



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

November 2024

S. KAY MURPHY PRESENTS LEGENDS AND LEGACIES ON THURSDAY, NOV. 7

One of our all-time favorite speakers, novelist S. Kay Murphy returns to Ridge Writers for our Thursday, November 7 program. The general meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. No admission fee. The public is welcome.



The author of two memoirs as well as the Dragon Singer series for middle-grade readers, Kay will explore “Legends and Living Legacies” with a talk and workshop aimed to kick-start our getting serious about own family histories.

Kay launched her writing career as a freelance journalist but went on to research and publish *The Tainted Legacy of Bertha Gifford*, a chronicle of her search to find the truth about her great-grandmother, a woman accused of multiple murders in 1928. In *The Dogs Who Saved Me*, she recounts how six beloved and extraordinary dogs protected her and enriched her life. She donates 100% of the net proceeds of this touching memoir to animal rescue.

She loves kids, cats, dogs, giraffes, donkeys, cows, and dragons (not necessarily in that order), lives in Southern California with her two rescue dogs and “one very special black cat,” and on her website, after noting that you can purchase her titles online, adds: “But before you click that

‘Buy Now’ button, consider whether your money might be better spent keeping an independent book seller afloat. While small bookstores might not have copies of my books on the shelves, the books are always available for order.”

Expect an upbeat, informative, and energizing presentation on November 7 and please bring your friends. A book signing will follow.

VIVIANA HALL ON LOVE AND STRIFE IN TWO LANGUAGES

Report on the October Meeting written by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

Poet/author/journalist/clinical social worker Viviana Hall shared her poetry and a video for our October 3 meeting. The video, ranging from sobering shots of war and violence to tranquil brooks, illustrated selections from her new bilingual collection, *Poems of Love*.



*Viviana Hall poses beside her recently published poetry book, **Poems of Love**.*

Viviana, who has given presentations from Rome to Mexico to California, came to the U.S. in 1979. She always wanted to understand the pain and suffering in the world, and found that writing offered a source of understanding, compassion, and beauty. This led her to journalism and years in New York City as a press correspondent as well as host of her own TV show, one similar to “60 Minutes” but geared to the Latino community. When she branched out into clinical social work, she focused on people and the environment. She also did programs with the prison system.

We saw her deep concern for the human condition and our planet in her readings from *Poems of Love*

(inspired by Walt Whitman and his call to pass on the light we all have), for example in a poem about Ukraine where she says, “Freedom is not free.” In another vein, we experienced the sensual appeal of her words of love. One selection, “Love in the Time of Coronavirus,” combines emotions drawn from both love and our civilization, by wondering what we have learned, if anything, from Covid.

Mark Your Calendar...

November 7 – S. Kay Murphy, family legends and living legacies

December 5 – Member Holiday Party, members read from their own works, 5-7 minute limit, light refreshments.

January 9 – “New Year, New Work” Writing Workshop, hosted by Daniel Stallings

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Opportunity Seldom Makes House Calls

The cliché says when opportunity knocks, get up and answer the door. However, Opportunity is very busy and often can't commit to making house calls. That doesn't mean he's out of business. He just takes a little more effort to contact. This rehashing of a familiar metaphor is really trying to illustrate that opportunities don't always fall into your lap. As an aspiring writer, you've no doubt heard how challenging the world of publishing is, how it seems all those opportunities are shrinking. They aren't disappearing. They're relocating.



The key to uncovering those hidden opportunities is to put yourself out there. The landscape of our world is changing dramatically, the digital world providing new platforms, the nature of being a successful writer shifting and evolving like a living creature. Don't be afraid to get involved in this world, because it's where Opportunity is taking its siesta in between its intermittent rounds. And it's not just the Internet, but other media as well. Have you ever thought about film or live performance as writing? Have you considered getting involved in reading events? All of this increases your visibility and can open those doors you want. There's too much talent in this world to have it turn to dust in a hard drive. So don't wait for the opportunities to make the house call. Go out and seize them. *Create* some.

Being involved in Ridge Writers is already a great step to getting your work and your presence out into the world, attracting prospects for future work. We're always producing events for the public to help writers get noticed and spread our love of the written word throughout the area. So why not share your love too? These opportunities may not be handed to you; You'll have to go out there and take them. Writing partnerships, editors, beta readers, jobs...you name it!

I know, for me, that becoming active in Ridge Writers has changed my life and my career. So many doors have opened for me just this past year alone. And it's been a blast working to make it happen. But I had to take that first step. I had to create the opportunity. And you can too. Share your ideas, ask to get involved, show interest, help out. All of this will propel you toward those tantalizing opportunities we creative people adore. It can be frightening, but it's one hell of a ride. So get out there and get involved! Because Opportunity may have misplaced your home address.

