

April, 2021

Suburban Scribe

Newsletter of the Sacramento Suburban Writers Club

sactowriters.org

Emily Blodget will speak to SSWC during our Zoom meeting on Monday, April 12, 2021

Emily Blodget is a California State Documents Librarian in the California State Library's Government Publications Section. She grew up in Folsom, which makes for fun conversations with out-of-state acquaintances: Yes, it's the town with the prison, but no, she hasn't been to Folsom Prison, and no, she didn't shoot a man in Reno.

After two years in the Great Books Program at St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM, Emily graduated from UC Davis with a bachelor's degree in early modern European history before getting a master's degree in library and information science from Drexel University. She enjoys helping people find all sorts of information in government documents, from historical rabies statistics to zombie apocalypse survival tips (really), and thinks more people should be using these as writing inspiration—because honestly, some government documents are weirder than speculative fiction.



As writers, you're always on the lookout for inspiration and those little details that make your fiction come alive. Here's an unexpected resource for both: government publications.

Whether you need to know how to prepare wine-fried muskrat, how to operate the Apollo lunar module, or how much sugar a saboteur should pour into in a gas tank (don't try this at home), there's probably a government publication to help you out—as writers like Michael Chabon and Lin-Manuel Miranda (who both drew on government publications in award-winning works) could attest.

Many government publications are in the public domain as soon as they're created, and you may have the right to free public access even to those that aren't. This means you can often find free, full-text copies online—and you have a lot of freedom in how you use and adapt them.

If you aren't sure where to start, there are dedicated networks of libraries which collect government publications and librarians to help you find them. Join me to discover the vast, varied, and surprisingly quirky world of government publications!

Zoom Meeting Info — Briefly

Join us on Monday, April 12 at 7 p.m. for the next SSWC meeting.

AT 6:55 pm. [CLICK HERE TO JOIN THE 7 pm MEETING](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84234186970?pwd=NC9CMUovNHZ5TGhCcit4ZGxKQ1pDZz09) —

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84234186970?pwd=NC9CMUovNHZ5TGhCcit4ZGxKQ1pDZz09>

More details for joining the meeting are on page 2.

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ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS FOR JOINING MONDAY'S SSWC MEETING

Date: Monday, April 12, 2021
 Topic: Ronald Smith's Zoom Meeting
 Time: 7:00 PM



Join SSWC Zoom meeting live on Monday, April 12th at 7 pm until about 9 pm.

How? Easy — click on the link below, and you will join the fun.

Hello, SSWC members and friends. Another zoom meeting approaches, and I hope to see everyone online. Join us as we "mingle" with each other and learn from another great guest speaker. Take care my friends:

Topic: Sacramento Suburban Writers Club Zoom Meeting
 Time: Apr 12, 2021 7 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

To join zoom meeting click on link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84234186970?pwd=NC9CMUovNHZ5TGhCcit4ZGxKQ1pDZz09>

Or log on to your zoom account and enter:

Meeting ID: 842 3418 6970
 Passcode: 439402

Ronald Smith, President SSWC



Last month's "contest" was to find "the big typo" and it was those exact words that were included in one of the articles. Those who found it and responded were --

Laura Kellen
 Jerry Matlin
 Bernard Wozny

Mort Rumberg
 Jennifer Helgren

Laura's name was drawn to receive a \$20 gift card from Amazon.

Will you be next member to win? Find the secreted word included somewhere in this newsletter and send an email to me (mledsonanderson@yahoo.com) telling me exactly where you found it. Include "SSWC Found It!" in the subject line.

This is probably the last contest since I can't afford to keep doing this — in other words, I'm too cheap to keep doing this! I just want everyone to read through the entire newsletter.

Your story, poem, or article ... next month ... goes here.

Are You Feeling Old Yet?

Submitted by Eva Wise



Each year the staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin puts together a list to try to give the faculty a sense of the mindset of that year's incoming freshmen.

Here is a list from 20 years ago:

1. Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave.
2. They have no meaningful recollection of the Reagan Era and did not know he had ever been shot.
3. They were prepubescent when the Persian Gulf War was waged.
4. Black Monday 1987 is as significant to them as the Great Depression.
5. There has been only one Pope. They can only really remember one president.
6. They were 11 when the Soviet Union broke apart and do not remember the Cold War.
7. They have never feared a nuclear war. "The Day After" is a pill to them, not a movie.
8. They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up.
9. Tianamen Square means nothing to them.
10. Their lifetime has always included AIDS.
11. Bottle caps have always been screw-off and plastic recycled.
12. Atari pre-dates them, as do vinyl albums.
13. The expression "you sound like a broken record" means nothing to them.
14. They have never owned a record player.
15. They have likely never played Pac-Man and have never heard of Pong.

