

SACRAMENTO
DECEMBER 2024



BRANCH
NEWSLETTER

SACRAMENTO WRITERS

*California Writers Club, Sacramento
invites you to the Winter Party luncheon at*



Sunday
15
December

WRITING FROM THE HEART

Our winter party is a celebration of a year of accomplishments, individually and as a club. Come prepared to join us in the holiday spirit with good food, good company and a chance to win prizes.

SELF INTRODUCTION—WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO WRITE

A BOOK TO TREASURE

Please gift wrap and bring a favored paperback from your bookshelf to exchange. (No hints as to what it is.) This is our take on the white elephant exchange.

PRIZE DRAWINGS

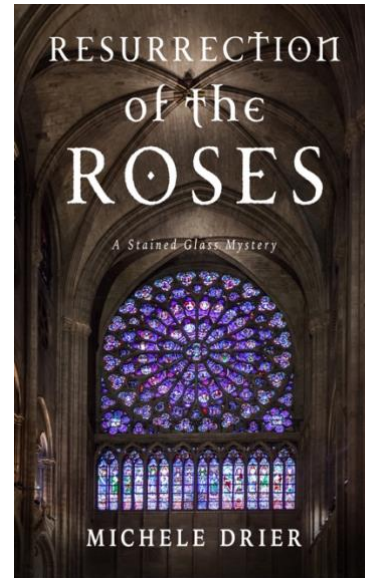
Drawing prizes include [Inkers Con](#) and other prizes

Purchase your ticket at [CWC Sacramento Writers](#)

The Zinfandel Grill, 2384 Fair Oaks Blvd, Sacramento
Sunday, December 15, 2024, 12:00–3:00 pm
\$50 per person

Adding Tension to Your Work

Keep readers engaged and turning the pages with tension



Friday
6
December

[Michele Drier](#)

No matter the genre, tension is the action element that keeps readers engaged and turning the pages of your book.

What attendees will learn from this presentation:

- Types of tension
- Adding theme to your work
- Pacing tension
- Internal vs. external In dialogue

Michele Drier is a fifth generation Californian. Her newspaper career included stints at the San Jose Mercury-News and McClatchy. She's the past president of Guppies chapter of [SinC](#), past president of [Capitol Crimes](#), currently is the president of the NorCal chapter, and co-chaired [Bouchercon](#) 2020.

Her 18 books include mysteries and paranormal romance.

Friday, December 6, 2024, 9–11 am

Denny's Restaurant, 8841 Greenback Lane, Orangevale, CA, 95662

You can find her on www.micheledrier.me

[Join Zoom Meeting](#) (meeting ID: 817 3734 0307 passcode: 227171)

Everything You Need to Know About Agents and Query Letters



Saturday
18
January

[Chuck Sambuchino](#)

Finding a literary agent can be daunting, yet it is important for authors to know how to navigate this landscape. Renowned former editor and writing workshops guru Chuck Sambuchino will give a crash course on dealing with literary agents. After reviewing what an agent is and what they do for writers, Chuck will discuss resources for finding agents, how to identify the best fit for you, query letter writing, and the most important things to do and not to do when dealing with representatives.

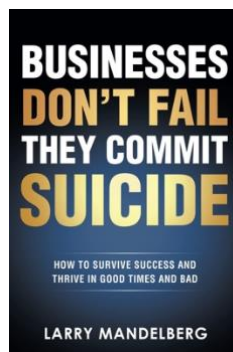
Chuck Sambuchino is a former editor for *Writer's Digest Books*. During his time there, he edited the [Guide To Literary Agents](#) as well as the [Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market](#). His [Guide to Literary Agents Blog](#) was one of the biggest in publishing, averaging more than 350,000 page views each month. He loves connecting with writers and helping them to get published and sell more books. In 2018, he became executive director of Writing Day Workshops, a series offered around the country giving writers tools and access to agents.

[Arden-Dimick Library](#), 891 Watt Avenue, Sacramento
Saturday, January 18, 2025, 1–3 p.m.

