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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 7
MARCH 2003

March Workshop
Writing the Fiction Synopsis

When: March 5, 2003, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Where: St. Moritz Room, Red Lion Hotel
314 W. Bijou Street (I-25 and Bijou exit)
Colorado Springs, CO 80905

Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members

For our March workshop, PPW Board member and award-winning author Pam McCutcheon will present her highly acclaimed workshop, Writing the Fiction Synopsis, a Step by Step Approach, based on her book by the same title. Pam is the author of 10



romance novels, two novellas, three fantasy short stories (as Pamela Luzier), and two how-to books for writers. See you there!

Coming in May

"How to Package your Proposal."
When: May 7, 2003, 6:30-8:30 p.m.*
Where: St. Moritz Room, Red Lion Hotel (address above)
Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members (special discount for PPWC attendees who bring their conference nametags)

*Please join your fellow writers for an informal "no host" reception following the workshop, in the bar at the hotel so folks can get to know each other and ask questions of existing PPW members and board members.



By Winnie Shows

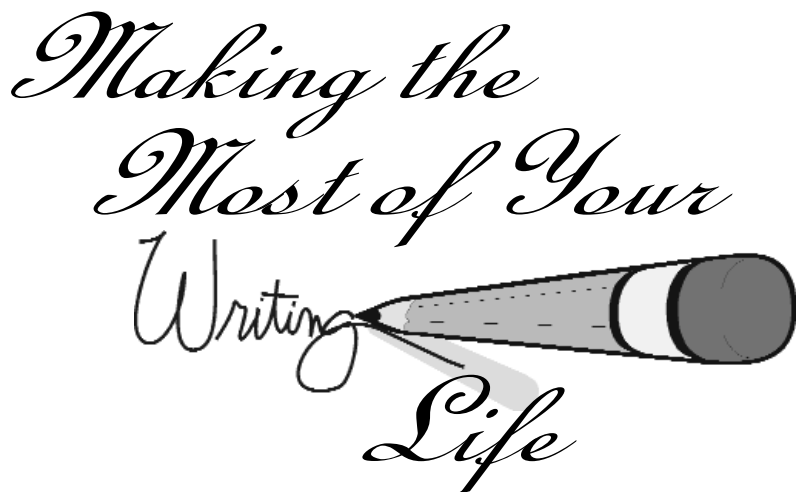
First in a three-part "Making the Most" series

Over the past twenty years, my writing life has spanned high-tech marketing, poetry, a monthly motiva-

tional newsletter, and personal- and spiritual-growth books. Here are some ways of the best ways I've found to keep moving forward, one word at a time, no matter what's on my desk...

1. Know Thyself

Figure out your optimal rhythm and arrange your life to make the most of your energy. My best days typically find me at the keyboard by 5:00 a.m. with time out for a workout at some point, and doing personal errands and lighter work in the afternoon. Sometimes I get a



second wind in the evening, but I don't count on it, so that motivates me to finish the important things early. What works best for you?

2. Define Success Each Day

Whether your goal is to finish a chapter revision or to come up with a dynamite title for your latest article, to research some subject matter or to organize your tax materials, list specifically what will constitute "success" today.

"Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work."

—Stephen King

continued on page 4

from the editor



First question: Have you given thought to your writing life, your writing space, and your writing career? Good! We kick off the March issue of PPW with Making the Most of Your Writing Life, by Winnie

Shows. Shows offers real life, real time how-to's on moving forward with our writing, one word at a time.

Second question: Are you ready for the April Pikes Peak Writers Conference? Yes and No? Whether this will be your first writers conference or your 15th, Karen M. Jenista's Writers Conference Planner helps

Bimonthly NewsMagazine of the Pikes Peak writing community

P.O. Box 6726
Colorado Springs, CO 80934
719.531.5723
E-mail: info@ppwc.net
Web site:
www.pikespeakwriters.org

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you focus in on what, exactly, you'd like to get out of the conference. Don't miss it! And while we're on the subject of the conference, check out this issue's Conference Clips by Jude Willhoff, who spoke with Barry Mayer, our keynote speaker for Friday's Opening Ceremonies.



