



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

July 2023

KEEPING STORIES ALIVE: HISTORICAL ARCHIVING ON JULY 6



Daniel Stallings and Janis Kunz, shown here as past winners of the CLOTA Robe, one local example of historical archiving.

Ridge Writers president Daniel Stallings and vice president and youth coordinator Janis Kunz will partner to discuss the importance of historical archiving as a means of storytelling for our Thursday, July 6 general meeting that starts at 6:30 p.m. at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. The public is welcome. No charge for admission.

Bringing with them artifacts to show and tell, Janis and Daniel will share stories about their archival work, be it Janis' comprehensive website dedicated to *Misfits of Science* or Daniel's work preserving sixty years of CLOTA theatre work. They will relate it to the importance of building community, keeping the stories and work of people alive, resources for the future, and storytelling.

Daniel Stallings has served as the president of the East Sierra Branch of the California Writers Club since 2015. He has worked in theatre for the last sixteen years, filling every position from director, playwright, actor, producer, stage manager, publicist, and more. In 2015, he started Master Mystery Productions, which stages interactive mystery theatre around the West Coast. In February 2023, he was appointed the Historian for the Community Light Opera and Theatre Association (CLOTA). He is the 2015

Jack London Award Winner for the East Sierra branch, two-time winner of the Diamond Mask Award for his acting, a 2022 Director's Award winner for *Witness for the Prosecution*, and a two-time winner of the CLOTA Robe.

Janis Kunz is the 2023 Jack London Award Winner for the East Sierra and has been an active member of Ridge Writers, Master Mystery Productions, and CLOTA for several years. An actor and theatre artist, she has won the Skeleton Key Award from MMP, the 2019 MMP Founder's Award, the Diamond Mask Award for her acting twice, the CLOTA Robe, and the 2022 Firecracker Award from CLOTA. She works as the SDC Teacher at Richmond Elementary School.

Enjoy a walk down memory lane for the July 6 program and bring your friends!

A SECOND VIEW OF HOME

Report on the June Meeting written by Daniel Stallings



Daniel interviewing Liz and Mark at the June general meeting. Photo by Janis Kunz.

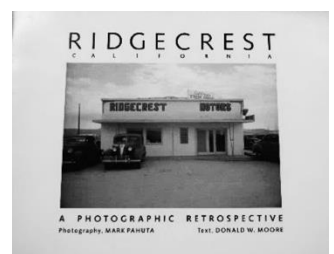
Collaborators Liz Babcock and Mark Pahuta took center stage as I interviewed them about their recently published book, *High Desert Double Exposures: A Photographic Retrospective of Ridgecrest and Its Neighbors*, and the process of working together to create it.

Double Exposures itself is a second look at a previous publication. In the late 1980's, Mark Pahuta worked on base and discovered the enormous archive of vintage photographs of the area. Inspired by photo retrospective books such as *Second View* and *In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell*, he decided to create his own work capturing photographic recreations of those vintage photos, a Herculean effort amassed in the first book, *Ridgecrest, California: A Photographic Retrospective* (pictured right). Donald W. Moore provided the captions and text for this first book.

Mark Your Calendar...

July 6 — Janis Kunz and Daniel Stallings on Historical Archiving

August 3 — Open Mic, members and guests read from their original work, light refreshments.



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Why do I write and what do I want to do with my writing career?



Stepping into my Newswriting classroom on the first day of high school, I immediately realized that I was the only freshman in a sea of upperclassmen. The daunting reality of being surrounded by older, more experienced students overwhelmed me, and I hesitated to speak up or take on any writing assignments, especially those requiring me to share my opinions. The fear of being criticized and receiving negative feedback haunted me, making it difficult to find my voice amidst my peers.

The pandemic hit hard during my sophomore year, and virtual lessons became a prison within the four walls of my bedroom. But I refused to be silenced. When my teacher asked for volunteers to write stories, I summoned all my courage and took a leap of faith. Finally, I started writing controversial stories. With each word, I felt like I was breaking free from the shackles that held me back. The sense of liberation was palpable, and I reveled in the power of my voice. Writing became my escape, my sanctuary, and my means of empowerment. It allowed me to share my thoughts and express my opinions, unafraid of judgment or ridicule.

My junior year as a journalist took a dramatic turn when one of my friends challenged my perspective on mask mandate protests in my town. Instead of approaching the situation with an open mind, I let my ego take over and engaged in a heated debate that quickly spiraled out of control. In a matter of hours, I watched as five years of friendship crumbled before my eyes, a painful reminder of the consequences of letting pride get in the way of understanding.