First published in a previous edition of Writers of the Purple Sage. Daniel's got a pressing writing deadline to reach this month.

Grace Period for Membership Dues

The grace period for renewing membership dues for the California Writers Club has ended on September 30th. So if you need to renew your membership, it will be the full \$65 for the year to reinitiate into the club.

Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings
Vice President – Janis Kunz
Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Treasurer – Andrew Sound
Member at Large – Vacant
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 socialwritersshowcase.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 over 100-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.

Through her various activities, she reconfirmed her belief that poetry provides the bridge, “the language that talks to your heart.” Further, referencing Ralph Waldo Emerson, “we need to connect, and the universe is the truth that binds us all.”

She concluded the evening with a book signing. Having moved east to west, she now juggles a considerable load of responsibilities for the Coastal Dunes Branch of the CWC, located in Nipomo.

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CALIFORNIA WRITERS WEEK AT RIDGECREST BRANCH LIBRARY



On October 19, 2024, Ridge Writers hosted an event at the Ridgecrest Branch Library in honor of California Writers Week. Celebrating the upcoming re-release of our 2011 anthology *Planet Mojave*, now subtitled *New Horizons*, we invited our Ridge Writers members to share stories from both the original and upcoming edition. The pieces we shared ran the gamut of poems,

essays, fiction, thought pieces, articles, and the forewords of the East Sierra presidents at the time of both publications. Pieces were thought-provoking, sweet, heartfelt, sobering, funny, and introspective. Thank you to Janis Kunz, Davis Kunz, Rebecca Parker, Daniel Stallings, Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, and Jennifer Kunz (reading for Gerry Wisdom) for attending and sharing work at the event.



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Our Jack London Award Winners

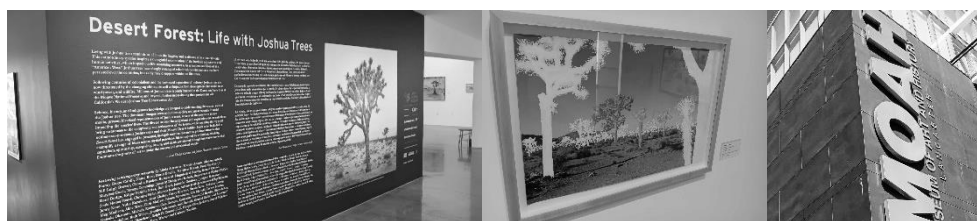
We're proud of the Ridge Writers who have won the Jack London Award, the highest recognition each branch of CWC can give outstanding members.

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

FIELD TRIP TO MOAH IN LANCASTER



On October 12, 2024, members of Ridge Writers and guests took a field trip to the Museum of Art and History (MOAH) in Lancaster to view their current exhibit DESERT FOREST: LIFE WITH JOSHUA TREES. It was a gorgeous exhibition with a wide variety in artistic styles and media--drawings, paintings, prints, photography, film, performance art, mixed media, embroidery, installation--on display. In some cases, art was made using desert sand, Joshua tree wood and seed oil, paper made from Joshua trees, and more. The collection was deeply diverse. We definitely recommend checking out the exhibition while you still can. The museum's admission is completely free, and this exhibition—DESERT FOREST—runs until December 29th.

More pictures from the field trip are on our Facebook page. If you are interested in future trips, let us know your interest at one of upcoming general meetings.



**Ridgecrest Branch
Library's
California Writers Display**



Thank you to Donna McCrohan Rosenthal for creating another wonderful and informative display about California writers in honor of the annual California Writers Week. We encourage our members to go to our library and see this display in the lobby and learn about the wordsmiths of our Golden State.

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.



**A BIG CONTEST FOR
SMALL
POEMS**

Sent to the Ridge Writers email: "Announcing a statewide CWC poetry contest beginning on October 1, 2024. Details are posted on the CWC website under CONTESTS: <https://calwriters.org/>

AWARDS

First Place \$100

Second Place \$50 Third Place \$25

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Submission period is October 1st to October 31st

\$10 submission fee for CWC members

\$20 for non-members

Maximum 8 lines per poem (please no Haiku or Tanka)

In addition to the 8 line poems, we will be accepting prose/flash of 75 words or less. This contest invites participation from writers of all genres. Any combination of prose and poetry in your submission is welcome.

Maximum 3 poems/prose poems can be submitted

Typeface: Times New Roman 12-point font

Format poems as Microsoft Word document

Multiple poems must be submitted in a single document

Each poem must have a title.

Poems must be original work of author.

Author name cannot appear in the Word Doc."

**SCENES FROM
LIVES OF SERVICE**
HIGH DESERT VETERANS OF
WWI THROUGH DESERT STORM

By RIDGE WRITERS
EAST SIERRA
BRANCH
CALIFORNIA
WRITERS CLUB



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.

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**The Ridge Writers
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