

June, 2023

Suburban Scribe

Sacramento Suburban Writers' Club Newsletter

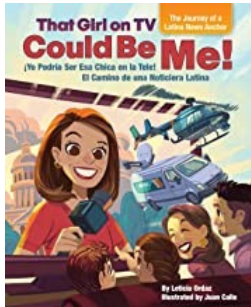
sactowriters.org

Join us on Monday, June 12, at 7 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall at 5501 Dewey Drive, corner of Dewey and Madison.

The meeting will be a viewing of Leticia Ordaz's taped presentation from May 22. She is a children's book author and publisher, featuring Latina children fulfilling their dreams and having adventures. Leticia grew up in Galt and graduated from Sac State, majoring in communications. She started working for KCRA in 2003 and now anchors the weekend morning news there and weekday mornings on My58.



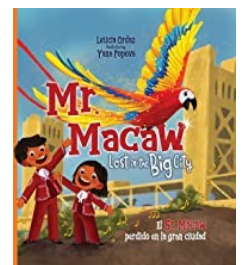
During our special meeting with her, Leticia shared information about her experiences that led her to publishing her own children's books, written in both English and Spanish, and their success. She was encouraged by her mother and inspired by other female television newscasters, including KCRA's Lois Hart, and the fact that, while growing up, she did not see anyone with a Latino background presenting the news.



Join us for a showing of her presentation. Though it is recorded, many SSWC members watched. There was opportunity to ask questions, and she answered each one, sharing more information about her road to being a successful author of children's book. Plus, her career as an author has taken her in a directions she never imagined.

Books available on Amazon:

That Girl on TV Could Be Me!
Mr. Macaw Lost in the Big City
The Adventures of Mr. Macaw
The Carousel King and the Space Mission



A Part of Us Is Gone

This is hard to write. It has been announced that Mort Rumberg passed away on May 24, 2023. He was a prolific writer and a cherished member of our critique group. He also expertly helped proofread this newsletter for many years.

Mort kept our spirits high, sharing writing-related jokes. He frequently signed off his emails with "Unassumingly Modest World Famous Author" and often included "Award Winning" in that phrase, because, yes, he did receive several awards for his writing.

(From the Internet:) Mort was a retired U.S. Air Force Officer who served as a Rescue and Survival technician teaching escape and evasion and survival techniques to aircrew members; he survived a tour in Vietnam and barely survived two hardship tours in the Pentagon as a computer systems action officer. Mort was also an information technology consultant and a manager with a large international health care insurance company designing computer business systems. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, a Master of Arts in Teaching, and a Doctorate in Education. He's been an adjunct professor of computer sciences for several universities in the Washington, DC area.

For 10 years, Mort and his wife, Susan lived aboard "Irish Gold," a motor yacht berthed on the Potomac River, then moved to Alexandria, Virginia, with their American Eskimo dogs, Yuki and Kori. While working on several novels, he was a volunteer with the Alexandria Police Department and the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria and very active in the Northern Virginia chapter of the Association of Information Technology Professionals. His hobbies included writing, painting, genealogy, traveling, and magic. His first novel, *CodeName: Snake*, won a national competition. He has nine (or more?) books published and a few awaiting publication. Several of his short stories have received national recognition.



Hello, fellow writers and artists of all walks of life, members, and guests —

Please join us in person at 7 p.m. at 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks in the Fellowship Hall of the Crossroads Christian Fellowship Church behind the white fence at the edge of the parking lot on June 12, even if it will be a hybrid meeting. EVERYONE IS WELCOME, NO MATTER YOUR ... WELL, NO MATTER YOUR *ANYTHING!*

For meeting in person, please arrive by 7:00 p.m. at 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks in the Fellowship Hall behind the white fence at the edge of the parking lot. The room has a super-large television for viewing the speaker while enjoying the camaraderie of other members.

