

Pikes Peak Writer

NewsMagazine

Official Publication of the Pikes Peak Writers



VOLUME VIII, ISSUE 3
May, June 2009

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Jeffery Deaver: Master of Craft

By Fleur Bradley

This year's PPW Conference keynote speaker Jeffery Deaver is the

kind of author all of us aspire to be. With over 25 books published, praise from *Booklist* and *Publishers Weekly* for his intricate plots, strong dialogue, and clever plot-twists, and a number of awards, it's hard to imagine Deaver was ever a beginner.

But during his humorous keynote speech, he reminded us that every writer has to start at the bottom—and Deaver took us through all those recognizable bottom moments. In a self-deprecating reading of diary entries, he talked about finding rejection letters in the mail, about bad reviews, unhappy fan mail, and procrastinating by mowing the lawn rather than writing a dreaded scene. "I'm a lazy writer," he said.

That "lazy" writer maintains both his Lincoln Rhyme and Kathryn Dance series, while writing stand-alone novels and short stories on the side. "I'm a businessman," he said simply about his productivity. He added that he enjoys writing very much, but treats his work as any professional would. "If a pilot wakes up in a bad mood, he still has to fly the plane."

Deaver is a methodical writer, who takes his plotting seriously. "I research for about eight months." This process has led to his reputation as an intricate writer. "Get it right," he advised writers about researching. His outlines are more than 100 pages long before he sits down in a dark

room and writes for two months straight. "I write very quickly, to get the ideas down. In the darkness, I can picture the images in the book." And when he writes, he is only focused on one person: his reader.

To a packed conference room, he explained this fierce dedication to his reader. "A novel is a consumer product," he said in his opening, comparing novels to products like toothpaste. "You have to give your reader something they want, or need." He continued by saying plot should come first, and then character. "Everything else is secondary." Deaver explained important components to plot, like creating a puzzle for readers to solve, maintaining suspense for as long as possible, and resolving every single conflict in the story. About the use of graphic violence in fiction, he said simply, "Suspense is good, gore is bad. It's easy to write a gory scene, but it's hard to write suspense."

"For his novels, he aims to keep his readers emotionally engaged, but for short stories, 'It's all about the shock.'"

He continued, explaining the importance of characters. "The characters have to be living, breathing people, otherwise the plot is useless." Deaver said characters should act, be multi-dimensional, and speak realistically. "Observe, observe, observe," he said, after an anecdote of listening in on a group of inner-city teens, to watch how

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"It is by sitting down to write every morning that one becomes a writer."

—Gerald Brennan

Letter from the Editor



By Mandy Houk

Nearly a week has passed, but I'm still full. The 2009 PPWC was a feast—and I'm not just talking about the food. In fact, we've expanded this issue to 16 pages because there was just too much good stuff to fit into our usual 12.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of dozens of volunteers, this conference more than satisfied. Our biggest thanks go to conference co-directors Karen Fox and PPWC Volunteer of the year Pam McCutcheon, as well as the owners of the



Bimonthly NewsMagazine of the Pikes Peak Writers, a 501(c)3 non-profit with members across the United States

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giant dog: Chris Mandeville and her son Duncan truly earned their distinctions as PPW Volunteer and Youth Volunteer of the year, respectively.

What do we long for most as writers? Inspiration. Encouragement. Opportunities to make connections with editors, agents, and other word nerds like ourselves. Tips for breaking into print, or marketing what we've already published. Tools to make our writing better.

With a phenomenal lineup of faculty members and keynotes, plus several brand new conference offerings (speed pitch practice; open mic night; optional Thursday workshops), I cannot imagine any writer going away from conference hungry.

If you had to miss it, this edition of the *NewsMag* will give you a taste of what the attendees learned. If you were lucky enough to attend, I hope this issue will refresh your memory and stoke the flame.

Fleur Bradley, our 2008 *NewsMag*

Reporter of the Year, has shared a bounty of knowledge from Saturday's keynote speaker, bestselling author Jeffery Deaver. We have several tasty tidbits covering conference workshops, as well as a delightful column from our youngest attendee, Mallory Shelstad.

But of course, this issue's not all about conference. We've got another fantastic article from Linda Rohrbough—winner of our first ever *NewsMag* Legacy award—telling you everything you didn't know you didn't know about book trailers.

And if you get hungry over the summer, stay tuned. With the May Open Meeting and the book signing May 30th and 31st, PPW nonconference events aim to please.

As soon as you've devoured this edition of PPW *NewsMag*, get back to what you're really here for: Happy Writing!

Mandy

Jeffery Deaver: Master of Craft

continued from page 1

they behaved around each other and get their speech patterns right.

"We have to like our protagonist," Deaver said about series characters. "Be very careful about killing characters off," adding that it could disappoint readers. Although believing in the importance of character, Deaver emphasized putting plot first—an unusual stance for a fiction writer to take. "Never let your characters control the story," he said, then added with humility: "I could be wrong, but I know where my story goes."