Now, as a senior and the Co-Editor-in-Chief of my school newspaper, my approach to writing has transformed. By striving for objectivity and impartiality, I have learned to approach controversial topics with a level head and an open mind. As I craft each story, I strive to present all sides of the issue, allowing readers to form their own opinions. Over time, consistently developing stories and navigating conflicts within the class has heightened my sensitivity to other viewpoints. The newspaper has become a haven for me and my peers to express ourselves freely and without fear of judgment. For the first time, heated debates transformed into insightful discussions.

As I prepare to embark on my next journey at UCLA, I'm aware that so many perspectives will emerge from an international scope. I am hoping to contribute to the LA community through *The Daily Bruin*, one of the city's most popular newspapers. With my writing as my weapon, I will strive to share my opinion and provide a platform for others to share their experiences and perspectives. For example, I'd like to share solutions I have for LA's homelessness crisis. For me, writing is not just a means of self-expression, but a way to uplift and empower others to foster meaningful change. Our differences make us unique; without them, we cannot grow and learn from one another.

Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings
Vice President – Janis Kunz
Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Treasurer – Andrew Sound
Member at Large – Monica Dwyer
Historian – Maryann Butterfield
Newsletter Editor – Daniel Stallings
Programs & Publicity – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
State Rep – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Youth Coordinator – Janis Kunz
Webmaster – Julianne Black

To reach any of these leaders, use ridgewriters@yahoo.com.

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters and our website CWC-ridgewriters.org.

SoCal Writers Showcase



The southern region of the California Writers Club maintains the “zine”-format socalwritersshowcase.com, containing monthly content from members, ranging from fiction, nonfiction/essays, and memoir, to poetry, interviews, discussion on writers' life, the craft, and news.

The Writers of the Purple Sage is the monthly newsletter of the Ridge Writers, East Sierra Branch of the 109-year-old California Writer Club. Except where otherwise stated, all articles in this publication may be printed without special permission in newsletters of branches of the California Writers Club and in the State Bulletin, subject to the following conditions:

- The author's name and original publication credit must be printed with the text.
- The text must be printed in its entirety, without additions or changes.
- You must send a copy of the newsletter bearing the reprint to the author.

Contact the editor by mail at P.O. Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA 93556 or by email, ridgewriters@yahoo.com. **SPECIAL NOTICE:** Photographs for publicity and newsletter uses are taken at all Ridge Writers events. By entering the venue, members and guests are granting permission that their likenesses may be used for publicity purposes.

While the premise of the project is simple to grasp—taking new photos in the sites of old photos as a before and after retrospective—actually accomplishing this feat was nearly “impossible,” according to Mark, as he couldn’t always line up his camera in exactly the same spot with modern roads and construction supplanting the old locations. He wanted to be as precise as possible with camera position and the lens he used. Mark said the key was the mountains. Mountains don’t move. By lining up our stunning topography, he was able to start matching up locations. After the first book sold out two printings, the negatives were sadly lost and the book couldn’t be reprinted. And then Don Moore passed away.

In looking to reexamine and recreate the book for today—now titled *High Desert Double Exposures*—Mark felt Liz was the only one who could match Don for the new captions. This time, the project went further afield and showed areas outside of the city of Ridgecrest. Liz also did the book’s layout (which she did concurrently with our veterans anthology, *Scenes from Lives of Service*), and she worked on giving this reimagined edition some organization that was missing from the earlier iteration. With the help of a map donated by the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, the book is now divided up by the different areas of the High Desert featured in the book.

Stories abounded about the challenge of recreating these historic images. One was Mark’s struggle to find the location of a photo of a lady and her horse and buggy supposedly coming “from church.” Liz mentioned one day there used to be a church in Grapevine Canyon, and Mark realized the buggy may not have been coming “from” the church but going “to” the church. Their collaboration was essential in helping the other locate places, organize the work, or provide content. Liz admitted she was a little “directionally-challenged” when needing to accurately write the locations in the captions, and Mark assisted her with some handy Googling. Everything came together to produce this spectacular book, published by The Maturango Museum.

Our Jack London Award Winners

We’re proud of the Ridge Writers who have won the Jack London Award, the highest recognition each branch of CWC can give outstanding members.

The award was presented annually until 2005, and subsequently only once every two years.