If you **MUST** join on Zoom 7-9 p.m. from home, President Ron Smith will send members a link by email. Non-members and guests can contact mledsonanderson@yahoo.com either the day before, or the day of, the meeting.

Ronald Smith, President SSWC

HELP !!! VOLUNTEERS

This is getting serious, folks ...

Calling all members — SSWC is in need of volunteers. You do have a few extra minutes once in a while, right?

Well, there is need for:

Newsletter Editor/Publisher
Snacks/Refreshments
Historian

Membership Chair
Publicity
Nominations

No individual job takes a lot of time, and you learn a lot about the club, our members, and even more about writing by helping out.

Contact Ron Smith ... or any other Board member as listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Meeting Info — Briefly

Since bribing people to come to the meetings in person with food didn't work as well as we'd hoped, we've given up on that plan.

So, simply join us because meeting in person is more fun, more enlightening and more humane, well, more *human*, at least.

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Prompt Response

Excuses for Not Writing

Writing Prompt Entry:

My pencil is broken.
My computer died.
My head is empty of ideas.
I am bored.

Robert N Austin

Future Speakers / Events

Here is our upcoming roster:

- June - Leticia Ordaz (recorded on 5/17)
 - July - TBA
 - August - Crystel Patterson, children's book author.
 - September - Tatiana Villa, Cover artist (rebooked from last year)
 - October - Marshall Patrick Garvey, Sports Writer
 - November - Lee Herrick, California Poet Laureate
 - December - Annual Party
-

Congratulations to our SSWC Writing Scholarship 2023 winner, Kate Rowberry! She is from Granite Bay High School and her teacher is Julie Francesconi. We are proud of Kate and wish her much success in her future educational endeavors at Brown University and career goals.

Kate's story is here:

Allomother Kate Rowberry

Daisy Marchand was the kind of babysitter who accidentally told children the tooth fairy wasn't real. Fortunately, the Quincys' daughter Morgan was not an attentive listener when *The Magic School Bus* was on. She was spared the bland truth about the five dollars that had appeared under her pillow a few weeks back. Bundled snugly into her mauve security blanket, Morgan occupied a small corner of the leather couch and plunged her finger into the pinkish hole left by her missing top right incisor. The loss of a tooth was easy for Morgan to comprehend.

Where had the other blanket gone? Morgan was happily fixed to the couch, so Daisy rumped her hair, muttered about being back soon, and began a brisk search for the navy-blue brother of the mauve blanket. Daisy herself felt attached to the blankets; after all, she had hand-embroidered the children's names into the corners.

The most logical place to look was upstairs in Rupert's bedroom, which had not changed during the month of leave the Quincys had, in the form of a question, told Daisy to take. *Wouldn't you like a month off during this difficult time? Paid leave, of course. We'll reevaluate your employment when things are more normal.* A pair of red Nike shoes, size three, were still cast across the carpet like dice. Daisy could picture the little shirts hanging behind the shut closet door and the little shorts compacted into the closed dresser drawers. Rupert's bed, in the corner of the room under a gaping window, was tightly contained by its striped duvet. A stuffed dinosaur sat at attention on top of the blanket, which was folded on the foot of the bed.

Daisy set the dinosaur aside, disturbing the museum exhibit that was Rupert's room, and picked the blanket up, letting its precise folds tumble apart in her grasp. She hugged it hard, like Rupert always did, and she could feel her heart beating through all the layers of fabric.

"Daisy," Morgan yelled from downstairs. "I want to go outside!" She was suddenly bored with watching shows. She wanted to *do* something.

"I'm coming," Daisy called, and placed the blanket back under the dinosaur. In the upstairs hallway, she paused to examine a Quincy family picture hanging evenly on the wall. Mr. and Mrs. Quincy were posed around their two children so that their color-coordinated brood appeared to be in an organized group hug. In the photo, shimmery dark hair spilled across Mrs. Quincy's shoulders and a sneaky tangle peeked out from the very back. Her long-sleeved dress was a royal blue that matched Morgan's skirt. Morgan was grinning with not just her mouth, but her whole body: shoulders hunched up, head tilted to the side, hands clasped into two thumbs-ups. Mr. Quincy was buttoned into a cream polo shirt. His collar flipped up to the left, making him look vaguely disheveled, but his meticulously combed hair restored his reputation as the organized Quincy.

