



Rota-Monica

Mon Apr 02, 2012

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Editor **Scott Kunitz**

If you have any comments or questions, please contact the editor.

Upcoming Programs

Apr 06, 2012

No meeting - Good Friday

Apr 20, 2012

Support Staff Day

Apr 27, 2012

Dark

Home Cooking for the Food Festival

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Upcoming Events

District Conference

Apr 19, 2012 - Apr 22, 2012

International Food & Song Festival

Tom & Stephanie Loo's
Apr 29, 2012 01:00 PM

Rotary International Convention

May 06, 2012 - May 09, 2012

Rotary Club of Santa Monica

Service Since 1922

Meets Noon Most Fridays

Riviera Country Club

1250 Capri Drive

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Stories

This week at Rotary - We are dark this week for Good Friday

Posted by Scott Kunitz on Apr 02, 2012

Rotary Club Meeting March 16, 2012 - Children's book author Alexis O'Neill

Posted by Nicholas Goehner on Mar 16, 2012

Meeting Cast



At the head table, Far Stage Right we had Invocator **Connie McGuire**; Next to **Connie** we have **Dr Janee Yuguchi Gates**. Stage left of the podium and here to introduce our speaker for today, we have **Sharon Gavin**. Next to **Sharon** is our speaker for today, children's book author **Alexis O'Neill**. Far stage left of the Podium and here to introduce our visiting Rotarians and guests we have **Scott Kunitz**. Our song leader was **Tom Larmore** with **Ken Waltzer** on piano, and our Greeters were **Jillian Alexander & Bill Rayman**.

Visitors

We had no visiting Rotarians today. We had only 1 guest of our Rotarians, **Matt Williams** who was a guest of **Lisa Alexander**.

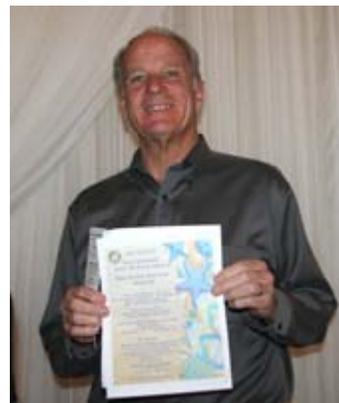


Connie McGuire's Irish Prayer

You blessed us with friends and laughter and fun, with rain that's as soft as light from the sun. You've blessed us with stars to brighten each night, you've given us help to know wrong from right. You've given us so much, please Lord give us too, a heart that is always grateful to you.

Announcements

- Thank you all the Rotarians who participated in Rotary reads. It was a big success. 67 class rooms, 1000 students. A lucky reader was randomly chosen to receive a Kindle Fire. That reader was, **Patricia Farris**, congratulations!
- On each of the tables was a copy of the "city wide reads" book by Raymond Chandler. A lucky winner from each table who participates in the quiz could win the book.
- **Grace Wang** staff support day April 20th, bring your staff and support them. Please fill out the fliers so they can get final numbers.
- **Bill Buxton**, Next Supper Service at OPCC is today at the Turning Point Facility on 16th and Broadway. We start cooking at 4pm and serve at 6 pm.
- District Conference is coming April 19th through 22nd. It starts off Thursday with a golf tournament. Hole in one Mercedes S-Class or Audi A8. And a lot of goodies and surprises throughout the week.
- **Charlie Follette**, International Food and Festival Committee. Next festival Sunday April 29th at 1:00pm. Plenty of food from many parts of the world. There will be events for children, and the whole family as well as wonderful music. The event is free of charge and counts as a meeting.
- Thanks to **Sharon Gavin** and **Janie Gates** for putting on the "Rotary Reads" project event.
- Recruiting committee, we want to get more people in to our club. New programs in place including 40 and under program to get our younger Rotarians in. There has also been a lunch subsidies program in place that hasn't been used. This allows guests to come in and eat lunch free of charge. There are 20 of these and only 1 has been used. You can also let the Recruiting Committee know of any individual or company you'd like to see join, and they will handle it for you.
- **Tim Jackman's** retirement party coming up
- Our next Healthy Living event will be a historic tour of Downtown Santa Monica on the 24th of March.
- 90th Anniversary party on the 23rd. Thank you to all the Rotarians who have donated \$1000 each.



Fines

- **Diane Margolin**, great mannequin fine \$100.
- To everyone who attended **Diane Margolin's** wonderful event \$50.

Presentation



Alexis O'Neill is a local children's author. She is the author of "Loud Emily" which was featured in Newsweek magazine. "The Recess Queen" which was on the Los Angeles Times children's best seller list. And "Estela's Swap" which is a multicultural book about generosity, highlighting a unique Los Angeles experience. Her non-fiction and fiction work has been featured in such publications as Crickets, Spider, Writer's Digest, and Children's Book Review Magazine.

Alexis also teaches writing for the UCLA extension writers program. She's a regional advisor for the society of children's book writers and illustrators. And a founding member of the children's authors network. She is a former Elementary School teacher. She holds a B.S. from Skidmore College and an M.S. in

Instructional Technology and Ph.D. in teacher Education from Syracuse University.

