

Pikes Peak Writer

NewsMagazine

Official Publication of the Pikes Peak Writers



VOLUME VII, ISSUE 2
March, April 2008

CONTENTS

From the Editor
page 2

The Writer's Life
page 2

**Ruh's Muse
of the Month**
page 3

**Your Best Writing
Year Yet**
page 4

Our Peak Pick
page 6

Sweet Success
page 7

Business of Writing
page 8

**What Editors and
Agents Want**
page 9

Upcoming Events
page 10

The Bone Collector
page 11

**Nora Roberts
Lifetime
Achievement Award**
page 11

**Things to Know
About Colorado
Springs**
page 12

Conference Is Right Around the Corner

By Kirsten Akens

With the Pikes Peak Writers Conference less than two months away, excitement is building. Have you registered yet? If not, visit pikespeak-writers.com today and get yourself signed up to experience one of the best writers' conferences in the West. This year's keynote speakers span the genres, from fantasy to romance, graphic novel to mystery.

Friday Dinner, April 25: Carol Berg

Carol Berg attended her first Pikes Peak Writers Conference ten years ago. Her tenth book, *Breath and Bone*, was published in January 2008. And according to her Web site, Carol and her publisher have just agreed on a new three-book traditional fantasy series.

She may have been a math major in college, but she took every English course that listed novels on the syllabus—just so she would have time to keep reading. It was her college roommate who loaned her the copy of Tolkien that gave her a love for epic fantasy that changed her life...eventually. Somewhere in the midst of raising three sons, earning another degree—this time in computer science—and a software engineer career, a friend teased her into exchanging letters written “in character.” The game quickly got out of control.

Carol's 10 mythic fantasy novels have earned national and international acclaim, including the Geffen Award, the Prism Award, and the Colorado Book Award. One reviewer has called the Books of the Rai-kirah: *Transformation, Revelation and Restoration*, “one of the first great epic fantasies of the 21st century.”

Carol has now put the engineering career on hold to become a full-time writer. She lives in Colorado at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

Saturday Lunch, April 26: David Liss

David Liss is the author of four best-selling novels, most recently *The Ethical Assassin*. He is also the author of *A Conspiracy of Paper*, winner of the 2000 Edgar Award for Best First Novel; *The Coffee Trader* and *A Spectacle of Corruption*. His fifth book, *The Whiskey Rebels*, will be published later this year. His novels have been translated into more than two dozen languages.

In January 2008, David spoke at the United Nations global anti-corruption conference in Bali, Indonesia. CNN Anchorman Jim Clancy led the panel on “Artists for Integrity,” exploring the need to fight corruption as a shared responsibility among governments, businesses and individuals. David shared the stage with film director Terry George (*Hotel Rwanda*), actress Famke Janssen (*X-Men*), and musicians Eric Wainaina, and Cesar Lopez.

As part of a broad and novel approach to raising awareness of global corruption, members of the literature, film and journalism worlds were asked to attend so they might meet representatives of various anti-corruption organizations, hear their stories and explore how the arts can engage worldwide audiences in the fight against corruption.

David lives in San Antonio with his wife and children.

Saturday Dinner, April 26: Vicki Lewis Thompson

New York Times and *USA Today* bestseller Vicki Lewis Thompson has written more than 90 novels, is an eight-time finalist for Romance Writers of America's RITA award and a two-time nominee for *Publishers Weekly's* Quill Award.

With the catch-phrase, “the brain is the sexiest part of the body,” Vicki's first mainstream romance, *Nerd in*

continued on page 5

“ Writer's block is for people who have the luxury of time.”

—Jodi Picoult

from the editor



Make New Friends, But Keep The Old

Ah, those former Brownies and Girl Scouts among you will recognize that title. It may be the first song

many of us learned after donning the uniform.

Make new friends

But keep the old

One is silver

And the other's gold



Bimonthly NewsMagazine of the Pikes Peak writing community

4164 Austin Bluffs Pkwy #246
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
(719)531-5723

E-mail: info@pikespeakwriters.com
Web site: www.pikespeakwriters.com

PPW Officers

President

Chris Mandeville

Vice President of Programming

Beth Groundwater

Vice President of Operations

Ron Heimbecher

Secretary

Bret Wright

Treasurer

Pat Kennelly

Conference Director

Kirsten Akens

Contest Director

Dawn Smit Miller

Faculty Director

Karen Fox

Member at Large

Charles Rush

Member at Large

Chris Myers

Editor

Debbie Meldrum

Workshops Director

Barb Nickless

Graphic Design

Martha Lancaster

Reporter

Ron Andrea

Pikes Peak Writers operates as a nonprofit, tax exempt organization incorporated in November 2001 as the Pikes Peak Writers. *PPW NewsMagazine* is a bimonthly publication serving members of Pikes Peak Writers group. The opinions expressed in *PPW NewsMagazine* don't necessarily reflect those of the editorial staff/board of directors. Articles in *PPW NewsMagazine* may not be reproduced without the written consent of PPW.

©2008 Pikes Peak Writers.

I treasure all my "old" friends in Pikes Peak Writers and especially those involved with the *NewsMagazine*. I wouldn't have very much to keep me busy around here without people like Martha, all the reporters, and our columnists Linda, Janice, D.B., and Ruh. They are the gold.

But we have some silver to celebrate in this issue. Some new friends have stepped up and taken on some pretty important tasks for PPW and for the *NewsMagazine*. Let's take this opportunity to meet them.

Sharon Williams is our new Volunteer Coordinator. She has experience in this tough position and will be a great addition to the PPW family. Of course, her job will only get easier with each new person who volunteers to lend a hand. You can sign up for a one-time task or take over an ongoing position. Next time you attend a PPW event, talk to Sharon. I bet she has something that would be a perfect fit for you and your schedule.

Another brave new volunteer is Ron Andrea, our new reporter coordinator. He is responsible for making sure you get to read about all the great Write Brains, workshops and other PPW events. When he's not wrangling reporters, Ron writes in several different genres and does beautiful water-colors.

D.B. deClerq is currently revising her first mystery novel, working on the draft of her second and researching her third. With my thanks and blessings, she is turning *The Writer's Life* column over to a mutual friend, Fleur Bradley. Fleur's short stories

are well known to fans of crime fiction. She is submitting her first novel to agents. And this prolific author is also working on young adult novels. Where does she find the time? Check out *The Writer's Life* to find out.