We're pleased to introduce two new staff this issue, so check out Hot Topics for details! And don't miss our new column, Sweet Success, which is, well, pretty self-explanatory.

And last but certainly not least, we've organized the next two workshops so you can reserve the dates in your calendar. Both workshops will take place at the Red Lion Hotel, a location we're excited about, and a place that's easy to find, just off I-25 at the Bijou exit.

So fill your oversized mug with Starbucks House Blend, snag a chocolate hazelnut biscotti, and claim your writer's hour. It's yours, all yours.

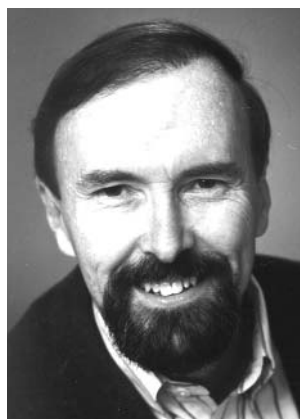
Conference Clips

This column is dedicated to the Pikes Peak Writers Conference, whether it be calendar updates, election notices, conference features, or editor-presenter interviews. In this issue, you will meet Barry Maher, PPWC 2003 Opening Ceremonies Guest Speaker, interviewed by Jude Willhoff.



Barry Maher, PPWC 2003 Opening Ceremonies Guest Speaker

By Jude Willhoff



Barry's topic for the Pikes Peak Writers Conference will be "How I Make a Comfortable Living as a World Famous Writer No One Has Ever Heard of." It's not strictly a motivational address, but it tells how he does just that—"makes a living as a famous writer no one has heard

of." The presentation is full of good solid information for fledgling writers. It has humor and several passages from his *Filling the Glass* "real world motivation" presentations. Attendees at the Santa Barbara Conference did find it motivational, but he prefers that it not be billed as a motivational presentation, rather more as a "how to." The title says it all.

Today Barry Maher is in demand as a speaker for business audiences. Whether as a speaker or a consultant, he is hired to get results: to improve productivity and attitude and ultimately, the bottom line. His clients include a number of the largest companies in the world. At the time of this interview he was also conducting another interview for a radio network in China. For an unknown author, the man does get around.

Barry's books include *Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business*, *Prentice Hall Marketing Yearbook*,

You've mailed your registration check, made travel arrangements, and hotel reservations. Maybe you've also polished those first 20 pages of your manuscript, whittled that synopsis down to the maximum three pages, and entered the contest. As a veteran of a dozen or so writers' conferences in the past several years, I've learned that's not the end of preparation.

The first conference I attended was the Whidbey Island Writer's Retreat for Women, in Oak Harbor, Washington. We were living in Oak Harbor then and I'd been writing for two years. My husband heard the radio spot while driving home from work. After five minutes of discussion, we drove to the hotel, registered, and I slipped into the dining room in time for the opening remarks. It was a small conference, laid-back and simple, one workshop at a time. Yet I was overwhelmed, intimidated, bewildered. (Sure, the last-minute, inexperienced start didn't help.)

Then came conferences with multiple workshops per session, readings, and agent/editor appointments, oh my! Add frantic and scattered to that list of adjectives.

Since I'm not totally devoid of intelligence, I gradually developed a plan to help me be most effective at conferences. One caveat: Be open and flexible. The plan is meant to guide, not limit you. When opportunities arise, don't sacrifice them to your plan.

Identify the objective

Why are you going? Are you a beginner, eager to learn the basics, explore genres? Perhaps you've written a manuscript and are ready to pitch it. Are you tired of working in a vacuum, hoping to network? Or maybe you want to revitalize yourself, discover anew your passion for the writing life. Write it down.

Set goals

These will spring from your reason for attending the conference. I try to list three, enough to feel productive without putting myself back into frantic mode. If my current career goal is to find an agent, my conference goals might be: pitch to three agents; talk to agented authors about their experiences; and network with authors in my genre. Write them under your objective.

Choose wisely

Study that conference brochure. List the workshops and events that support your

WRITER'S CONFERENCE PLANNER



by *Karen M. Jenista,*
PPW Assistant Editor

objective. Prioritize them, even ones you're ambivalent about.

