

SWEET LAVENDER

Logline:

Sweet Lavender tells the story of a young girl whose world is rocked to the core when her once loving and nurturing childhood is destroyed by betrayal, abandonment and infidelity.

Synopsis:

Set in a small town in Louisiana in 1964, where a small house sits on a vast field of Sweet Lavender.

Rae Lynne Johnston was a daddy's girl, happy and carefree, who loved to play with her father in the Sweet Lavender field, also known as, The Healing Ground. When she was 5 years old, her father brings home to her a little baby brother that was conceived from an adulterous relationship. Then five months later, due to guilt and the rejection from his wife, her father packs his bags and walks out of her life, leaving her mother Angela to raise his love child.

While Angela struggles to raise her family in difficult circumstances, Rae Lynne feels very alone after her father left home and the only place where she finds healing is in the field of Sweet Lavender that grows behind her house. The Lavender was her sanctuary for her and her family.

Years later, when her mother becomes deathly ill, Rae Lynne is faced with yet another responsibility of caring for her dying mother. Will the myth behind the Lavender be enough for Rae Lynne to succumb this hardship that she faces, or will it be just too much for her to bear?

Follow this moving story as Rae Lynne walks us through this twelve year journey of life's astounding reality in Sweet Lavender.

BIOGRAPHY

TERRY A O'NEAL

“Her poems are reflective of African American culture and at the same time underscore our universal humanity.”

—**Dr. Kevin Starr**

State Librarian of California

Best selling author Terry a O'Neal, whose poetry has been published in numerous magazines, journals and newspapers around the world, has been named among the most popular African American female writers of our time, featured in a book entitled *"Literary Divas: The Top 100+ Most Admired African American Women in Literature"*--a list of women who've left a mark on the wider world through their writing.

Her previous publications include three volumes of poetry, *Motion Sickness*, *The Poet Speaks in Black* and *Good Mornin' Glory*; two children's books *Ev'ry Little Soul* and *My Jazz Shoes*; and the award-winning southern fiction novel *Sweet Lavender*.

Her works are world renowned, recognized in South Africa, Iran, Jamaica, Australia, Canada, Bermuda, and across America. In March 2004, her poetry was translated into the Persian language and featured in the Persian Magazine *Golestaneh*.

Her name in Lights: In 2008, O'Neal ventured into the world of screenwriting, focusing on inspirational feature films for family audiences. Recently, she has completed a screenplay of her novel *Sweet Lavender*, which is currently resting in the hands of Hollywood producers.

With her Bachelor's of Arts in Communications, O'Neal is well-known for her dedication and time devoted toward reaching out to today's youth, encouraging them to carry out their dream, no matter how unlikely it may seem.

In addition to her writing accomplishments, she is the VP and Executive Director of the non-profit organization, Lend Your Hand, Inc. Educating the World's Children; and the Founder of the National Black History Bee, a program devised to test students' knowledge on African-American history facts in the form of a trivia competition.

Today, O'Neal is a contributing writer for *Black Heritage Today Magazine*, a publication that has often been hailed 'the BEST black history month magazine in London'. Some of her upcoming works include *The Sparrows Plight: Woes of a 21st Century Black Poet*, a collection of original poetry; *Cotton Day*, a southern fiction novel; and *Sweet Lavender*, a Stage Adaptation.

Furthermore, O'Neal is actively pursuing a Master's of Arts in Education degree at Ashford University, moving ambitiously towards her aspiration of becoming an instructor of African-American Studies in higher education.



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P R E S S

C L I P P I N G S

Article:
“Local Author Goes Hollywood”



The Sacramento Union Est. 1851

Fabian's Fabulous Life It's Good to Be Assembly Speaker



Democratic Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez talks with reporters at the Capitol. (AP Photo)

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and AARON C. DAVIS
Associated Press Writers

LOS ANGELES (AP) – State Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez shares a luxury downtown penthouse with a prominent fundraiser who has collected nearly \$600,000 in fees and expenses from Nunez's political committees and the state Democratic Party since 2005.

State law places no restrictions on legislators living with friends or fundraisers, but some government watchdog groups say such arrangements can raise potential conflicts because of the proximity of political power and contributors' money.

Nunez, a Los Angeles Democrat and one of the state's most powerful dealmakers, pays \$1,000 of the \$4,325 rent to live part-time in the loft-style penthouse in his district, which has 20-foot ceilings and jet-liner views.

He also owns a \$1.2 million ranch-style
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Gore Wins Nobel Peace Prize?