I've talked about it before here, but it's worth repeating. Pikes Peak Writers is a volunteer-run organization. Without our volunteers, we couldn't put on the Write Brains, workshops or the Pikes Peak Writers Conference. You can make a big difference by doing what you might think is a very small thing. Arrive a few minutes early for a Write Brain session and help set up the tables and chairs. I think you'll be surprised by how grateful Beth Groundwater and Barb Nickless are to have your help. Or stay a little late and help clean up. Again, a few minutes of time, but a huge help to the organizers.

Do you attend most of the Write Brains? Drop me a line, and I'll put you in touch with Ron Andrea. If you're going to be there anyway, why not write an article for the *NewsMagazine*? It helps us out and gives you a publishing credit. No extra time for you, a big difference for us. Can you say, "Win/win?" I believe we're covered through May (thanks, Ron and reporters), but Ron can tell you where we need coverage. Or you might want to write an article about a non-PPW event. Yep, we'll consider those, too.

Think about it. And enjoy the *NewsMag*.

The Writer's Life: February—The F Is for Focus

By Fleur Bradley

The other day, I had another one of those conversations that irk the heck out of me. I tell someone I'm a writer. The person smiles, touches my arm, says, *I always wanted to write a book too. But I just don't have the time.* As if I have all the time in the world.

I smile back. We have a little conversation about how wonderful writing is, and I walk away annoyed. I want to say, *So why don't you write? Go see how easy it is to write a novel.*



The truth is that it takes hard work to be a writer. You know this, too. If you want to write, you have to sacrifice something. Time with your spouse, your

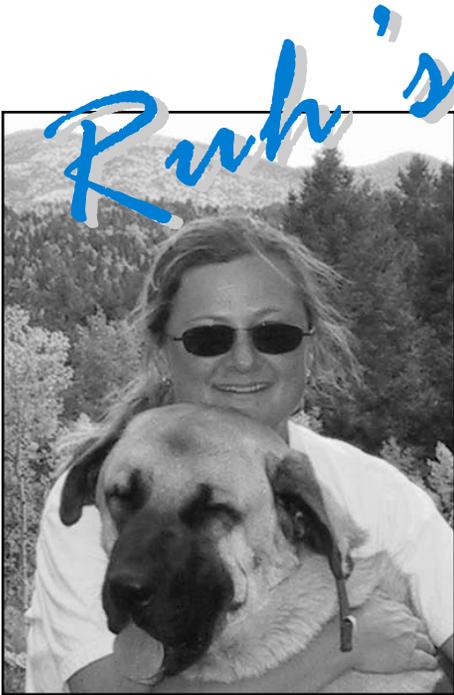
kids, the most recent episode of *Lost*. A writer friend of mine wrote his first novel during his lunch breaks. You want it bad enough, you make the time. Right?

But then I thought about this. *What have I done for my writing lately?*

In January, I started with this great list of goals. But the kids got sick—I have two little

continued on page 6

Muse of the Month



As told to Chris Mandeville

Rub (pronounced "Roo") is a service dog and PPW/C mascot. He likes stories of all kinds, especially those involving squirrels. His favorite things are writers, children, his cat Loki, and Wisconsin cheddar.

FEBRUARY

Enthusiastic, animated, earnest, ebullient, zealous, spirited, passionate, gung ho, lively, energetic, eager...I could go on, but I imagine you get the idea—I'm describing my muse for February, **Jené Jackson Hanna**. Yup, she's a real fireball (and yes, I did just discover www.thesaurus.com). Jené is one of the most inspiring humans I've ever met. Her creativity, enthusiasm and joie de vivre are contagious. As the Member Liaison for PPW, she spreads her contagious vivaciousness to members, prospective members and arts-related organizations kind of like a friendly virus. That analogy doesn't seem as good on paper as it did in my head, but you get the idea.

Jené is the creator and host of our Member Night at Poor Richard's Bookstore at the end of each month. She also serves as our liaison at meetings of other nonprofits, such as KCIC—Imagination Celebration, PPAC—Pikes Peak Arts Council, and the BAC—Business of Arts Center. This year Jené is in charge of the "Relax & Renew" room at our conference. I know she'll have

cool stuff planned for you two-legged sorts. As for me, it's both relaxing and renewing just to lounge at Jené's feet, so bring your tape roller to the R&R room (and some doggie treats, too, please) as you'll likely find me (or at least some evidence of me) there.

Jené's personal time is just as full of fun people, creativity and positive energy as her PPW time—she's got a houseful of smart, funny, energetic family members, has multiple fiction projects brewing in multiple genres, and is working on an incredible nonfiction venture ("the oat project"—ask her about it!) that fills every available moment (and then some). If Jené's writing portrays even a fraction of the exuberance, joy and brilliance contained in that tiny human body of hers, she'll soon be recognized as the force of nature and creative genius that I know her to be.

It may seem a bit of a contradiction that a person so bubbly, bouncy and free is so down to earth, but I don't question nature's miracles. Like squirrels who visit in the winter and steaks left unattended on the table, I welcome and enjoy the gift that is Jené.

MARCH

I adore my muse for March, **Kirsten Akens**. We're kindred spirits, she and I. We both love cats. And cheese. And cuddling up with a good book (though she actually reads them). But come to think of it, she doesn't chase squirrels, bark or shed...at least that I know of. Well, I adore her anyway. In fact, when I see her I completely forget I'm a service dog and I run to greet her, wagging like mad.

When Kirsten smiles and scratches me behind the ears, I feel about as lucky as a pig in mud, an eater of a steak left unattended on a table, or members of the PPW Board of Directors when Kirsten is at the helm of the Pikes Peak Writers Conference. Yes, Kirsten is the Conference Director for 2008, and as a result we're all in for a scrumptious treat. Well, maybe not scrumptious. How about enriching, edifying, educational and enlightening? (thesaurus.com again. I do love those "e" words.) Any-who, we're going to have a pawsitively wonderful time at PPWC 2008 due to the inspired guidance of Director Kirsten Akens and her fabulously gifted crew of volunteers. That's because Kirsten is a great leader, a forward thinker, logical and

creative, and dang smart. You all better look out or I might knock you down as I bound merrily toward Kirsten and the Marriott for my yearly dose of writers, agents, editors, pitches, speeches and workshops.