Sometimes the program at the conference provides more detailed descriptions of the workshops and speaker/workshop substitutions, which may alter your list. If any of your choices coincide in the same sessions, the list quickly shows you which to attend.

If my current career goal is to find an agent, my conference goals might be: pitch to three agents; talk to agented authors about their experiences; and network with authors in my genre.

Depending on your goals, you might also be examining the brochure for information on editors or agents. What criteria are important to you? Large publishing house? AAR member? Glean what you can from the brochure, then research further in publisher/agent guides and on Web sites. Use the information to rate your candidates. Try to meet them in that order.

Unless you thrive on non-stop stimuli, schedule down time for yourself. You don't have to fill every time slot. And some fruitful relationships begin in lobbies and lounges.

Make note cards

You might think this only applies to people meeting editors or agents. However, a beginner, besides being interested in general information, may have specific questions about plotting. A networker seeks advice on starting a critique group. How many times have you tucked a question or idea in the back of your mind, only to forget it during a busy, exciting event? Don't forget a card for your objective and goals.

For pitching, notes aren't a necessity. But not everyone is a good extemporaneous speaker. I'm not. Notes improve my ability

to articulate all my important points. For each manuscript, I write title (in a different color), genre, word count, and log line on an index card. On another card I create a brief, bulleted resume.

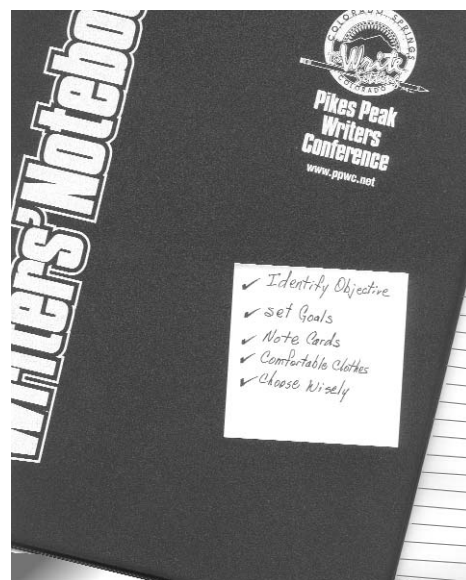
Minimal notes on separate cards make information easy to find, easy to read, easy to have with you. At the conference, peruse them before appointments and at random moments to increase familiarity with your information. You're less likely to gape or sputter.

Pack comfortable clothes

I've seen a wide spectrum of attire at conferences: casual to formal, plain to fancy, a few coordinates to complete wardrobes. Your skirt suit may be perfect for an interview, but if you're usually a khakis-and-polo person, leave the suit at home. Why be hampered by heels or distracted by itchy fabric? Wear clothes that let you move with ease and concentrate on the conference.

While you're packing, also think about how you can carry as little as possible. With fewer possessions, you'll have less to keep track of and can move smoothly around the conference spaces. Clothing with pockets allows key items—business cards, notes—to be hands-free available.

Now that you're prepared, you can control your conference experience. I wish you success. If you're a veteran attendee, be a pal to newbies. It's good karma.



Making the Most of Your Writing Life

continued from page 1

Then do it. After that, you're free to do what you want. You'll be surprised at the energy this releases, and you'll accomplish way more than if you were following a long "to do" list.

3. Catch the Wave

When we catch a cleaning wave, dishes fly into the cupboards and dust balls obediently cluster together in front of the broom. When we catch a creative wave, the paint jumps onto the canvas and words arrange themselves into paragraphs and stanzas of breathtaking delight. Be on the lookout for sparkling ideas and flashes of inspiration and capture them immediately, even if they don't apply to what you're working on right now. Catch the wave, and you'll produce more and better material.

4. Apply the Swiss Cheese Approach

On the other hand, when there are no waves in sight and you get stuck, switch to something that has a completely different feel to it. Sometimes material needs to rest. Just keep moving forward. I wrote this article in bits and pieces between other projects and jumped around within the sections whenever I ran out of steam. I took a nap. I visited with a friend. I ate lunch. Each time, I came back with new ideas and more word power.