Rupert's outfit matched his father's. Mrs. Quincy stood behind Rupert, and if Daisy looked closely, she could tell that Mrs. Quincy was holding down the cowlick of her son's spiky black hair with the tip of her finger. His beam staunchly mirrored those of the other Quincys, but he gazed slightly to the right, as if there were a more fascinating sight just out of frame.

There was an order of service tucked carefully into the image's polished mahogany frame. *Rupert Yun Quincy*, it read. *March 13, 2013—September 4, 2019.*

The Quincys, of course, had said they weren't going to invite her to the funeral. *Family only. Fine.* They also wouldn't tell Daisy how he died. *Some things are private.* As if she hadn't been there for Rupert every day, playing with him and coddling him and loving him. As if she weren't just as much his mother as Mrs.

Quincy was.

Lip curling, Daisy marched back into Rupert's room and seized the blanket. She thought of the food she ate from the pantry here, of the Quincys' toys she took home for her own siblings, and even of Mrs. Quincy's gold pendant, sparkling even in her dim apartment and the dimmer pawn shop. The family never noticed Daisy's thefts because they simply replaced missing things.

Unless they couldn't.

The very first time Daisy took something, Rupert had caught Daisy slipping those few Legos into her pocket. "Why are you putting toys in your pocket?" he asked. "Daisy, let's share but not with Morgan."

Laughing it off, she dropped the colorful parts in his outstretched hands and re-stole them later, once he had moved on to the toy army men, lining them up precisely into equally-sized squads. His hair stuck up in increasingly extreme angles as Morgan rumbled a Cinderella dress over his head.

Rupert's infamous cowlick was the antithesis of his ironed school uniform and serious disposition. He came from parents who simultaneously wanted the best for him and expected the best from him. The private school Rupert had attended, one town over, had him at the same level of math as Morgan, although he was two grades younger. They did their math homework together, doodling on each other's papers or racing to finish. Even now, there was a multiplication test pinned to his bulletin board with *A+* scrawled across the top in bright orange marker.

Morgan did her homework alone now.

Daisy squeezed the blanket tighter now, cradling the weight as if it were a baby, like she had watched her own mom do years ago with her brother and sister. Those two younger Marchands had settled into a barely-scraping-by routine to which Daisy was now a key contributor. She faltered only when on leave while the Quincys processed their son's death: Rupert was gone. Was her job gone too? She couldn't say goodbye to him. Did the Quincys blame her somehow? For her entire month off, she dammed up her tears and babysat for families who paid only half as much and for children she loved only half as much.

"Daisy!"

Daisy went back downstairs with the blanket rolled under her arm to address Morgan's summons. She stopped at the marble counter in the kitchen; after softly tracing the *Darling Rupert* she'd embroidered on the blanket's corner, she hid it within her tote bag. Also in the bag was her uneaten lunch—a sleeve of Ritz crackers—and the book she had borrowed from the library a month or two ago but had neither returned nor even opened. It was a dog-eared copy of *Flat Stanley*, which Rupert always wanted to check out when they went to the library.

She paused for a moment, wondering if she should hide the bulgy blanket in her car. Neither adult Quincy had ever questioned her honesty, and they probably would attribute any lost toys to the irresponsibility of young children. However, the blanket was a bigger, more suspicious object to keep in her bag, and she didn't want to lose her job, so Daisy grabbed it and darted towards the door.

"Are you running away with Rupert's blanket?"

From the hallway, Morgan peered at Daisy, who slowly dropped her hand from the doorknob. "No, of course not. We should go outside, like you were saying. Get your warmest jacket!"

