

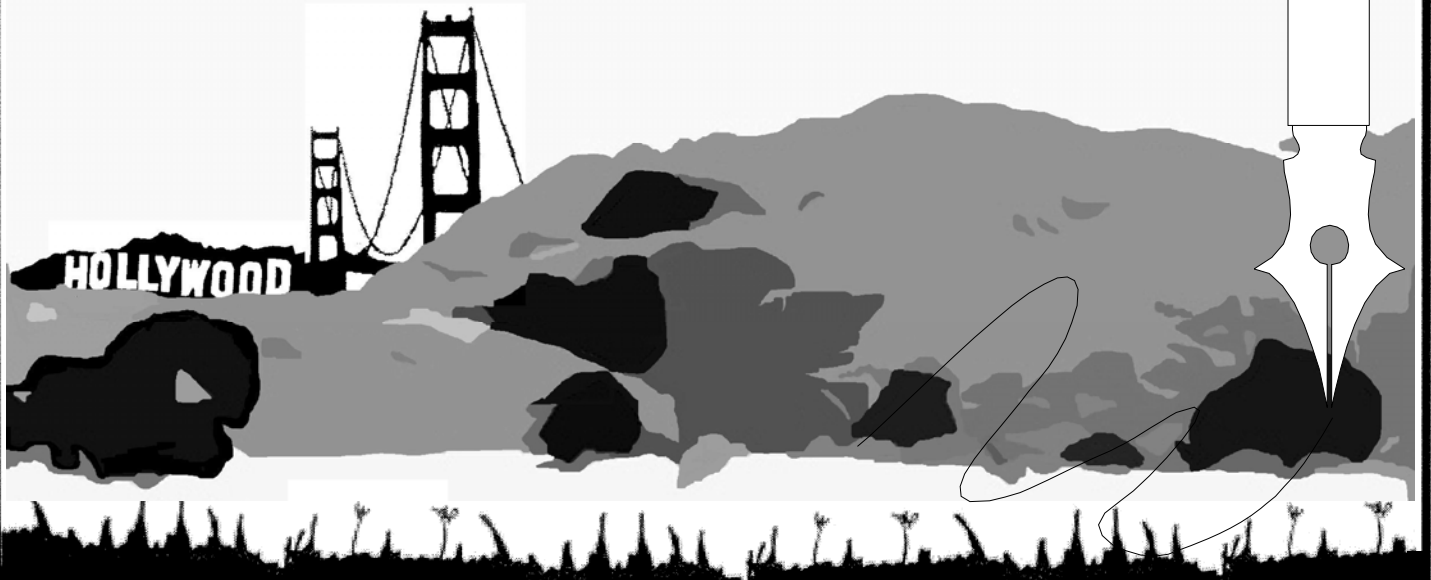
THE BULLETIN

California Writers Club

Vol. 2009 No. 5

Fall 2009

CENTENNIAL SPECIAL EDITION



100 YEARS

OF LITERARY HISTORY

Signing Off from the World of Print

When I was 12 years old, I happened to catch *Deadline U.S.A.* on the late show and my fate was sealed. Right then, I knew exactly what I wanted to be when I grew up: a newspaper reporter. How could an impres-

JOYCE'S VOICE



By Joyce Krieg
Central Coast Branch

sionable tween resist when a trench-coated, fedora-topped Humphrey Bogart growled, "It may not be the oldest profession, but it's the best."

Ah, those great, old newspaper movies! *The Front Page*, *His Girl Friday*, *It Happened One Night*, *Citizen Kane*, *Call Northside 7-7-7*. . . The thundering presses, the screaming headlines, the crusade for truth and justice, the us-against-the-world camaraderie of the newsroom, the sheer adventure and romance of it all. I loved every moment of those old black-and-white movies flickering across the screen of our bunker-sized Zenith console on Channel 2 late at night when I should have been asleep. Most of those films featured a female re-

porter, sometimes a spunky ingénue, more often a hard-boiled dame. Either way, that's who I desperately wanted to be.

Ten years later, I made that dream a reality, first majoring in journalism at San Jose State, then landing a job at the *Woodland Daily Democrat* out in farm country northwest of Sacramento. Okay, it wasn't exactly the *New York Times*, but still, it was an exciting time to be in print journalism, no matter how small-time. Two cop beat reporters at the *Washington Post* were toppling a Presidency, and Tom Wolfe and Hunter Thompson were the nation's hot new celebrities, leading the pack of New Journalism. I was lucky enough to work side-by-side with the editor/owner of the "*Daily D*," who believed in giving young talent a chance and granted us free rein to raise all the hell we wanted in his little town. Well, okay, we also worked cheap.

I left the newspaper game in 1978, lured by the opportunities for women in the heretofore boys-only club of broadcast journalism. But I never quite got over my love affair with print: the aroma of ink, the crunchy, honest texture of newsprint, the crackle of turning pages, the smudge of inch-high headlines on my fingers.

And books! Is there anything more intoxicating – more full of promise – than a brand-new book? That new book smell, the heft of it, the slick cover art and glammed-up author photo, the arrangement of type

on printed page. I defy an electronic download to the pure tactile richness of a book.

If that brand-new book has your name on the cover as author . . . well, I can't think of anything more thrilling and fulfilling except possibly holding your newborn baby for the first time.

All of the above is a very long-winded way of saying good-bye. The digital age is obviously here, full steam (or should I say full electrons?) ahead. The *CWC Bulletin* is no exception. Your Central Board is moving toward an electronic publication to be e-mailed to the members. I know it's a green solution and will save us tons of money, but . . . I'm a print person and always will be. Thus, this is my last "Joyce's Voice" and last issue as editor.

My thanks to past president Barbara Truax, who first saw my potential and offered me the editor's gig three years ago, and presidents Anthony Folcarelli, Dave Cunningham and Casey Wilson for keeping me around.

I wish all the best to my successor in this brave new world of e-publishing as I "sail on" into the paper-and-ink sunset, where the presses still thunder, reporters are still brave and honest, a ragged boy still stands on the street corner yelling, "Extra! Extra! Read all about it!", Humphrey Bogart is still barking orders, and a hopelessly romantic 12-year-old still has all of her dreams ahead of her. 🖋️

Fremont Becomes #18



Congratulations to Fremont Area Writers, which became CWC's 18th branch at the July 19 Central Board meeting in Oakland. From left: Nancy Curtman, Central Board representative; Bob Garfinkle, president; Jeannine Vegh, vice-president; Casey Wilson, CWC president; Evelyn LaTorre, past treasurer; and Carol Hall, current treasurer.

CWC Bulletin

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EDITORIAL MATERIAL

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Contact Your Branch Membership
Chair

OUR MISSION

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

Where Do We Go from Here?

At the next Central Board meeting I will have the pleasure of presenting several Jack London Awards and an Ina Coolbrith Award.

The Jack London Awards are recognition from the California Writers Club governing body to candidates nominated by their branch peers. The awards are given in recognition of the recipients' service to their branches and to the organization as a whole — a small token of appreciation for the many volunteer hours these members have given to their branches to make our prestigious organization better for all of us.

