

July 2025

Suburban Scribe

Sacramento Suburban Writers Club (SSWC)|Newsletter

sactowriters.org

Join us on Monday, July 14, 7 - 9 pm, for our next writers' club meeting.

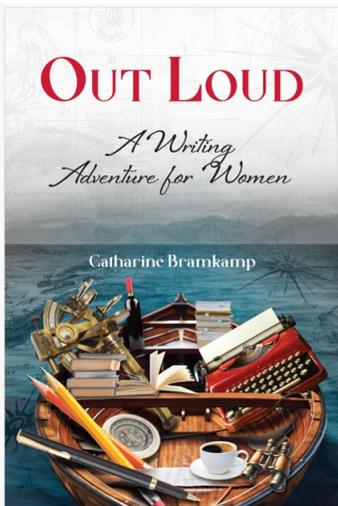
The speaker will be author Catharine Bramkamp.

Everyone is invited to join us at the Fellowship Hall of the Crossroads Christian Fellowship Church, 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks, California

Catharine is a world traveler, poet, and belly dancer.

In her free time, she serves as a writing coach and workshop facilitator. She has authored 27 fiction, non-fiction, and poetry books.

She has an MA in Creative Writing and her newest book *Out Loud* A Writing Adventure for Women came out in 2025.



Creativity in an age of False Perfection. In the face of AI does creativity and originality even have a future? Catharine will discuss technology, disruption, and how to attract your Muse.

Come be re-inspired and reassured that creativity is not dead and writers are not endangered.

Hope to see you there.

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SOMEONE IS NEEDED TO EDIT AND PUBLISH THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER.

IT IS NOT DIFFULT — IT JUST TAKES A BIT OF TIME, FOR ORGANIZING, SET UP, AND EDITING.

THE CLUB NEEDS YOU.

MINGLE IN JULY

Did you miss the last Mingle Meeting? Well, it seems almost everyone did. If so, you were missed by us. But, it is not too late to join us this month for an exciting and informative discussion on Plot Development.

****A drawing for door prizes will be held. Come for your chance to win ... and learn something new (or refresh the old). ****

Mingle Meeting — FREE!

SATURDAY, July 19, 2025

Plot Development — Ways to make readers eager to read your book, keep the action moving, and get them to finish, excited for your next publication.

9:00am to 11:00am.

Denney's Restaurant

122 Sunrise * Roseville, CA 95661

*We welcome seasoned
and novice writers!*

Workshop

Jake Armstrong and Mary Lou Anderson

Jake and M.L. will demonstrate how to add events to your calendar ... Not just for today, or tomorrow, or even just for next week.

We will demonstrate how to enter repeating appointments and meetings into your phone's calendar so you can live the easy life and not miss important events that occur, whether weekly, monthly, or yearly — and with only one (1, *uno, un, eins, een, один*) entry. .



Peace (Scholarship Entry)

Schonette Sanders

In a single moment, everything shattered. My world tipped, cracked, and collapsed beneath me. Normally, I would've scrambled to pick up the pieces, but now, I didn't have the energy. I'd spent so long trying to be the best, always pushing myself to the limit, but now I noticed how it drained me. Now, all that effort feels hollow. Empty. Strangely enough, I wasn't afraid anymore, I didn't have to fix anything anymore. For once in my life, the world finally went still, and I finally noticed how beautiful the sunrise is. The sun— a quiet beacon of light people hope to wake up to. It's such a beautiful star, shining from lightyears away, that everyone dreams of reaching. Including me. The world is so beautiful, especially with nature. But the noise— oh, how I hate the noise. But now? Not a single sound, not even from miles away. My mind was blank, my focus deteriorating. Maybe I'd gone deaf. Or maybe the world just decided I didn't need to hear it anymore. Either way, it oddly made me smile. For the first time in my life, I felt at peace.

Peace comes from within. At least, that's what they say. But do I even know what peace is? I've never felt it, not really. I've always been on high alert, braced for something. Anything. There was never time to feel close to peace. Now that it's quiet, it feels like something's missing. Something I'm supposed to have to make this peace real, but it's just... gone. The silence isn't comforting. Silence pressed against my ears like hands. Not comforting, but confining. Like the quiet you feel when something is watching. Quiet, like my classmates when I cried behind the bathroom stalls— I'm too fat, too meek, too different to matter. Quiet, like screaming during sleep paralysis— no sound, just danger creeping in like temptation. Can anyone hear me? Help me! Quiet, like the detention hall. It always smelled stale in there, as if the air forgot how to move. No windows. Just artificial light and those white, padded-looking walls, like a mock mental asylum. A room full of the "troubled." I sat in the far corner doing my classwork, keeping my head down until a large, wrinkled hand slammed on the desk. Was it a man? I didn't know, I couldn't stop staring at the glint on their ring finger. A golden band: marriage, love, passion. But when I looked up, all I saw was a face twisted in hate. Did she hate her job?