Morgan scampered away. Daisy shoved the blanket into her bag and left it by the sliding glass door that opened to the yard, where she helped Morgan prepare for the November evening chill so that she didn't break the zipper of her jacket. Then they went out into the Quincys' backyard—multiple acres bordered by a wrought iron fence and accented by a large, oval-shaped smudge of a pond that Morgan clomped towards in her blue rain boots. "I want to be a fish scientist," she called out once they arrived at the water. "An *ickythologist*. From the book Daddy read me last night."

"You mean an ichthyologist?" Daisy asked, avoiding the patchy spots where the bank's sandy dirt became mud. And the blanket: Morgan might tell on her. Should she return the blanket to Rupert's room?

Morgan ventured into the murky water and stared at the skittish minnows darting around as she toed the

mud. “Rupert liked Goldfish crackers.”

“I know.”

“I want to go swimming.”

“Morgan, it’s autumn.” Daisy gestured to the yellowed foliage of the trees. “The water is going to be very cold if you get in all the way.”

Morgan waded in deeper, just to see what would happen, then bent and poked at something in the water. “Rupert liked to go swimming.”

“Morgan, let’s...” Daisy paused, thoughts briefly snagged on what the girl had just said. And perhaps she should let Morgan keep playing in the water. That might distract her enough to forget about the blanket. But then Daisy remembered: among other new restrictions, the Quincys didn’t want Morgan in the pond. Dang it. “Let’s stay out of the water. I think we ought to go back indoors.”

And maybe everything would turn out alright. Maybe Mrs. Quincy, who usually got home first—and earlier than Daisy’s own parents ever did—would be so tired that Daisy could just slip away with Rupert’s blanket. Maybe the Quincys’ usual obliviousness would enable her once again. Her theft was justified, after all. She was being Robin Hood. Nothing horrible.

Rupert had loved her the most anyway, hadn’t he? And didn’t Morgan still?

“Let’s go play with the pretty leaves under those oak trees!” Daisy said, gnawing at a cuticle. “We could make a pile to jump in, if you want. But only for a few minutes, and then we really do need to go inside.”

“I hate those trees.” Morgan lodged a grubby finger into the gap in her smile.

“Oh, that’s right. Pebbles’ ghost is over there.” The first time death had approached Morgan was via her hamster named Pebbles, who had been laid to rest in the copse along the property line. During Rupert’s funeral, Morgan had asked her mother if he could be buried next to Pebbles, and she was still flummoxed by the terse response she received: *Your brother isn’t a—wasn’t a—rodent.*

Finally falling to Daisy’s persistence, Morgan trudged through the mire, emerging with pants soaked to the knees. She scrubbed her shoes on the grass until they were clean of mud splotches, then staggered across the lawn and collapsed to the ground under the oaks. She began to make leaf angels.

“Hey, silly, let’s try to not get too dirty!” Daisy faced the Quincy’s house as she sat criss-cross applesauce on the mat of crinkly leaves that she, to reassure Morgan, claimed must be smothering Pebbles’ ghost so it couldn’t emerge from its paltry grave.

After the sun’s rays had started withdrawing closer to the horizon, Mrs. Quincy’s Lincoln pulled into the driveway. Daisy got to her feet as Morgan’s finger again explored her mouth. “I have another wiggly tooth,” she said.

“Maybe you should wash your hands before you show me. Plus, your mom is home!” Daisy bustled across the lawn, leading Morgan back through the sliding glass door, and stopped so Morgan could tug off her boots. After securing her bag with shivering fingers, Daisy ushered Morgan into the well-equipped kitchen where Mrs. Quincy had lit a pine-scented candle and was extracting clutter from her purse.

