

*“I used to be the fastest telegram messenger boy in all Fresno. My nickname was*



*“Speed.” Finally, I said, “Take back your nickname. This pace is killing me.” Anyway, I still write fast—it’s my impatient Armenian nature. I’m keen to find out how my plots end, and if I write faster I’ll find out sooner.”*

## SUGGESTED READING

### BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

**The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze and Other Stories**

**Essential Saroyan**; edited by William E. Justice

**Fresno Stories**

**The Human Comedy**

**My Name is Aram**

**Three Plays [Love’s old Sweet Song, My Heart is in the Highlands, and Time of Your Life]**

**The William Saroyan Reader** with introduction by Aram Saroyan

### ABOUT WILLIAM SAROYAN

**A Daring Young Man: a Biography of William Saroyan** by John Leggett

**Saroyan: a Biography** by Lawrence Lee and Barry Gifford

## ABOUT SAROYAN

**B**orn in 1908, Saroyan was the fourth child of Armenian immigrants. He never denied his heritage and his writings embraced his culture’s distinctive qualities as an inspiration to his writing. Saroyan’s cultural celebration was most notably apparent in his 1940 story, *My Name Is Aram*. Published in 1943, Saroyan’s novel **The Human Comedy** was adapted for the silver screen, starring Mickey Rooney. The film received five Oscar nominations, and won Saroyan the award for Best Writing Original Screen Story.

Along with his numerous short stories, novels, and screenplay Saroyan was a prolific playwright. His writing for the stage included: **My Heart’s in the Highlands, The Time of Your Life, Hello Out there!, The Cave Dwellers, and The Beautiful People**. Saroyan was the first American writer to win

both the New York Drama Critic’s Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for his play, *The Time of Your Life* (1939). Saroyan’s artistry extended into the visual arts and music as well.

The Fresno Art Museum exhibited his paintings for the first time during the 2002 William Saroyan Festival.

Based on an Armenian folk tune, Saroyan co-wrote **Come On-a My House** along with his cousin Ross Bagdasarian. It was the song that catapulted the career of Rosemary Clooney.

Saroyan died from cancer on May 18, 1981, in Fresno at the age of 72, about a mile from where he was born. His lasting words to the press in face of the inevitable were, “Everybody has got to die...but I have always believed an exception would be made in my case.” Half of his ashes were buried in California, and the remaining was interned in Armenia.



## SPECIAL SAROYAN EVENTS

### 24 HOUR READATHON

**Thursday & Friday, January 10 -11, 2008  
11am to 11am**

Saroyan’s works featuring many local celebrity readers  
George’s Bar & Grill, 6680 N. Blackstone, Fresno.

### CSU FRESNO STUDENT SATELLITE UNION

2485 E. San Ramon, Fresno | 488-3856

**Wednesday, April 23, 2008, 7 PM**

The Fresno County Library and Henry Madden Library invite you to a panel discussion featuring authors Aram Saroyan, Thomas Steinbeck, and Susan Cheever moderated by Steve Yarbrough. These authors are children of Pulitzer Prize winning authors (William Saroyan, John Steinbeck, and John Cheever). Learn what is like being the child of a celebrated author and how their fathers have inspired their writing. A book signing and refreshments will follow the program. Arrive early as seats are limited for this free program.

### THE HUMAN COMEDY

**Friday, April 25, 2008, 7pm**

The Friends of the Fresno County Library present a screening of **The Human Comedy** with special guest appearance by Mickey Rooney.

Movie Screening Only \$20

Movie Screening & Dessert Reception with Mickey Rooney \$50

Mickey Rooney appears under license authorized by CMG Worldwide, Inc. [www.CMGWorldwide.com](http://www.CMGWorldwide.com).

For ticket information call the Tower Theatre at 485.9050 or order tickets online at [www.TowerTheatreFresno.com](http://www.TowerTheatreFresno.com).

Central Branch Library  
2420 Mariposa Street | Fresno  
559.488.3195 | [www.fresnolibrary.org](http://www.fresnolibrary.org)

Fresno County Public  
**LIBRARY**



WILLIAM  
**SAROYAN**

100  
Years

LIBRARY

Fresno County Public

ENLIGHTEN • EXPERIENCE • ENTERTAIN • EXPLORE • ENLIVEN • ENRICH • ENHANCE • ENLIGHTEN • ENRICH • ENHANCE • ENLIGHTEN • EXPLORE • ENLIVEN • ENRICH • ENHANCE • ENLIGHTEN • EXPLORE • ENLIVEN • ENRICH • ENHANCE

## WOODWARD PARK REGIONAL LIBRARY

944 E. Perrin, Fresno | 433-3135

### Tuesday, March 11, 2008, 7 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

### Monday, April 14, 2008, 7 PM

Film historian Paul Kaser will discuss the Saroyan years in Hollywood, his works which were made into movies, and his relationship with famous stars and film studios. Film clips will be shown.

### Tuesday, April 22, 2008, 7 PM

Barlow Der Mugerdechian, CSUF faculty member in the Armenian Studies Dept., will lead a discussion on the book **Essential Saroyan**, a compendium of excerpts from Saroyan's fiction and nonfiction works along with selected short stories and plays. Register at Woodward Park Regional Library by April 1, 2008 and received a free copy of this book.

### Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 7 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

### Sunday, September 7, 2008, 2 PM

Actor and drama professor Todd Wronski will perform a one man show based on the life of William Saroyan.

## SUNNYSIDE REGIONAL LIBRARY

5566 E. Kings Canyon, Fresno | 255-6594

### Wednesday, March 19, 2008, 6 PM

Film showing **The Time of Your Life**. Based on the Pulitzer Prize winner play written in 1935, this film set in San Francisco at Nick's Bar captures the mixture of melancholy and hope that emerged between the Great Depression and World War II.