The Ina Coolbrith Award is also for service. It is presented in recognition for service to the Central Board. It is the Central Board that guides the destiny of the California Writers Club. This award recognizes a member's contributions to corporate management.

This year's awards have special significance. This is our Centennial Year.


Where do we go from here? What's next?

CWC is growing still.

In July the Central Board inducted a new branch, the Fremont Area Writers under the experienced leadership of Bob Garfinkle. I have received an initial query from still another group of writers exploring joining our ranks.

In the midst of all, consideration is being given to reorganizing with the goal of strengthening the corporate structure. It is

important to remember, especially at the management level of the Central Board, that we are members of a corporation.

With your help and the help of those coming behind us, the California Writers Club will celebrate its bicentennial. 

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Casey Wilson
CWC President

The First 100 Years

By Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, Centennial Chair


One hundred years of literary history . . . heritage . . . excellence. Call it what you will. We celebrate a landmark this year.

We started 2009 with ambitious plans and seem likely to achieve most if not all of them by December 31 - including several media releases, workshops and programs, the Literary Landmark Map, a time capsule, a Centennial scrapbook given to the Bancroft Library, and a prize drawing for all members at the Jack London Awards luncheon in November. We've increased our visibility at writers and publishing trade shows, as well as with state agencies and nonprofits in the humanities. By the time you read this issue of *The Bulletin*, a number of city halls and county administrations will have delivered proclamations honoring California Writers Week.

Of course, we've had our share of bad news in terms of the economy's impact on dues revenues and conference attendance. But while there's nothing good about a re-

cession, this one may serve to focus us on productive partnerships that we can bring about at the local and state levels. When groups and organizations don't have money, they respond more attentively to offers for joint projects. Further, they're considerably less likely to dismiss your branch simply because you don't have a small fortune to attach to the deal.

In other words, don't relax yet. Keep thinking of ways to interest, involve and benefit branch members and your communities. The completion of our first hundred years represents a legacy, an achievement, a milestone, but closes the book on nothing. If anything, it focuses us on following through in every arena as we embark our next hundred years.

We've done a lot. We'll do more. One hundred years of literary history . . . heritage . . . excellence. Do you realize what that means? It means a wonderful beginning. 

**Next CWC
Central Board
Meeting
Sunday, Nov. 8
8:30 a.m.
Oakland Airport
Holiday Inn Express**

Berkeley

Berkeley will mark the Centennial with their regular monthly meeting on October 17 at the Barnes & Noble store in Jack London Square – a fitting location for a club with roots tracing back to the famed author. Kemble Scott, whose first novel, *SoMa*, became a regional bestseller thanks to a promotional video on YouTube, will take CWC into its second century with a discussion of electronic publishing. In other news, Berkeley has recently taken on the hosting the West Side Story contest, an annual short story contest now in its fifth year. Prize-winning stories will be read at the December meeting and all entrants will receive a chapbook featuring the winning stories and, if any, semifinalists and honorary mentions.

Central Coast

Central Coast is celebrating CWC's centennial year by showcasing its members at the October 20 meeting. Members are invited to bring displays about their books or writing projects to place on tables at the Casa Munras Hotel. Ten members will be invited to read from their work. In addition, the winners of the "100 Words - 100 Years - \$100" writing contest will be announced.

East Sierra (Ridge Writers)

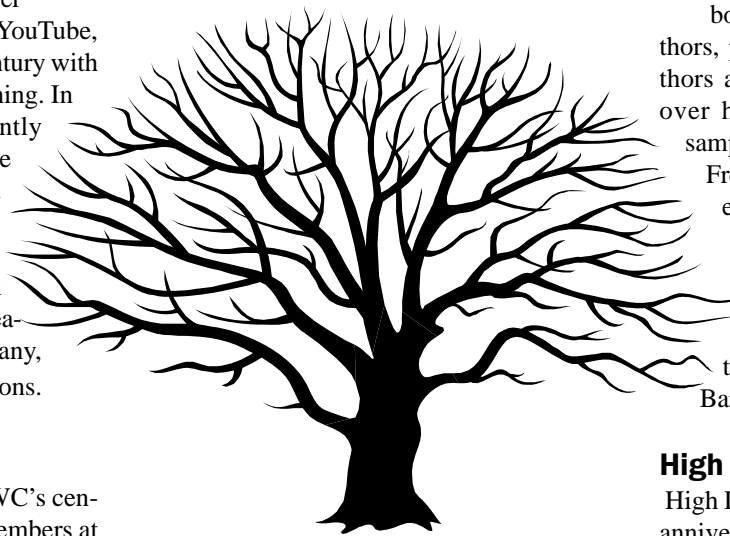
The East Sierra Branch, "Ridge Writers," has taken a three-pronged approach to celebrating the CWC Centennial: 1) programs and articles throughout the year; 2) special activities during California Writers Week in October; and 3) announcements in October launching new initiatives that will culminate early next year.

Many of East Sierra's monthly speaker programs have highlighted California writers, and the weekly book review column "Ridge Writers on Books" in one of Ridgecrest's two newspapers has emphasized work by California's most historically important authors, among them Upton Sinclair, Ambrose Bierce, and George Rathmell's wonderfully readable and comprehensive *Realms of Gold: The Colorful Writers of San Francisco 1850-1950*.

Award-winning playwright Paul Jacques, Operations Director of and performer in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, California's official state outdoor play, will give the October 7th program and discuss Jackson's

Branching Out

Special Centennial Round-up of CWC Branch Activities



novel. The next day, the City of Ridgecrest will present a proclamation recognizing California Writers Week. Throughout the month, Ridge Writers will honor legendary California authors by displaying memorabilia at the local library. Artifacts include the proclamation, a hand-painted Bret Harte first day cover postmarked in Twain Harte, CA; photos of The Grove at Joaquin Miller Park; and a May 1917 issue of *Harper's Magazine* featuring Mark Twain.

October's media releases will publicize projects currently scheduled and in progress, among them the teen photo/essay exhibit *Stories in the Sand I & II* for which East Sierra provided writing consultants; helping stock a bookcase in Mojave's Stoken' coffee shop (located in the building that formerly housed Mojave's county library); and, with Writers of Kern, holding a "Write About Kern County" essay event.

Meanwhile, branch members have been spotted around town wearing CWC Centennial logo fleece jackets, signing documents with their CWC Centennial logo pens, and carrying groceries in their CWC Centennial logo tote bags.

All in all, the East Sierra branch has spent the year reflecting on the CWC's legacy while preparing for the next hundred years – with ties to the past, eyes on the future, and presenting speakers with CWC Centennial logo USB 4-port hubs.

Fremont

It's official – Fremont Area Writers have become CWC's 18th branch. The members celebrated with a pizza party in August. Their September meeting featured Mark Coker, founder and CEO of Smashwords.com. Smashwords is a digital publishing platform, online bookstore, and e-book distributor for independent authors, publishers, and their readers. Authors and publishers retain full control over how their works are published, sampled, priced, and sold. Meanwhile, Fremont is building its presence in the electronic world. They are now on Meetup.com under "Writers" in Area Code 94536 and in Facebook. They sponsor an open mic from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at Barnes & Noble in Fremont.

