

Jack Winer: Volunteer Extraordinaire!

In 1988, Jack and Carolyn Winer made a few stops along the way, but finalized their retirement years in San Carlos in 1987. How lucky we were!

As it happened, their new home was in walking distance to the San Carlos Branch Library. A life long, avid reader and quoter of well-known authors, Winer became a regular figure at the Branch, a member of SCFOL, its Vice-President in 1989, and in 1993 he was tapped to be SCFOL's President. SCBL staff member, Zelia Thompson told us that Jack always took time to talk with the staff and thank them for their dedication to the library and its patrons.

In 1991, lacking space to house its growing materials collection and program offerings, SDPL's Master Plan called for the building of a new San Carlos Branch Library. Any available land in San Carlos was grabbed up fast by developers.

As our luck would have it, the ARCO gas station and Mini mart on the corner of Golfcrest and Jackson adjacent to the library closed due to leakage of their underground storage tanks. Who would buy a contaminated lot?

The property sat vacant and vandalized; Jack Winer went into action. With the assist of local attorney and then SCAC President Stan Zobel, Winer set off to see how they could buy the lot and make the SCBL expansion become a reality.

Winer realized two things: the lot's location was perfect for the Branch's expansion, and the City would not be able to build immediately, giving Arco time to mitigate the lot before purchase. A unique opportunity for both the City and ARCO. A win-win.

In 1994, Winer's "lot purchase" campaign began by gaining the support of City Councilmember Judy McCarty, City Librarian Bill Sannwald, past SCFOL President and then Executive Director of FSDPL Betty Sherman, Mayor Susan Golding, City Manager Jack McGrory, and ARCO's personnel including Don Althouse, Craig Yamasaki and Lod Cook then Chairman of ARCO Corp.

The agreement called for ARCO to continue the lot's mitigation and the City would lease the property for \$1/year with an option to buy the lot for \$150,000 (half the then -fair market price) upon a "No Further Action" report by the County's Water Quality Control Board. In a public ceremony held July 20, 1995, the deal was sealed when Councilwoman Judy McCarty handed to ARCO executive Alex Goldstein a \$5 bill for the City's rental of the lot for 5 years (the expected mitigation timeline). Mitigation took 28 years! In 2022 the Water Authority declared "No Further Action Needed," and on August 5, 2023, the City held a 'WE BOUGHT the LOT" celebration. We wish Jack could have been there, but he was well represented by his SCFOL Life Member sons Michael, Rocky and Gene Winer.

But WAIT! There's MORE!

- In 1994: Winer secured funding (\$8000) from the Coleman Foundation for a student education center at the San Carlos Branch Library.
- In 1997: Winer created the "Writing for Literacy Essay Contests for 4th, 8th, and 10th graders in the Henry



cluster schools.

- 1998-2017: the Annual Writing contest spread to include students from 165 public and 70+ private schools in San

Diego.

- 1999: Winer's enthusiasm made San Carlos Friends of the Library the most active and largest FSDPL chapter with 560 annual member and 14 Life Members. Today SCFOL has 146 Life Members whose names are on the Honor Wall in the WINER FAMILY COMMUNITY ROOM & ART GALLERY. The room was named in his honor during the Branch's 40th anniversary celebration in 2014.
- 1999-2001: Jack Winer served as President of the Friends of the San Diego Public Library (FSDPL) and helped secure funding for all San Diego Public Libraries.
- June 4, 2001: San Diego City Council proclaimed it Jack J. Winer Day. This day coincided with the City Council's increase in funding for the City's Public Libraries.
- February 2, 2002: With the too soon passing of Jack Winer at age 63, SD libraries lost their staunchest advocate. We remember Jack with thanks and awe. We keep close to our hearts his favorite quote from the last lines of Lord Tennyson's *Ulysses*:

"Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will.

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."