The meeting is open to the community at no cost. Since library rules prevent collection of a meeting fee, members are encouraged to support the club's Speaker Fund. This allows the board to continue to bring in experts of regional or national reputation. Suggested amount per meeting: \$10. Thank you, members!

Writing Day Workshops (<http://writingdayworkshops.com>) is returning to Sacramento on April 11, 2025. Our club is pleased to be the local partnering organization. If you're writing a book, or planning one in the future, consider this one-day event to gain exposure to insiders and agents. Some of us attended the last time the conference was in town and found it unique in so many ways, including the number of agents present. See you there.

Start Envisioning Your Success Today!



Friday
3
January

Larry Mandelberg promotes a model of setting goals that lead to outcomes and success. A self-described organizational “savant,” he solves complex business problems for clients in diverse industries. As the fifth generation of his family’s business, he embodies 170 years of successful organizational experience. Start envisioning your success today! As a non-recovering serial entrepreneur, Larry has launched four start-ups, led a merger, and conducted a successful turnaround. Larry is author of [Businesses Don’t Fail They Commit Suicide: How to Survive Success and Thrive in Good Times and Bad](#). He is author of many articles, largely in business publications.

Friday January 3, 2025

Denny’s Restaurant, 8841 Greenback Lane, Orangevale, 1–3 p.m.

SACRAMENTO BOOK FESTIVAL

If you have a published book and you’re thinking about reserving an author space at the 2025 Sacramento Book Festival, do not wait. Tables for authors are selling out fast! Everything you need to know about the book festival can be found [here](#). And the author sign up form is [here](#).

Saturday, May 31, 2025, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Shepard Garden & Arts Center

SEEKING MEMBER HELP

With our branch’s 100th year anniversary planned for October 18, 2025, a branch centennial “imagination” committee is seeking members who have Ancestry and LinkedIn accounts and who like research. Why? Because we are searching for writing achievements of early members and also seeking descendants still alive. Contact Kim Edwards at kimberlyedwards00@comcast.net if this might be of interest to you. This would not entail a lot of hours, but would be a chance to participate in your club’s history and to honor those who came before us. You would not be obligated to join the centennial committee. Thank you.

Cheers to a Fascinating Open Reading

November 19 Reading Closes Out 4th Year of Open Readings

The Open Reading draws new readers and listeners. Various descriptions of the world revealed a variety of life's experiences and take aways. Everyone had a complete emotional experience. The following summarizes our listening experiences.

Dan Martinez is having discussions with some studios about his short book. The premise is that nothing in the Bible has ever been written about Jesus in the three days between the crucifixion and his ascension. He read from "Day One" about Jesus recognizing his immortality while seeing the holes in his corporeal body.

[Kathy Lynne Marshall](#), who has written books about her black ancestry and history and many libraries feature her books, read about doctors having a difficult time diagnosing and then discovering she had shingles.

[Mari-Lynne Infantino](#) is writing a new book about a gangland murder, and the dead man's woman trying to get away. Everybody thought those few pages were like a movie and as intense and real as anything they'd ever read.

[Dr. Lally Pia](#), who teaches doctors about child psychiatry, wrote about her difficulty landing at the London airport with a cast, after her flight from Ghana, where her family had moved to from Sri Lanka where they were being persecuted.

[Eric Wiesenthal](#), who been a reporter for the *Charlotte Observer* before moving to California and working for the state, wrote about the sorrow he'd felt when his Temple in Sacramento had been firebombed by two young men, and his complicated feelings. The feelings were magnified at the ensuing service—when damaged or burnt holy books, including the Torah, are buried as part of their faith.

[Andy Laufer](#), who worked as a Cal Firefighter, and other jobs at the state, read six (6) brief poems, all very evocative. One, about how he always tears when watching the winners on the Olympic stand, another about the significance of the goodnight kiss. His poems always resonate.

[Karen Durham](#), a respected local poet, essayed her mental struggle to fight the fear of cold, cramps, and drowning as she swam her third, and the following year, fourth Alcatraz to San Francisco swim.