5. Experience the Power of Completion

Go all the way to the end. Check it off your list. Get it off your mind. Deadlines provide the discipline most of us need. If you don't have a hard deadline, create one. Especially on first drafts, plunk the words down in roughly the right places and do enough to cover the topic. Get to the last paragraph. Close the file. Feel the release of completion.

6. Reward Yourself

I learned this one from my 7th grade teacher Sister Mary Charles, who, for some unknown reason, also had the unusual habit of randomly saying, "I smell rubber." (You can imagine how this cracked up a room full of hormone-driven thirteen-year-olds.) When you complete a goal, treat yourself in

some way. It may be as minor as taking a walk around the block or calling a friend after completing a small goal, or as major as taking off for a week's vacation after dropping your manuscript into the mail. Variety is the key. Sometimes it's a treat just to open my mail if I've been ensconced with a snarly manuscript all day.

7. Enlist a Writing Buddy

Check in each morning, set a goal for the day, and report on how you did with yesterday's goal. This simple process creates amazing results.

8. Create the Space for Brilliant Solutions and Creative Ideas

Live in the present moment. Drop those grudges. Clear up any unfinished business. Eliminate any of the psychic drag that prevents your best work from coming through. Hang out with people who make you laugh. Breathe deeply. Kiss and hug regularly. Read other great writers.

"When we catch a creative wave, the paint jumps onto the canvas and words arrange themselves into paragraphs and stanzas of breathtaking delight."

9. Get Enough Exercise

You can brainstorm ideas as you swim laps at the Y, come up with a surprising plot twist while traversing the Garden of the Gods or channel a winning title while executing a downward dog in yoga class. These activities also bring more oxygen to the brain and promote a greater sense of well-being as you return to your keyboard.

10. Clear the Decks

Clear the clutter from your desk each night so you arrive the next morning to an inviting space that says, "Let's go!" (You night owls can reverse this order.)

11. Create a Grand Vision

Do you have a personal mission statement? Mine is, "I am a sparkling, playful expression of God, connecting people with ideas that enrich their lives." What's the biggest picture you envision for your life? When my motivational speaking career didn't take off but my writing career did, I realized that, working through best-selling authors, I can spread my ideas to millions instead of thousands and have no doubt that my work will change the world. Does that sound grand enough? Sure charges me up with a sense of purpose. Don't hesitate to think BIG!

12. ...and Remember to Pay the Bills!

Some of us may prefer to live in the ethers or think it's romantic to be a starving writer, but we need hard cash to keep a roof over our heads and the DSL line humming. Take one step each day to create income. This may mean working on a paid project, making phone calls, or updating your marketing materials. Inspiration is more likely to come if you aren't worrying about your next dollar.

Here's to the best year yet for all of us!

Winnie Shows is a collaborative writer who helps people birth their books. She has helped Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul author Kimberly Kirberger create No Body's Perfect (Scholastic, January 2003), Vickie Falcone create Buddha Never Raised Kids and Jesus Didn't Drive Carpool (Jodere, February 2003) and Kate Ludeman Ph.D. and Eddie Erlandson M.D. create Radical Change, Radical Results: 7 Actions to Become the Force for Change in Your Company (Dearborn, May, 2003). To subscribe to Winnie's free monthly motivational newsletter, visit www.wshow.com.

Coming next issue:

Making the Most of Your Writing Space



The Business End

PIKES PEAK
writers

Annual Report
February 15, 2002 - August 31, 2002

Founded in 2002, Pikes Peak Writers (PPW) is an organization dedicated to 1) provide an educational forum for the study of the craft of writing, 2) serve and promote the literary arts on a local, regional, or national level, and 3) demonstrate the relevance of those arts to contemporary life and culture.

In our inaugural year, PPW supported a wide variety of programs in accordance with our mission statement. We organized and executed the Paul Gillette Memorial Writing contest with a total of 224 entries in ten categories: Mainstream fiction, Mystery/Suspense, Historical Romance, Contemporary Romance, Science Fiction/Fantasy, Screenplays, Creative Nonfiction, Young Adult, Children's, and Short Stories. First place winners in each category were given a chance to come to the Pikes Peak Writers Conference (PPWC) for free or receive a cash prize of \$100. Second and third place finishers received cash prizes as well.