Have I mentioned that Kirsten uses her powers for good, not evil? Yes indeed, she does. She focuses her acumen (good word, even though it doesn't begin with an "e") onto the page with whole bunches of brilliant words and ideas devoted to causes both global and local. The newspaper page, that is. She's a writer for *The Colorado Springs Independent Newspaper* ("the *Indy*") with a number of cool stories to her credit. I'm particularly fond of her cover story on Colorado Springs' School in the Woods, a fourth-grade-only public school that teaches kids to be environmentally conscious "naturalists." After all, there's only so much a dog can do on his own without fingers and a voice, so I really appreciate the help from Kirsten and fellow nature lovers (of any age) protecting planet Earth's big backyard.

So I hope you'll attend PPWC 2008 and experience for yourself the myriad (dictionary.com) of reasons why PPW is so proud and fortunate to have Kirsten as the PPWC Director this year. When you see the fantastic lineup of speakers, the pitch room full of acquiring editors and agents, the delectable food-stuffs, and the slew (boy that Internet comes in handy) of educational, entertaining, and inspiring workshops, you'll think you're a lucky dog, too. Lucky, lucky, lucky.

Thanks, Kirsten, for the flock of inspiration. I think I'm in love with you (and with thesaurus.com).

January Write Brain: Your Best Writing Year Yet



photo by Jared Hagan

Featuring Cynthia Morris

By Erin Shaw

Only a few words into a conversation with Cynthia Morris and you know you're speaking with a writer in possession of the zeal and the skills for the craft that all authors crave. That's what makes Cynthia not only a great writer, but also a great writing coach. Through her Web site, www.originalimpulse.com, and through such books as *Create Your Writer's Life: A Guide to Writing with Joy and Ease*, she has helped writers of all achievement find inspiration to create, to hone their skills, and to promote their finished works.

And for the January Write Brain, Cynthia helped a packed room full of Pikes Peak Writers flesh out plans to make 2008 their best writing year yet. With the aid of a series of questions outlined below, she guided participants through a process to map out exactly how to achieve that feat.

Goals

The first step to making this year your most successful writing year is knowing what will make it your best year. Start by delineating your primary goals: finishing your novel, writing and submitting short stories, finding an agent to represent you, and publishing the works you have already completed are some simple suggestions. Build

on these possibilities and customize them to fit your needs. Set your goals high, and you may be pleasantly surprised at the end of the year how much closer you are to achieving your writing dream.

Focus

After creating a list of general goals for yourself, find a motivational word or phrase that succinctly describes your creative energies. Let this be your mantra for the rest of the year. A few examples from participants include: "Out the door," "Finish everything I start," and "Don't over-commit." When you find yourself distracted or frustrated, use your mantra to reignite your desire to write and refocus your energies on your creative projects.

Results

There is no better way to recognize your own success than to know when you've achieved pre-defined results. Make yourself a list of tangible accomplishments you can check off as you reach them. Examples might include setting a goal of a certain number of pages written in a novel, entering and placing in a certain writing contest or finishing a certain number of revisions on your current novel. It might even include, as one participant proposed, a certain number of rejection letters received in your mailbox—just to know you're keeping your promise to yourself to tell the world that you have something you want to share.

Tools

In order to succeed in building your writing career, you need to pack a toolbox. After you have made your list of desired results, make an accompanying list of required tools to get you there. If your goal is to network, consider starting a blog. If you feel you need to improve skills or gain more constructive feedback, consider attending a writing workshop or joining a critique group.

Support

It will likely be easier for you to see the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel" if you break your goals down into segments. It will also help motivate you to start early if you have deadlines that are shorter than a year away.

For instance, if you intend to finish a 400-page novel this year, you can set a 100-page-per-quarter goal to help ensure you make it the end of the book by December. If you want to both start a blog and send out query letters, you can decide that during the first quarter you will sign up on a blogging site and that during the second quarter you will buy a book that lists agents in your genre. By the third quarter you can aspire to be writing



photo by Jared Hagan

a daily online journal and to have sent out 20 letters to potential agents.

Saboteurs

By recognizing which demons are stifling your writing aspirations, you begin the process of defeating them. These can be drainers—the things the voice in your head is saying you "should" be doing instead of writing. These can be the demands of jobs and sometimes family members who don't feel writing is as important as their assigned projects. It can be a major life distraction, such as a legal battle or sick family, which demands precious time and energy that might otherwise be spent on writing. List these

Conference Is Right Around the Corner

continued from page 1

Shining Armor, became Kelly Ripa's pick for her book club in 2003 and launched Vicki's popular nerd series.

Instead of resting on her laurels, Vicki sought a new challenge and chose paranormal romantic comedy. Set in the fictional town of Big Knob, Indiana, the Hex series features a large granite spire, a matchmaking witch and wizard and a dragon who's ADD. *Over Hexed* was published in October 2007 and *Wild & Hexy* is due out in June 2008.

Her qualifications for writing these books include a New England ancestor accused of witchcraft, a love of potions—especially those concocted in a martini shaker—and a great fondness for black cats.

Vicki's favorite word is "serendipity," she loves Haagen Dazs coffee ice cream and she lives in Tucson, Arizona.

Sunday Lunch, April 27:

Walter and Louise Simonson

Walter Simonson was born in Knoxville, Tennessee. He tried drawing his first comic when he was about seven, using manila paper and colored pencils. He tackled the weighty subject "The Origin of Life." He got through a page and a half before deciding that typing

captions on his Dad's manual typewriter and fitting them into the appropriate spaces was too difficult. He started reading comics seriously while he was in college. Then he began reading fewer comics and went back to trying to draw them. Eventually, he started working in the comics field professionally as both an artist and writer.

Walter has worked on a lot of comics including the *New York Times* bestselling Alien graphic novel *Manhunter*, *The Metal Men*, *Superman*, *Batman*, *Thor*, *X-Factor*, *Fantastic Four*, *RoboCop vs. the Terminator*, *Star Slammers*, the *Rampaging Hulk*, the *X-Men vs. the Teen Titans* crossover, *Orion*, *Wonder Woman*, and *Hawkgirl*.