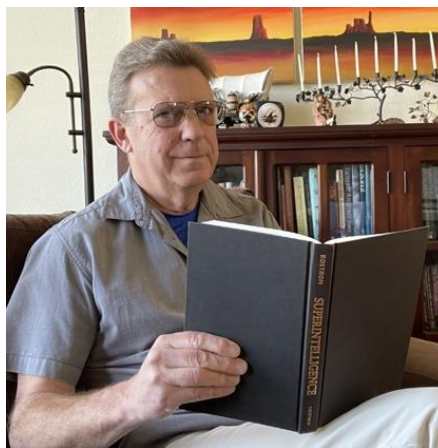
[Marcia Ehinger](#), a retired physician, read three short poems. Kali the tortoise made his rounds as we saw him grow from palm size to 60 pounds; Plowed Sheep toured the strands of clouds; and Tex showed how a cowboy could barbecue his food on the go.

[John Patterson](#), retired, whose story appeared in the [Redwood Writers Anthology](#), read the start of his dinosaur story.

Our next reading will start the fifth year of the branch's Open Readings. Come to share your work or be entertained with insights far deeper than Netflix;)

SAC BRANCH PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by

Bernard Wozny



We all know that time flies, but I'm always taken aback by how quickly it goes. By the time you read this, Thanksgiving will already have passed. This means that I am writing to you in a future tense. I hope you all enjoyed Thanksgiving in whatever way you choose to celebrate.

I don't have time to dwell on clocks, and my jokes would probably tick you off. There is a lot to be said during December, and a lot to look forward to.

The first thing I want to remind you about is the Winter Party on Sunday, December 15th. We are holding this at Zinfandel Grill, 2384 Fair Oaks Blvd. You can see the announcements on the website and this newsletter. We will have a buffet, as I'm told this was to the norm during club luncheons. I trust this was a wise choice, as the board and I aim to please you.

Just like last Winter, we will have some wowie zowie prizes for our raffle – or should I say prize draw. The top prize will once again be admission to Inkers Con online. You don't need flights or hotels to attend. You can even turn up in your PJs. This event is online and stretches over several days. Recordings of presentations are valid for a long time.

I have it on good authority that Inkers Con is information central for writers and publishers of all genres. Tickets will only be available at the party.

By the way, I'm bringing my bank balance with me to ensure I buy enough tickets to win!

The next thing I want to talk about is my present to everybody.

Present? Yes, present, as in gift.

The Sacramento Book Festival will be on Saturday May 31st, 2025, at the Shepard Garden and Art Center, next to McKinley Park. Once again, keep track of announcements on our website and in this newsletter. I have also opened a dedicated website for this festival, [The Sacramento Book Festival](#). Much of this is still being developed, but I have a first-class team who are working with me.

I do not joke when I say that author tables are almost sold out.

The reason I am giving this present to you is that I am building this *Capital Event* for you. Never mind, the other big events in California, this is going to be *your* event. You will be able to say to others, “This is our event”.

If that isn’t enough, I want to remind everyone of a Centenary Event coming up in October. California Writers Club originated in 1909, in Alameda and establishing later in Oakland. We all know the great literary heroes who contributed. Our centenary stems from October 31st, 1925, when the first branch of CWC was established in Sacramento. Kim Edwards and a team of talented volunteers are working hard to make sure that this will be a special celebration to be worthy of. I have no doubt that you will agree with me that this will be an event to look forward to.

OMG, there are many other things I want to talk about. The fact that YOU are here with ME is the highest thing in my mind. I have said this before, and I know it sounds corny, you are the one who makes this club. If it wasn’t for you, I would be talking to myself.

That leaves me with one more thing to say. I hope you’re still listening.