Feel old yet? More to come in next month's newsletter.

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Comma Rule Review Joining Sentences into One

The Grammar Guardian

M. L. Edson



We've covered commas used in interjections and direct address. Do you remember those rules? If not, you can review them. Past newsletters are available on the SSWC website—sactowriters.org/newsletter/.

This comma rule will allow you to make longer sentences. Remember, using shorter sentences builds tension in your writing. However, there are times you want to, and *should*, combine two sentences into one, such as during quieter or more contemplative times.

Generally, any time you join two sentences with the conjunctions "For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, and So" (mnemonic: FANBOYS), you put a comma between them. (Of course there are exceptions! But usually this is true.)

This is more than combining "They run." and "They jump." into one sentence — "They run and jump." This is when you have two complete sentences, and you want them together for smoother action, smoother continuity, smoother reading.

"The clock chimed ten times. It was time to put their nefarious plan into action."

With the two sentences above, you can join them with a conjunction and a comma:

"The clock chimed ten times, so it was time to put their nefarious plan into action."

Both parts of the one sentence above retain their subject and verb; they're just combined into one sentence. (This last sentence has a semicolon because the conjunction was left out. We'll cover that later.)

UNJUST 'JUSTICE': THE WATTS TRIAL

Pat Biasotti



Shakespeare said, "All's well that ends well." Not so. Quinton Watts may be out of prison, but he can never recoup the twelve lost years of his three daughters growing up, the eldest now nineteen. When released he couldn't wait to "go home and see my beautiful girls. It's a dream come true."

The previous article detailed Edric Cane's investigation into what he characterized as such an atrocious defense during the trial that "I was shocked. It was my first encounter with the American justice system." That trial resulted from a terrible crash in October, 2008, involving a casino bus with 42 passengers and Watts the driver. The accident occurred on a narrow Yuba County road bordered by a ditch and a rice paddy. Watts had driven Daniel Cobb's (his father-in-law's) bus several times to the Thunder Valley Casino, but this was his first trip to the Colusa Casino. Cobb sat behind him giving directions. Suddenly the bus started drifting toward the ditch. Several passengers noticed in the mirror that Watts' eyes were closed. Cobb stood, grabbed the wheel, and shouted at Watts to wake up. Screams and shouts couldn't awaken him and the brakes were never applied. Cobb stood beside Watts, trying desperately trying to regain control. The bus veered back and forth on the road for a half mile before finally crashing down into the ditch. Watts was catapulted through the windshield. Cobb died along with 10 others, and 21 passengers were seriously injured.

The only memory Watts has of the crash was waking up in the mud, dazed, his head gashed, and left arm split down to the bone. Among the trial irregularities, the only witness called by Watts' extremely inept public defender was the EMT who assisted him in his shocked and injured state and drove him to the hospital. Watts didn't know what had happened or where he was. Watts is Black, from Stockton, and the trial was held in a county which had a miniscule Black population. The jury was all white. Obvious questions were not asked and alternative explanations not even considered. Incriminating testimony was presented to the jury unchallenged by flagrant contradiction to earlier *recorded* testimony by the same witness. However, the crucial flaw was the omission of Watts' history of seizures. A physician's assistant had mistakenly approved the DMV application for Watts' commercial license when knowing about his seizures. (Watts had been a truck driver for years, but *blackouts* started after he was battered severely for defending a young girl.) The California Medical Board eventually reprimanded the physician's assistant for this.

His doctor had prescribed medications for his high blood pressure and diabetes, but never gave him medication or informed him about the seizures. However, Watts trusted his doctor.

Guilt will probably shadow him the rest of his life. Shaking his head he exclaimed, "That was a terrible accident. It should never have happened, and I just pray that somehow, someway they can forgive me for even being involved in that."

When the Head of the California Department of Corrections intervened, Watts' sentence was reconsidered and he was subsequently released. Quinton Watts may have been released from prison, but the big question arises: how many more are languishing in prison because of unjust *justice*.