His latest complete work is *Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer*, a graphic novel written by Michael Moorcock for DC Comics. Walter recently drew *Superman 666*, a story written by Kurt Busiek that sent Superman to Hell.

He's currently working on a 96-page graphic novel provisionally entitled *The Judas Coin* for DC.

Louise Simonson began her publishing career editing horror anthology comics for Warren Publishing then moved to Marvel Comics where she edited the best-selling *Uncanny X-Men*, *The New Mutants*, *Conan*, *Star Wars*, and *Star Trek* among other titles. In

1984, she created the award-winning *Power Pack*. Her bestselling comics for Marvel include the *X-Men* titles *The New Mutants* and *X-Factor* for whom she co-created the fan-favorite characters Apocalypse and Cable, Web of *Spider-man*, Warlock, and Galactus the Devourer. For DC Comics, she wrote *Superman: Man of Steel* and co-created the character Steel as part of the bestselling "Death of Superman" storyline. Her *Orion: First Encounter* for Harcourt Achieve was part of their award-winning Hi/Lo series of educational graphic novels. She has published 13 comics-related novels and kids' books featuring DC Comics characters, including books featuring on *Superman*, the *Justice League*, and *Wonder Woman*. She is writing an adult prequel to the new *Batman* movie. She wrote three middle-reader novels in the *Extreme Monsters* series for Penny Candy Press and the Tween novel *Children of Olympus* for Actionopolis (Spring 2008). Her first adult nonfiction book *CoverGirls* (Rizzoli Publishing) was released in Spring 2007.

Walter and Louise live in New York City.

Visit our Web site for ongoing updates and scheduling information. Conference 2008 is sure to be the best one yet.

January Write Brain: Your Best Writing Year Yet

continued from page 4

saboteurs and recognize them when they come around.

Strategies

In order to ensure that you can keep writing despite distractions and detractors, you will need to delineate strategies to overcome them. Establish ground rules: Commit to your job the time it requires but set aside adequate time for yourself and your writing. Make sure your family knows that if the office doors are closed, entry is allowed only in the case of emergency.

If you are having trouble motivating yourself to write, set an alarm and when it sounds, stop what you're doing and write for your allotted time. If you find yourself unable to keep personal deadlines, make yourself accountable to someone else. Consider joining a writing group or finding a writing buddy with whom you share your works.

Celebrate

By December, you should see yourself moving closer to your year-long goals. Worry less about the unfinished ones and relish the ones you have reached. Treat your "Muse" with gifts, travel to inspirational places or consider throwing a party for everyone involved in your success. Buy yourself the

"The first step to making this year your most successful writing year is knowing what will make it your best year."

fancy pen and journal you've been admiring or sign up for a subscription to a new writing magazine. Splurge on that writing retreat to Hawaii. Who knows—your celebration may

turn into the inspiration for your next novel!

Now that you've made your lists and you know exactly where your writing career will be by December, it's time to get to work. Put down the newsletter, hang your lists on the walls of your writing space, and start checking off each goal you've accomplished toward making this the best writing year yet.

Through her company Original Impulse, Cynthia Morris helps writers, business owners, and visionaries make their big dreams a powerful reality. A speaker, certified coach, and published author, Cynthia leads writing and creativity workshops in the U.S. and France. Cynthia is the author of *Create Your Writer's Life: A Guide to Writing with Joy and Ease* and has penned hundreds of articles on writing and the creative process. She has published several e-guides on writing and creative travel and has completed a historical novel set in Paris. Join her creative tribe at her Web site www.originalimpulse.com.

Pikes Peak Writers is thrilled to present Our Peak Pick - the updated face of the recommended craft book program.

In each issue of the newsmagazine, a PPW staff member will recommend a highly beneficial book on the business or craft of writing. PPW will then sell it to members at a discounted price.

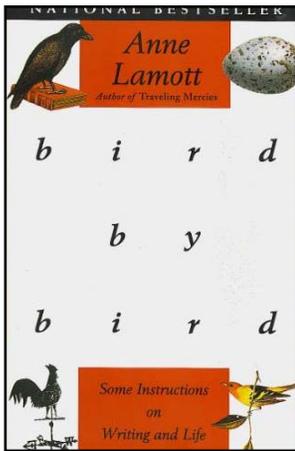
Our Peak Pick for March and April is *bird by bird* by Anne Lamott. It lists for \$13.95, but the PPW member price is only \$9.50 plus tax. The member discount applies during the months of March and April. Read the recommendation, and come to the Write Brain sessions on March 18th and April 15th to pick up your discounted copies. Enjoy!



bird by bird
By Anne Lamott

Recommended by Bonnie M. Hagan

An unimpressive cover sporting an odd title wraps itself around one of the most motivating books about the craft of writing I've ever had the privilege to



read. Anne Lamott, a California native, a novelist, a book review columnist, a restaurant critic, a mother, and a Guggenheim recipient, brings her power and her passion to bear

in *bird by bird*. She fills the text with vignettes that inspire, and prose that makes my fingers itch for the keyboard.

As the pages flew beneath my eager eyes, Anne Lamott's experiences led me through the mechanics of writing, coached me on the writing frame of mind and helped me discover the worlds of help that exist for every writer.

I had the uncanny notion that this woman had crept unawares into my office, observed my uneven writing habits, and was now, with good humor, gently shoving me into the writing practices I knew I should cultivate. Without lecturing even once, Anne Lamott encouraged me to open myself up to attitudes and behaviors that could transform a stutter-stepper like me into a real writer.

I heard her talk about school lunches and how the simple things from our past could tap into universal themes I never knew existed. Her difficult childhood, one filled with joy and loss was entirely her own story, but somehow she found my childhood, too.

I heard her tell about the frustration of writing, rewriting, and rewriting yet again only to be told that her work must be rewritten once more. With steel in her voice she talked about terrible first drafts and how crucial it was to just get it all written down.

I heard her tell me that publication, that gleaming carrot before the eyes of every aspiring writer, is not the end all and be all of writing. I heard her talk about the frame of mind necessary in order to put one word in front of another in any kind of meaningful way. I heard her—in no way preaching—talk about morals and beliefs and how these should shape every word a writer puts on paper.

And I heard her tell me about Broccoli. You're going to have to find out about that one yourself.