"What are you doing?" the woman asked, her voice sharp and accusatory.

I froze. Afraid to get into more trouble, I said nothing. Just held up the paper in my hand— my homework — and looked past her face. She adjusted her glasses, grunted, and walked away as if I were a nuisance in her presence. How did I end up there? That's a question I still ask myself. Maybe it was for being late again. Or because I nodded off in third period. It could've been anything.

"You're free to go now," she called out, already looking away. I packed my bag like we were about to evacuate, and quickly left for lunch. It was always a battle in the cafeteria, whether it be for the limited dishes, the drinks, food fights, or petty teenagers making you into the modern trashcan in the room. I knew not to sit by the popular kids, and the football team was even worse with their remarks. I searched for the table where I normally sit by myself, sighing in relief as I knew it was available. I quickly got in line to get whatever they're serving and grabbed my tray, unable to smell anything distinct, just the sterile scent of the cafeteria. Then I saw the neon-yellow macaroni, tiny tenders, green goop— none of it mattered. I didn't care about the food, not when no one cared about me. The lunch lady barely glanced at me before snapping, 'Next.' Maybe one day someone will care. I quickly went to my corner space, eating my lunch with distaste.

Neon-yellow slop pretending to be cheese. Pinkie-sized tenders— it looked like shrunken, decaying fingers. I forced one into my mouth and immediately regretted it. Why doesn't the school care about quality? Anyways, I finished eating, threw away the leftovers, and quickly went to my ELA class. As I was about to sit at my desk, I froze at the sight of the graffiti scrawled across my desk, reading "PIG" in a bold black. I didn't have the energy to tell my teacher about this. Every time this happens, I'm told to "use my words," "talk it out," or not to disrupt the class. I went ahead and left for the bathroom, planning to get some paper towels and wet them to clean off the words, but of course... she's here. I took a deep breath, prepared for any insult and planned to just ignore her, which worked out up until she got annoyed. The next thing I knew I was shoved against the stall with my arms up to block my face, succumbing to her yells and antics of how I was a nuisance, a waste of space, a pig, it just went on and on until she and her friend left, leaving me to sit on the damp blue tiled floor. I didn't even know I was crying until I felt the tears tickle my neck, wiping my eyes and taking a breath. I only need to survive a few more hours. A few more hours and then I'll be free. I continued with my mission, finally able to go back to class and clean off the desk before the lecture started. Surprisingly, I zoned out, looking out through the window as I enjoyed the sunlight. Maybe today will be better. Before I realized, the bell rang, dismissing the class. My teacher called me up with a disappointed look. I already knew I was in it for another mouthful, zoning out and only nodding when she told me I needed to focus more and take my studies seriously, as if I'm not passing her class. She caught me zoning out again. Her unreadable stare lingered before she shook her head, disappointed. I didn't care anymore. It was just another lecture, another reminder that I was falling short.

"I'll be calling your mother. At this rate, you might not graduate if you don't take your studies seriously..." Her words were drowned out by my loud thoughts, nodding slowly as I only thought of myself as a failure. About 5 minutes later, I looked up at the clock that felt as if it was still, reading 4:20 P.M. I had missed the bus. I prepared myself for a long walk, leaving my school campus and walking back home. My feet ached, sweat clung to my skin, but after what felt like hours, I finally reached home. A place of peace for many, but not much for me.

I knew my mother was going to have something to say, but I just wanted to enjoy the peace and quiet outside before then. After a couple of minutes, I gained some temporary confidence to walk inside. The door creaked eerily as I entered, my shoes clicking on the wooden floors as I gently closed the door. The familiar smell of beer and cheap perfume hit my nostrils, trying to warn me of what's to come. I looked around and saw that the only light source was from the television, lighting up my mother's dull expression. At first, she didn't say a word. I stood in the doorway in silence, my head down in shame, as I waited for her to say something. Anything. I anticipated hearing her smack her lips, but the soft swish of her drinking from the beer bottle was the only sound she made. As soon as I considered leaving, it was as if she knew, and then, she spoke.

"Your teacher called." She said without sparing me a glance. I smacked my lips, suddenly feeling as if I was dehydrated. "I don't know what's going on with you lately," she continued, still looking away. "Always getting in trouble nowadays. Zoning out. I've done so much for you just to deal with this almost on a daily basis now."

