

reading the *grapes of wrath*

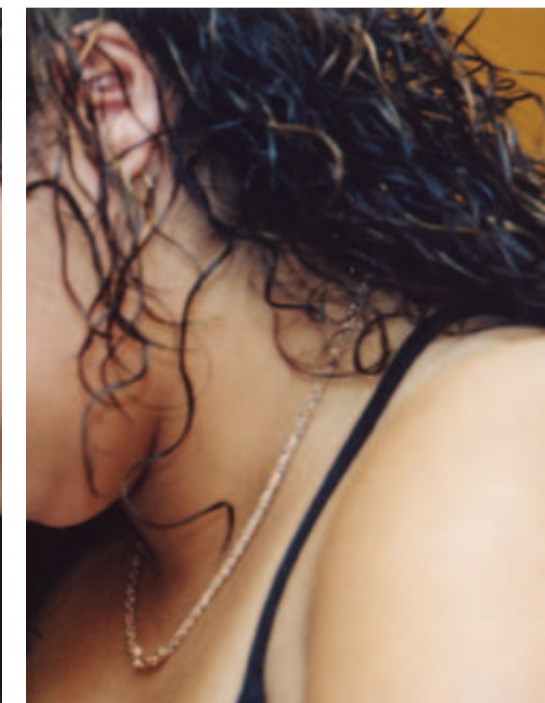
Unprecedented statewide
reading and story-sharing program
draws large audiences

The inaugural campaign of California Stories, Reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, engaged thousands of Californians in reading John Steinbeck's novel about California migrants and exploring its relevance to today's California. The months of October and November 2002 were packed with more than 800 events around the state, from book discussions and film series to live performances and poetry slams. Book discussions took place in six languages other than English, including Arabic, Vietnamese and Korean.

In Los Angeles, L.A. Theatre Works produced a weeklong run of Frank Galati's Tony Award-winning play *The Grapes of Wrath*. In Fresno, people turned out at a Krispy Kreme doughnut shop to participate in a 24-hour read-a-thon of the novel, and in San Francisco, Studs Terkel appeared in a special CCH-sponsored evening of conversation

with writer Calvin Trillin. A number of prominent individuals supported the program, including Maria Shriver, Rob Reiner, Rita Wilson, Sharon Davis, U.S. Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, and 24 congressional representatives.

The campaign garnered extensive press coverage and generated interest statewide. For the first time since it was published, more than 60 years ago, *The Grapes of Wrath* reached the bestseller list in California, and Penguin Books, an early program supporter, was prompted to issue the first Spanish-language edition of the novel for the U.S. market.



Above: CSU Fresno student Diana Godnez works on a poem during "Grapes of Write," an afternoon of poetry readings and writing workshops at Artes Americas, the major Latino arts center in Fresno.

Left: The Fresno County Library's *Grapes of Wrath* read-a-thon at a local Krispy Kreme attracted enthusiastic Steinbeck fans.

Far left: Jeffrey Donovan and Shirley Knight starred in a special L.A. Theatre Works production of Frank Galati's *The Grapes of Wrath* to benefit CCH.