The most amazing thing about *bird by bird* is that I heard her. Having never met her in my life, I have heard Anne Lamott as if we sat side by side in a coffee shop while she told me her insights into writing and life. I listened to her the way I would listen to a traveler returning from the trip I myself had bought a ticket for—the frightening, maddening, and immensely rewarding safari of being a writer.

I recommend having a conversation with Anne Lamott. Listen for a spell as she offers insight into the writing life chapter-by-chapter, step-by-step, and *bird by bird*.

The Writer's Life: February—The F Is for Focus

continued from page 2

girls who pick up every bug at school. *Twice*. I started a new reporter job, which meant real deadlines with a paycheck involved. The house still needed the occasional cleaning (although I happily sacrifice housekeeping for writing time). And then there was a blizzard or two, which meant snow days for the kids.

I talked to a good writer friend the other day about what we were writing, and realized I hadn't written a word of fiction since December. Suddenly those 31 days of January don't seem very long at all. February is here,



I'm knee-high in life, and I can barely remember what my goals were.

After that irksome conversation with that person, I said to myself, *So why don't you write, Fleur?*

There will always be reasons not to write. Laundry to do, work to do, kids that need my time. Jobs for the mom, the

reporter, and the wife that I am—and I love to be all those things. But my writing goals are important to me, to the fiction writer I am.

So February will be the month I focus on my goals again. Before you know it, it'll be spring, and I *really* won't remember what my goals were. As soon as I finish writing this article, I will start those revisions that I've been itching to get on the page.

Because the goals I made at the beginning of the year were like a promise to the fiction writer in me. And she deserves for me to keep them.

Sweet Success

Compiled by Janice Black

What an encouraging quarter! Recently, an e-mail came to me from Supriya Bhatnagar, the Editor and Director of Publications at *The Writer's Chronicle*. Her exact words were, "Just a quick note to let you know that we are putting your letter in Letters to the Editor in the Feb. 08 issue. I have not cut anything from it." The journal, which comes out of George Mason University, is available at bookstores and posted at www.awpwriter.org.

Several members of PPW and one of our PPWC 2008 Faculty members have been named semi-finalists in the **Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award (ABNA)** contest. They include:

Kirk Farber for *Postcards From a Dead Girl* in General Literature. Go to www.amazon.com/dp/B00122GTR8 to look at an excerpt.

Beth Groundwater for *Virtual Death*, which is different from her cozy mysteries, being a futuristic romantic suspense with some fairly racy bits. Go to www.amazon.com/dp/B0011ZCAME.

Kenny Golde for *Pursuit of Happiness* in Historical. To read his, go to www.amazon.com/dp/B00126594I.

Ian Healy for his novel, *Deep Six*, in Science Fiction and Fantasy category. You can take a peak at www.amazon.com/dp/B00122GTTG.

Bill Mason for *Primordium* in Science Fiction and Fantasy. The first 5,000 words and a review are posted at www.amazon.com/dp/B0011ZCADI.

Chris Myers for *Offshoring* in Mystery/Suspense/Thriller. For a sneak preview, go to www.amazon.com/dp/B0012658F8.

Bret Wright for *Nasty*, also Mystery/Suspense/Thriller and at www.amazon.com/dp/B0011G9XPU

A few words about ABNA from our esteemed President Chris Mandeville: "The semi-final round features excerpts from contestants' entries as free Amazon Shorts. Amazon customers are asked to read these and post reviews. From the 800 plus semi-finalist entries, only 100 will go on to the next round. Don't let your favorites get left

out. Go to Amazon and review as many shorts as you want.

To view all the semi-finalist entries (grouped by category) go to Amazon.com and scroll down to 'Features and Services' on the left. Under 'Amazon Exclusives' select 'Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award.'

Back to **Beth Groundwater**: On December 29th, she signed a contract with Tekno Books for the sequel to *A Real Basket Case* titled *To Hell in a Handbasket*. In this latest, which takes place in Breckenridge, Colorado, a gift basket designer and her family's ski vacation goes to hell in a handbasket when the sister of her daughter's boyfriend is killed on the ski slope.

*Note: Rockrimmon Fiction Book Club is discussing *A Real Basket Case* at the Rockrimmon Branch of the Pikes Peak Library. And, it has been nominated in the mystery novel category of the Predators and Editors poll. If you've read the book you will want to vote for it on www.critters.org/predpoll/novelmys.shtml.

Beth's message about networking with other writers is featured the week of March 9-15 on *The Bylines 2008 Writer's Desk Calendar*, a weekly inspirational planner.

Also, interviews with Beth Groundwater and with her editor, Denise Dietz, appear in the January/February issue of *Mysterious-E ezine* (www.mystericale.com).

And, Beth's light and humorous short story, "The Extra Gift," is included in the January/February 2008 "Celebrating Crime" issue of *Crime & Suspense Magazine*.

This girl never stops. To keep up with her, visit her Web site at www.bethgroundwater.com.

Another busy writer among us, **Pamela Cosel**, won honorable mention for a personal essay, called "Family Secret," in the Women on Writing (WOW) Fall 2007 quarterly writing contest. Congratulations, Pamela! (I entered that one too.) "Family Secret" is posted at wow-womenonwriting.com. Visit her Web site: www.carouselcommunications.com and take a look at her blog: www.offthebookshelf.blogspot.com.

Pam McCutcheon was asked to write an essay, "Stephanie Plum's Trenton: A Great Place for the Family?" in *Perfectly Plum: An Unauthorized Celebration of the Life, Loves and*

Other Disasters of Stephanie Plum, Trenton Bounty Hunter by Janet Evanovich, one of her favorite authors!

Coming out in August: The fantasy anthology *Enchantment Place* includes Pam's short story "Make-a-Mortal," Deb Stover's short story "Witch Stitchery," and Laura Hayden's is "Steel Crazy."

Also, Pam's short story, "Chemistry 101" will be published in the upcoming *Witch High*, a fantasy anthology. If werewolves, pre-adolescent ogres, unicorns and dragons and chemistry lab partners at Sadie Hawkins dances are your cuppa tea, you'll have a blast, er, good time with any of Pam's stories.

And Pam has been asked to write an article on writing synopses for the *Guide to Literary Agents*.

Carol Hightshoe: *It Seems a Time To* has been recommended for A Triptee Jury award. This anthology was named as a Finalist for an EPIIE.