Deaver takes a systematic approach to plotting and structuring his novels, but this does not mean he has no appreciation for the art of writing. "The prose, the writing, is hard enough," he explains to a table of fans over lunch. "Why make it harder?" Even with his intricate work plotting, Deaver rewrites his manuscripts 40 to 50 times before sending to his publisher. "Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite, and rewrite," he advised attendees during his conference session.

For his short stories, Deaver creates outlines as well. "But with short stories, there's only one purpose: that big jolt." For his novels, he aims to keep his readers emotionally engaged, but for short stories, "It's all about the shock." And his approach has been successful: he won the Ellery Queen

Reader award for best short story several times. "I have a small following," he said.

The awards, the good reviews—all this success could really feed an author's ego. But Jeffery Deaver stays humble, and focused on his readers. "Readers are smart," he said, adding that he reads all reviews of his work. During PPW Conference, he talked to writers and fans, remaining friendly, accessible and honest. His keynote speech praised the conference for its friendly atmosphere and camaraderie among writers. And Deaver talked about eating kiwis and drinking lattes at Hollywood meetings, not afraid to make light of his own success, and sharing his setbacks. "They're speed bumps, not brick walls," he said of a fiction writer's challenges, reminding the audience to take the good with the bad, like he does. "Writing is a journey, not a destination."



Pam McCutcheon, Jeffery Deaver, and Chris Mandeville chatting at the PPWC.

Taking Up the Gauntlet

By Ron Heimbecher

October of 2008 tossed us, and six billion other people, some challenges. As deadlines loomed for the 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Conference, our organization went after each of these challenges, only to be slapped by another one almost without delay. Rumors of budget cuts in the New York houses brought concerns that some of our faculty, agents, and editors might not be able to attend. Skyrocketing fuel prices drove concerns about transportation costs for faculty and guests. For a number of reasons, we had more changes in faculty than ever in the history of PPWC, some within days of the conference start.

Bleak economic news, layoffs, bailouts, financial collapse, all became commonplace descriptors of the world around us, each being a harbinger of a potential PPWC disaster. To paraphrase Chief Dan George in the movie *The Outlaw Josie Wales*, “we endeavored to persevere...”

Should we increase conference fees in a rapidly receding economy? Should we change our policies on faculty, and perhaps risk a potential drop in quality? Could we add new programs to the conference agenda? Should we? We got news that a major sponsor had dropped sponsorship for 2009. Were we on the path to catastrophe? We no longer viewed

The Hero's Journey just as a formula for storytelling, but as a function of our quest for success. With the help of valued partners, we took up the gauntlet.

April 27, the 2009 Pikes Peak Writers conference has ended—successfully. Hundreds of smiling faces graced the halls, lobbies and conference rooms. Hundreds of eager minds fed on the accumulated knowledge of esteemed, well-prepared faculty. Airplanes landed, meals disappeared to nourish the eager minds, bottles emptied. Conversations created new friendships and solidified old ones. Airplanes departed. There was no catastrophe.

We did not increase conference fees, nor did we reduce the quality of our invited faculty. We did add four new programs; a full day on Thursday, speed pitching, a large book signing and open mic readings, all of which were immensely successful. And we did overcome the loss of a major sponsor.

At conference, we awarded significant players in our success, heroes in our journey whose stories appear elsewhere in this expanded edition of the *NewsMag*. A Web page, currently in development, will tell the tales of all the heroes who strode against operational challenges and the hordes of operational minutiae. The space on this page, and another minute of your time are for another group of heroes who we do not see every day, but are indeed the behind-the-scenes magicians who pull the levers, pulleys and strings to make everything come together. Those who enable us to beat back the demons of the 2009 economy.

Hotel Heroes: Stacy Peak and Kayla Conger of the Colorado Springs Marriott led a phenomenal staff, and worked for hours with us to provide value options and creative solutions for the hundreds of details it takes to mount a conference of this size. Glenn Hodge, also of the Marriott, worked with us to form a joint venture as an innovative answer to our audio recordings and delivery of completed CDs and DVDs.

Travel Hero: When fuel costs began to soar, and last-minute faculty changes occurred, Liz Mueller at Travel Travel worked some special magic to keep our travel costs within budget all the way to the end.

Publicity Heroes: Carrie Simison-Bitz, Jill Thomas, and the *Colorado Springs Independent* helped us to spread the word with out-of-the-box ways to expand our advertising messages in both depth and breadth.

Fundraising Hero: Dogosaurus Ruh and his mom Chris Mandeville of course, went paws full out to chase down replacement dollars for our lost corporate sponsorship. Ruh's Boosters and the Pen Pal program (thanks to pens donated by *Rainbow Editing™* and over 75 gift donors) gained back those lost dollars, with a little to spare.