Maryann Butterfield 1997
Casey Wilson 1998
Rlee Peters 1999
Judy Dutcher 2000
Curt Danhauser 2001
Judy Martin 2002
Donna McCrohan Rosenthal 2003
Holly Dworken Cooley 2004
Liz Babcock 2005
Allison Aubin 2007
Steve Wersan 2009*
Margaret Luebs 2013
Daniel Stallings 2015
Julianne DiBlasi Black 2017
John Anderson 2019
Andrew Sound 2021
Janis Kunz 2023

*With a special Charmian London Award to Fran Wersan

When asked about collaboration itself, Liz humorously recounted two people at work trying to partner on a project and said she “would never collaborate with someone.” But she also said they key was establishing mutual respect, finding someone understanding and kind. “I trusted that he knew what he was doing, and he trusted that I knew what I was doing,” she said. We ended the evening with a video from Mark Pahuta showing the past photos fading into his present ones, a second view of our home and a poignant close to a fascinating program.

Junior Writers’ Story Bootcamp

*Four 1-hr sessions *Free *Writer’s Kit included (notebook, pencil, etc.)

WHERE: Ridgecrest Branch Library, 131 E Las Flores Ave, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

WHEN: During the Library’s summer program’s storytelling week: July 5, 6, 7, 8.
Grades K-5 @ 3-4pm each day
Grades 6-12 @ 4-5pm July 5, 6, 7; 3-4pm July 8

Day One: “How to Write Characters and Dialog”

An experienced writer and RW member gives a brief talk about what goes into designing, naming, and creating backstory for a character and their voice.

Day Two: “How to Write Plot and Action”

Armed with the characters from the previous session, JW’s learn how to write compelling plots and action sequences and how to avoid common pitfalls.

Day Three: “How to Write an Ending”

JW’s discuss endings to favorite stories (movies, cartoons, video games...). An experienced writer and RW member goes over what makes for satisfying endings.

Day Four: “Putting It All Together”

Time to bring all the pieces together of the original stories! An experienced writer and RW member discusses editing your work. Stories can be shared or read aloud by the JW’s for additional help and feedback.

Finished stories can be brought back to the Library’s book-making workshop for inclusion in the honors checkout selection.

DUES WILL BE DUE SOON

Membership dues for the California Writers Club, of which Ridge Writers is the East Sierra Branch, will be due starting July 1st. The dues are \$45 for the year (July 1st to June 30th) and grant you special perks such as newsletters, membership discounts for branch events, *The Literary Review* published by the CWC, access to be published on SoCal Writers Showcase, and more. If your membership expires, you will have to pay the additional \$20 initiation fee for a total of \$65 to rejoin. So plan to renew those memberships soon! Dues must be collected by September 30th at the absolute latest.

Ridge Writers does not endorse any contest, conference or publishing opportunity that appears in our newsletter. We merely collect and share news of opportunities for our membership. Member discretion advised.

The East Sierra Branch (Ridge Writers) is the California Writers Club branch serving the eastern part of Kern County. Over the mountains on the west side of the county is our Bakersfield-based sister branch, Writers of Kern.



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Ridge Writers Leaders

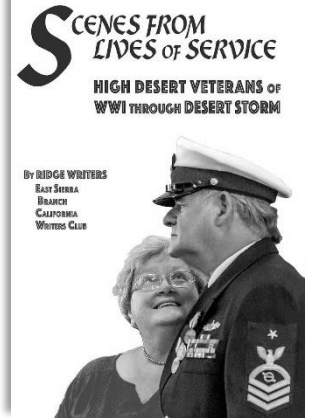
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Jack London Awards
Junior Writers’ Story Bootcamp

**2023 Jack London Award Winner,
East Sierra Branch**

Congratulations to **JANIS KUNZ**, who has been selected as the East Sierra Branch’s 2023 winner of the Jack London Award! Her commitment to the club and outreach programs over the past two years have been outstanding contributions to our club.

Every other year, each CWC branch may nominate one member to receive a Jack London Award in recognition of outstanding service to the organization. The award honors a member whose service to the CWC and/or a branch has been exemplary. The merit of the award is in the service, independent of writing accomplishments. It is not mandatory that a branch designate a recipient simply because the opportunity exists. The CWC president bestows the awards at the annual corporate meeting.



Cover Photo by Laura Austin

Our book featuring stories of High Desert veterans, *Scenes from Lives of Service*, is on sale at Red Rock Books and through mail order. To order through mail, send a letter and check to Ridge Writers, PO Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA, 93556; buyer should state name, mailing address, number of copies wanted, and enclose a check for \$32.50 each. Ridge Writers members can buy the book for \$25 each.

**The Ridge Writers
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California Writers Club
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