Deb Stover: *The Independent* published a lovely interview done in 2007. The link to the online version is www.csindy.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A22182.

Mike Befeler's second novel in the Paul Jacobson Geezer-lit Mystery Series, *Living With Your Kids is Murder*, is under contract with Tekno Books/Five Star for publication in April, 2009. A sequel to *Retirement Homes Are Murder*, this new novel takes place in Colorado where octogenarian Paul Jacobson comes to live with his son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Paul, who suffers short-term memory loss, witnesses a string of crimes and must figure out a retirement home property scam and escape a vicious killer. Mike's Web address is www.mikebefeler.com.

Karen Laugel is a PPW member in New England who has made it to the top ten in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel contest. Her novel is *Ring of Lies* and an excerpt can be downloaded and read for free by going to www.amazon.com/abna and clicking on her entry. If you like her story, consider taking a moment to write a review of it on Amazon. The grand prize winner of this contest will be selected by popular vote, so jump in there and cast your vote by posting a review.

—Thanks to all who proclaimed their success stories and thanks to those who brought others to the light. If I missed something, please resend it so I can put it in a later issue. Keep writing! And keep submitting!

The Business of Writing

A Few Key Contract Negotiating Tips

by Linda Rohrbough

When I do workshops I often hear from new writers a fear that borders on paranoia about contracts. But contracts aren't as hard as you might think and, with a little information, even new writers can look savvy in this business. Let me say up front, I'm not a lawyer. These are tips I use myself, and you use them at your own risk.

My first tip is to read the contract. You'd be surprised how many authors don't. They just sign it, then complain loudly to anyone who'll listen when something they didn't expect happens, like the publisher changes the title after acceptance of the manuscript.

The next tip is, once you've read the contract, Google terms you don't understand. Then ask about these terms in a non-adversarial way with your agent or editor. Sometimes the editor will make a concession to you on that part of the contract, just because you asked.

My guiding principles in contract negotiation are 1) to maximize potential profits and 2) to attempt to avoid language that limits my future. Here are some terms to look for.

Joint Accounting

You don't want this and most publishers will remove it without hesitation. This term means if you do two books (or more) for the same publisher, the profits are grouped together, or counted jointly. The consequence to you is the profits on one can be used to make up for losses on another. You want your books accounted for separately, so if one "earns out" or makes back the advance, then anything above that comes to you in royalty checks.

First Rights of Refusal

This means the publisher decides first whether or not to publish your next book. You may or may not get this removed, but you can certainly ask. You can also ask to shorten the period the publisher gives themselves to consider your next book idea. On my last contract, my agent got a 90-day refusal period shortened to 30.

Options Clause

The publisher often wants to buy your next book(s) for the same financial agreement. This reportedly happened to Agatha Christie when she signed her first contract. When her first book took off, she tried to get a better deal for the next two. But the contract had her locked in. So she did what any self-respecting author does; write the next two, then renegotiate book four. Though, of all the problems in the author universe, this is one of the better ones.

Buying Rights

The publisher is buying the right to publish your book in certain formats. They'll want all the rights, meaning paperback, hardback, electronic rights, audio book rights, movie or film rights, foreign language rights, and so on. You'll want to keep as many of these rights as you can. This is always a balancing act. You may not get to keep many rights at first, but with each new contract, you can expect to keep more.

"... contracts aren't as hard as you might think and, with a little information, even new writers can look savvy in this business."

Royalties

This is the biggie. You may not be able to get the royalty rate you dream of, however, publishers are often willing to create a royalty scale that slides upward as your book sells more copies. The idea here is the publisher will have recouped their costs in putting the book out, so their profits go up and therefore yours should, too. As an example, on a first fiction book, they might offer you three percent. You might be able to counter with sliding up to four percent at 10 thousand copies and go to five or six percent at 25 thousand. Thirty thousand copies is considered a best-seller, so sometimes the publisher will want to set the upper break point there. This is much easier to negotiate



than a deal where you get a higher royalty right out of the box.

I remember getting a contract and seeing a 12-percent royalty. I got all excited until I read more carefully and found out that was for hardback, and I knew there were no plans for a hardback version. Careful reading is the bonus here.

Many writers ask, "Won't my agent take care of all this?" Not always. Some agents are only a step or two ahead of you in the game. Others have too many authors and they simply can't keep up. And these days a lot of authors are unagented. If you are agented and decide to turn a blind eye to the contract, you're taking a chance. Why do that if you don't have to?

Six Tips for Contract Negotiation

1. Read the contract.
2. Google terms you don't understand.
3. Look for the term "Joint Accounting" and ask for it be removed.
4. Try to keep as many rights to the book as you can without alienating the editor.
5. Watch out for options, like first right of refusal, and try to get that removed or limited.
6. Suggest a sliding (upward) scale for royalties.

Linda Rohrbough has been writing professionally since 1989, has more than 5,000 articles, seven books and awards for her fiction and nonfiction. Her latest publisher was bought by a bigger house, so her new book is being retitled and bumped to a March 2008 publication date. The new title is Weight Loss Surgery with the Adjustable Gastric Band: Everything You Need to Know Before and After Surgery to Lose Weight Successfully from Da Capo Lifelong. Visit her Web site for more details: www.LindaRohrbough.com.