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NEWS: UP FRONT

Liberalism IS a Mental Disease

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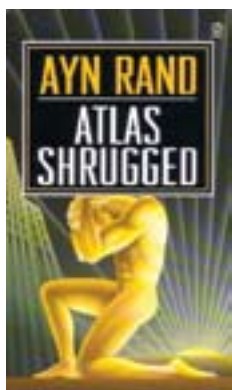
Alisa and Arnold

What Schwarzenegger Could Learn from Ayn Rand

By WILLIAM E. SARACINO
Special Contributor to The Union

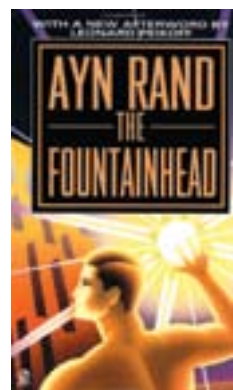
I must give the puzzle away right off the bat: Alisa Rosenbaum was better known as Ayn Rand, who is brought to mind this month by the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Atlas Shrugged*.

At first glance, you'd think Alisa and Arnold (you know who) would have much in common. Both spent their formative years under repressive governments, Rand in early communist Russia, Arnold in post-World War II socialist Austria. Both had enough inherent



individuality that even as youngsters they bristled under the yoke of state control. And both made names for themselves in the arena of ideas by opposing the kind of state control they suffered under.

Alas, there the comparison ends—unless the governor reinvents himself (yet again) to become once more the anti-statist, pro-individual freedom advocate he was (or pretended to be) when he won the recall election. The governor is literate and well-read, so he may have read *Atlas* and/or *The*
see ALISA AND ARNOLD page 14



Local Author Goes Hollywood

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
Sacramento Union Writer

Local author Terry A. O'Neal, who has written several volumes of poetry, children's books and fiction novels, has reached her next plateau, working her way to the big screen.

O'Neal, 34, a resident of Elk Grove, whose latest novel, "Sweet Lavender," caught the attention of executive film producers in Hollywood, recently began working with award-winning producer and writer Ken Rotcop.

Rotcop is known for his most prestigious work, "For Us, The Living: The Story Of Medgar Evers," which he wrote and produced in 1983. The award-winning film starred Laurence Fishburne.

Rotcop, who was the recipient of the Unity Award for the CBS African
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Delta Nears Collapse

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THE SPORTING GOLD

Reasons to Hope

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Local Novel Adapted to Full Length Feature Screenplay from page 1

American history documentary, "Images and Attitudes," is also known for his work as the creative head of Hanna-Barbera, Embassy Pictures, Trans World Productions, and Cannon TV.

O'Neal, who began working with Rotcop about two months ago, said that it is an honor to be working with such an accomplished individual.

"Just working with him alone is a great opportunity and an achievement and I'm humbled in his presence," O'Neal said.

Rotcop was attracted to "Sweet Lavender," because he felt that it was a great story with a lot of potential. The

book is expected to be released in its movie format by late 2008.

"Sweet Lavender," explained O'Neal, is a father-daughter, mother-son love story, which relates to the average, day-to-day person.

"The book has crossover appeal to all races and genders, so the story can relate to all walks of life," O'Neal said.

"Sweet Lavender" is the story of a young, black girl, named Rae Lynn Johnston, who grew up in the small town of Cecilia, La. in 1963.

Rae Lynn's world is turned upside down when her once-loving and nurturing child-

hood is destroyed by betrayal, abandonment and infidelity.

Rae Lynne was only 5 years old when her beloved father walked out of her life, leaving her mother, Angela, to raise his love child. As she got older, the only place Rae Lynne could find peace was in the sweet lavender field in her backyard.

While her mother struggled to raise her family in difficult circumstances, Rae Lynne, once being "daddy's little girl," is forced to examine the cruel, harsh realities of life.

In addition to "Sweet Lavender," O'Neal is also the author of "The Poet Speaks in Black," a volume of rhythmic, free verse poetry, and her most recent release, "Good Mornin' Glory," a collection of inspirational poetry.

O'Neal, who began writing at a very young age, said that she grew fond of writing through the inspiration of her mother, Barbara Williams.

"My mother exposed me to arts, literature and culture before I was able to take my first steps," O'Neal said.

Among O'Neal's most treasured memories of her childhood was when she had the opportunity to meet one of the greatest voices in African American literature, Maya Angelou, who is best known for her autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

O'Neal, who was born and raised in Stockton, said that she remembers this experience as if it occurred only yesterday and it has proved to be one of the greatest impacts in her life.