I wish the best Seasonal Happiness and celebration for you and your family during this Winter Holiday. For Christians, Merry Christmas! For Jewish, Hanukkah Sameach! For Hindu, Diwali the festival of light! For Muslims, I am ashamed to say that I cannot determine the most appropriate winter holiday – perhaps Laylat al-Mi’raj, or Laylat al-Bara’ah? The latter is the ‘Night of Forgiveness’. Maybe this is something we should all celebrate? Forgive me if I am mistaken.

If you are still short of celebrations, then I also wish you festivities for the New Year. More than that, I wish you the prominence and excellence that you deserve in the New Year.

Going full circle, this brings me back to time. Western culture celebrates the New Year on January 1st, while the Chinese celebrate later in January.

Interestingly, the Chinese designate an animal to each year in their zodiac. Currently, we are in the Year of the Dragon, while their New Year brings on the Year of the Snake. Each of the twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac has their blessings, strengths and drawbacks.

Whatever your beliefs, I beseech you to recognize the cultures of others. For me, that is the fun of life, to share my joy and experience the joy of others.

Together, we can celebrate, live together, grow together, and write together.

Happy Holidays to everyone!

And a very happy and prosperous New Year to us all!

Remember, your words must be read.

Bernard Wozny (bpwozny@gmail.com)

Long-time agent Michael Larsen answers members' questions!



Agents tend to focus on the Big Five (publishing houses), the likeliest market for them to make a living on 15% commissions, which keeps getting harder. But agents (and publishers) have submission guidelines on their websites, so finding out what they want and how to query them is easier than ever. Their guidelines vary, so you must adapt what you submit.

The challenges are proving that you and your work are ready for publication. More than 90% of the time, this isn't the case.

Query letters and the proposal or sample material should be strong. And agents (or their assistants) are only reading far enough to make a decision. They can't make a living saying no, nor spending a lot of time explaining why the submission or idea will not work for them. They're perpetual optimists doomed to disappointment practically all of the time.

Your job is to enlist your writing community to help you make every word count and make your submissions as enjoyable to read as you can.

There are agents who help promising clients self-publish. Whether it's better to self-publish is another question, but it's becoming an increasingly attractive alternative, and is the way of the future.

[Mike Larsen](#) is an author coach who loves helping writers achieve their goals by adding value to readers' lives. In 1972, he cofounded Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents, which sold books to more than a hundred publishers and imprints before declining new submissions. His books: [How to Write a Book Proposal](#), fifth edition, coauthor Jody Rein; [How to Get a Literary Agent](#); and [Guerrilla Marketing for Writers: 100 No-Cost, Low-Coast Weapons for Selling Your Work](#), second edition, coauthored with Jay Conrad Levinson, Rick Frishman, and David L. Hancock. His next book, *Writing Success Guaranteed: 9 Superpowers for Making a Living and Changing the World* is in progress. Mike is cofounder of the [San Francisco Writers Conference](#) and the San Francisco Writing for Change Conference.

If you have a question for the Ask Agent Mike column, please send your question to: Kimberly Edwards, kimberlyedwards00@comcast.net.

Finding Help

by Teri Lown

In the spring of 2024, I attended the workshop put on by Sacramento CWC “Finding your Voice” by [Molly Dwyer](#). Molly is a respected Northern California writer and teaches Creative Writing at Mendocino College. She is also available for editing and coaching. I loved her genuine approach to the art of writing. I’d been struggling with my own writing project and decided to engage her to help me as book editor. My project is coming along nicely with insightful and expert input from Molly. Thank you, Sacramento CWC, for putting us together!

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A Table for Memoir Books

by Bonnie Gault-Blue

I am planning on renting a table at the [Book Festival](#) at the end of May and wanted to make it a memoir table. For those of you who have a memoir and would like to put your book out to the public, we could join forces and sell our books together. It would be a table dedicated to Memoir. If interested, contact [Bonnie](#).

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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.

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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](#). 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](#).

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Calling for Beta Readers

If you are interested in reading a member’s manuscript in full to give feedback on, there are people in the club interested in obtaining your services. Let us know at sacramentowriters@gmail.com

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Editors from our Membership

Gini Grossenbach - find her at www.ginigrossenbach.com

Janey Ranlett - search for Janey Ranlett on Linked-in

Rebecca Partridge - find her at ripartridge.com

SMALLS

Announcing a new CWC publication for 2025.



The Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose is complete, and the three winners have been announced (see below). With so many excellent entries received (377) we have decided to make a book of some of the best writings submitted. The book will be titled *The Smalls, California Writers Club 2024 Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose*. The book will include a selection of the pieces

submitted. If your poem or prose is selected to appear in the book, Les Bernstein will notify you as soon as it is possible.

To remind you, Robin Gabbert, Steve Trenam and Les Bernstein named these three contest winners. The winning poems will be posted on the CWC website and in the next CWC bulletin. Congratulations to:

- 1st place — “What Matters,” by Bich Khoi Do
- 2nd place — “Coastline” by Rod Morgan
- 3rd place — “The Clover and the Cactus,” by Phillip (Rags) Rosenberg

Roger Lubeck, President, and Les Bernstein, head judge, congratulate the winners and thank all the writers and poets who participated in the contest and those selected to appear in the book, *The Smalls*.

Next Generation Short Story Awards

A not-for-profit international awards program for authors of short stories.

Brought to you by the Next Generation Indie Book Awards (the largest book awards program in the world for self-published authors and independent publishers) and Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group

A brand new not-for-profit awards program open to authors writing short stories worldwide is now accepting entries written in English.

Why you should enter the [Next Generation Short Story Awards](#):

- 30+ Categories open to all short story authors worldwide
- Cash Prizes plus Gold Medals for all Winners
- Inclusion in a published Anthology for all Winners
- Exposure and valuable literary recognition
- Gala invitation for all Grand Prize Winners to attend the prestigious awards reception being held in conjunction with the Next Generation Indie Book Awards (NGIBA) awards gala

[Enter](#) by February 27, 2025 to take advantage of this exciting opportunity to have your short story considered for cash prizes, awards, exposure, and recognition as one of the top short stories written this year!

All stories must be submitted digitally (online) by February 27, 2025 to be entered into the 2025 Awards Year.

Writers of the Mendocino Coast is proud to announce a
[Special Program](#) for Mendocino Writers

Your Path Through Today's Publishing Labyrinth



Lisa Manterfield and Shirin Yim Leos

You're finally ready to get your book out into the world, but with so many bewildering publishing options available to authors today, how do you know which one is right for you? Come listen as two highly successful published authors and coaches discuss the rewards and frustrations of each option. You'll find out how your goals, personality and genre can bring personal satisfaction and success in the publishing world.

Over the past decade, Lisa Manterfield has self-published four novels, two works of non-fiction, and five non-fiction ebooks, and coached many other authors to self-publishing success. She is an Independent Publishers Book Award winner, Best American Fiction Finalist, and UCLA Kirkwood Prize in Fiction nominee.

Shirin Yim Leos has coached writers who have secured multi-book deals from Big Five publishers, and film and television options from major entertainment companies. She is the author of twenty-one children's books, a developmental editor, and a former publisher. Leos also leads writing retreats and teaches writing and publishing for universities and conferences internationally

December 8th, 2:30-4:30

Community Center of Mendocino

Space is limited to forty-five participants on a first-come basis

This event is free to WMC members

Open to the public with a \$25.00 fee

Advanced Registration Required. To reserve your space, email:
nonareneel@gmail.com with subject line "registration"

Announcing our 2025 Anthology

The San Joaquin Valley Writers branch is pleased to announce the theme for its next anthology, to be published in the fall of 2025: *Beginnings & Endings*.