What Editors and Agents Want

| Editors: | Interested in: | Material wanted at pitch session: |
|---|---|--|
| Cecile Goyette Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers | Middle grade and young adult fiction, picture books (of the hardcover trade ilk), young graphic novels. | One to two page synopsis and book proposal. |
| Rakesh Satyal HarperCollins | Fiction and nonfiction, with a tendency toward genre-bending, cultural or international fiction and pop cultural/trendy nonfiction. | Author's discretion. |
| Liz Scheier Random House | Science fiction and fantasy, particularly urban and contemporary fantasy, paranormal romance, GLBT fiction, some other commercial fiction and nonfiction. | First five pages of manuscript for pitch sessions. |
| Peter Senftleben Kensington Books | Mysteries, thrillers (especially serial killer—no terrorism plots), urban fantasy, women's fiction, romantic suspense, paranormal fiction and romance, horror, gay and lesbian, pop culture, humor, and entertainment. | Hard copy of the synopsis for the pitch sessions. |
| Abby Zidle Pocket Books | Commercial fiction including romance, women's fiction, suspense/thrillers, historical fiction, and popular or "service" fiction. | Pitch material isn't necessary. |
| Toni Plummer St. Martins Press Thomas Dunne Books | Mystery, thriller, women's fiction, chick-lit, and multicultural. | Author's discretion. |
| Agents: | Interested in: | Material wanted at pitch session: |
| Pamela Harty The Knight Agency | Women's fiction and all romance genres. | No hard copies necessary for the pitch session. |
| Rachelle Gardner WordServe Literary Group | Fiction or nonfiction with a clear Christian worldview. Includes all categories of nonfiction such as marriage, partnering, finances, health, etc. | Author's discretion. |
| Kate McKean Howard Morhaim Literary Agency | Fiction: literary and commercial, including women's fiction, contemporary romance, paranormal romance, urban fantasy, mystery, and thriller. Young adult and middle grade fiction. Nonfiction: craft, how-to, sports, narrative, lifestyle, health/wellness, humor, and pop culture. | Author's discretion. |
| Victoria Skurnick The Levine Greenberg Literary Agency | Fiction: literary, narrative nonfiction, memoir, and politics. | Author can bring whatever material they prefer. |
| Cherry Weiner Cherry Weiner Literary Agency | Open to all genres, handles most. | Pitch material isn't necessary. |
| Laurie McLean Larsen Pomada Literary Agents | Adult genre fiction and middle grade/young adult children's fiction and nonfiction books. | Pitch material isn't necessary. |

Upcoming PPW Events

March, April

March Write Brain

“Fish or Fowl? Where does my book fit in?”

featuring Charles Kaine, Proprietor of Last Knight Publishing and the Reader's Cove Bookstore in Fort Collins, CO and Beth Anne Steckiel, Owner of the Beth Anne's Book Corner bookstore in Colorado Springs, CO

Tuesday, March 18, 2008, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: Cottonwood Artists School,



This program will help writers understand the commercial fiction genre classifications and how to label their own manuscripts when pitching them. Two bookstore owners, one

who also has publishing experience, will offer in-depth knowledge on the fiction genre classifications, note “industry standards” used by vendors, discuss how they deal with cross-genre books, and provide examples of books in each genre and successful cross-genre books.

After their presentation, we'll play a “name that genre” game. The panelists will listen to a few one-paragraph (250 words max) manuscript pitches from audience members, ask questions if they need to, and advise them on how to classify the genre of their manuscript to an agent or editor.

April Write Brain Session

April 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Pitch Practice and Conference Tips featuring Pam McCutcheon

This Write Brain session will answer questions about the 2008 PPWC with tips on making the most out of the conference. Award-winning author Pam McCutcheon will explain how to pitch your manuscripts and take you through log line exercises to distill your manuscript concepts to one perfect sentence. Attendees will have the opportunity to practice pitching in front of a small group

with experienced writers.

All Write Brains are FREE for PPW Members! Nonmembers may attend one Write Brain session for free, subsequent sessions are \$10. For more information and a map, go to pikespeakwriters.com.

The meetings are held at Cottonwood Artists' School, 25 Cimino Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

If you would like to participate in any Write Brain session, PLEASE RSVP AND INCLUDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION. This does not commit you to attending, but enables us to prepare enough materials for expected attendees, and importantly, it gives us a way to contact you if we have an emergency change to the Write Brain session, such as a postponement due to weather. We will make every attempt to post changes to the PPW Yahoo loop and the Web site, but to be ensured of notification you must RSVP to rsvp@pikespeakwriters.com.

PPW Members Night

Monday, March 24 and April 28 at 6:30 p.m. (The fourth Monday of each month.)

Poor Richards Bookstore
320 N. Tejon, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Come and hang out with other writers and bring friends interested in PPW. We eat, we drink, and we talk about the writing life.

Open Critique

Wednesday, March 26, 6:30 p.m.

Location: Cottonwood Artists' School (Open critique is held the fourth Wednesday of each month.) featuring Richard Bamberg as guest critiquer for March

Richard grew up in a small town in the heart of Alabama and has been writing, off and on, since the fourth grade. Over the years between careers in the USAF and with Boeing's part of the missile defense program, he's had four novels and a few short stories published. His writing leans toward thrillers with a touch of science fiction and horror. His novels include *Emerald Eyes*, *The Nazi Legacy*, *Strega*, and *The Phoenix Egg*. His short stories include pieces in *Bending the Landscape*:

Science Fiction, *The Parasitorium: Terrors Within*, *Executive Warfare*, and *Amber's Glow*.

Pikes Peak Writers Conference April 25-27, 2008 Colorado Springs Marriott

featuring keynote speakers:



Friday evening:

Carol Berg

Saturday lunch:

David Liss

Saturday banquet:

Vicki Lewis

Thompson



Sunday lunch:

Walter and

Louise

Simonson

You still have time to register!

PPW Fundraiser Booksigning May 31, 2008

Our third PPW fundraiser booksigning, will be held on Saturday, May 31st. We'll be returning to the Barnes & Noble Booksellers location across from Chapel Hills Mall. The signing component will be held 2-4 p.m., though PPW coupons will be good for purchases made all day. The participating PPW authors and titles are:

Lise Fuller, *On Danger's Edge* and *Cutting Loose*.

Ian Healy, *The Milkman*.

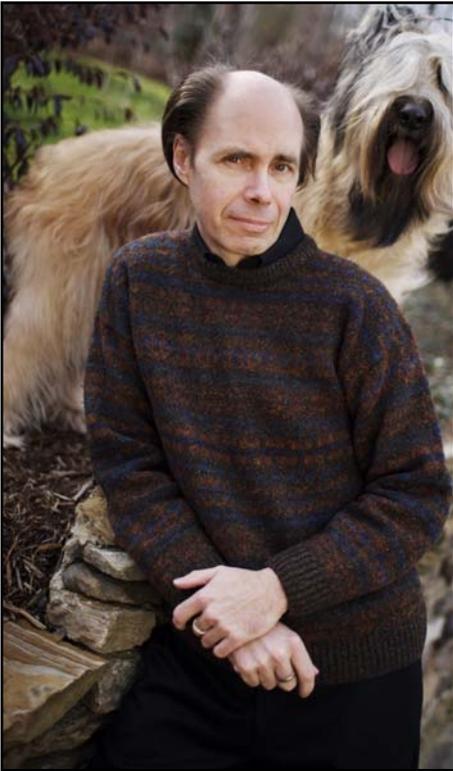
Lynda Hilburn, *The Vampire Shrink*.