Faculty Heroes: Linda Rohrbough, Angel Smits, Susan Mitchell, and Deb Courtney showed up on the field of honor a full day early to do presentations in three optional tracks.

My quota of magic words is fading fast. Please think a thought of thanks for those who helped us bring this all together. With dedicated partners beside us, we picked up the gauntlet—and won.

A Young Writer's View of Conference

By Mallory Shelstad

Opportunities for teens to study fiction writing at the caliber of PPWC are rare and generally out of reach—either financially or logistically—so I am delighted that this conference is held locally as an annual event. There is no better way to learn the craft than by rubbing shoulders with people that share my passion. What a novelty to be around people who can actually talk about writing without their eyes glazing over!

I don't remember a time when I didn't want to write. I wrote stories before I knew how to form letters; jagged lines on papers, walls, and chubby legs. I decided that I wanted to make writing my career in second

grade and have never wavered. Attending a writer's conference is a dream come true.

I attended the '08 Conference at the age of 14, and the knowledge I came away with was worth a year of study. This year's conference was no less inspiring. The best part about attending an adult-oriented conference is that the information has not been “dumbed down”. Definitely not the formulaic school stuff passed off as Creative Writing 101—these workshops hone your craft and let your imagination fly with a flourish.

All the authors, whether attending or teaching a workshop, readily share their knowledge and experience. Many of them tell me how lucky I am to be starting my career at such a young age. I feel as though I was among peers. They respect my youth, and also

understand my deep hunger for knowledge and experience in the writer's world.

Besides the immersion into the writing culture, PPWC offers an excellent opportunity to volunteer. Not only does volunteering help me to grow as a person, but also allows me to interact on a whole different level with the writers and authors that I so admire.

PPWC presents a variety of workshops on all forms of craft. I appreciate the diversity. My favorite this year was Linda Seger's “Creating a Transformational Arc for Your Characters.” I couldn't write my notes fast enough!

Some of the most inspiring speeches were presented at dinner, combining two of my favorite things—writing and food. I found it

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By Linda Rohrbough

The Business of Writing

A Short Guide to Book Trailers

The newest trend in fiction is book trailers. They look like movie trailers, but they promote books. The goal is to connect the Internet generation with the world of books. Here are the how-to resources for book trailers, including common problems and cost considerations.

A number of PPW authors have done their own trailers, such as Cicily Janus, whose book *The Face of New Jazz* was recently bought by Random House/Watson Guptill. Mystery chick-lit writer Diane Carver credits her book trailers for an increase in sales. Libraries are posting book trailers on their Web sites for readers. And research shows that commuters are book readers, so it's effective to post short videos on TVs in trains and buses. However, most book trailers end up on streaming video sites like YouTube.

If you're a do-it-yourselfer, you'll be happy to know the latest iterations of Windows include Windows Movie Maker, a program to create your own mini-movie. Detailed how-to advice is available on-line from award-winning Christian romance author Brenda Coulter (brendacoulter.blogspot.com/2007/06/promoting-your-novel-how-to-make-book.html), or from the aforementioned Diane Carver (www.writersweekly.com/this_weeks_article/004498_01302008.html).

You might end up forking out \$100 for music, video, and pictures, but some authors have spent less than \$10 altogether with stuff they found free on-line. Brenda's page includes how to find free ingredients for your trailer, but there are also links near the bottom of the page for more resources.

The main problem is time—40 to 60 hours, including the author's learning curve. Matthew Koumalats, a television producer in Fort Worth, Texas, started doing book trailers part-time after he and his wife found themselves with a new baby girl and a new mortgage. He initially founded ReaderHook.com for his mother, *New York Times* best-selling author Jodi Thomas.

Matt says many authors want trailers pre-publication. "It helps build anticipation,

especially if there's a fan club involved. The idea is to create interest, but not tell the book."

Matt says the most common earmarks of an amateur trailer are poor video quality, pacing that's off, inconsistent sound, and excessive length.

Poor video quality usually results from the author trying to keep the file size down. But Matt says there's no benefit to small video if lower quality results. Pacing problems can be dragging stills/video, or rushing through images, or images that are not synchronized with the soundtrack. Inconsistent sound has to do with spikes or drops in volume.

But the biggest mistake is trailers which are too long. "A lot of this stuff is viewed while people are at work taking a 'web break.' Very few people will watch a five-minute video. Most won't even watch three or four minutes." Matt doesn't do book trailers that are longer than ninety seconds. Most of his average a minute.

Jodi Thomas told me that for *Texas Princess* she spent most of her time finding voice-over talent. Matt posted a script on a number of voice-over sites and people sent audio files.

How long does all this take? "If we have good communication with the author, we can go start-to-finish in three to four weeks," Matt said.

