

SACRAMENTO
BRANCH
NEWSLETTER
APRIL EDITION



SACRAMENTO WRITERS

Michael Barrington: The Art of the Short
Story and its Use as a Marketing Tool



CWC-Sacramento Meeting on
Saturday, April 19th, from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm at
Unitarian Universalist Church, 2425 Sierra Blvd, Sacramento

Writing a short story versus a novel or novelette: what's involved? How to get published in a magazine or journal. The short story as a major marketing tool.

What you will learn from Michael

- How to write a short story: the Art
- How short is short? The Craft.
- Genres: Does it matter?
- Who decides if it is ready for publication?
- Finding a publisher?
- Driving readers to your website.

Michael Barrington, MA., M.Ed., Ph.D., is from England, has a Diploma in Marketing from Harvard, written twelve books, published two collections and more than 60 short stories in the US, UK and Europe. He has taught workshops on the craft of the Short Story, and Marketing. He is an assistant editor for The Brussels Review, and blogs on his website www.mbwriter.net. He is the VP of CWC Mt Diablo.

Plus: Micro-Workshop “Your Author Platform” by Christina Brabham and Query Work with Michael Larsen

Members who sign up by Friday, April 18, will receive a copy of Agent Michael Larsen’s Superpower 2. Based on this article, please come ready to share literary and publishing goals. These goals will determine how and whether a letter and a proposal are needed.

Admission fee of \$15. You can pay on the day or get your ticket below.

[Book online here](#)

CWC-Sacramento Network Meeting- Friday, April 4th

Lisa Montanaro

Publishing Paths for Today's Strategic Author – Choices, Decisions & Priorities

Friday, April 4th from 9 am to 11 am at
Denny's Restaurant, 8841 Greenback Lane, Orangevale, 95662

What attendees will learn from Lisa's presentation:

- The decision of how to publish your writing, and who to partner with, is an important one.
- Fortunately, authors today have more choices than ever before—big trade, small press, hybrid and indie.
- Discover the pros and cons, and similarities and differences of the various publishing paths to determine which is the best match for your definition of success, time frame, budget, skill set, and level of control.
- Learn how some authors are choosing one publishing path for their writing career, while others are choosing different paths for each published work.
- Change your mindset to one of empowerment to make a strategic decision about the publishing paths for you!

Lisa Montanaro is the author of the novel, *Everything We Thought Was True*, and nonfiction books, *The Ultimate Life Organizer*, and "The Brand Called You! Personal & Professional Branding for Authors," featured in *Launch Pad: The Countdown to Marketing Your Book*. Lisa serves as Webinar Host for the Women's Fiction Writers Association.



We continue to hold hybrid meetings with zoom, but please be aware that zoom participation may be limited to audience only.

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 817 3734 0307

Passcode: 227171

About this Newsletter

Sadly, William MacDonald, who created such excellent, colorful newsletters, is unable to continue. So if you have thought to help the club, and have computer skills, we would love to have you join us as our newsletter editor. See Bernard or Bonnie about this, or email sacramentowriters@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

Planning for the Sacramento Book Festival—hosted by your club—is off to a great start. The festival will take place on Saturday, May 31, from 10 am to 4 pm, at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., in East Sacramento.

And we need your help! We have many opportunities for volunteers to help us make this festival a success, from setting up in the morning to checking in attendees to helping with a fun scavenger hunt, and more. Of course, the planning committee hopes that all CWC members will attend, but if you'd like to do more, please sign up as a volunteer on the book festival [website](#).

As a preview: More than 125 local authors will attend the festival to talk about and sell their books, plus numerous sponsors, including 5 bookstores, 8 local writers organizations, the Sacramento Public Library and [Friends of the Library](#), [916 Ink](#), and the [Sacramento Literacy Foundation](#). We will be running a fundraiser for the [Mustard Seed School](#), a school for homeless children/families in the Sacramento area—we're asking attendees to bring a new or gently used

children's book (or to buy one during the festival) to donate to the school. And we'll have several well-known authors speaking during the festival, including headliner James Rollins, award-winning mystery author Catriona McPherson, and crime fiction writers Claire Booth and James L'Etoile.