As the newly-organized sponsoring entity responsible for the Pikes Peak Writers Conference, we organized and held the tenth annual PPWC on May 3-5. We had an attendance of 403 which included 359 registrants and 44 faculty (7 editors, 8 agents, 29 authors). We conducted 45 workshops over the weekend, and supervised more than 100 one-on-one and group meetings and pitches between aspiring writing and publishing professionals. At our Awards Banquet, we recognized the winners and finalists of our writing contest. In addition, we awarded the Pikes Peak Conference Award for Writing Excellence to David Morrell. The Jimmie Butler Award for outstanding service to Pikes Peak Writers was given to former conference director, Michael Waite.

In addition, at the end of the conference, we held the first organization meeting of PPW with 85 members attending. Elizabeth Lyon spoke about the value of volunteering.

As a part of our quarterly programming, we sponsored a workshop held at the East Library in July featuring Doris Booth, founder of EditorLink. This meeting was free for all members and their guests, with 62 people attending.

Our bi-monthly newsletter is an 8-page one-color publication consisting of articles about the craft of writing, industry news, announcements of area literary events, reviews of research material, lists of online resources and other material relevant to the writing career. The first issue was distributed along with our conference brochure in February and the second issue was distributed at our conference. Subsequent issues have been mailed to all members. Back issues have been distributed gratis to prospective members via mail or handed out at local bookstores.

Through an ongoing membership drive, we ended our fiscal year with 303 paid members.



PPWC alumni Carol Berg writes, "My fantasy novel *Song of the Beast* is forthcoming from New American Library/Roc Books in May 2003. *Song of the Beast* won the [PPWC] Paul Gillette contest for Best Fantasy in 1999.

"Also, I have just sold a new three-book epic fantasy series *The Bridge of D'Amath* to New American Library/Roc Books. Book 1, *Son of Avonar*, will be published in February 2004.

"*Restoration*, the third book of my epic fantasy *Books of the Rai-kirah* (following *Transformation* and *Revelation*), has been nominated for the *Romantic Times Reviewers' Choice Award* for Best Epic Fantasy of 2002."

Congratulations and kudos to you, Carol!

Pikes Pique, or . . .

. . . choose your words oh so carefully!

Best of Merged Books (from a *Washington Post* contest)

Green Eggs and Hamlet—Would you kill him in his bed? Thrust a dagger through his head? I would not, could not, kill the King. I could not do that evil thing. I would not wed this girl, you see. Now get her to a nunnery.

Where's Walden?—Alas, the challenge of locating Henry David Thoreau in each richly-detailed drawing loses its appeal when it quickly becomes clear that he is always in the woods.



Catch-22 in the Rye—Holden learns that if you're insane, you'll probably flunk out of prep school, but if you're flunking out of prep school, you're probably not insane.

Rikki-Kon-Tiki-Tavi—Thor Heyerdahl recounts his attempt to prove Rudyard Kipling's theory that the mongoose first came to India on a raft from Polynesia.

The Maltese Faulkner—Is the black bird a tortured symbol of Sam's struggle with race and family? Does it signify his decay of soul along with the soul of the Old South? Is it merely a crow, mocking his attempts to understand? Or is it worth a cool mil?

Conference Clips

continued from page 2

Getting the Most from Your Yellow Pages Advertising, and the mini-cult classic novel, *Legend*. He's been featured in more than 200 publications, including *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

Barry's speaking career began when people who'd read his writing asked him to speak and offered to pay him for it.

"As soon as I got over being terrified of it, I realized I loved it," he said. "Unlike writing, the response is instantaneous."

Barry doesn't think of himself as a motivational speaker. "I consider myself a writer who tries to reach people by dealing with the reality of the situation rather than the wishful thinking and pixie dust that some who are considered motivational speakers try to spread. Anyone who doesn't believe reality can be inspirational doesn't really believe in inspiration."