I opened my mouth, but nothing came out. How do you explain the weight of a sadness you can't escape, the ache of isolation that no one understands? It was times like these that I wished I could go far away and find peace. In the end, there's no point in defending myself. She'd either interrupt me or not listen. If only

she could listen to me for once. Hear me, help me, anything. I need my mom, and it always feels like I'm listening to the TV or talking to a brick wall. It makes me feel alienated. Do I belong? I don't even feel like her child; it feels like being stuck with someone who doesn't know me. I wouldn't even doubt it if she didn't remember my birthday. Before I could think any further, she spoke again.

"Are you on your phone during class? Is it a boy?" she asked with a sarcastic laugh, finally glancing at me.

I shook my head slowly. It felt nice for a short moment that she acknowledged my presence, but I couldn't help but frown. It felt like she knew I would never find anything close to a relationship. I never found it easy to find a lover, let alone develop friendships. I'm expected to be the best, as if I'm meant to take care of my mother for the rest of my life. The booze kept sinking into my nostrils as my face soured and scrunched up in disgust, hating the odor it produced. It was even worse because my mother's breath reeked of it.

"Well, you need to figure it out. You're not a child anymore. If you don't get it together, no one's going to want to deal with you. No wonder teachers complain about you. Do you even have friends? How about—" She cut herself off, taking a few gulps of her beer with a sigh and a burp.

Before she could finish, I fled upstairs, closing my door with a soft click. Once again, there was quiet. Not peaceful, not calming—just emptiness, a quiet that felt like torture. I've only thought about it, but now I crave that peace—I need it. If no one will help me find it, I'll do it myself. Maybe someone will help me before then. At least the sun will still be there at the end, and maybe I could be a star close by. Maybe then I'll be seen as beautiful. Maybe then people would look forward to seeing me. Maybe then people would be happy—no, maybe then I'll be happy. Yes, I'll be at peace.

The journal trembled in her hand, the once broken sobs now gone silent as the paper absorbed the few stray tears she let out. It was as if she were torturing herself as she reread the journal entries from start to end. She had finally sobered up for once—she was finally listening to what her daughter had to say, only that it was too late. Far too late. She closed the journal with trembling hands. The room felt colder now. Empty. Her daughter—A Daedalus trying to escape from her imprisonment to an Icarus falling from being too close to the sun. She gently closed the journal as she sat on her daughter's bed, finally realizing—no, knowing—she hadn't done enough.

"Can anyone hear me? Help me!" I'm here now.

"Maybe then I'll be seen as beautiful." You were always beautiful.

"Maybe someone will help me before then." I should've been here.

"Maybe one day someone will care." I care.

She looked up to the ceiling, muffling a sob as she clutched the journal to her chest.

"I'm sorry," she whispered.

Then silence. Heavy, still, eternal. Up until something whispered back from the quiet—

"I found it,"

The mother looked around, dread written in her eyes as her eyes widened in fear, a sudden scream being cut off as silence echoed in the house. Finally, there was peace.

"But no one else will."

The lights flickered out.

A Century of Writing Excellence in Sacramento
October 18, 2025 (California Writers Week)
North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave, Fair Oaks, Noon – 3 p.m.
cwcSacramentoWriters.org

Dear Ron and members of Sac Suburban Writers:

We are delighted to invite you personally to share in on our 100th year anniversary event, scheduled for October 18, 2025, noon-3 p.m., at the luxurious North Ridge Country Club. Our history is your history, as we salute those of all genres who value writing. Our purpose is to pay homage to the art we love. Take yourself back in time to 1925 and learn about writing, marketing, and publishing to better inform ourselves about the paths taken that have led us to the present.

“**A Century of Writing Excellence in Sacramento**” will feature a unique display of rare early magazines and books of members’ published work, accompanied by brief author bios. Some publications go as far back as 1917. We continue to search for books by early members. Attendees will also hear a program featuring a renowned line-up of prominent speakers, and will witness the Greater Sacramento awards, chosen by a Blue Ribbon panel, for organizations promoting the craft of writing improvement to children, incarcerated youth and adults, etc.

Taking the podium will be **Jack Ohman** Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist and columnist, **Sandra Proudman**, Literary Agent for Galt & Zacker, **Rich Ehsen** Editor-in-Chief of *Capitol Weekly* (and former Press Club President), **Carolyn Lynn Stevenson Grellas**, Editor for Kelsay Books, 13-time Pushcart Nominee, **Maryellen Burns**, Cultural Historian & Author/Publisher, and **Al González**, Executive Producer, Quad Air Communications. There will be more name to add.

Prestigious friends and partners include the **Crocker Art Museum; the California State Library, the Sacramento Library; and Center for Sacramento History**. Much gratitude is owed for their belief in local writers.