A Visit to Jack London State Park

By Julie Snider, photos by Tina Stidman

In 1909, the California Writers Club began in the Bay Area, and in 1925, local members established our Sacramento branch. We will hold our Centennial Celebration on October 18, 2025. There is quite a link between Jack London and the CWC, as he was a founder of the Bay Area branch. Members of the Centennial Committee of CWC-Sacramento spent a delightful Sunday in March touring Jack London State Park. We are very grateful for the extensive private tour led by the park's Volunteer Coordinator, Susan St. Marie and volunteer Rich Brumley who escorted us and interpreted the exhibits. We were interested in seeing London's famous retreat, with a special curiosity about his writing chair. More about that in a moment!

Located just above the town of Glen Ellen in Sonoma County, London and his wife, Charmian, purchased "Beauty Ranch" in 1905. Originally 130 acres, the couple bought adjoining farms between 1908 and 1913, giving them 1,400 acres. In 1911, construction began on a 15,000 square foot home with 26 rooms and 9 fireplaces. They called it Wolf House and built it in the Arts and Crafts style from local volcanic rock. The grand home burned down August 22, 1913. Luckily, this was before Jack and Charmian moved in. The suspected cause was spontaneous combustion from oily rags left behind by a worker.

In 1911, London and Charmian moved to a small wooden cottage in the middle of the property. They intended for the cottage to serve as temporary housing while Wolf House was under construction, but after the fire, London lacked funds to rebuild the large home.



CAPTION: CWC field trip attendees in front of the glorious ruins. L to R: Julie Snider, Tina Stidman, Esta Wiederanders, Mark Wiederanders, Kim Edwards, and Mari-Lynne Infantino.

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Highlights from the 2025 San Francisco Writer's Conference

by Theresa Lown

The Hyatt Embarcadero was ready, the attendees were arriving, and the hotel rooms were filling up. Four days of writers converging and convening to learn, write and

publish. The first plenary session had started in the lower-level conference room, when we were interrupted with an announcement that there would be a temporary power outage. The speakers on the dais were cool and collected when the doors closed automatically, and the emergency generator lights came on. The session proceeded but within minutes we heard there was an incident in the atrium.

The soaring atrium of the hotel held a cocktail bar, seating, and elevators to the rooms upstairs. Sitting in the center, a stunning sculpture of an abstract orb looks like a giant metallic spirograph. The sculpture is also a fountain.

When the power was turned off to manage a small kitchen fire, the beautiful fountain overflowed. Water oozed out and covered the floor of the atrium. The flood in the atrium found its way into the power center for the hotel. It shorted out circuits and half of the Hyatt was in the dark. For two days. Two days of cold showers, no heat and limited kitchen availability. But the conference went on as planned due to the ingenuity and perseverance of the conference organizer Lissa Provost and her team. Thankfully, I was at the nearby Harbor Court Hotel, my procrastination on getting a room paying off.

The sessions were organized into tracks that followed a theme throughout the four days. The Hollywood Summit for Screenwriters, Fiction, Nonfiction, Kid lit, Self-publishing and Fundamentals were the broad themes.

Consultation and Pitch appointments ran simultaneously to the sessions. Registration included one pitch session with the person of your choice. You could purchase additional appointments as you wanted after that. The conference program listed the photo and bio of over one hundred professionals in publishing and writing, many of whom were also speakers. My program souvenir is a great resource for potential future query activity.

The keynotes were given by Tommy Orange, author of *There There*, a NYT best-seller about his multigenerational family of urban Native Americans. And we heard Ilse McElroy, the NYT Critics Choice winner and non-binary writer of *The Atmospherians*, and *People Collide*. Both were interesting and entertaining.