Barbara Nickless, short stories in two DAW anthologies: *Fate Fantastic* and *Something Magic This Way Comes*.

Sharon Silva, *Spirit Dancer*.

The Bone Collector

Read The Book, See The Movie

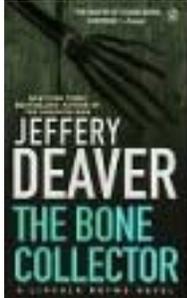


By Laura Pellerin

Pikes Peak Writers sponsored a “read the book, see the movie” night hosted by The Business of Arts Center in Manitou Springs. The movie was *The Bone Collector*, a 1999 movie based on the book of the same title by the *New York Times* best-selling author Jeffrey Deaver.

The audience consisted of both those who had and had not read the book. They stayed after the movie for a short question and answer session led by PPW’s president Christine Mandeville.

According to Chris, Deaver says that he is



in the business of writing suspense. As an author, Deaver separated himself completely from the making of the movie.

This is evident from the differences between the book and the movie. Those of us from PPW, readers as well as writers,

had high expectations of seeing a movie that more closely followed the book than this one did.

Deaver’s premise of a brilliant quadriplegic cop and a patrol officer cum crime scene investigator features a slowly building relationship between Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia, excellently played by Denzel Washington and Angelina Jolie. The interaction between healthy, yet vulnerable female and mentally superior but crippled male is interrupted by an occasional heart-stopping fright when the killer strikes and you think, “Oh, no. Not that!”

The director, Phillip Noyce, played a few tricks on many in the audience who had read the book by changing the physiology of the main character and also by changing the murderous motivation of a completely different serial killer.

Jeffery Deaver believes his readers want suspense, not gore. *The Bone Collector* was written as a stand-alone novel, like many of his books. The story is about a quadriplegic cop, armed only with computers and friends on the force, who forever changes the career direction of a young, female patrol officer. This gives him reason to stay alive. But readers loved the symbiotic characters, and demanded more. Being in the business of writing what readers want, Deaver has written

a total of eight books to date in this series.

Deaver does all his own research, about eight months worth before writing his books. He writes between eight and ten hours a day.

It’s Chris Mandeville’s opinion that Deaver writes without agenda or social commentary on the life of a maimed character. All the electronic gadgets in the world cannot enable Rhyme to walk on water, rather he must use people to perform his legwork.

They say the art of deductive reasoning brings no new facts to light. Deductive reasoning merely rearranges the known data to present a foregone conclusion in a different light. Rhyme is a character who can only manipulate arrangements of fact in order to spotlight a killer. And readers love Rhyme for what he is.

Author Jeffrey Deaver was the keynote speaker at a special, afternoon Pikes Peak Writers Workshop and an evening banquet Saturday, March 1, at the Colorado Springs Marriott Hotel.

The Business of Arts Center, located at Venue 515 on Manitou Springs Avenue, is a nonprofit, educational center for artists. Workshops are given about the business side of art, similar to PPW’s Write Brain workshops for writers to learn about the business of writing. Visitors are invited and encouraged to tour the studios. Their gallery has new exhibits every four to six weeks.

A free movie night is held at the Business of Arts Center every month. Craig leads the audience in social discussion at the end of the thought-provoking film.

For more information on the Business of Arts Center, please telephone: (719)685-1861 or visit their Web site: www.thebac.org.

Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award Honors Vicki Lewis Thompson

Vicki Lewis Thompson, a keynote for PPWC, was honored with a 2008 RWA Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award.

Thompson is an eight-time finalist for the RITA Award and author of more than 80

novels. She was first published in 1984 with Harlequin Temptation, and her first mainstream romance, *Nerd in Shining Armor*, became Kelly Ripa’s pick for her book club in 2003.

Read more about this 2008 RWA Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award winner at her Web site www.vickilewisthompson.com and at www.rwanational.org under “contests and awards.”



PIKES PEAK WRITERS
 4164 Austin Bluffs Parkway #246
 Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Things to Know about Colorado Springs



photo by Martha Lancaster

What should I pack?

- Bring clothes you can layer. The unofficial state motto is “If you don’t like the weather, wait five minutes.” Weather in late April could mean mid-70s or below freezing—sometimes both within one weekend.
- Pack sunscreen. No matter the temperature, the sun at over 6,000 feet is intense. Reapply often whenever you’re outdoors.
- Bring UV-blocking sunglasses. See above.
- Wear a hat, preferably wide brimmed, when you’re outside. Again, see above.

How will the altitude impact me?

This varies from person to person, but there are some things you can do to help avoid problems.

- Drink lots of water. When you think you’ve had enough, drink more. This is your best defense.
- Limit the amount of caffeine, salt, and alcohol you ingest.
- You may want to avoid strenuous physical activity the first few days.



Fun Facts:

- Colorado has the highest mean altitude of all the states.
- Colorado Springs was founded in 1871 by General William Jackson Palmer.
- Colorado Springs is 6,035 feet about sea level.
- The summit of Pikes Peak is 14,110 feet above sea level.
- Zebulon Pike never made it to the top

of Pikes Peak and stated that the mountain would never be climbed.

- *America The Beautiful* was written by Katherine Lee Bates atop Pikes Peak.
- Every year in August hundreds of people take part in two races on Pikes Peak. One is for people who run to the top of the mountain. The leaders’ times for the half-marathon distance is about that of a regular marathon. The second race is for those who run up and down.
- Nicknames for Colorado Springs include Newport of the Rockies (because of the number of Easterners who used it as a resort town) and Little London (for the number of British visitors).

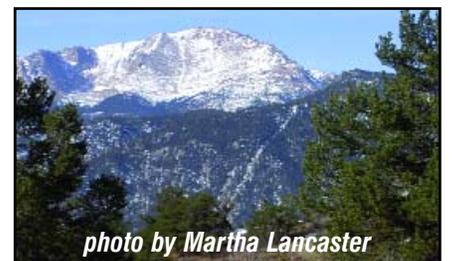


photo by Martha Lancaster