Prices vary for video book trailers. ReaderHook.com asks \$475 for video with sound or music and still photos and text but no voice-over. Stock video, custom voice-over, and music will cost up to \$1,400. Circle of Seven Productions (COS) is the award-winning video production site that trademarked the terms "book trailer" and "book teaser." According to their latest brochure, prices start

at \$300 for a trailer with just your cover as the still, to \$1,500 for a "teaser" with stock video and stills. More custom work with actors and voice-over talent is bid by the job, but company representative Sheila English said publishers have paid from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Usually production houses ask the author to fill out a questionnaire along with the cover art and promo copy from the book. You can expect they'll throw in uploads to video streaming sites with corresponding links you can post on your Web site. However, creating a distribution plan for the trailer to fit the author's goals is COS's specialty. This plan, done up front, may include up to 5,000 libraries, B&N.com, and even showing the trailer on buses in major cities via Transit TV (for an additional charge).

Matt's advice, should you decide to hire help, is: "If you don't feel the trailer represents your book in a way that you're happy with, don't compromise. Get the editor involved and work with them until you have something you are happy with. You should be proud to show this to your friends and family."

Are publishers paying for video trailers? COS said in 2002 it was all on authors, but now it's about 50/50. But if you can present a solid case, you might negotiate the cost of a book trailer into your next contract. Who knows?

—Linda Rohrbough has been writing professionally since 1989, and has more than 5,000 articles, seven books and numerous awards for her fiction and nonfiction. Linda's latest book is *Weight Loss Surgery* with the Adjustable Gastric Band (*Da Capo Lifelong Books, March 2008*). Visit her Web site: www.LindaRohrbough.com

Sources for Professional Book Trailers:

- ReaderHook.com (Matt Koumalats)
- Circle of Seven Productions (www.cosproductions.com)

Do It Yourself Guidelines:

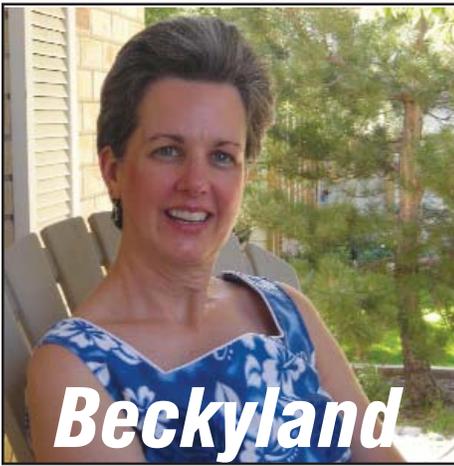
- Brenda Coulter's video trailer guide: brendacoulter.blogspot.com/2007/06/promoting-your-novel-how-to-make-book.html
- Writer's Weekly how-to article by Diane Craver: www.writersweekly.com/this_weeks_article/004498_01302008.html

Free images sources:

- www.sxc.hu
- www.istockphoto.com
- www.bigstock.com

Free sound source:

- www.sounddogs.com



By Becky Clark

I've become fascinated—some say obsessed—by the machinations of the blogosphere. My blogosphere, in particular.

My blog statistics and my StatCounter tell me many fascinating things, like which of my blogs are the most popular...how long people stay in "BeckyLand"...what pages they read during a visit...a running tally of my posts, comments and pings...and the countries my readers hail from.

People trek into "BeckyLand" from all the cool states and all corners of the world. Israel, Indonesia, Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, Canada, Australia. Some make sense, like Venice after I interviewed Cat Bauer who lives there. Or Sweden after I mentioned ABBA. Or Malaysia after I posted about a high school band there. Or England,

How People Find My Blog

since the Queen is a huge fan.

But when I saw I had visitors (plural!) from Kazakhstan, I had to do a bit of research before it made sense. An exhaustive search of Wikipedia reveals that livestock is one of Kazakhstan's most important agricultural commodities. I recently waxed poetic about cows. Mystery solved.

My favorite blog stat, however, is the section that tells me the search terms people use to stumble into "BeckyLand."

Oddly enough, every single day, people—possibly muppets—search "Cookie Monster" and end up in BeckyLand. I tracked it for five days and discovered 36 Googlers who looked for Cookie Monster and found me. But that's not all. In one day folks searched from the general "Cookie Monster pics" (2), to the very specific "Cookie Monster eats a donut" (2), "C is for cookie" (1), and "Cookie Monster #" (3), which seems like some kind of code. Unless it's Elmo trying to program his cell phone.

Weirdly, when I googled these phrases, I never found my blog. Lesson learned? Cookie Monster fans are persistent.

These are some of my favorite search terms people used recently to gain entry into "BeckyLand." Some make perfect sense as they directly relate to topics I've written about like "most beautiful numbers synesthesia"... "I love a tuba player"... "synesthesia

in taste"... "looks like Letterman".

