ABOUT SAROYAN

Born 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
For ticket information call the Tower Theatre at 485.9050 or order tickets online at www.TowerTheatreFresno.com.

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

“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.”

Central Branch Library
2420 Mariposa Street | Fresno
559.488.3195 | www.fresnolibrary.org
Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2008, 7 PM
Actress 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 work which were made into movies, and his relationship with famous stars and film studios. Film clips will be shown.

Tuesday, 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.

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

Tuesday, May 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.

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.

KERMANN LIBRARY
15081 W. Kearney Plaza, Keramn | 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.

REDELLY BRANCH LIBRARY
1027 E. Street, Reedley | 638-2818

Thursdays: March 6, 20; April 3, 17, 2008
Librarian Ernst Votava will lead a 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 Reddelly Library by February 15, 2008 and receive a free copy of this book.

SANGER BRANCH LIBRARY
1872 E. Center Grove Rd, Sanger | 875-2425

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.

Sunday, May 14, 2008, 7 PM
Actor and drama professor, Todd Wronski will perform a one man show based on the life of William Saroyan.

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

Tuesday, 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
307 W. Bullard, Fresno | Phone: 438-4071

Tuesday, May 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. Dokato, 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)

LEO POLITI BRANCH LIBRARY
5771 N. First Street | 431-6450

Monday, April 21, 2008, 7:30 AM
American Saroyan! 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 heritage with stories and fun for preschool and school-age children.

CALIFORNIA ARMENIAN HOME
6729 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, 2008, 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."