

September 2026

CWC Bulletin



Top News

Pages 1, 2: CWC
President's Message

Page 3: Branch News

Page 4: Conferences,
Contests & Publications

Page 5: Editorial Page

Page 6: California
Author Spotlight

Pages 7 - 9: Essays

Pages 10, 11: Flash
Fiction

Pages 12, 13: Poetry

Pages 14, 15: Long Prose

Pages 16, 17 : Short Prose

Pages 18 - 22: Member
Publications

Page 23: CWC
Leadership and Policies,
Board News



CWC President's Message

Welcome to our new July 2026 through June 2027 term. It's our 117th year as the California Writers Club. Over the years, many CWC members from the various branches have “walked the walk and talked the talk” before me, and I’m in awe of these extraordinary volunteers who gave of their time, energy, and knowledge.

Today I want to express my gratitude to those who have volunteered to serve on this year’s Executive Committee Board. Crissi Langwell from Redwood Writers has stepped into the VP position and will also keep the CWC website (www.calwriters.org) up to date and relevant. Evelyn LaTorre from Fremont Area Writers has agreed to be our secretary. She has been a valuable team member for the NorCal group. Bernard Wozny will continue as treasurer. He served as the president of the Sacramento Branch from 2022 to 2025.

Sandy Moffett from Writers of Kern will continue as member-at-large and the state membership chair. She brings her extensive knowledge of the old Member Records Management System (MRMS) and is excited to assist branch membership chairs in their duties.

Branch News

California Writers Week Sacramento Branch

California Writers Week encourages the people of our state to reflect on the contributions of California writers. This October 11-17 celebrates the 23rd anniversary of this special week created by a California Assembly resolution.

The CWC Sacramento Branch is taking this celebration community-wide, sending teams of writers to visit assisted living residences. CWC members will read excerpts from their writing and answer questions about the writing process. Some authors are planning to give away copies of their books.

Reading to seniors during California Writers Week is something other CWC branches might consider. What better way to showcase who we are and what we do, while giving back to our communities? Contact sacramentowriters@gmail.com to learn more.

Julie Snider

CWC Sacramento Branch member

Panel on Joan Didion

Lane Igoudin, Ph.D. (Orange County Branch) will be speaking on a panel, *Joan Didion: Writing California, Defining a Voice*, at the upcoming 29 Palms Book Festival (November 13-15, 2026 | www.29pbf.com) in San Bernardino County.

Lane is the author of *A Family, Maybe*, an emotional journey to fatherhood against many odds. He is a professor of English and Linguistics at Los Angeles City College. See more at laneigoudin.com.



Author Spotlight: Joan Didion

Chronicler of the Golden State's Shadow

By Lane Igoudin
Orange County Branch

Joan Didion is often thought of as the quintessential Californian writer. Much of the seven decades of her inquisitive writing centers on the perennial boom and zeitgeist of her native state. Is California, with its unparalleled immensity, diversity, and opportunities of fulfillment, the proverbial Garden of Paradise, “a dream teaching the dreamers how to live,” as she once wrote? Or just a front, a ramshackle stage set, behind which there is nothing but disconnect and solitude?

Didion probes California’s contradictions in her now classic essay collections *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and *The White Album*, the memoir *Where I Was From*, the novel *Run River*, and her movie scripts for *Play It As It Lays* and *A Star Is Born*. Born into a Sacramento family of wagon-train-pioneer background, Didion graduated from UC Berkeley and moved to New York, but returned to live in California throughout her life.

California shaped Joan Didion, and she, in some ways, shaped the way we see the state. Her style mixes personal and political, scholarly and judgmental. It goes beyond the surface events to explore larger connections, seek deeper truths.

Here is one example. Didion’s 1969 essay “Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream” brings us into San Bernardino Valley to report the story of a mother of three, who took a drive to the supermarket in the middle of the night and whose car caught on fire.

“For 75 minutes, Lucille Miller ran up and down Banyan [Street] calling for help, but no cars passed and no help came. At three o’clock that morning, when the fire had been put out and the CHP officers were completing their report, Lucille was still sobbing and incoherent, for her husband had been asleep in the Volkswagen. ‘What will I tell the children, when there’s nothing left, nothing left in the casket,’ she cried to the friend called to comfort her. ‘How can I tell them there’s nothing left?’”

This horrific incident soon morphs into a murder investigation. A love quadrangle, with the widowed Lucille in its midst, seems to offer the clue.

To Didion, this crime drama is deeply Californian, set against a desolate landscape of highways, churches, motels, and coffee shops, that empty out into the desert where “the subdivision flags whip in the harsh wind.”

The VW fire is a natural starting point for Didion’s essay. To Didion, fires are an integral part of California. They regularly burn down houses, strip malls, and the chaparral, but also the California Dream itself. “The city burning is Los Angeles’s deepest image of itself,” as she writes in *Los Angeles Notebook*.

Dreams are always about the future. They have no history, no sense of memory. Didion’s writing dissected the California Dream, illuminating its dark side, making something elusive into something permanent.



Joan Didion in Los Angeles on August 2, 1970
Kathleen Ballard, *Los Angeles Times*