But these? "Jacuzzi"... "twas"... "what makes a person prissy"?! I twasn't in a Jacuzzi, nor am I particularly prissy.

I'm equally baffled by this one—"like fathers chasing kids around with po." Pork? Poles? Polyester? Pogo sticks? Porcupines? Pollen? Podiums? Potatoes? Poinsettias? Potable water? Politicians? Popcorn? Polar bears? Poetry? Postage stamps? Pocahontas? Poison? Polliwogs? Pocketknives? Pomeranians? Polaroids? Potassium nitrate? It boggles the mind.

Disturbingly, a lot of people find me by using phrases involving "tapeworm". At least once a week, sometimes more. Five times just this week. "Human tapeworm." (2)... "tapeworm segments in human" (2)...and "tapeworm segments in stool" (1). I don't take it personally, but I'm becoming a bit concerned about health care in this country.

However, I'm clearly the go-to blog for writers struggling for just the right turn of phrase, which more than makes up for it. In the past week I got these—"metaphors for being in the marching band"... "funny similes about love"... "urban similes"... "similes someone's first day of high school"... "bad similes by teens and gross"... "e coli Canadian similes"... "a simile sentence for someone showing hat."

Hmm. I hope I was helpful.

A Young Writer's View of Conference

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difficult to go to bed after listening to them because my fingers were itching to dance on the keyboard. I enjoyed the simple truths that all the speakers shared. However, being a diary writer myself, I identified most with Jeffery Deaver's hilarious rendition of the writing life and enjoyed the chuckle at the end of a great day of writing workshops.

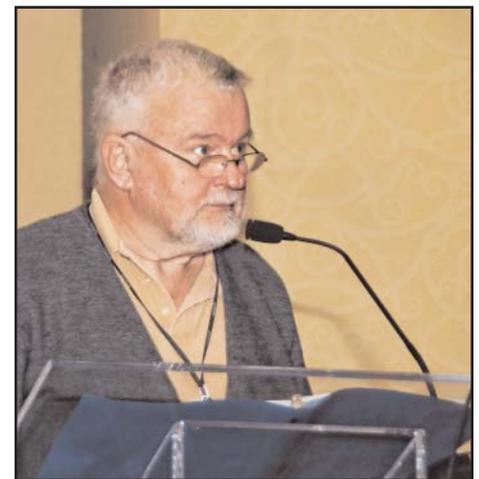
So what wasn't wonderful? All I can say is that I wish I could have had Hermione's time turner for the weekend, so I could attend more than one class at the same time! Choosing which classes to go to on Sunday was especially hard, as the bulk of the classes I was interested in were scheduled simultaneously. Ahh! Decisions, decisions!

Most importantly, I felt safe throughout the conference. It was easy to find my way around, and someone was always close by to

ask for help. The reputation of the Pikes Peak Writers staff did not disappoint. Their efforts made me feel comfortable in the primarily adult setting. The Marriott is a phenomenal venue—and I didn't even get to go in the swimming pool, which is how all hotels should be gauged in my opinion!



Laura Resnick spoke at Saturday's lunch and reminded us that "The Trick is to Keep Breathing."

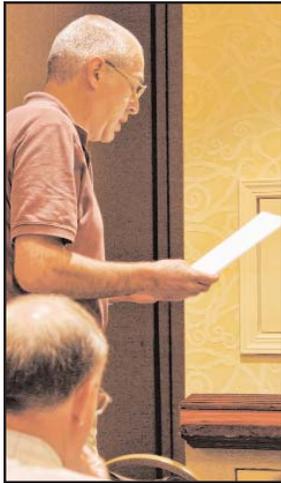


James N. Frey spoke at the PPWC Friday night dinner. He said that we as writers should take very seriously the power and influence of the words we use.

Read & Critique “X” with Sandra Bond

By Debbie Maxwell Allen

Twenty-five writers sat tensed in their chairs, palms sweating, throats clearing. Clutched in each pair of hands: a single page. Each sheet contained



just 16 lines, but those lines held power over each writer’s future.

As the agent stepped into the room, 25 sets of eyes followed her and shone with questions.

“Will she like it? Maybe a little?”

“Will all these people snicker at the

words I’ve poured from inside me?”

A few sly glances gauged the distance to the exit, should the worst happen.

The agent, Sandra Bond, cleared her throat (did she rub her palms on her slacks?) and surprised us all. “I’m much more nervous than all of you,” she said. It hadn’t dawned on us that she was in the hot seat, having only five minutes to listen to and pass judgment on another’s writing.

Whether or not that made us feel better, it

did remind us that agents are human. They don’t like rejection any more than the rest of us. Sandra’s vulnerability eased some of the tension in the room.

As the writers stood and read from their pages, Sandra gave excellent, specific constructive criticisms, which added up to the equivalent of a wonderful seminar on how to hook a reader. Here are some highlights:

The first sentence is paramount.