"Sweet Lavender" by Terry A. O'Neal has gained much popularity since its release in 2003. (Photo courtesy of Terry A. O'Neal)

Works by Terry A. O'Neal

"Sweet Lavender" (Motion Publishing; ISBN #0-9679446-7-8; 2003, \$12.95)

Category: Young Adult Fiction

Rae Lynne's world is rocked to the core when her once loving and nurturing childhood is destroyed by betrayal, abandonment and infidelity. Her riveting journey challenges her faith in love, family, marriage and God.

"The Poet Speaks in Black" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9679446-4-3; 2001; \$15) Category: Poetry

"A rich volume of rhythmic, free-verse poetry. Encouraging dreams, pondering life and stretching past the horizons of the mind, (the book) is highly enjoyable reading, whether aloud at a microphone or at quietly at home." --Midwest Book Review

"Grace and the Fig Tree (Volume I)" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9768492-3-2; 2007; \$ 7.99) Category: Young Adult Fiction

Grace Newberry, a daring, young girl shares her childhood adventures while growing up on a farm in Virginia with her grandparents, John and Ophelia Newberry.

"Good Mornin' Glory" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9768492-2-4; 2007; \$11) Category: New Selected Poetry

In her third collection, O'Neal writes vibrant, colorful poetry about the hidden pleasures of life. The book awakens its readers to the richness of life and presents messages of love, joy and laughter during life's troublesome times.

"Motion Sickness" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9679446-0-0; 2000; \$9.95) Category: Poetry

"It is a compilation of poems that range in topics including relationships between black men and women, how to be comfortable being yourself, and instilling self-esteem in your children while they're young." --Tee C. Royal

"Ev'ry Little Soul" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9679446-6-X; 2002; \$10.95)

Category: Children's Picture Book / Inspirational

"Ev'ry Little Soul" encourages strength and endurance in children. It is a salute to the achievement of African-American youth. O'Neal's poem conveys an essential message about determination and unity for readers of all ages and colors.

"Make Some Noise! I" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9679446-8-6; 2003; \$9.25) Category: Youth Poetry

A unique collection, capturing the voices of young, U.S. and Canadian poets, from 12 and 18 years old. This rich collection presents a wide range of lyrics and prose straight from the mouths of today's youth.

"My Jazz Shoes" (Motion Publishing; ISBN# 0-9679446-9-4; 2008; \$14.99) Category: Children's Picture Book

A vibrant, picture book that takes one along the energetic stroll of a young dancer's joyful outlook on life, as she taps down the sidewalks of her urban neighborhood, observing the small treasures in life that surrounds her.



Terry A. O'Neal, shown at the age of 1 year old, said that she was exposed to arts, literature and culture before she was able to walk. (Photo courtesy of Terry A. O'Neal)

Since that time, O'Neal has been named alongside Angelou and many other literary greats such as Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston and Octavia Butler in a book, called "Literary Divas: The Top 100+ Admired African American Women in Literature," written by Heather Covington.

In addition to her writings, O'Neal works as the editor of the youth poetry and anthology publication, "Make Some Noise!," a collection of poetry written by youth, ages 12 to 18 years old, from throughout the world.

O'Neal is also the founder and executive director of the non-profit organization, "Lend Your Hand: Educating the World's Children." The program provides necessities for assisting disadvantaged youth through school supplies and special visits by authors. These appearances have included such authors as O'Neal and her cousin Patryce "Choc'Let" Banks, author of "A Choc'Let State of Mind," and

Denise Michelle Harris, author of "Sweet Bye-Bye."

Aside from her work as an author, poet, screenwriter and educator, O'Neal is employed at California State Prison Sacramento, as an office technician.

This experience, said O'Neal, has furthered her ideas for writing.

"Working at California State Prison Sacramento has definitely given me some things to write about," O'Neal said. "There are so many personalities on so many different levels and one thing that I can say that I got from these experiences is that if you are not a well grounded person on a spiritual level, the environment can consume you."

Even with O'Neal's already extremely busy lifestyle, she still makes time to be a wife and a mother of four children, of which three are teenagers.

O'Neal's new ventures in the film industry have led her to join forces with Hollywood actress and her childhood friend, Nakia Burrise, to establish a film production company.