"The person who had the greatest influence on my life over a short period of time was me: when I decided that I'd better take control of my life."

The people who listen to Barry speak and the people who read his books are the best motivators for him. When he's speaking, he gets instant inspiration from the audience. When he's writing, he's envisioning the reader and getting motivation from trying to reach him or her.

"And of course there's nothing like a note or an e-mail from a real flesh and blood reader after the book hits the streets," he says. "The only thing better than that is a rave review from another writer."

"I deliberately don't try to define success for others. In *Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business*, I tried to provide strategies and tactics for helping people achieve whatever their own idea of success might be. For me, success is reaching the people I'm trying to reach as a writer and speaker and having it mean something to them. Why write or speak, except to have

some sort of an impact on your audience?"

Barry has been lucky enough to be able to control much of his own life. "For good, bad or indifferent, what I am today is the result of the things I've done and the choices I've made." Perhaps the main reason he's reached the level of success he's reached as a writer, he admits, is, "I'm incapable of holding a real job for any extended period of time. Freedom is what I most strive for in my life. I could never be happy having to spend my days doing something I didn't want to do. I've tried, and I'm not good at it."

It's not for him to say how much he influences the people he comes in contact with. "I would hope that occasionally I nudge them a bit into influencing themselves. The person who had the greatest influence on

my life over a short period of time was me: when I decided that I'd better take control of my life."

The second greatest influences are the people who serve as examples to show him that his goals were possible. "Obviously, none of us can accomplish anything if we don't believe it's possible."

Barry will be available for signing *Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business*, and *Legend* during the Pikes Peak Writers Conference. You may visit Barry Maher's Web site at <http://www.barrymaher.com>.

Out of Book Experience

a PPW Bookshelf Review

Sin and Syntax How to Craft Wickedly Effective Prose

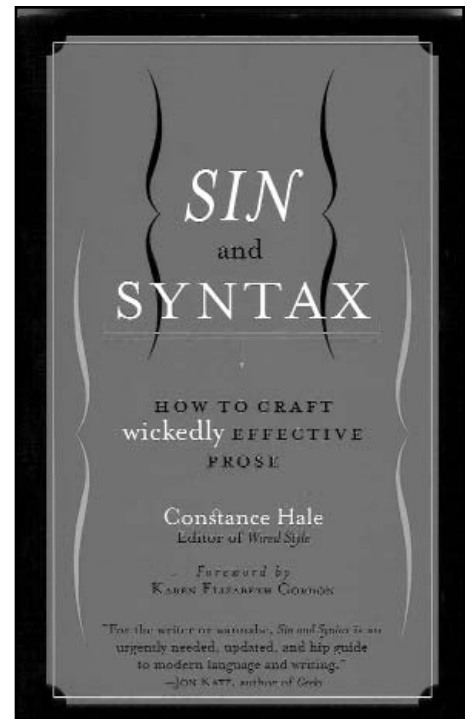
By Constance Hale

No, it's not a "dirty" read. Shame on you.

Sin and Syntax is a hilarious, sarcastic, and entertainingly effective grammar guide. Yes, grammar. No, not the kind you remember from sixth grade.

In the book-jacketed words of Jesse Sheidlower, Senior Editor, Random House Dictionaries, "*Sin and Syntax* is one of the rare books that recognize—and even celebrate—the fact that good writing has little to do with 'rules' and much to do with a true understanding of effective prose. Connie Hale provides us an invaluable service by showing us what works and what doesn't in the real world, regardless of what the pundits say."

It's a bold red book with the word 'Sin' on the cover. Simply a must have.



Creativity Workshop a Hit



Attendees shop a wide selection of books provided at the workshop.

Mara Purl, left, and Dr. Linda Seger regale their audience in January.

The all-day Creativity workshop presented by Dr. Linda Seger and Mara Purl was a resounding success, with some 30 writers taking part in hands-on exercises and creativity conceptualization. Seger and Purl both entertained and inspired the audience with personal vignettes and practical tips on living the creative life. In case you missed it, here are a few gold nuggets:

- Write down your mission in life. Don't be afraid to list what you need—be outlandish.