Start with a graphic, visual scene—action, tension, dark humor. Don’t confuse your reader with the first line, hoping they’ll keep reading to figure it out. They’re more likely to put it down.

If your first line or paragraph doesn’t grab the friends you test it out on, try ditching it and begin with your second paragraph. Sandra says this won’t always work, but it’s worth a try.

Show your character’s personality immediately.

Whether it’s through humor and sarcasm, or fear and paranoia, let your reader see your



character’s quirks and sensitivities. What are the “must haves” or “can’t stands” in their world?

Beware the prologue.

While many successful authors use them, Sandra warns that writers must be aware that lots of readers skip them. If your prologue reveals something crucial to the story, weave the information into your novel, or turn the prologue into chapter one.

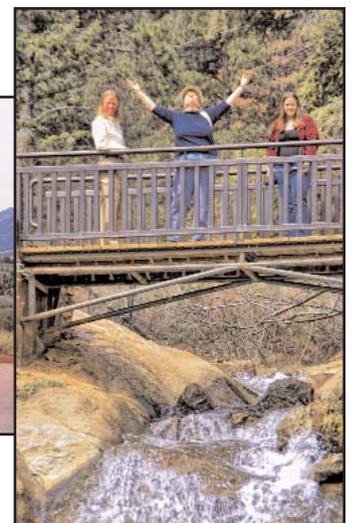
Use the senses to pull in the reader.

Two submissions that seemed to be popular with Sandra, and the group as a whole, employed this idea. One focused on several unusual smells that helped connect us to what the main character liked and didn’t like. Another used sound—a particular sound brings back snatches of memories from the lead character’s life—and makes us want to know what sound stirred up these recollections.

If you’re tackling a memoir...

Sandra noted that memoirs are a difficult genre to get into. In order to distinguish yours, accentuate your voice to make it compelling and unique. She told us that a memoir should never begin with, “When I was nine...” Find the voice that will grab your reader.

Attending a Read & Critique session helped me realize that I could not only survive reading aloud in a group, but pick up some great writing tips as well. If you want to learn more, be brave and sign up for a Read & Critique next year!



Friday morning before conference began, volunteer coordinator Sharon Williams led a tour to Garden of the Gods and Helen Hunt Falls. The out-of-town faculty got a taste of the beauty of Colorado.

New for 2009 PPWC: Thursday Add-on

With three Tracks to meet individual writer's needs, the Thursday Add-on Day was well attended and brought rave reviews.



Angel Smits led Track One for Beginners, *Thinking it Through*. The workshop covered genre basics, getting started, cornerstones for characters and plot, learning and teaching yourself the craft of writing, and the business of writing.



Linda Rohrbough's Track Two, *Fleshing it Out*, had the largest crowd. Linda talked about taking a novel to the next level with tools the pros use—plotting grids, story line development tracking tools, character arc development worksheets, character development grids, subplot development utensils, and editing tools for smoothing the rough spots.



Susan Mitchell (above) and Ron Heimbecher (right) led Track Three, *Giving it Wings*. It was intended for advanced writers who were ready to submit their completed manuscripts. The attendee is long-time PPWC veteran Terry Banker.



Keepin' it Caszh with Kirby and Kate

By Grant McKenzie

Kirby Kim and Kate Harrison decided to “keep it caszh” and turned their presentation on “Writing for Children and Young Adults” into more of an open discussion and question/answer session. They opened the session by reading excerpts from query letters and synopses they had received and explaining why each had been rejected or accepted. Some were more obvious than others. This led to flurries of questions which taught us a lot about submitting in today's children's and YA markets.

Kate summed up the central theme perfectly when she said, “Trends come and go, but good writing always rises to the top.” And as Kirby illustrated several times, good writing can be judged before the manuscript is ever seen simply by reading the query letter. In one example, he pointed out that a manuscript had been rejected because of a typo in the second line of the query. If you don't put the extra effort into your query, it's



assumed you didn't put the extra effort into your manuscript.

Good writing is also concise, so a good query letter is brief. Kirby and Kate are busy people. If your letter makes them work to figure out your book, they will throw it aside and grab someone else's. Write a good hook to get them interested and then tell them as briefly and concisely as possible the basics of your book. As Kirby read aloud a query which clearly stated the title, word count, and genre early on, his broad grin left no doubt that he had accepted the submission with enthusiasm.

In addition, good writing does not need help in order to impress. One query Kate

read sounded more like an SAT study session. Most people in the room obviously had difficulty translating the erudite author's epistle. Kate dismissed it immediately because this was a submission for a middle-grade book. Had the writer used the same voice for his query letter that he used in his manuscript, the outcome might have been much different. Show a little personal humility and let your writing speak for itself. Don't try to change it just to impress your agent or editor.