High Desert

High Desert will celebrate CWC's 100th anniversary with a panel of distinguished and multi-talented Inland Empire authors. The meeting is to be held on October 10 at the Apple Valley Library from 10 a.m. to approximately 1:00 p.m. A no host lunch at the historic Apple Valley Inn will follow. Panelists include Glen Hirschberg, the 2008 Shirley Jackson Award winner for *The Janus Tree*; Michael Burgess, who writes under the name of Robert Reginald and has 113 books and 13,000 short pieces to his credit, and Diana Sholley, a journalist and author of *That's Amoré*, which she describes as "Life with my sometimes funny, always crazy, frequently unbelievable Italian family."

On October 13, the Town of Apple Valley will present a proclamation affirming that the third week of October is Writers Week, and honoring the High Desert branch of the California Writers Club.

Inland Empire

The Inland Empire branch of the California Writers Club is celebrating California Writers Week by inviting all its members to attend the Inland Authors' Panel Discussion on Saturday, October 24. In recognition of the diverse and eclectic field of Inland Empire California Writers, Inland Empire CWC is hosting an authors' panel discussion. Moderator: S. Kay Murphy. Panel participants are Larry Burgess,

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Branching Out

continued from page 6

Brandy Burrows, Alex Espinoza and Dwight Yates, authors whose work appears in *Inlandia: A Literary Journey through California's Inland Empire*, edited by Gayle Wattawa and published in 2006 by Heyday Books. The event will be held at Borders Bookstore in Montclair on Saturday, October 24th at 10:15 a.m. The event will be open to the public.

Long Beach

California Writers Club of Long Beach will add enhanced features this year to last year's well-received California Writers Week program, which showcased favorite authors from California and afar, as well as readings of work by our members. The mood will be especially festive in celebration of the CWC Centennial. Members will dress in costume for the occasion, either as a favorite author or — new this year — as a visual pun of a book title. *White Fang*, anyone? A Road Trip Up North is on the program, too, with a PowerPoint presentation of Joyce Krieg's virtual tour of Joaquin Miller Park, complete with "CWC brand" trail mix and a pass-around wicker basket to inspire flashbacks of former strolls among towering pines.

Marin



"We know they can write, but can they sing?" With that provocative title, Marin celebrates the CWC Centennial with an afternoon of readings and song on October 18 at Book Passage in Corte Madera. Kathi Kamen Goldmark and Sam Barry (of Rock Bottom Reminders fame) and featured authors will join the band Los Train Wreck to sing a song or two. Participating authors include Peter Beren, Tony Broadbent, David Corbett, Katherine Cowles, Patricia Volonakis Davis, Tanya Egan Gibson, Deborah Grabien, David Harris, Seth Harwood, Ivory Madison, Gil Mansergh, Logan and Noah Miller, Janis Cooke Newman, Brenda Novak, Susanne Pari, Andy Ross, Kemble Scott, Sheldon Siegel, Ransom Stephens, and Wendy Nelson Tokunaga. \$45 admission includes great music, a buffet lunch with wine, a \$15 Book

Passage gift certificate, a three minute pitch with literary agents, and a door prize drawing with great prizes.

Mt. Diablo

Mt. Diablo celebrates "100 Years of Excellent in Writing" with a luncheon on October 17 featuring distinguished California author Ron Hansen. Hansen's 1996 novel, *Atticus*, about the bond of love between a father and a son, was a finalist for both the National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner Award. Mr. Hansen has also authored the popular novels, *Desperadoes* (1979), *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (1983, Motion Picture in 2007), *Mariette in Ecstasy* (1991), *Hitler's Niece* (1999), and *Exiles* (2008). CWC Members and the general public are invited to attend. Mr. Hansen's topic will be "Making Things Up: Why One Becomes a Writer." The celebration will take place at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant in Pleasant Hill.

Orange County

Orange County invites its member to celebrate 100 years of literary history with a special program on October 10. Speakers include medical forensics expert Dr. Doug Lyle and publishing guru Claudia Suzanne. This special meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. and takes place at the Orange County Public Library and History Center in Orange.

Peninsula

While this is CWC's Centennial year, it will also be remembered as the year of the recession. Sadly, that reality has hit home for Peninsula, as it has had to cancel its premiere Centennial event, the Jack London Writers Conference. On a happier note, this past summer, Peninsula was a major participant in the San Mateo County Fair, now renamed the Peninsula Festival, as a sponsor of literary arts, with presentations and workshops given by local writers and authors, and writing contests. Among the winners were Peninsula members Jo Carpignano (poetry) and Linda Okerlund (personal essay), and Lucy Murray (personal essay, voted Best in Show). All winners were invited to read their entries, an event which was very well attended. Specialty workshops were given by Geri Spieler, Joyce and Lenny Robbins, Martha Alderson, Laurel Ann Hill, Tory Hartman, Chris Wachlin, Inés Villafañe-León, Teresa LeYung Ryan, and Luisa Adams.

Redwood



Join the Redwood Writers at the Flamingo Hotel and Resort in Santa Rosa on October 24 to share the joy of writing with fellow writers, agents and editors in a relaxed, wine country

setting. Headlining their day-long conference are poet Al Young, Steve Hockensmith, author of the "Holmes on the Range" mystery series, and Tamin Ansary, author of *West of Kabul, East of New York*. The activities include a Friday night pre-conference dinner, one-on-one editorial consultations, speakers, panels and a writing contest, all in celebration of CWC's Centennial.

Sacramento

Sacramento's program for their California Writers Week/CWC Centennial celebration on October 17 will feature authors Dahlynn and Ken McKowen. Their topic is "Creating Nonfiction Book Proposals that Wow Publishers!" Sacramento officers plan to acknowledge the Centennial at the October 17, and members are encouraged to bring their books for display. Door prizes are also planned for this festive day.

San Fernando Valley

San Fernando Valley is inviting all past Jack London Award winners — whether from SFV or any other CWC branch — to attend their Centennial celebration on October 17 at 12:30 p.m. at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church in Winnetka. Refreshments will be served and a copy of a *Murder She Wrote* script signed by Thomas B. Sawyer will be given to the lucky winner of free drawing.

South Bay

South Bay will celebrate CWC's Centennial and Halloween at its October 13 dinner meeting. They'll hold their annual Halloween costume contest where members are asked to dress up as someone literary. This could be an author, a character from a story, book, a movie, play, fairy tale, mythology, political scandal, or even the member's own lurid past. South Bay meets at the Outlook restaurant at the Sunnyvale municipal golf clubhouse. continued on page 13

www.calwriters.org

Timeline of CWC History:

Editor's Note: For several years, Tina Stinnett and Dave Sawle from the Berkeley branch have been eagerly researching and writing a comprehensive history of CWC. Would that we had the space to present their work in its entirety, but reality begs to differ. What follows are highlights of their work, with sincere apologies for the many treasures that had to be deleted.



CWC Founded

1909



1909 - Berkeley

Incorporated with Secretary of State

1913

1919



1925 - Sacramento

The California Writers Club ("CWC") is one of the oldest and largest writer's clubs in the nation, its rich history dotted with intellectuals, adventurers, and famous names of the twentieth century. Now, on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary, it seems only fitting to pay it tribute by offering a short history of its origins, growth, and contributions to society.