Social activities like Nightcap and Network, Harvey's meet-up dinners, Pub Quiz breakfast and the Gala Poetry and Jazz made networking a breeze. People were friendly

and interested in each other's work. The nearby Ferry Building had some interesting shops and eateries, like Gott's Roadside, a popular burger place with conference veterans.

'Memoir in the Marketplace' was a panel discussion with publishers Lisa Kastner (Running Wild Press), Vickie DeArmon (Sybilline Press) and Brooke Warner (She Writes Press) moderated by publicist and book coach Joey Garcia.

Under the creative non-fiction umbrella, memoir is a sub-category, the "I" story. Not autobiography, memoir is a slice of someone's life that is thematic about something. There's an emotional arc to the narrative, a passion. The memoir is about resilience and survival, a protagonist who makes a journey into the truth. It's not a victim story but one of transformation.

The takeaway from the story is an important aspect to think through. Why will someone want to read your memoir? A high-concept memoir has a title that is clear and grabs attention, a hook. The story narrative is easy to comprehend and has potential for commercial success because it has the elements of action and drama.

What's selling in memoir is dominated by celebrities. That's followed by travel memoir, think *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert. Mother/daughter relationship and abuse narratives still have some commercial appeal, but memoir is not a genre that's selling right now.

While all of the publishers on this panel stated they did not place high importance on having a platform, they were in agreement that the author's ability to create enthusiasm and their intention towards making effort to help market the book will play a role in offering a potential deal.

'Writing Without Retraumatizing Yourself' was a session on how to safely write about traumatic memories by coach and author Lisa Cooper Ellison. She also has the 'Writing and Resilience' podcast. She is trauma-informed and has developed a workbook about this topic, available from her website.

Resources for more information about writing and publishing: Query Tracker, Reedsy.com, Jane Friedman.com, Publishers Marketplace.com, Manuscript Wish List , Query Shark



CWC SAC Branch President's message, April 2025.

As you know, I'm always up for a gag, but this is no joke. For me, April is always a time for serious development, and this year is no exception. These coming times promise to be the brightest the club has ever had.

See the vision and embrace the community.

The vision couldn't be simpler, to build this club into a proud community. Through our strength, we will be worthy of our motto; Writers helping writers.

These past years, I have been guiding this club to ensure our stability and coherence, but now is the time to grow. We have gained many new members recently, and this inspires me to build on what we have.

This growth has already begun but continues with the Book Festival in May. This event will happen, and my only remaining message is—please come support your fellow authors.

The centennial of our Sacramento Branch is in October. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime event, where history will be celebrated. I have had an insight into the planning, and I can't wait for that date.

Both events will have profound implications for all CWC branches statewide. But it won't stop there. I envisage more community building projects in the coming year.

Workshops to educate us, author retreats to get us writing, and even travel. Yes, we can dare to explore what previous writers have done and reveal what has inspired them.

We will always ask members to help us organize these projects. I always welcome volunteers, and like to say, "You will be paid as much as me!" Trust me, it is a tremendous thrill, not to mention a valuable entry into your Résumé.

Don't be shy if you can't volunteer, the important thing is for you to take part in these events. Above and beyond anything else, this is your club, and everything that we do is for you.

If there is something we haven't organized, or anything that you want to see, then tell me. I regard this to be the top of my job description; listening to members who want or need something. If I don't know the answer, I know someone who does.

That reminds me, there will be club board elections coming up in June. Don't worry, there will be 2 more newsletters and a load more spam about that. So, all I have to say right now is.

- Think about who you want to be on the club board – **Nominate**.
- Let us know who you want to be on the club board – **VOTE!**

That sounds like one of those TV commercials, which means I've written enough.

The only thing left for me to say is. No winter lasts forever, and no spring skips its turn.

As I said last time, good luck with your springtime projects and give some serious thought to working closer with us. It will stand you in good stead when promoting your writing.

Remember, your words must be read.