Morgan waved to Mrs. Quincy, who then reached down to envelop her daughter in the neon pink sleeves of her jacket, which shrouded a black, ruffled blouse. “Oh! You went outside,” exclaimed Mrs. Quincy. “Let me pick the leaves out of your hair.” Holding Morgan at arm’s length, she picked detritus out of the girl’s inky locks. Brows knitted, she saw the damp fabric along the hem of Morgan’s pants and brushed it lightly. “Did you go in the water?” she asked.

Morgan nodded. Mrs. Quincy told her to get a snack and glared at Daisy, who was slowly edging towards her bag. She stopped and fiddled with the beaded bracelets on her wrist that her sister had made. Her sister, who was fifteen, who was home alone with the ten-year-old again, and for whom Daisy desperately needed a job. “I apologize,” Daisy said, and moved toward her bag again. She carefully slung it over her right arm, dreadfully aware of its purloined contents. “I apologize for letting her get in the water.”

“You don’t understand.” Mrs. Quincy waved her hands, unsure of where to put them, and swallowed. She peeled off her jacket and slung it over the back of a kitchen chair. This was far worse than the only other time she had gotten angry at Daisy—the time she discovered one of Morgan’s Barbies with a brand-new zigzag bob sitting right next to a pair of snub-nosed craft scissors and little bits of synthetic hair. She had explained to Daisy that she did not want to receive a call from school explaining that her children, encouraged by their babysitter, had been playing hairdresser or destroying toys willy-nilly.

Mrs. Quincy reached out and held Daisy by the shoulder. “I feel the need to remind you that you, as the babysitter, don’t know everything about Rupert and”—her voice broke—“his death. We welcomed you back into our lives because we didn’t want too many big changes for Morgan. If you are going to endanger her life, then Stuart and I have the responsibility to reconsider that decision.”

“Daisy! My wiggly tooth is bleeding!” Morgan was in the family room, tracing patterns in the cookie crumbs she’d spewed across the floor as the two women’s conversation gloomed around her. She had endlessly imagined her brother’s tragedy based on overheard tidbits and wondered where death was waiting for her. That was why she no longer played hide and seek.

“All right, dear! Come get me if it falls out.” Resuming her focus on Daisy, Mrs. Quincy’s voice quietened. “I really don’t know what happened. How anything happened. But he... per Morgan, looking in the water for his favorite boat...”

Daisy pulled on the straps of her bag uncomfortably and glanced in the direction of the front door. She needed to leave *now*. Could she afford to resign? “I’m so sor—”

Mrs. Quincy dropped her hand from Daisy and closed her eyes momentarily, as if to reset her charade of happiness. “So Morgan is not going out near the pond. Do you hear me? In fact, Stuart and I are considering moving. In the future, we—is that Rupert’s blankie you’re hiding?” Mrs. Quincy interrupted herself sharply and stared at the lump of cloth Daisy had tried to conceal in her bag.

In a whirl of movement, Daisy yanked the blanket from her bag and thrust it into Mrs. Quincy’s hungry arms as barbed words chased her out of the kitchen. *Stealing from a grieving mother? Fired! You’re fired!* Out the front door, *slam*, across the manicured lawn, scrabbling at the car door handle. Daisy crumpled into the driver’s seat, sobbing, and banged her fist against the steering wheel.

There was a plastic toy sailboat with a thin reed tangled around its mast sitting on her brother’s desk. Brought to most of the beach ‘field trips’ Daisy had taken the kids on over the summer. Thoughtlessly plucked out of the Quincys’ pond at an opportune moment the very last time the weather had let them swim. Faded initials that Daisy herself had Sharpied across the bottom: R.Y.Q.

Stroke

Inspired by a dear friend of mine
Jeannie Turner

'Twas a *stroke* of good luck with my golf *stroke* that day,
But a man's quick right *stroke* brought me down;
A *stroke* of face paint covered over the bruise,
And *stroking* my cat eased my frown.

Then a friend took me out with his crew for a ride,
I never had gone quite so fast!
But *strokes* of that crew brought no victory to them.
In fact, it turned out, they were last.