Born in the aftermath of the great 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the CWC emerged from the Alameda County Press Club in 1909 under the influences of Jack London, Austin Lewis, Herman Whitaker, and George Sterling. Through two World Wars, the Depression of the Thirties, the horrors of September 11, 2001, and all that occurred in the decades between, the CWC has thrived, gradually developing into a remarkably diverse collection of writers from socialists to conservatives, poets to non-fiction authors, atheists to theologians.

In 1925, the Sacramento branch of the CWC was established with 31 charter members, bringing the total membership of the Club to 246. By 1931, 32 of the CWC's 253 members were listed in *Who's Who in America*.

The Depression years were difficult for writers, and by 1935 membership had

dropped to 138. Still, the CWC recovered quickly, with membership rates increasing by the 1940s. By 1975, there were over four hundred members, and the Club had been reorganized to have a Central Board and four branches: Berkeley, Peninsula/San Francisco, Sacramento, and Redwood. As of 2009, the Club has grown to comprise approximately twelve hundred participating members in eighteen branches across the state of California.

CWC leads campaign to create Joaquin Miller Park



First tree planted at Writers Memorial Grove

1930



1938

CWC joins with WPA to build Woodminster Amphitheater and The Cascades



March 5, 1941 - Woodminster dedicated to California Writers

1941



1964 - SF/Peninsula

Throughout its long history, the CWC has been more than a simple coalition of writers. From its inception, it has dedicated itself to the enrichment and development of its members through such programs as peer review and critique groups and the sponsorship of over thirty writers' conferences. Encouraging cross-pollination among writers is a key objective of the CWC.

Over the course of a century, the membership of the CWC has made a myriad of contributions to society, both literary and non-literary. Those who have made significant literary contributions include Jack London, Herman Whitaker, William Morgan, John Muir, Ina Coolbrith, Mary Roberts Coolidge, Agnes Morley Cleaveland, Harold Lamb, Kathleen Norris, William Lederer, C.S. Forester, and many others. Eugene Burdick, who was briefly a member of the CWC, co-wrote a book (with Harvey Wheeler) entitled *Fail Safe* that became one of the most important books of the Cold War era and was later made into a film by the same name, starring Henry Fonda and directed by Sidney Lumet.

Non-literary contributions of CWC members abound as well. CWC presidents alone provide a series of impressive examples: James Henry MacLafferty, second president of the CWC, later became a Republican Congressman; Professor Frank Soulé, third

president of the CWC, served as Dean of the UC College of Civil Engineering; Dr. William Morgan, fourth CWC president, was president of the Pacific Coast Conference of Unitarians; and Professor Rudolph Altrocchi, thirteenth president of the CWC, was head of the Department of History at the University of California, Berkeley.

From literature to non-fiction, playwrighting to movies and television, poetry to photojournalism, editing to publishing... the contributions of the California Writers Club are substantial and far-reaching.

"The Coppa Four"

As the century turned in San Francisco, a group of four writers was coming together. These men, known variously as the "Coppa Crowd" and the "Coppa Four," were destined to leave their imprint on what was to become an enduring entity: the California Writers Club.

Having published *The Call of the Wild* in 1903 and only recently returned from a two-year voyage to the South Seas on his yacht, "The Snark," Jack London, was at age thirty-three the most well-known of those who would play a part in the evolution of the California Writers' Club. In addition to being a force locally – he was among those who recorded the blackened destruction of the San Francisco earthquake and fire in both word and photo – Jack London's in-

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From Hot Type to Cool Computers

continued from page 6

fluence in both literary and world arenas would be wide and lasting.

Herman Whitaker, an English adventurer who arrived in San Francisco in 1895 with a wife, six children, and but five dollars in his pocket, was a determined short story writer and novelist. A man who would wear many hats in search of pay, Whitaker's love of writing consumed him. Once, while working as a bill collector, he noted that too often he found himself scribbling stories on the backs of statements rather than focusing on the job at hand. He even pondered the advisability of giving up the "dunning business" for writing and the lure of the Coppa Crowd. A man so easily deterred from a stable job must have been dreaming of bigger things.

Poet George Sterling, the son of a New York doctor, worked in the office of the Realty Syndicate in Oakland and wrote poems during his spare hours. Austin Lewis, born in Yorkshire, England, was the most educated of the group, with an LL.B. from the

University of London. He came to San Francisco in 1890 and spent seven years as a classical master at the Tamalpais Military Academy while at the same time practicing law, writing books, and writing copy for the *San Francisco Examiner*.

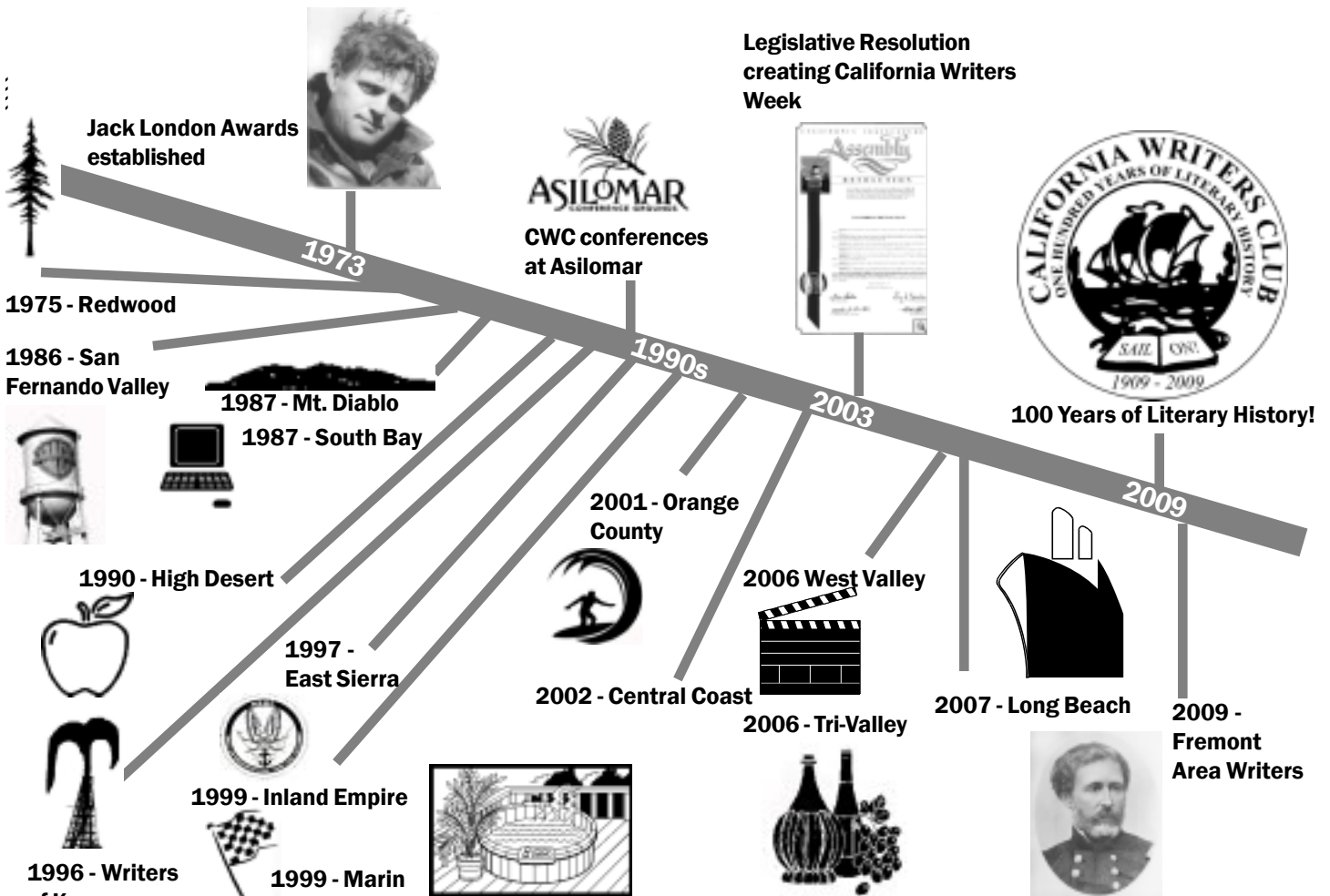
These four men met one another at some point prior to the 1906 earthquake, during which time they became frequent customers at Coppa's Restaurant, a San Francisco Montgomery Street rendezvous for writers and artists. The "Coppa Crowd," as they came to be known, appears to have been a convivial group that passed substantial periods of time discussing literary endeavors, debating the ideas of the time, and engaging in general camaraderie. London became known among his companions as "The Stallion" and "The Wolf," while Sterling was referred to as "The Greek" for his classic profile and a proclivity for engaging in nudity with his "Bohemian Group."