It is human nature to conceptualize the world consisting of beginnings and endings. This duality permeates almost everything we see, imagine, feel, and hope for. Beginnings and endings can be real and tangible such as birth and death, marriage and divorce, the first and last day of school. They can be metaphorical, perhaps not even visible, such as a thought that blinks into existence only to disappear just as quickly from someone’s mind, or a first impression of someone or something that changes over time. Beginnings and endings can be fast, sudden, or they can be slow, gradual. They can be far apart or blend into each other. Maybe a beginning is also an ending and vice versa. Send us your stories, memoirs, essays, or poetry in which a beginning and/or an ending takes center stage or is the background for something else. Show us the human experience through images, dialogue, verse, but no matter what, with beautiful words. And maybe, just maybe, show us a new take on beginnings and endings.



Participation is open to all CWC members in good standing. Submission information and guidelines can be found on our [website](#) or by using the QR code to the right below.



Read, Learn, and Plan Your Storylines



[Cheryl Anne Stapp](#)

How and when did your interest in writing begin?

I have been scribbling stories since I was a little girl of five or so—at first, little girl stuff about talking flowers and lost kittens and such. Right from the beginning, writing was something I felt compelled to do, something I was hooked on, even if the complexities of character development and plot eluded me. For a class assignment in eighth grade, I wrote a story about a race horse. My teacher sent it to the *Sacramento Bee*, and they published it; the hook sank deeper. Nevertheless, as I grew to adulthood real life got in the way, as it often does, and for many years, I contented myself with occasional “inspired” scribbles, mostly about novels that never went anywhere.

What training helped you improve your writing?

From high school on, I read everything I could find about the craft of writing—how-to books, and articles in *The Writer* and *Writer’s Digest*. In the late 1990s I joined CWC’s San Fernando chapter, listened to the advice of monthly speakers, and won a writing competition for the first chapter of a historical romance novel that I never finished.

Then and now, I always read with one critical eye open, subliminally (or openly) analyzing the author’s style, vocabulary, sentence structure, and skill at putting it all together.

During my last five years in Los Angeles, I was a regular contributor of articles, ten or so per year, to *Working World* magazine, a regional publication whose targeted readership was ordinary workforce employees. I learned that submitting 800- to 1200-word articles on a regular basis requires discipline, that I enjoyed the bit of necessary research and fact-checking, and that writing non-fiction had its own rewards. It was the first time I got paid for writing. About then I made peace with my limitation as a writer, which is: I don’t have what is called a fictive imagination. I can come up with interesting ideas, but I can’t devise an entire novel. Or even a satisfactory short story.

However, when I finally found my nonfiction-history niche in 2009, I realized I could apply some of fiction’s conventions, the elements and rhythms of storytelling, to nonfiction: imagery, active voice, the right verbs to convey exact meaning, and attention to syntax to facilitate the flow of prose.

What in your writing career are you most proud of?

My six nonfiction histories, two of which were published by the prestigious History Press (now merged with Arcadia). The titles that have received the most acclaim are my history of California’s stagecoach era, and my history of Sutter’s Fort. I am *quite* proud of my article “Twice Deceived,” published in the September 2019 issue of *Wild West History Association Journal*, a historical discovery I made on my own through dogged research: the identity of the unfortunate first wife of a mid-1840s Sutter’s Fort employee who later married a Donner Party survivor.

What type of reading do you do when not writing?

Well, somewhat eclectic. I enjoy mysteries with complex plots and strong character development; authors Elizabeth George and John Lescroart are among my favorites in this genre. Years ago, I devoured everything Stephen King wrote, but haven’t read him lately. Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove* remains high on my list of great novels. Of the more recent blockbusters, I would willingly sacrifice a few teeth to have written *The Girl on the Train*. I also love Ann Tyler’s gentle stories and her quirky characters. I read biography (usually of famous authors), and I read California history for pleasure, in addition to reading it for research.

What words of encouragement would you give to new writers?

Read, read, read! ... in your chosen genre, and everything else that interests you. As Stephen King once said, those who won’t read cannot write. Study other author’s techniques. Know the standard conventions of your chosen genre. Plant yourself in a chair for X hours a day and *write*. Focus on your inherent strengths.

I am not qualified to offer advice to poets, memoirists, or screen writers.