Bernard Wozny (bpwozny@gmail.com)

Members' Announcements

Ronald Javor recently published *Murders and Mayhem at Muscle Beach*, a thriller involving a frantic search for hidden Vietnam War era contraband and a mysterious old veteran who hid it. Bloody twists and turns ensue as homeless veterans and their allies compete to find it first.

Dierdre Wolownick announces the publication of her newest book, ***Success in 7 Steps*** (Feb. '25). Although Dierdre now lives in Las Vegas (as of Jan '25), to be near her grandchildren, she's been a member of CWC in Sacramento for many decades and would like to share her news with her California colleagues. Dierdre is the oldest woman to climb Yosemite's El Capitan, and has been an orchestra conductor, marathoner, publisher, professor of 5 languages, and more. This book explains the method she used to accomplish all of the many things she's done; anyone can do anything, she proposes, if they follow the method that she and her son, Alex Honnold of Oscar-winning ***Free Solo***, have always used. The documentary about her life, ***Climbing Into Life*** (inspired by her previous book, ***The Sharp End of Life***), recently won its 8th film festival award, ***Best Feature Documentary***, and will soon be available to the public.

Raymond Blain is publishing the pamphlet *Our Inalienable Rights: On the Critical Issues Facing Our Democracy*. For pricing and more details contact him at raymondblain@comcast.net. As Raymond says, "Your future freedom of expression could depend on it."

CWC-Sacramento Board Elections for 2025-2026

We are open to receiving your interest in positions on the Board for these next two weeks.

April 1st through April 15: Open to candidates. Please ask questions and/or let us know if interested in one of the positions listed below, by emailing Bonnie Blue, nominating chair, at beaubleue4@gmail.com.

May Newsletter: We will publish the candidates for various positions and will hold a runoff if there are two candidates for a position.

June Membership Meeting: We will announce the finalized slate of Board members for the next year.

Please read the basic descriptions below of the 5 elected Board positions and consider offering your help. If interested, email Bonnie Blue, nominating chair, at beaublue4@gmail.com:

President:

- Presides over Board Meetings and Membership Meetings
- Provides vision and leadership
- Represents the club with other branches, the central branch and the Public

Vice President of Programs:

- Assumes president's duties when president is absent
- Schedules Speakers for the Saturday Membership Meetings.
- Ensures accurate logistics for the upcoming Speakers.

Vice President of Membership:

- Signs up applicants for membership and keeps tally of members.
- Provides quarterly reports for the Central Board.
- Collects yearly dues.
- Represents the members interests in the Board.

Treasurer:

- Keeps a record of money coming in and money going out.
- Prepares monthly reports for the Board and quarterly reports for the Central Board.
- Makes quarterly payments to the Central Board.
- Prepares an annual budget.
- Pays speakers fees.

Secretary:

- Records the minutes of the Board Meetings and distribute to the Board members.

April's Members' Corner

New Members:

Tim Gbedema

Alvin Gaerlan writes Memoir and Creative Non-Fiction

Say hello when you see them.

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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 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

Interested in finding a Critique Group? So many of us write alone and have gotten very little feedback on our work. Exposing our creative efforts to a group of like-minded and considerate writers is the first step towards sending our masterpieces out into the world.

Email Bonnie at sacramentowriters@gmail.com. Your names 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.

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

Gini Grossenbach - find her at www.ginigrossenbach.com

Janey Ranlett - search for Janey Ranlett on Linked-in

Rebecca Partridge - find her at ripartridge.com

Board of Directors

President: Bernard Wozny

First Vice-President/Programs: Kimberly Edwards (Emeritus)

Second Vice-President/Membership: Bonnie Blue

Treasurer: Tim Schooley

Secretary: OPEN

Other Club Directorships

Contest Coordinator: OPEN

Historian: Julie Bauer

Marketing Consultant: Alysse Adularia

Newsletter: OPEN

Open Readings Host & Coordinator: John Patterson

Publicity Chair (Social Media): Chris Hennessy

Webmaster: Bernard Wozny

Writers Network Coordinator: Cheryl Stapp

A Visit to Jack London State Park (continued from page 7)