Mysterious Origins

As befits any great adventure, much about the origins of the California Writers Club remains shrouded in mystery and controversy, with legend offering conflicting versions of the story.

Undisputed is the fact that the 1906 earthquake's destruction disrupted much of the Coppa Crowd's activity, causing many of the regulars to shift their literary pursuits across the Bay to Alameda. Meanwhile, the ferment brought together another viable collection of writers that organized to become the Alameda County Press Club. According to one origin story, the California Writers Club was one and the same as the Alameda Press Club – just with a new name. It is true that most of the original members of the California Writers Club (the Coppa Four included) had also been members of the Alameda Press Club. And, as the Recording Secretary's Book of the Press

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Meet Your 2009 Jack London Honorees

CWC is an organization that runs on volunteers. Thus, during our Centennial year, it is most appropriate that we honor our hard-working volunteers. The Jack London Awards, established in 1973, recognize service "above and beyond" at the branch level.

The Jack London plaques will be presented at a luncheon during the November 8 Central Board meeting. The location is the Oakland Airport Holiday Inn Express.

This year's Jack London Awards chair is Bob Garfinkle from the new Fremont branch.



Berkeley – Anne Fox

For starters, Anne Fox is supportive of those writers that she believes have talent and she can get pretty crusty if they don't work hard enough improving their skills in crafting their writing.



Anne is the watch-fox extraordinaire for the Berkeley Branch's newsletter, *Write Angles*. She keeps it alive with mentions of new markets and writer services. There is little that escapes her notice or sense of purpose when it has to do with news of importance to writers. Anne plays an important role in guiding Berkeley members through their manuscript maze. She assists members by copyediting their work. Simply put, she comes through for all of the members and they are certainly proud to honor Anne Fox as Berkeley Branch's 2009 Jack London Award recipient.



Central Coast – Ken Jones

Ken Jones moved to the Monterey Peninsula after retiring in March of 2001. Ken began writing for pleasure in the mid 1980s, focusing on personal essays and short stories. He is a co-author of *Monterey Shorts*, and *Monterey Shorts 2*, published by the Fiction Writers of the Monterey Peninsula. Five of Ken's stories appear in *The Barmaid*, *The Bean Counter* and *the Bungee Jumper*, a collection of short stories and poetry. Ken's very short stories have received honorable mentions in *Monterey County Weekly's* annual 101 Word Short Story Contests and in 2003, Ken's "Holiday Dinners" won the first prize (\$101).



came the branch's first Vice President. He designed and launched the branch web site, which he continues to administer. Ken served briefly as the branch's Central Board representative. Ken was instrumental in creating the branch newsletter, *Scribbles*, and for a time performed all aspects of its production. Ken was elected President in 2004 and held that position until 2007. During his six years of direct involvement in branch management, Central Coast matured and grew not only in numbers, but also in the quality of its offerings to its members.

Ken and Anne live in Pacific Grove with their deaf, one-eyed cat Lucky. Their daughter, son-in-law and grandsons reside in Pennsylvania.



In the spring of 2002, Ken helped found Central Coast Writers, which received its charter in the summer of that year. Ken be-

Long Beach – Anne Margis



Anne Margis, the first Jack London Award honoree for Long Beach, is a retired teacher and humor writer who led the formation of this branch. She also helped land a library

meeting location, and subsequently worked with the city's central librarian for monthly distribution of CWC program flyers to all city libraries. In addition, Anne designs engaging graphics for each flyer. Now in her second term as president, she continues to provide leadership and innovative ideas, shares insight gleaned from her work at a literary agency, and brings a wonderful light-hearted attitude along with lots of moments of just plain fun. Anne is an independent publishing professional.



Orange County – Pamela Tallman



Pamela (Pam) Tallman, the 2009 Jack London Award recipient for the Orange County branch, has served as branch Membership Chair

for the past half dozen years, helping Orange County more than double membership. Above and beyond this service, she has volunteered countless hours in the design and production of visual materials for the

Writers and Readers Fest, the branch's annual event to celebrate California Writers Week. Her creative efforts range from signs and table decor to styling a cavernous lecture hall into an inviting literary salon. Her efforts for to the branch and CWC go far beyond the requirements of her title. In her writing life, Pam contributed a monthly column to *The Orange County Register*, and scores of her humor pieces have appeared in periodicals such as *Threads*, *Orange Coast* and *Fine Homebuilding*. Orange County is pleased recognize Pam's dedication to CWC.



Writers of Kern – Sandy Moffett



Sandy Moffett has been a poet for more than 30 years and a lyricist for the past 15 years. She is an inspirational speaker for women's groups and uses her personal life experiences and history as a third generation cemetery and mortuary owner to help those who are grieving.

Sandy's tales as a "funeral singer" have been published in trade magazines, *Mortuary Management* and *International Mortuary and Cemetery Management*. She is the author of *Dear Ones*, a collection of poetry and prose and is working on a second edition entitled *Consider the Lilies*. Sandy is recording a CD of her original music. Sandy was honored in 2009 to be part of the national bestselling series *Cup of Comfort*, in the newly released *Cup of Comfort—Devotional for Mothers and Daughters*.

Sandy is serving her third term as Writers of Kern Treasurer, Membership Chair and representative to the Central Board. She and her husband Greg live in Bakersfield and have been married for 28 years. They have four children and two grandchildren.



