

Ruh's Muse of the Month  
As told to Chris Mandeville

*Ruh (pronounced "Roo") is a service dog and PPW/C mascot. He likes stories of all kinds, especially those involving good chase scenes. His favorite things are writers, children, his cat Loki, and Fontina cheese.*

**NOVEMBER 2007 – Barb Nickless & Beth Groundwater**

For this month I couldn't limit myself to just one muse. Here's why: **Barbara Nickless** and **Beth Groundwater** are the Dynamic Duo of PPW's Non-conference events. Their PPW teamwork began when they worked the Pitch Appointment desk together at PPWC 2006. I could tell right away that they formed a winning combo. Now they use their joint brainpower, creativity and ingenuity to create and produce a fantastic line-up of non-conference events. I'm inspired by them at each and every event, as I see them working hard to make everything run smoothly. They smile in the face of tight deadlines, stand tall when faced with last-minute changes, speak in front of large group without breaking a sweat, and leap capital letters in a single bound! Their grace, professionalism and style in their personal writing careers inspires me, too--

Barb Nickless is serving her second year on the Pikes Peak Writers Board of Directors as Workshops Director. Her Science Fiction and Horror stories have appeared in a wide variety of magazines and anthologies. "To Each Man an Island," her novel-length mystery manuscript, placed first in PPW's Paul Gillette contest, first in the Colorado Gold, and second in the Daphne du Maurier Award for Excellence in Mainstream Mystery/Suspense. She's currently in edits with her agent, and I know that any day now we'll hear of a big sale. Wow. She's beautiful, smart and talented, too. And tall. I like Barb. If my socks came off, she'd impress them right off me.

Beth Groundwater is PPW's Vice President in charge of Programming. She's had six short stories published, including one in Wild Blue Yonder, Frontier Airlines' in-flight magazine, and her amateur-sleuth novel A Real Basket Case was released in hardcover earlier this year. And we've not seen the last of her by far! What impresses me most about Beth is that behind her relaxed demeanor is a real go-getter. She orchestrated a marketing blitz to promote her novel, doing more appearances than McGruff the Crime Dog. I wasn't at all surprised to learn they'd paid off--she recently outsold her advance. So don't let her sweet smile and kind words lull you into a false sense of mellowness. If Beth says in that soft voice of hers that she's going to do something, stand back. Get out of the way. Run with your tail between your legs if you have to, because this woman's on fire.