Kate spent some time talking about picture book submissions. The big lesson from this was that, as an author, you are not an illustrator. Even if you think you are, you're not. If you have a picture book to submit, send in the entire manuscript and leave the drawing to the professionals. Even in picture books, the writer's focus is on the craft.

Finally, it was easy to see that Kate and Kirby strongly believe in the theme for this year's conference. Queries and manuscripts that were rejected were contrived, convoluted, grammatically incorrect, and—in some cases—bewildering. Those that were accepted were clear, concise, grammatically correct, and—most of the time—enthralling.

The lesson is clear: if we “cut to the craft,” success will follow.

Thanks to Our Pen Pal Donors



Pikes Peak Writers thanks the following donors for contributing prizes to our “Pen Pal” Program, a fundraiser to benefit the 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Conference.

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www.writersdigest.com

Wyrd Sisters

www.ireadwyrdstuff.livejournal.com

Volunteer Award Winners



Chris Mandeville, PPW Community Ambassador and past president, was awarded the 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Volunteer of the Year Award for her many hours of service with both Pikes Peak Writers and Pikes Peak Writers Conference.

Duncan Mandeville received the 2009 Outstanding Youth Volunteer of the Year for his outstanding service to Pikes Peak Writers.



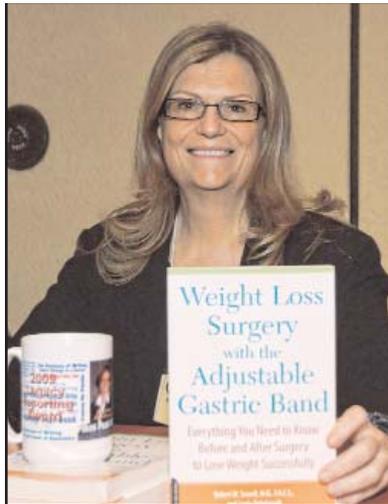
Pam McCutcheon (left) was awarded the long-awaited 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Conference Volunteer of the Year Award. Pam has been involved in PPWC since it began 17 years ago and was this year's Co-director. Congratulations, Pam!!

Fleur Bradley and Linda Rohrbough Reporters Who Rock

By Debbie Meldrum



**Fleur Bradley
Winner of the Reporter
of the Year Award**



**Linda Rohrbough
Winner of the NewsMagazine
Legacy Award**

Two people whose names are familiar to readers of this *NewsMagazine*, Linda Rohrbough and Fleur Bradley, were honored at the 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Conference on Saturday. Linda received the Legacy Award and Fleur was given the Reporter of the Year Award.

For a little over a year, I had the privilege of editing this *NewsMagazine*. Both of these women consistently turned in well-written, informative articles. And they were always on time! The awards were well deserved in each case.

Many of us turn to Linda's column on the "Business of Writing" first when our PPW *NewsMag* arrives. Her advice is always timely, easy to absorb and delivered with a nice dose of the patented Linda humor. I've returned to her columns more than once and bookmarked her Web site. If you haven't been there, check it out. It's worth a visit just to use her wonderful templates. www.lindarohrbough.com.

I have known Fleur for several years. When I realized that editing the *NewsMag* and writing a regular column wouldn't work, she offered to take over "The Writer's Life" from me. Each month she found a unique take on the triumphs and the trials of writing while also being a wife, mother, friend, sister, daughter and amateur home remodeler. Somehow, she found the time to submit (and submit and submit) and find an agent. Even with her busy schedule, Fleur became the go-to girl for Write Brain and workshop coverage. My mother used to say "When you need a job done right, give it to a busy person." She may have been thinking of Fleur.

Linda and Fleur will always have my thanks for their professionalism, hard work and friendship. They truly made my life easier with each issue of the *NewsMag*. And I'm sure that Mandy feels the same way.

A Brief Glossary for the 2009 PPWC

By **Christian Marcus Lyons**

- Pre-published—the state of one’s writing career before the first book gets sold, as in: No, I’m currently pre-published, but am pitching to a reputable agent this weekend.
- Trixie—the alter ego of our beloved conference host, Jodi Anderson, who appears spontaneously at many conference functions.
- Hell Phone—a device which you’ll hear a million announcements against, as they interfere with the recording equipment in the workshop sessions.
- SASE (pronounced SA-ssee)—the ubiquitous Self Addressed Stamped Envelope required by many agents asking to see hard copies of your work.
- Rejection Slip—if you need to know what this means, you’re not sending your writing out enough.
- Hooker—a person who pens a story containing an amazing hook. Okay, we just made that one up.



Christian Marcus Lyons is an award-winning writer, Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest winner, and conference volunteer, whom you will find anywhere an open microphone is located. Jodi Anderson (right) presented Christian with his certificate for Second Place, Historical Fiction, in the Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest.



Deborah LeBlanc, a very popular conference speaker, showed her class what works and what doesn't in book marketing and promotions.