- When you're stumped in your writing, jump categories, start looking at something from an entirely different angle.

- Your own curiosity is one of your best assets.

- Your muse doesn't keep regular hours—keep a notebook, always, and be ready, be welcoming.

- If your writing project just doesn't want to get started, give yourself a consecrated period of contemplation.

- Make sure you're not the only one who's fallen in love with your words.

- Be ready for success instead of being shocked by it.

- Figure out your natural writing process—morning, afternoon, evening?

- Releasing your own creativity makes you more of what you are. A force of nature. Volcanic. Unpredictable.

- When we create, do we create something new or are we discovering something that already exists?

- Creativity is noticing and observing.
- Creative ideas require nurturing.
- Being aware of your needs is being aware of where your intelligence is heading.
- Ask yourself, What I am supposed to want vs. what I really want?
- People in writing groups write faster and get published faster.
- Graham Wallace's steps of creativity:
 1. Preparation
 2. Incubation
 3. Illumination
 4. Verification
- Write it down now! Never assume an idea will come to you again.

PIKES PEAK WRITERS REGISTRATION FORM

Interested in joining us? If you'd like to become a member of the Pikes Peak Writers, just fill out this form and mail it to PPW, P.O. Box 6726, Colorado Springs, CO 80934, along with your membership dues of \$15 for January 2003 through May 31, 2003. On June 1, 2003, dues will be \$25, with membership running through May 31, 2004.

For more information, visit www.pikespeakwriters.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____ E-mail _____

Hot Topics

Contest entries set new record

A grand total of 304 entries (80 more than last year) were submitted to the Paul Gillette Memorial Writing Contest for the upcoming 2003 Pikes Peak Writers Conference in Colorado Springs. The United States, England, and Canada are represented among this year's entrants. But don't worry, you're not competing against 303 other writers. This year's contest is divided into 10 categories, something to fit everyone's creative effort.

New Staff

Please welcome two new staff members to the PPW roster; Krysti Kercher as PPW's new Assistant Treasurer, and Chris Mandeville, newly elected Board of Directors member-at-large (as a representative of the PPW membership) and PPW's Workshops Chairperson.

Krysti is working on a Science Fiction/Fantasy project and enjoying the Beginning Writer's Workshop taught by

8 Pikes Peak Writer

PPW Board member and author Pam McCutcheon. Krysti grew up in Southeast Asia, and could teach us a thing or two about death adders, pythons, Papuan Black snakes, foot-long centipedes, and large wasps. Whew! I guess we need not wonder where she gets her writing material!

Krysti is also a home-schooling homemaker, artist, and seamstress.

Chris has a background in Social Sciences, and has worked in advertising; most notably on the IAMS pet food account, and was an original member of the advertising team that launched Lexus. Chris is a former editor of a newsletter for new parents, was a ghostwriter for several non-fiction pieces, and is currently writing a fantasy novel relating to dreams and Hopi Indian mythology. Married and the mother of three sons, Chris has lived in Canada and various locales across the U.S.

Writers Supporting Readers

Start saving and collecting books for donation while in attendance at this year's Pikes Peak Writers Conference. Collection receptacles will be available for all age groups. To help make our job more efficient and effective, please sort and group "in good condi-

tion" books for children (elementary), youth (junior high/middle school), young adults (high school) and adults. Donated books will be distributed to many appreciative school libraries and civic groups in need.

Operation Paperback

Once again, we will be collecting books for Operation Paperback at the conference. Operation Paperback is a program started on the Internet to send paperbacks to our troops overseas. Since they are often stationed in remote areas with little entertainment, the contribution of reading material will give them something to look forward to at the end of the day. In support of this effort, the Pikes Peak Writers Conference will collect your gently used fiction paperbacks at the conference, package them up, and mail them to one or more of the addresses on Operation Paperback's list. So, please remember to bring your fiction paperbacks and donate them to the cause! For more information about Operation Paperback, go to <http://oppaperback.virtualave.net>.

PPW Membership

Don't forget to join PPW, an organization tailored to you, the writer! For more information, visit www.pikespeakwriters.org.