Sacramento – Julie Bauer

Julie Bauer has made a living as a writer/editor since 1987 and joined Sacramento branch that same year. After earning a bachelor's degree in journalism from San Francisco State University, her first job was a newspaper features editor for the *Galt Herald*. Julie has served as a branch board member and treasurer, and has assisted with past children's writing contests.



In 1995, Julie became the editor of the branch newsletter *Write On!*. She writes and edits the articles, and handles all of the de-

West Valley – Kathy Highcove

West Valley has selected Kathy Highcove as its 2009 Jack London Award honoree for her outstanding service to the branch. Kathy has been an active member of West Valley since its inception and has served in several capacities including stints as publicity chair and the current editor of the newsletter *In Focus*. Before she became the editor, Kathy contributed to *In Focus* a monthly column about the branch's guest speakers. Kathy belonged to the San Fernando Valley branch, but joined West Valley when the split was made.



In the early 1990s, Kathy suffered a severe attack of multiple sclerosis. She turned to writing essays, articles, poetry and anything else to help her heal from the disease and its depressing isolation. Writing restored her interest in living and helped her to heal. She has written several pieces on the connection between

her creative writing and her health. Kathy is a retired schoolteacher. West Valley members are proud to bestow the Jack London Award on its hard working and highly respected member Kathy Highcove.



Fremont – Robert A. Garfinkle

Robert A. Garfinkle holds B.A degrees in history and English Literature. Bob worked for 25 years as a Senior Technical Writer in the defense and hi-tech industries. He is the author of the best-selling astronomy book *Star-Hopping: Your Visa to Viewing the Universe* and a co-author of *Advanced Skywatching*, which has been translated into Spanish and German. Bob has sold award-winning short stories, numerous astronomy-related articles in national and international publications, book reviews, and is trying to sell a novel.

In addition to his writing, Bob served 13-1/2 years as an elected public office holder. During his tenure on the Union City Council, he beat back an attempt to recall him by 1 vote out of over 10,000 votes cast, then three months later he was re-elected to a second term on the Council.

Bob joined the South Bay Writers in 2002. In 2004 and 2006, he served on the staff of the East of Eden Writers Conference. Bob chaired the Basil Stevens Memorial Writing Contest in 2004, 2006, and 2008. From 2004 to 2007, he represented South Bay on the CWC Central Board.



In 2007, he and Jeannine Vegh began the efforts to create a CWC branch in the Fremont area. Under Bob's leadership as president and Jeannine as vice president, their efforts paid off on July 19, 2009, when the Fremont Area Writers became the 18th branch of CWC.



sign, printing, and distribution of each issue. In 2006, Julie took over the branch Web site and has been taking photos, updating the information, and serving as Webmaster since.

In 1988, Julie was hired by an association management firm as a professional editor to research and write articles, as well as layout and design their clients' maga-

zines and newsletters. For 14 years, until Maureen Kennedy Salaman's death in 2006, Julie researched and wrote books and ar-

ticles for her, including *How to Renew You*, *All Your Health Questions Answered*, and booklets on diabetes, depression, weight loss and aging.

Julie is an Associate Editor of Publications at the State of California Environmental Protection Agency. She produces a monthly employee newsletter. Through her work with the CWC and the State of California, she is doing what she loves the most: learning and writing about the hardworking people who support and form the backbone of a nonprofit organization.




South Bay – Dave LaRoche

Dave LaRoche has had a positive impact on the South Bay Writers branch from the moment he joined in 2004. He immediately volunteered to take on the job of editor of the newsletter. He worked to make the newsletter bigger and better, and to become a true publishing opportunity for our members. He built a staff of editors and columnists, improved the layout, cut the time and costs of production, printing, and distribution. He organized regular writing contests for members, and made sure winners were honored and awarded prizes at the meeting.

Dave applied himself next to the budget—mainly to the lack of one. Even though he wasn't the treasurer, he helped bring expenses in line by analyzing South Bay's monthly income and expenses. He also located a better venue for the monthly meetings.



In 2007, Dave was elected president of South Bay and was reelected in 2008. Using the same team-building skills that were so successful as the newsletter editor, he worked to make the branch bigger and better. He's rallied new members onto the board, increased the number of workshops, and continued to seek out ways to improve the branch, which now has the largest membership in CWC.

Dave's diligence, dedication, and contribution to SBW has earned him the respect and gratitude of the South Bay membership, and made him their unanimous choice for this year's Jack London Award. 



High Desert – Bob Isbill




Bob Isbill first came to High Desert in 1972 as a supervisor and troubleshooter for the Hostess/Wonder Bread Corporation. In 1984, with a B.A. in Psychology and

Economics, Bob went to work for the Teamsters Union, Local 166, as a Business Rep and later as an officer, until he retired in 1996. Today, he serves as an occasional Mediator for the Small Claims and Unlawful Detainer cases in the San Bernardino courts.

Bob's work for the High Desert branch includes putting together the new web page and doing a fantastic job of publicity. Due in great part to his many creative ideas and hard work, the membership has grown dramatically since he took on these jobs.

Bob's lifelong love of good movies piqued his interest in determining what made them work, or not work. He began to read scripts and to look at movies in an analytical way. A class with Michael Hauge spurred him on. He has attended the Show-Biz Expo and the Creative Screenwriters Magazine Expo. Bob studied memorable scenes from movies and sought out classes and semi-

nars from the "Best of the Best" in the industry.

Bob is currently focusing all his efforts on creating a screenplay of his own. The working title is "Lights, Camera, Darkness" and it promises to be a spellbinder. He is vice president of High Desert, where the members feel lucky to have him as part of the group. 

Redwood – Karen Batchelor




Redwood is proud to honor Karen Batchelor with the 2009 Jack London Award. Karen has been a loyal member of the Redwood branch for decades, all the while working full-time as a college instructor in San Francisco. When Karen was elected president of Redwood Writers in June 2007, she brought her professional expertise to the club. A quiet, unassuming president, Karen put the needs of the members first and foremost and set about meeting those needs with an ambitious, goal-setting agenda. Her accomplish-


Inland Empire – Libby Grandy



Probably one of the best ways to describe Libby Grandy is in a single word: Beloved. While we know she is a fine writer, those who work with her (and

laugh with her) through the Inland Empire branch appreciate her passionate desire to mentor other writers, both youthful and mature. Libby is the facilitator of a weekly writers critique group that meets at Borders Books in Montclair, and she is the Programs Director for Inland Empire. Always, she goes above and beyond her duties in both groups to reach out to new members and those just embarking on the journey of writing and publishing. Friends from IECWC say of her that she is dependable, generous, welcoming and warm, also using words such as "dynamic," "genteel" and "nurturing" to describe her personality. Of course, one of the aspects that make her unique in our group is her authentic Southern charm.

Libby has been published in *Mature Living*, *Alive*, and *Writer's Journal*, among other publications. She writes a regular online column, and she draws ever nearer to the publication of her first novel. The members of Inland Empire CWC are thrilled to nominate Libby for the prestigious Jack London Award, as she more than deserves this praise and recognition. 

ments include: editing a branch anthology for four consecutive years; creating and managing a series of editing workshops for two years; setting up routine reading opportunities for members, and an annual Book Launch party to celebrate recently published members, including Redwood's own co-published authors. She spearheaded plans for the upcoming Redwood Writers Conference, the first conference for the branch in over 20 years. The result of her hard work has been the rapid growth of Redwood from approximately 36 to 130 members. Under Karen's leadership, the members found themselves in the spotlight. Now it is Karen's turn to be in the spotlight, honored with the Jack London Award, a testimony of her members' gratitude. 