The author needs to credit Edric Cane for contributing crucial trial evidence to this article.

Blogs Anyone?

If any of you members of SSWC have a blog, let me know, and I'll post it here in the newsletter each month.

A blog can increase your visibility as an author, gain followers, and maybe even increase sales.

Right now, I only know of two members who have them, so here they are.

Dave Wheeler has this one:

TheWriteDave.com

I'm waiting to hear from the other member to be sure she's willing to have it listed here.

Let me know what your blog link is, and I'll add it and the secreted word to this list.

This topic will probably be covered in a future workshop.

Antigonish [I met a man who wasn't there]

William Hughes Mearns (1899)

Shared by Mort Rumberg

Yesterday, upon the stair,
I met a man who wasn't there
He wasn't there again today
I wish, I wish he'd go away...

When I came home last night at three
The man was waiting there for me
But when I looked around the hall
I couldn't see him there at all!
Go away, go away, don't you come back anymore!
Go away, go away, and please don't slam the door... (slam!)

Last night I saw upon the stair
A little man who wasn't there
He wasn't there again today
Oh, how I wish he'd go away...

This poem is in the public domain.

Trying to figure out what this is about?
Think psychology: It's really about schizophrenia, although some say it's just nonsense.

Take It Off! Take It Off!

Jeannie Turner

Air, air, glorious air!
I guess you've always, always been there
But never before did I seem to care
About my breathable air

But now that wearing the hateful mask
Is a burdensome chore and my daily task
There's nothing more that I could ask
Than inhaling the marvelous air



COPY AND DEADLINES

Submit **original** written and edited/corrected material such as: poems, letters, book excerpts, articles, book reviews, humor, web sites to visit, general information, fun stuff to share — almost anything. Also, share info about book completions and launches, other meetings, apps, contests, books, book signings, classes, etc.

Please keep the submission relatively short, otherwise it will have to be serialized. Also, please submit electronically. There is no pay but byline credit is given — and that looks good to agents and publishers. This is a benefit of being a member of SSWC.

Remember to put SSWC Newsletter Submission in the subject line ... PLEASE!

Contact: Mary Lou Anderson (916) 459-0888 mledsonanderson@yahoo.com
Deadline is about two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date.

Join the Club!

We are a vibrant club with active writers, have several critique groups (with room for more), and stay wonderfully supportive of each other.

SSWC supports local writers and encourages everyone to write and publish. Attending meetings is free, but membership brings benefits, such as publication in the newsletter and anthology, use of our club's library, qualification for grants to attend conferences (limits apply), and ability to join our first-class critique groups.

MEMBERSHIP is paid on a yearly basis. If joining after April, dues are prorated by quarter (unless you are just really late in maintaining your membership!).

_____ Individual \$40 / year

_____ Couple \$55 / year

_____ Full-Time Student \$30 / year

_____ Platinum Senior (70+) \$30 / year

More information is on our website: sactowriters.org

Name: _____ Genres: _____

Published? Y / N (yes, includes self-published) Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Website/other info/address (optional): _____

MAIL YOUR DUES TO: Jeannie Turner. Her address is in the Directory. If you don't have a copy, email Jeannie at turnerjeannie48@gmail.com and she will let you know where to send it.

OFFICERS

Elected Officers:

President	Ron Smith
Vice President	Brittany Lord
Secretary	Linda Coveli
Treasurer	Julie Beyers

Chairs:

Coffee/Treats	Al Gilding
Conferences	John Powell
Critique Grps	Brittany Lord
Historian	Pat Biasotti
Librarian	Ron Smith
Membership	Jeannie Turner
Newsletter	Mary Lou Anderson
Nominations	YOU ????
Prgm/Speakers	Laura Kellen
Publicity	Paul Turner
Raffle	MaryEllen Dempsey
Sunshine	Nan Roark
Website	Wes Turner
Workshops	Gloria Cooksey

There's a spot in the list above for YOU!



Motivation ...

Write something that tells why you are willing to send something to the newsletter each month to motivate people to write.

A prompt.

A suggestion.

A motive.

Almost anything.

Then send it to the editor!



MEETING INFORMATION

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Next meeting:

Monday, April 12

Location: Your home.

Via your computer, tablet, or cell phone.

*All writers are encouraged to attend.
Membership is not mandatory
but brings privileges — like
publication in the newsletter!*