CAPTION: The London's Cottage

London's writing studio in The Cottage, shown here, includes his famous writing chair. In the 1970s, Gladys Morse, wife of a past president of CWC-Sacramento, and Irene Donelson, another prominent member, gave the chair to Jack London Park. Our tour guide revealed that until Kim Edwards called and asked about the chair, the staff was uncertain which of the chairs on site was Jack's preferred perch. She said its tag was missing. Now, it is back in its rightful spot, properly identified! CWC-Sacramento members who visit Jack London State Park can take pride in our connection with this important piece of literary furniture.



CAPTION: London's writing studio, with the chair donated by members of CWC-Sac in the 1970s. The chair in question is on the right side of the photo.

London didn't confine his writing to his desk, however. He strung clothesline over his bed and wrote long into the night, clipping his ideas up with clothespins so he would remember them come morning. It's no wonder Charmian slept in another room most nights!



CAPTION: London's bed on his sun porch, with the clothesline bearing notes he made during the night hours.

London was a devotee of so-called “scientific agriculture,” and consulted with U. C. Davis to learn the latest farming techniques. He replaced the nutrients used by his crops, an uncommon practice. London rigged up a pulley system between the animal barns and a third building to store manure from the barns for later land application.

Some of his agricultural ideas didn't pan out, however. After discovering eucalyptus trees during a trip to Australia, London bought into the notion the trees would produce good lumber and planted a crop of 80,000 seedlings. To supply water to his trees, he purchased a water wagon from the San Francisco Fire Department. Sadly, the wagon proved too heavy to be pulled up and over the hilly terrain.



CAPTION: Water wagon purchased from the San Francisco Fire Department.

The trees didn't fare well either. London discovered that eucalyptus wood was prone to cracking and was susceptible to insect attacks, making the investment a poor one. Another idea he derived from traveling to Australia was planting a cactus garden. He worked with well-known horticulturist Luther Burbank, and together they planted a field of spineless cacti to use for cattle feed. Alas, the soil and moist climate of Sonoma County proved less than ideal for the growth of this desert plant. Today, a small cactus garden grows on the ranch in tribute to his grand idea.

There were successes, however. The Pig Palace (moniker given by a San Francisco reporter who visited the ranch) had seventeen pig apartments and could house up to 217 pigs and piglets. A special watering apparatus simultaneously watered all the pigs, and the feed was stored in this quaint round shed.



CAPTION: The Pig Palace

London's many overseas travels, combined with the fact that he continued to spend time in his hometown of Oakland, meant that he had limited time to spend at his beloved ranch. His untimely death in 1916 (at age 40) robbed him of his dream of spending years writing at Beauty Ranch. Considering that he wrote fifty novels between 1900 and 1916, one wonders what more he could have produced had his life been longer.

After his death, Jack's sister Eliza London Shepard ran the ranch until she passed on in 1939. His wife Charmian died in 1955. The ashes of all three rest on a knoll beneath a large red rock taken from the ruins of Wolf House.



CAPTION: London's Grave

Architect Harry P. Merritt designed London's House of Happy Walls Museum, built by Charmian and Eliza after her husband's death. Charmian always intended it to be a museum one day. She lived in the house from 1935 until

1952. Contained within is Charmian's prized 1901 Steinway grand piano. On weekends, local pianists volunteer to play Charmian's piano. The lovely sounds resonate throughout the museum and remind listeners of days gone by.



CAPTION: A volunteer from the local piano club plays Charmian London's 1901 Steinway.

I think everyone on this special tour walked away with a new appreciation of Jack London's life and vision. Without his leadership and enthusiasm, it's doubtful that the California Writers Club would have become the strong, vibrant literary organization we value today. I encourage every club member to plan a visit to Jack London Park. And please, mark October 18 on your calendar! Our special Centennial Celebration is not to be missed!