In addition to writing, Alexis has served as an education consultant for a variety of museums across the country, including the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Ventura County Museum of History & Art, the Everson Museum of Art and the Erie Canal Museum. In her community, she chairs the annual Children's Book Week Celebration for the Simi Valley Friends of the Library and serves on the board of the Ventura County Reading Association. Alexis lives with her husband, David, in Simi Valley, California.



Alexis began with a saying "C'ead Mile Failte" which means "A Hundred Thousand Welcomes" in Gaelic. And after testing her slide show she began to take us through her journey from growing up in Southey. She grew up in a very Irish family and spoke of how enjoyable each St. Patrick's Day was in her family. She then showed everyone a picture describing how she dressed up for Halloween being an Irish American, she was dressed in a nun's habit. And told stories of how while everyone else trick-o-treated a houses, she did it at the convent.

in 1979 she was given the honor of being chosen as a Rotary foundation fellow. She was chosen when she was right at the limit of how old one could be to receive the fellowship. Living with her Rotary parents in London gave her the opportunity to study in England for a full year from 1979 to 1980. She had already begun her doctoral at Syracuse university but she had gone back to teaching to get more experience. And this year would allow her to do a lot of writing and through her experiences gave her a lot of writing material for the rest of her life.

Alexis has been in a number of careers, but she states she has definitely found her last. She absolutely loves writing for children. About 20 years ago she embarked on a journey to do everything she could to become a published author. She started by publishing in children's magazines. At the same time she was also working on her books, the 3 stated earlier and the most recent, "The Worst Best Friend."

She commented on Rotary Reads and how reading to children and bringing those experiences to people are so important because it's a personal experience. And when a child is read to and has that personal connection, in her experience, she has been told by librarians that library checkout always goes up.

The current educational system are in tough times, and some places can't afford to bring in authors. It's up to all of us to what we can to keep the arts alive in schools and give children the opportunity for artistic expression.

Picture books, which are what Alexis writes, are a different, and traditionally misunderstood, form of writing than a traditional novel that one might find at a book store. She pointed out how there are two names on the front of her book, that of hers, and that of the illustrator. This is an interesting point because she's never met the illustrator on her book. When Alexis writes a story she sends it off to multiple publishers. Once she finds someone to buy it, that publisher has an editor who then finds an illustrator to bring the story to life.

She showed us the original manuscript and read a few lines to us. She then described the images that were produced by the illustrator, and described how imaginative they were. A lot of thought went into the illustrations, down to the smallest child in the background. Each image tells everything about the text and tells even more about the back story and the behind the scenes. The illustrator carries the main character and all the other characters through each page of the book.

Each character has their own personality and a through-line. The illustrator shows how each character changes and evolves through the story, and each character seems to represent all types of children so all readers could relate to one of the characters in the pictures. Alexis showed examples of each character type and their actions throughout the story. By the end of the story, where everyone was sad and afraid, everyone became happy and playful. One example as well of the difference between the illustrators initial draft and final work was that originally there was a dog in the book with the kids on the playground. This had to be taken out because there are no dogs on the playground and children reading the book would have been taken out of the story because of this

She described how she came up with a lot of the inventive words and the difficulty in writing a rhyming book. There is a definite rhythm in a rhyming picture book.

The last thing that she touched on was the cost of a picture book and how the profits were distributed. Her book sells for \$16, here's what's interesting. 10% of that total goes back to the creators, so Alexis gets 80 cents per book. 40% goes to the book seller. And then 50% goes to the publisher. The reasons behind all of this are because of the color printing and processing of each book. \$17,000 for paper printing and binding, \$6,400 for plates, \$32,000 for overhead, and different amounts for the advances. Alexis' advance on "Loud Emily" was about \$2,500 and that advance has to be paid back before any profit is made. So that amount has to be made back in 80 cents increments. certainly not what I expected as compensation for an author.

She also shared with us her first book "Loud Emily." She described one scene in the book that was actually an event that happened to her when she was younger, when she almost got blown away in a hurricane.

She recently published through e-publishing 3 short stories called 3 Irish tales, and recommended everyone look it up on their ipads and kindles, etc.

She had a couple of quotes that she shared with us in closing.

- "Stories are the single most powerful weapon in a leader's arsenal." - Howard Gardner
- "If you don't know the trees you may be lost in the forest. But if you don't know the stories, you may be lost in life" - Siberian Elder

Our lives are made up of stories and we should pass those stories on. It's so important for knowledge and growth and each and every one of us has their own unique story, and who we are, makes the story.

She closed with a song, that was always sung, in parting from a get together. She left us all with a great feeling and a pure smile.

"Oh of all the money that err I've spent
I spent it in good company
and all the harm that err I've done
Alas it was to none but me
but since it falls unto my lot
that I should rise and you should not
I'll gently rise, and I'll softly call
goodnight and joy be with you all"

Thank you Alexis O'Neill!



Thought for the Day

A quote published by *Fortune magazine* said: "Some people will lie, cheat, steal, and backstab to get ahead. And to think, all they have to do is read."

ROTARY CLUB OF SANTA MONICA

Service Since 1922 - Meets Noon Most Fridays
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