For aspiring novelists, I can only suggest the following: are you able to envision the characters and conflicts of a complete novel from beginning to end, without being totally stumped over what should happen in the middle; create believable dialogue, have a grip on how to skillfully advance the storyline? Some authors claim to be “pantsers,” but maybe that’s best left to professionals who already have a long list of published novels.

For nonfiction hopefuls, what are your other interests? What are you now (or what can you become) an expert in, such that your writing has market value? I know a career law enforcement officer who regularly sells nonfiction pieces to environmental and outdoor-life magazines, because he is also an expert on snakes. Bernard De Voto, one of America’s most revered literary men of decades past—who served as editor-in-chief of the *Saturday Review of Literature*; wrote a monthly column for *Harper’s* for 20 years; was curator of the Mark Twain papers for a time, and published multiple articles and short stories in his era’s wide-circulation magazines—ached to be a novelist. He did write and publish several novels, none of which achieved commercial

success, because all of them somehow “just missed the mark,” according to his biographer.

But. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *Across the Wide Missouri*, the middle volume of his vividly written, nonfiction trilogy on the history of the American West, an interest of his since boyhood.

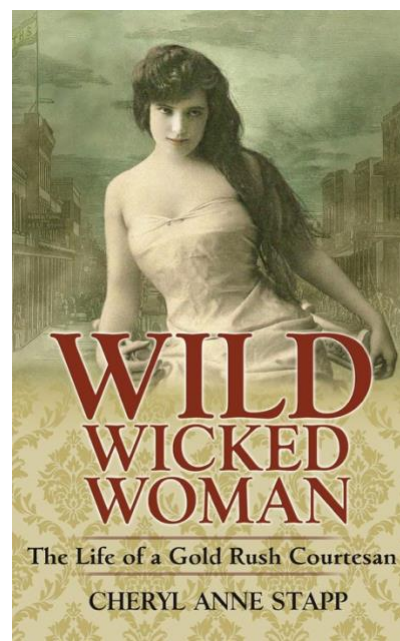
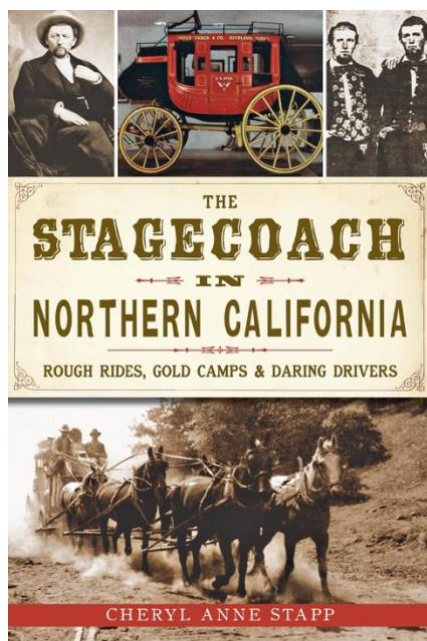
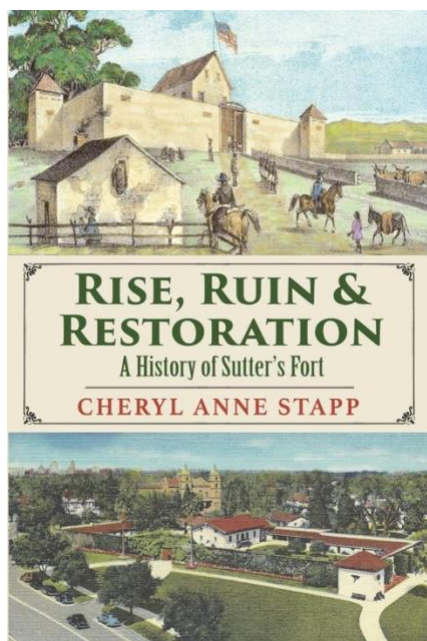
If you're still working full-time, don't quit your day job yet.

