Rosenhouse wrote for hundreds of established and emerging magazines including for teens, seniors, confessions, travel.

The syndication of "Helen Help Us" columnist Helen Bittel exploded across the U.S. Edna Mae Burnam Nauman wrote *A Dozen a Day* – still used today - for piano instruction. She composed more than 150 pieces.

Bud Gardner's students sold 6,000 pieces and 200 books. A national award named him the most inspirational writing coach in America. As co-director of the Sierra Writing Camp, he developed *Sell What You Write* workshops and coauthored *Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul*.

Mayor Walter Christensen proclaimed October 15, 1967, as Poetry Day at the request of the club.

Margaret Craven met Gertrude Stein, via Alica B. Toklas, before writing *I Heard the Owl Call my Name*, adapted as a movie. Another member wrote *The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams*. Jenny Angel became a movie, as did *A Marriage of Convenience* starring Jane Seymour. An early policewoman wrote *Woman on Patrol*. Another wrote for the *Cowboy Sam* series.

In 2003, the California State Legislature declared the third week of October as California Writers Week.



Edna Wilson Becsey, First President
California Writers Club Sacramento
(circa 1922)

An Amazing Line-up of Esteemed Sacramento Area Presenters (and more to come)



Jack Ohman
Pulitzer Prize-winning Editorial
Cartoonist & Columnist



Sandra Proudman
Author & Literary Agent,
Gallt & Zucker Literary Agency



Rich Ehisen
Editor-in-Chief
Capitol Weekly



Carolyn Lynn Stevenson Grellas
Editor for Kelsay Books
13-time Pushcart Nominee



Al González
Executive Producer
Quad Air Communications



Maryellen Burns
Cultural Historian
Author & Publisher

Purpose:

- To shine a light on Sacramento as a literary center east of San Francisco where California Writers Week was born. Sacramento is home to legislative recognition of the first two California State Poet Laureates and the First Literary Historian, the latter born near Folsom.
- To bring together all partners in the local writing and publishing community to appreciate the evolutionary landscape of writing and publishing in the larger Sacramento area.

Attendees will:

- Learn the narrative of literary achievement that lights to pathway to inform our continued identity as determined, successful, and ever-improving writers.
- Access a unique collection of rare books and early magazines which Sacramentans wrote or contributed to. See how publications have changed. Many members of the California Writers Club wrote books that were made into movies or TV shows.
- Be treated to a buffet luncheon in a beautiful setting. A no-host bar will warm the room.
- Listen to nationally-known Keynoter Jack Ohman.
- Access experts not readily accessible, such as literary agents, political writers, and bloggers.
- Understand the overlap of narrative writing, fiction, and journalism.
- Give due recognition to organizations - **chosen by a Blue Ribbon panel of writers** - that have helped children, incarcerated adults, and the community learn to appreciate writing.
- See artifacts related to our early city and related tools such as the original wood cut used for the California Writers Club logo by UC Berkeley professor Perham Nahl more than 100 years ago.
- Hear stories about the linked history with the Crocker Art Museum and how Jack London's writing chair ended up in Sacramento for 23 years and *whoosh* - it was gone. ("Jack London's Chair: Hiding Here in Plain Sight," *Carmichael Times*, Apr 29, 2025.)