East Sierra – Steve Wersan

As much as loving couples everywhere complement and complete each other, Steve and Fran Wersan radiate something special. East Sierra branch members see it, and Steve and Fran write about it, most recently in a delightful publication celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

Steve holds degrees in mathematics and physics and a doctorate in civil engineering. He spent his career in software development for computer and defense electronics manufacturers. Yet, says Steve, “My right brain just refused to quit.” His interest in poetry dates back to the 1980s, and resulted in his book *Smooth Stones on the Bottom*. Steve has given



speaker programs at several CWC branches, among them High Desert, Inland Empire, and East Sierra.

Steve’s contributions to East Sierra include book reviews for the branch’s weekly newspaper column, service on the East Sierra board of directors, and annual arrangements for the holiday party. With Fran, they co-wrote, directed, and performed a puppet show that that broke branch attendance records.

East Sierra proudly recognize Steve’s talent and dedication. Incidentally, Fran gets an award this year too – East Sierra’s local, unofficial Charmian London Award.



Mt. Diablo – Joanne Brown

Joanne Brown is a California native and graduate of UC Berkeley. She earned her teaching credential at the College of Holy Names in Oakland and taught elementary school. She has published numerous pieces including humor essays for “My World” in the *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, and for “Real Life” in the *Contra Costa Times*, including several cookbook reviews. Writing for children is her passion. Raising three sons has provided stimulus for two middle grade novels currently awaiting publication and a third under development. Her writing goal is for her books to be a cross between Erma Bombeck and Beverly Cleary.

Joanne is greatly valued by the leadership of the branch for consistently volunteering first for any important task. She has

been the source of many innovative ideas, usually presented with sound reasoning, careful planning, and with a delightful touch of



whimsy at times. She often takes that imaginative extra step that turns a routine task into an impressive result. Her detailed record-keeping and her talent for managing often times complicated branch finances has won high praise as branch treasurer. Because of her diligence, the branch remains in the black.



San Fernando Valley – Cara Alsom



Cara Alsom first came to the San Fernando Valley branch when JoEd Griffith was president. In Cara’s words, “The people of CWC

made me feel possible as a writer. It was possible for me to explore and grow as a writer. It was possible for me to brave the scary world of submission for publication and contest entries. It has been possible

for me to repay what I’ve received in a small way – by offering the same hand of friendship to new writers that cross my path.”

Cara has served on three branch conferences, been both Hospitality and Programs Chair, and has been published in *ByLine*, *Writer’s Digest*, *Art Villa*, *Israel Today*, *Pulse*, *The Jewish Times*, and *The Valley Daily News*. She is current secretary of the newly-reorganized, risen-like-the-phoenix San Fernando Valley branch.



Tri-Valley – Kathy Urban



Kathy Urban has been a pillar of the Tri-Valley branch since its beginning. She was the first newsletter editor, second president, and the branch’s only representative to the

Central Board. After the untimely death of founding president Sue Tasker, Kathy was the prime mover in establishing the Sue Tasker Memorial Service Award to recognize a member for significant service to the Tri-Valley Branch.

Kathy has also been instrumental in bringing structure as well as unity to the club. She developed a survey that Tri-Valley uses each year to get feedback from branch members. Kathy is currently co-chair of the committee working to publish a club anthology. She coordinated the redesign of the branch website and provided the content for the web pages. In 2008, she became the Central Board treasurer.

Kathy writes for a variety of markets, but most enjoys writing for children. Her recent and forthcoming publications include articles, features, crafts, and poems in *Highlights for Children*, *Humpty Dumpty’s Magazine*, *Spider*, *Babybug*, and *Fandangle Magazine*. She’s been a correspondent for two local newspapers, the *Danville Times* and the *Pleasanton Times*. She did extensive editorial work on the 2001 award-winning *California Fresh Harvest* cookbook and has written numerous articles about the Philippines for *Inklings Magazine*. For two years, Kathy was editor of Tri-Valley’s newsletter, *Write Around the Valley*, and currently serves as the Tri-Valley treasurer.



**Is Jack London
really the founder
of CWC?
Check out our
Mysterious Origins
on page 7!**

Mysterious Origins: Is Jack London Our Founder?

continued from page 7

Club of Alameda County, January 10, 1910 through March 18, 1913, attests:

“March 7, 1911, at a meeting held in Shattuck Hotel Parlors, the Club’s name was changed to California Writers Club from Press Club, Alameda County. At the meeting were Torrey Connor and Agnes Morley Cleaveland. At the time, Mrs. Connor was President of the Press Club.” Also responsible for the initiative was Florence Hardiman Miller, a woman characterized as “[a] heart of faith! Of such was she - our friend - whose mind and heart created us - the California Writers Club.” (“In Memoriam,” Mary Lambert, 1913)



Two of the “Coppa Four”: Jack London (left) and George Sterling.

In a dueling narrative, the members of the Coppa Four envision themselves to be the true patriarchs of the California Writers Club. According to this scenario, novelist London, storywriter Whitaker, pamphleteer Lewis, and poet Sterling found themselves seeking a niche for the more “elevated” members of the Alameda County Press Club to relax and discuss their writing. They settled for a picnic in what is now Oakland’s Joaquin Miller Park. In the first years of its bohemian existence, a blanket in the park and a basket of chow were all the Coppa Four required. Over time, they were joined



Berkeley’s Shattuck Hotel, seen here in a 1910 postcard, was an early meeting venue for the group that may have become California Writers Club.

by an ever-increasing number of picnicking writers and eventually came to identify themselves as the “California Writers Club.” As Austin Lewis, original member of the Coppa Crowd and first president of the CWC, (in 1909), wrote on January 15, 1936:

“I don’t think that the California Writers Club emerged from the Alameda County Press Club. It was started by a small group of us: Jack London, Herman Whitaker, George Sterling, and myself, with a few other people, one or two of whom came from Alameda... As far as the inside group was concerned, it was started with the idea of forming a somewhat distinguished group, but the general attitude to literary matters on the part of the members very soon disposed of that notion and the originators of the enterprise retired in disgust.”

With his usual diplomacy, Dr. William S. Morgan, fourth president of the CWC, acknowledges both theories in his 1939

speech on the history of the Club. As he notes, one theory holds that the CWC emerged from the Alameda Press Club, while the other adheres to Austin Lewis’s 1936 letter in which Lewis states that he, Jack London, Herman Whitaker, and George Sterling were responsible for the inception of the Club.

Perhaps the divergence of views between



Ina Coolbrith

the two primary origin myths of the CWC stems from the substantial rivalry that existed between the men of the Coppa Four and certain members of the Alameda Press Club (which was dominated by

women). According to Ina Coolbrith, who writes of the California Writers Club in *West Winds: A Book of Verse*, the CWC originated in 1907. 1907 may have been the year the Alameda Press Club originated, or it may have been the year that the Coppa Four first began holding their literary gatherings. Regardless, it is clear that the Alameda Press Club effectively merged with the CWC in 1911 by changing its name to California Writers Club.