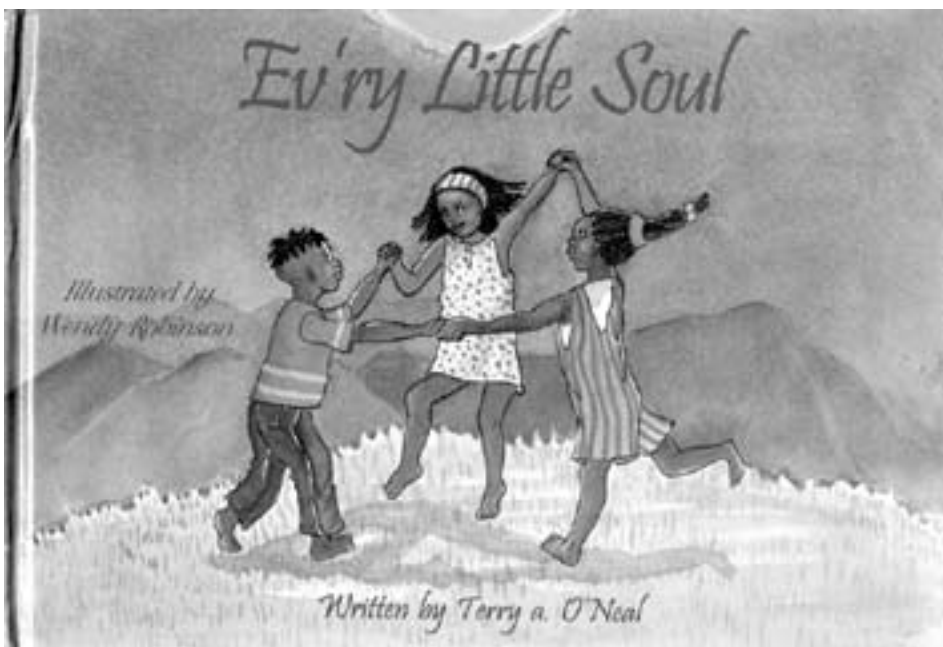
Despite her many accomplishments, O'Neal said that she continues to maintain "tall dreams."

"At this point, I can truly say with confidence that I am happy with the blessings that God has given me and the unconditional love and support from my family, especially my husband Michael, who has supported me throughout this journey that we call life," O'Neal said. "Though I still have many dreams to accomplish, the day that you see me on the Oprah Winfrey Show, that's when you'll know I've made it big!"

For more information about O'Neal and her literary works, visit the Web site www.terryoneal.com.



Local author Terry A. O'Neal is enjoying the success of her latest novel. (Sacramento Union Photo/Lance Armstrong)



"Ev'ry Little Soul" was written by Terry A. O'Neal as a book designed to encourage strength and endurance in children. (Photo courtesy of Terry A. O'Neal)

Local Authors on the Rise

Below is a brief summary of some of the region's premier up-and-coming authors:

Patricia E. Canterbury

Sacramento
Children's Fantasy Mysteries
Known for her children's novels such as "Carlotta's Secret."
www.patmyst.com/

Stefanie Cruz

Sacramento
Children's Picture Books
Best-known Book: "Delta and Dawn: Mother and Baby Whales' Journey" (Release Date: Oct. 29)
www.DeltaDawnbook.com

Emanuel A. Frenkel

Davis
Economics and Finance
Book with most attention: "Thrive!: Catching the Spirit of Personal Economics."
www.amazon.com/Thrive-Catching-Spirit-Personal-Economics/dp/097556210X

Nicholas Grabowsky

Roseville
Horror/ Sci-fi
Best-known books: "Halloween IV," "The Everborn"
www.downwarden.com/homepage.htm
www.myspace.com/downwarden

William H. Holden

Fair Oaks
True Life Adventures/Sacramento History

Personal memoir: "Dhow of the Monsoon"
www.amazon.com/Dhow-Monsoon-Zanzibar-Sindbad-Adventure/dp/1413739326

Nan Mahon

Elk Grove
Novelist
Best-known book: "Junk Yard Blues"
www.amazon.com/Junkyard-Blues-nan-mahon/dp/0595419852

W. H. McDonald Jr.

Elk Grove
Non-fiction/Poetry
Best selling book: "A Spiritual Warrior's Journey"
www.vietnamexp.com

Shirley Parenteau

Elk Grove
Children's Fiction
Best-known works: "One Frog Sang"
www.shirleyparenteau.com

Phil Silver

Roseville
Children's Books
Book-known series: "Boga Bear"
www.amazon.com/Boga-Bear-Philip-N-Silver/dp/141202126X