Learn how magazine and book writing, including memoir and poetry, intersects with journalism. By understanding the past and present trends, we can better navigate our success in the never-ending quest to improve our writing.

On the attached flyers, you’ll see a list of what attendees will receive. We surely hope to see you there, for you are an important part of the local writing legacy!

Sincerely,

Centennial Committee:

Kimberly A. Edwards Coordinator, Julie Snyder, Mari-Lynne Infantino, Ted Witt, Christine Brabham, and (100 Faces in 100 days Coordinator), on behalf of Bernard Wozny, President; Sandra Navarro Informal Consultant

Sampling of mid-century vintage books and magazines by Sacramento writers

Jenny Angel, Elsie Oakes Barber, 1954 (made into a movie); **The Tangled Web**, Estelle Urbahns, 1943; **Treasure Magazine**, Leo Rosenhouse, June, 1970; **Young Hawk**, Edna Walker Chandler, 1957; **A Portrait of Myself**, Winifred Madison, author of teenage novels, one of the first with an Hispanic protagonist; **The World of Cryogenics**, Waldo T. Boyd, 1968; **Banner Over Me, a Tale of the Normal Conquest**, Margery Greenleaf, 1968.

Which Club Members Have Published?

Check out the SSWC website — sactowriters.org

. You will find a list of members and their book on our club's website: <https://www.sactowriters.org/books-by-our-members/>

If you are a member and have published material, send the information to Wes Turner, including any links to your own website and/or to a site that sells your books (eg Amazon). His email is listed in our club roster. Wes will add your book(s) to the list.

R U Done Yet?

Have you finished another book? Had an article published recently?

Are you holding a Book Launch to let the world know what you have accomplished?

Let the other members and readers know with an article in the newsletter. (A new email address will be forthcoming.)

*Someone must be working on a book ...?
Where do you stand in the progress?
Just starting?
Almost done?
50,000 words in?
Searching for a publisher?*

Members — Wanna be Published?

Submit your own short story, article, poem, excerpt of your own book to the newsletter for publication. (Please keep it to under 450 or so words ... or it will have to be serialized.)

It would give you bragging rights as being published if you are going to be in contact with an agent and/or publisher.

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Note that the article to the left is directed to "members."

So, if you do *wanna be published* in future newsletters, make sure your dues are up to date.

HELP !!! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Calling all members — SSWC is in need of volunteers. You do have a few extra minutes once in a while, right?

Well, there is need for:

- Membership chair/co-chair
- Snacks/Refreshments
- Historian

- Nominations
- Publicity
- See back of last page for others.

No individual job takes a lot of time, and you learn a lot about the club, our members, and even more about writing by helping out.

Contact Ron Smith ... or any other Board member as listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Join the Club!

We are a vibrant club with active writers, have several critique groups (with room for more), and stay wonderfully supportive of each other.

SSWC supports local writers and encourages everyone to write and publish. Attending meetings is free, but membership brings benefits, such as publication in the newsletter and anthology, use of our club's library, qualification for grants to attend conferences (limits apply), and ability to join our first-class critique groups.

MEMBERSHIP is paid on a yearly basis. If joining after April, dues are prorated by quarter (unless you are just really late in maintaining your membership!).

_____ Individual \$40 / year

_____ Couple \$55 / year

_____ Full-Time Student \$30 / year

_____ Platinum Senior (70+) \$30 / year

More information is on our website: sactowriters.org

Name: _____ Genres: _____

Published? Y / N (yes, includes self-published) Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Website/other info/address (optional): _____

(We need a membership chair. Any volunteers?)

OFFICERS

Elected Officers:

President	Ron S
Vice President	Brittany L
Secretary	
Treasurer	Mary Lou A

Chairs:

Coffee/Treats	
Conferences	
Critique Groups	Brittany L
Historian	
Librarian	Brittany L.

Membership

Mingle	
Newsletter	
Nominations	
Prgm/Speakers	
Publicity	
Raffle	Cathy M
Scholarship	Karen S
Sunshine	Nan R
Website	Wes T
Workshops	Mary Lou

There's a spot in the list above for YOU!



WRITING PROMPT



This month's writing prompt is asking you to list the ways you could help the club.

We have several "officer" openings. If you have ANY interest at all in helping the club continue to succeed as well as it has over the last 70 years, search your brain and decide how you can help.

There are a lot of blank spaces in the column to the left, and some of those people would like a break.

So Stand Up. Help Out!

MEETING INFORMATION

7:00 - 9:00 PM

**Future Meetings:
Monday, July 14**

*We meet the second Monday each month, year round. Same time. Same place
5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks, CA
All writers are encouraged to attend.
Membership not mandatory but brings privileges
like publication in the newsletter!*