BIO

Cheryl Anne Stapp writes nonfiction California history. A native Californian who grew up in Carmichael, she graduated from California State University, Northridge, while working full-time in the Los Angeles entertainment industry. She lives with her husband in Sacramento—in bygone days, an important Gold Rush town—and facilitates CWC's monthly First Fridays Networking meetings. Her titles have won awards from the [Next Generation Indie Awards](#), and the [Independent Press Awards](#).

She is the author of [Wild Wicked Woman – The Life of a Gold Rush Courtesan](#); [Rise, Ruin & Restoration – A History of Sutter's Fort](#); [Before the Gold Rush - The Sinclairs of Rancho del Paso 1840-1849](#); [Disaster & Triumph: Sacramento Women, Gold Rush Through the Civil War](#); [Sacramento Chronicles - A Golden Past](#), and [The Stagecoach in Northern California: Rough Rides, Gold Camps, and Daring Drivers](#).

“California's Olden Golden Days” [website](#)



Where Do You Get the Ideas?

Often, I am asked where I get my ideas for articles. My answers run along such lines as nowhere, everywhere, articles, stories, vacations, suggestions, something that seems too simple for anyone else to write about. I have no one answer.

Several years ago, I vacationed around Salt Lake City. One of the sights to see was Promontory Point, the locations where the last crosstie was laid for the first transcontinental railroad.

At the time the spot was barren of anything except a small monument. Why, I wondered, would anyone in his right mind choose this place for the East and West to become one. Also, I noted from the inscription that the following May would be the centennial year for this important event—a good hook for a go ahead.

I could hardly wait to get home to do research. The material was exciting. And I wanted to write something about the railroad and sell it. So I chose Theodore Judah, the least likely worn-out subject connected with the railroad. I chose right.

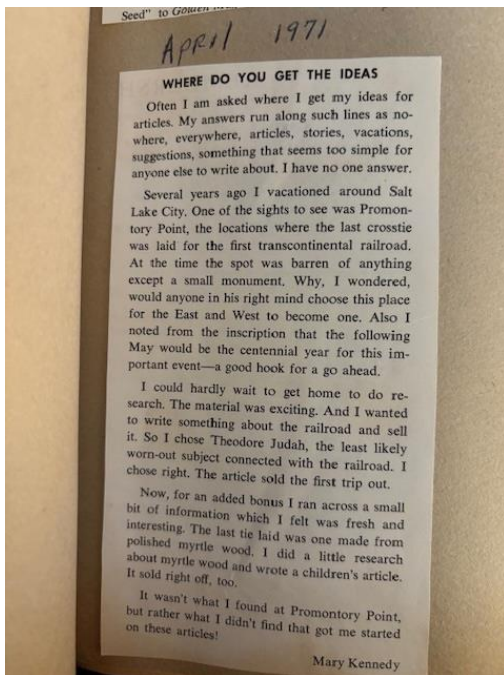
The article sold the first trip out.

Now, for an added bonus I ran across a small bit of information which I felt was fresh and interesting. The last tie laid was one made from polished myrtle wood. I did a little research about myrtle wood and wrote a children's article.

It sold right off, too.

It wasn't what I found at Promontory Point, but rather what I didn't find that got me started on these articles!

Mary Kennedy



This is an article, dated April 1971, was found in the California Writers Club archives by Kimberly Edwards. Kim photographed it with the idea of sharing it with the club. With the help of [Optical Character Recognition](#) we can present this in a more legible form.



Board of Directors

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POST SCRIPT

by William MacDonald

An author contacted us recently with a cautionary tale of her being exploited by a person posing as a literary agent. The lesson to be learned is, before contacting an agent or publisher, investigate them. If clients are listed, ensure they are legitimate. Search beyond the website of the agent and look for reviews or testimonials, either positive or negative.

Before signing a contract, read it thoroughly. Twice. Resist pressure to act quickly. Stay calm. Consider seeking legal advice.

If sending money for publication, use a money order, or a credit card that requires authorization for large amounts. The author mentioned earlier had an unauthorized \$4,000 charge on her card.

Avoid a similar fate by vetting potential agents.