Some words that we use have more meanings than one
And *stroke* is one of them, you see,
But the one that we're speaking of here, now, today,
Is important to you and to me.

That attack on your brain, a stroke, it can come,
In a couple of two different ways.
But it always blocks blood, every time, to your brain,
Lasts seconds, or it can last days.

These signs one must look for, and look for quite fast:
Balance, speech, weakness, or eyes.
Signs might disappear quite as rapidly, too,
But that can be only disguise.
The person who's having a stroke needs quick help,

The window for saving is small.
Please don't let them say, "I think I'm ok."
Just go make that nine-one-one call

You're wanting to help them while waiting for help—
Don't even give them a drink.
And aspirin is not what you want in this case.
The cause might be not what you think.

This blockage of blood to the brain might be caused
By a blood-stopping clot it is true,
But the lack of the blood that is reaching the brain
Just might have been caused by type two.

And that's when a vessel, it leaks or it bursts,
And blood is not reaching the brain.
For this one an aspirin is really the worst.
And stroke rarely comes with a pain.

Yes, watch for those signs. The key word is speed,
Whether it's you or your brother.
Minutes count. Note the time when the symptom
appeared
There's no need to wait for another.

Get help right away, and don't think to drive,
An ambulance has the right things
For life-saving treatment to start while there's time
As the patient to ER, it brings.

This page is intentionally repeated each month. .

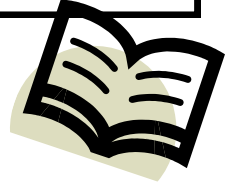
Follow the SSWC podcasts at:

<https://anchor.fm/sactowriters>

Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/show/0UHX19RTviPkRXMzkysg6V>)

RadioPublic (<https://radiopublic.com/sactowriters-694Q1Z>)

Pocket Casts (<https://pca.st/z1e83qlq>)



Which Club Members Have Published?

Check out the SSWC website. You will find a list of members and their book on our club's website: <https://www.sactowriters.org/books-by-our-members/>

If you are a member and have published material, send the information to Wes Turner, including any links to your own website and/or to a site that sells your books (eg Amazon). His email is listed in our club roster. Wes will add your book(s) to the list.

R U Done Yet?

Have you finished another book? Had an article published recently?

Are you holding a Book Launch to let the world know what you have accomplished?

Let the other members and readers know.

Send a brief announcement (including links and your contact information) to mledsonanderson@yahoo.com and have it included in the next newsletter.

Please include a copy of the cover.

Members — Wanna be Published?

Submit your own short story, article, poem, excerpt of your own book to the newsletter for publication. (Please keep it to under 450 or so words ... or it will have to be serialized.)

It would give you bragging rights as being published if you are going to be in contact with an agent and/or publisher.

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Note that the article to the left is directed to "members."

So, if you do *wanna be published* in any future newsletters, make sure your dues are up to 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	
Treasurer	Mary Lou Anderson

Chairs:

Coffee/Treats	
Conferences	
Critique Groups	Brittany Lord
Historian	
Librarian	Ron Smith
Membership	Jeannie Turner
Newsletter	
Nominations	
Prgm/Speakers	Laura Kellen
Publicity	
Raffle	
Scholarship	Karen Sepahmansour & Bernard Wozney
Sunshine	Nan Roark
Website	Wes Turner
Workshops	

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



WRITING PROMPT

Your curiosity gets the best of you and you get ahold of an AI program that will write your story for you.

You have dreams of it becoming the new best seller.

However, it did not live up to your expectations.

Write how you imagine an AI will write the opening to your story. Share with us the results of a computer writing something that you did not expect and maybe will publish ... Or maybe not.



MEETING INFORMATION

7:00 - 9:00 PM

*We meet the second Monday each month, year round. Same time. Same place
5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks, CA
All writers are encouraged to attend.
Membership not mandatory but brings privileges
like publication in the newsletter!*