



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

Los Angeles author Karen Kondazian talks about her new novel, "The Whip," Wednesday at Watsonville Public Library.

New novel based on stagecoach whip

Author hosts book signing in Watsonville

By TARMO HANNULA
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Author Karen Kondazian launched "The Whip," a historical fiction novel about famed stagecoach whip Charley Parkhurst, Wednesday at a book signing in Watsonville.

"The Whip" was inspired by the true story of Charlotte "Charley" Darkey Parkhurst (1812-79), who lived most of her life as a man in California.

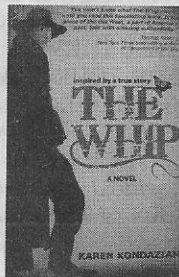
Parkhurst became a renowned stagecoach driver for Wells Fargo. She killed a famous outlaw, had a secret love affair, and lived with

a housekeeper who, unaware of her true sex, fell in love with her, Kondazian said.

It wasn't until Parkhurst died of cancer in 1879 in Watsonville that it was discovered he was a woman who had maintained a false identity as a man.

At the signing, Kondazian addressed a group of about 40 people and told them that Watsonville was the first book signing she chose because it is key to Parkhurst's life and death.

"The novel took me six years and 27 drafts to complete," Kondazian said. "I thought I'd never be able to let go of it. Charley Parkhurst was a survivor. This is not just a story about Charley; it's a story about forgiveness and survival. Can you get up after a great loss and put your arms around life?"



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