In the end, while the true details surrounding the beginnings of the CWC may remain a mystery, it is clear that the controversy has had no power to affect the Club’s efficacy, influence, and resiliency. 🖋️



Joaquin Miller’s home in the Oakland hills circa the time Jack London and his literary friends would have been enjoying “a blanket in the park and a basket of chow.”

Did You Know . . . ?

CWC’s documents are considered of such historical significance they’re housed at the prestigious Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley!

CWC's "Cathedral in the Woods"

In 1886, famed poet Joaquin Miller purchased a barren hillside overlooking the town of Oakland and built a home that he called The Abbey. It was at The Abbey where he penned his most famous poem, "Christopher Columbus," the work that inspired the CWC motto "Sail on!" And he planted thousands and thousands of trees, creating a park-like setting that lured his fellow Bay Area literati as a site for picnics. Among those were several founders of CWC. Upon Miller's death in 1913, CWC, under the leadership of Gertrude Mott, led the campaign to turn the poet's home into a park. In 1919, Joaquin Miller Park became part of the Oakland parks and recreation system.

The tradition of planting trees to honor writers began 1930, with the idea of planting a new tree each year to celebrate a specific California writer. The first tree was dedicated on October 15, 1930, to honor the park's namesake.

Then came a period of glorious ambition and monumental plans and schemes. CWC

Branching Out

continued from page 5

Tri-Valley

One hundred years ago, a colorful cast of characters founded the California Writers Club "to mentor and educate writers of all levels in the art and craft of writing." This October, Tri-Valley Writers will celebrate CWC's Centennial with a birthday bash devoted to character. What's a story - or a club - without great characters? David Corbett, author of three successful thrillers including *Blood of Paradise*, a *San Francisco Chronicle* Notable Book and one of *The Washington Post's* Top Ten Mysteries and Thrillers of 2007, will discuss what makes characters memorable and how to craft them. A former private investigator who teaches writing courses through UCLA Extension and at Book Passage, David brings an intriguing background and a keen eye to his own characters, variously noted as "deeply engaging," "complex," "riveting," and "impossible to forget." Don't miss this banner event, as we pay playful homage to CWC's century of literary history, and to the characters who made it happen.

Expect some surprise visitors—and, yes, there will be cake! The celebration is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, starting at 11:30 a.m. at the Oasis Grille in Pleasanton.

conceived of a grand amphitheater – Woodminster, a cathedral in the woods – along with waterfalls, staircases, pools and fountains – all dedicated to the achievements and legacy of California writers. They were able to secure funding for their vast and extravagant dreams through the Depression-era economic stimulus plan known as the WPA – the Work Projects Administration. On March 5, 1941, Woodminster was dedicated to California writers and opened to the public.



Detail from the granite carvings at Woodminster.

West Valley

Kathy Highcove, editor of West Valley's newsletter and its Jack London Award honoree, wrote extensively about CWC's history in the September issue of *In Focus*.

Writers of Kern

WOK will be holding its California Writers Week/CWC Centennial meeting on October 17 at the Wyndham Hotel on Buck Owens Blvd from 10:00 a.m. to approximately 12:00 p.m. Each month a new speaker is provided to teach and entertain the group of published and aspiring authors. All attending are invited to stay for lunch and visit with the speaker. WOK schedules several annual events. March is set aside for the Annual Writers Workshop. Each year is different with new speakers, including authors, publishers, and others in the writing profession. It is sometimes an all day affair, other times a half day event. In June, WOK holds an anniversary dinner. Members are invited to read something they have written. December is WOK's Christmas party where once again the members entertain the group with something they have written.

As the years went on, CWC's tradition of planting a tree every year to honor a California writer continued. The last tree-planting that we have record of took place in 1985, honoring Will and Ariel Durant.

In our Centennial year, CWC is working to re-establish our connection with Joaquin Miller Park. Linda Brown of our Berkeley branch is exploring the possibility of placing a sign identifying Writers Memorial Grove, and of installing a display in the ranger station explaining the history of CWC and our connection with Joaquin

Miller Park. While planting a new tree in Writers Memorial Grove is an appealing idea, in this drought year the city of Oakland is discouraging any activity that might involve the use of additional water.

Though just nine miles from downtown Oakland, 500-acre Joaquin Miller Park exudes an atmosphere of rustic serenity, fulfilling CWC's original dream of creating a "cathedral in the woods."

Joaquin Miller Park, on Sanborn Road off of Highway 13, is open daily from dawn to dusk. Admission is free. <http://oaklandnet.com/JoaquinMillerPark>.



The Nation's Oldest Writers Club?

Though it would be cool if CWC were able to make that claim, the reality is somewhat less superlative. At least two other organizations beat us to starting gate: the National Press Club, founded in 1908, and the Boston Authors Club, founded in 1900.

Technically, any claim to be "the oldest" also needs to carry the qualifier "continuously active" or "in continuous operation." Who knows? Thomas Paine may very well have set up a critique group for his pamphlets, and the Pilgrims had to do *something* to entertain themselves on those long winter nights in New England.

We're probably safe in claiming to be "The Oldest Writers Club in California," or "The Oldest Continuously Active Writers Club in The West." Another possible solution: "The Oldest Writers Club of Its Type," which pretty much covers every eventuality!



Why Does Our Logo Have a Ship on It?

Our newer members may be forgiven if they wonder why a writers club has a ship on its logo and a motto of "Sail on!"

The answer lies in the very early days of the club, and the early years of the 20th century. Movies, radio, and recorded music were in their infancy, and television and the Internet was only the stuff of fantasy. It was the golden age of print, when newspapers and magazines were the mass media. Writers of short fiction and popular poetry thus became the media celebrities of their day, the equivalent in sheer star power of today's hip-hop artists. Among the brightest stars in the constellation were two names destined to play a key role in the formation of California Writers Club: Jack London and Joaquin Miller.



Joaquin Miller was the very definition of a colorful, larger than life character. The self-styled Poet of the Sierras, the Byron of the Rockies, he was born Cincinnatus Hiner Miller in 1841 and given his pen name by Oakland librarian Ina Coolbrith – another significant player in CWC's history. Miller's home in the Oakland hills was a favorite gathering place for the Bay Area literary crowd, including the founders of CWC.

Miller's poem "Columbus" was wildly popular in its day,

much like a Top Ten hit on the radio, and quickly became a staple in school readers throughout the country, with generations of children memorizing its stirring stanzas for recitation on October 12.

In 1913, when CWC was incorporated with the Secretary of State, artist Perham Nahl

created a woodcut featuring one of Columbus's ships as the CWC seal and the club adopted "Sail on" as its motto, taken from the refrain of Miller's poem:

*A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on."*


Thus, while one might assume that a writers club would feature a pen or a book on its logo, CWC honors our founders and, perhaps, captures the enduring optimism and unwavering faith of the creative soul through our unusual seal and slogan.



The Bulletin

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