### Tuesday, April 29, 2008, 7 PM

Barlow Der Mugerdechian, CSUF faculty member in the Armenian Studies Dept., will lead a discussion on the book **Essential Saroyan**, a compendium of excerpts from Saroyan's fiction and nonfiction works along with selected short stories and plays. Register at the Sunnyside Library by April 1, 2008 and received a free copy of this book.

### Tuesday, May 13, 2008, 7 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

### Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2008, 7 PM

Actor and drama professor, Todd Wronski will perform a one man show based on the life of William Saroyan.

## CLOVIS REGIONAL LIBRARY

1155 Fifth Street, Clovis | 299-9531

### Thursday, March 13, 2008, 7 PM

Film historian Paul Kaser will discuss the Saroyan years in Hollywood, his works which were made into movies, and his relationship with famous stars and film studios. Film clips will be shown.

### Monday, March 24, 2008, 7 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

### Thursday, April 10, 2008, 7 PM

Film showing **The Time of Your Life**. Based on the Pulitzer Prize winner play written in 1935, this film set in San Francisco at Nick's Bar captures the mixture of melancholy and hope that emerged between the Great Depression and World War II.

### Thursday, May 15, 2008, 7 PM

Film showing **The Human Comedy**- This 1943 film starring Mickey Rooney tells the story of a young telegraph worker who looks after his widowed mother and siblings while his brother is off fighting the War.

## KERMAN LIBRARY

15081 W. Kearney Plaza, Kerman | 846-8804

### Tuesday, March 4, 2008, 6 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

## REEDLEY BRANCH LIBRARY

1027 E Street, Reedley | 638-2818

### Thursdays: March 6, 20; April 3, 17, 2008

Librarian Ernst Vitovec will lead an in-depth discussion over four evenings of the book **Essential Saroyan**, a compendium of excerpts from Saroyan's fiction and nonfiction works along with selected short stories and plays. Register at the Reedley Library by February 15, 2008 and receive a free copy of this book.

## SANGER BRANCH LIBRARY

1812 7th Street, Sanger | 875-2435

### Monday, April 14, 2008, 7 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how

Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

### Monday, May 12, 2008, 7 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

## FIG GARDEN REGIONAL LIBRARY

3071 W. Bullard, Fresno | Phone: 438-4071

### Tuesday, March 25, 2008, 7 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

### Thursday, April 3, 2008, 7 PM

Film showing **The Time of Your Life**. Based on the Pulitzer Prize winner play written in 1935, this film set in San Francisco at Nick's Bar captures the mixture of melancholy and hope that emerged between the Great Depression and World War II.

## GILLIS BRANCH LIBRARY

629 W. Dakota, Fresno | 225-0140

### Thursday, April 3, 2008, 7 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

## CARUTHERS BRANCH LIBRARY

13357 S. Henderson, Caruthers | 864-8766

### Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 4 PM

Film showing **The Time of Your Life**. Based on the Pulitzer Prize winner play written in 1935, this film set in San Francisco at Nick's Bar captures the mixture of melancholy and hope that emerged between the Great Depression and World War II.

## SELMA BRANCH LIBRARY

2200 Selma Ave, Selma | 896-3393

### Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 7 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. will present a multi-media program entitled, "Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno". Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

## AUBERRY BRANCH LIBRARY

33049 Auberry Road | 855-8523

### Wednesday, April 2, 2008, 6:30 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

### Wednesday, September 17, 2008, 6:30 PM

Chris Henson, CSUF faculty member, will lead a discussion on the book **Essential Saroyan**, a compendium of excerpts from Saroyan's fiction and nonfiction works along with selected short stories and plays. Register at the Auberry Library by September 1, 2008 and received a free copy of this book.

## BEAR MOUNTAIN BRANCH LIBRARY

30733 E. Kings Canyon, Squaw Valley | 332-2528

### Saturday, May 17, 2008

#### Potluck Dinner 6 PM Program 6:45 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

### Saturday, September 20, 2008

#### Potluck Dinner 6 PM Program 6:45 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

## KINGSBURG BRANCH LIBRARY

1399 Draper, Kingsburg | 897-3710

### Thursday, April 24, 2008, 6:30 PM

Join the Kingsburg Library Book Club in discussion of William Saroyan's "The Human Comedy" led by Faythe Arredondo.

## LEO POLITI BRANCH LIBRARY

5771 N. First Street | 431-6450

### Monday, April 21, 2008, 3:30

Armenian Mania! Celebrate William Saroyan's Armenian heritage with stories and fun for preschool and school-age children.

## CEDAR-CLINTON BRANCH LIBRARY

4150 E. Clinton | 442-1770

### Thursday, April 17, 2008, 7:00 PM

**Three Apples Fell From Heaven;** Celebrate traditional Armenian tales with storyteller Terrance McArthur.

## CALIFORNIA ARMENIAN HOME

6720 E. Kings Canyon, Fresno | 251-8414

### Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 6:30 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

### Wednesday, September 10, 2008, 6:30 PM

Local actors will perform a reader's theater production of a Saroyan work. A group discussion will follow the play. (Specific Work TBA)

## SAN JOAQUIN GARDENS

5555 N. Fresno Street | 439-4770

### Thursday, March 27, 2007, 6:00 PM

Fresno historian William Secrest, Jr. presents a multi-media program entitled, **Saroyan: The Man and His Fresno**. Learn how Saroyan, born in Fresno, traveled the world, rubbed elbows with celebrities, and received international accolades for his writing.

“ In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite variety and mystery of it. ”