Fleshing It Out with Linda Rohrbough

By **Cathy Dilts**

I attended the Thursday workshop at the Pikes Peak Writers Conference with some misgivings. I was sure I already knew it all. But I was willing to give “Fleshing It Out: Take Your Novel to the Next Level with Tools the Pros Use” a chance to teach me something new.

Then Linda Rohrbough knocked me off my seat with her statement, “You’re here because you have a problem.”

With new humility, I took copious notes on techniques I knew, but which I had to admit I wasn’t using. The workshop was designed for people who had already written a novel, published or not. Interactive sessions

encouraged attendees to apply the information to their work.

Using examples like the movies *Jerry Maguire* and *The Fugitive*, Linda didn’t just present fiction concepts. She demonstrated their use, walking us through the application of various plotting formulas, spreadsheets, character arcs and character grids. Why have I not created goal, motivation, and conflict charts for characters in my murder mystery? I will now!

Much to my surprise, I did learn new ideas, as well as fresh ways to look at old techniques. The Enneagram was a fascinating tool, taking the concept of the archetype into new realms.

Linda used her laptop to show us various Web sites, and to demonstrate electronic tools. From basics such as showing the “track changes” tool in Word, to critiques of mind-mapping software, she covered an array of fiction aids.

We were not allowed to sit still. Breaking



into groups, rearranging groups, and changing seats, Linda pushed us out of our comfort zones. Toward the end of the day, she asked how many of us were going home to rewrite our novels. My hand went up.

It’s one thing to know the tools of your craft. But when you’re pushed to apply them in a room full of writers, you quickly discover where you’ve failed to implement what you know. Linda Rohrbough’s workshop lived up to its title. Using what we learned, we should all be able to take our novels to the next level.

On Friday afternoon Speed Pitchers, led by Ron Heimbecher, practiced to perfect their pitches. Tips, hints, guidelines and support were offered to help nervous attendees refine their pitch for an upcoming editor/agent appointment.



Random 10: Ways to Use the Weather in Your Writing

By Deb Courtney

Writing comes from inside us, from the secret places, from our joys and our experiences and from our imaginations. It can also be impacted by external events and phenomena. Weather is one of those mundane things which we give little thought to, but which can impact us greatly—from our moods, to directing the events of our lives in small ways. Here's a look at how that bit of mundane might be put to work for you, as a writer.

Actual Weather, impacting us as writers:

Cold—on a brisk, cold day, place your hand on a windowpane. Take a walk in the chill. Feel the invigoration, or the pain, of two degree air as it hits your lungs. Know that for most of us, the cold is an ephemeral experience, a fleeting part of our time, but it can get in the way of things, much like writers block or a day job can. But it passes.

Gray—oh how a dreary day gets some of us down. The barometric pressure drops, the grey mimics twilight, and calls for a fire, a cup of something warm, and a comfy blanket. Or a nap! But what an opportunity for quiet reflection. On your goals, on your stories, on your progress. As a writer, the ability to revel in this quiet time may lead to discovery, or new ideas, or breakthroughs on old ones. So, revel.

Brilliant—When there are no clouds, and the temperature is as close to perfect as it ever gets, take a notebook and get outside. On your patio, on a hike, at a pool. Interact. Through interactions with people and nature, you build experiences upon which your characters can draw, and through which your settings can manifest.

Caliente—summer's heat can wring the life out of us, melt composure, wilt our good intentions. But the heat of summer can also remind us of the emotive interactions between our characters, or how they might feel on a tropical beach far away. Grab your notebook—no matter how damp—and capture the sensory experience and delights that only summer's heat can bring us.

Windy—whether a hot summer's breeze or the chill thrust of winter, wind can remind us of the changeable nature of things, and

also how to remain flexible in the face of strong forces. Watch the trees bend, or the dust blow, and think through how your story and your characters remain strong but flexible and unbroken in the face of adversity, or how they might splinter under the force of something too strong to resist.

Weather in your story:

Setting—though a cliché, 'It was a dark and stormy night' does have the benefit of creating a setting of sorts. What is your setting's weather and how does it relate to your story, plot and characters? Could this story only happen in a dusty and dry desert, or might it as easily take place in the Arctic? Why?

Mood Enhancer—use of weather in a story can enhance or complement the mood you create in scenes. Also a cliché is rain at a funeral, but what about light snow during a romantic walk? A change in weather during a climactic moment? To avoid cliché it is advisable not to dwell overly on weather conditions as a mood enhancer, but do not ignore them altogether.

Plot Driver—Some stories really can only happen in certain climates with certain weather. A flood in small town Massachusetts might not play, but would easily in a drought-ridden Midwest town where a freak storm drops unexpected amounts of water on soil baked to bricks. That same storm would be a drop in the bucket of water absorbed by a tropical rainforest, and considered run-of-the-mill in Central Florida.

Character—much as noted above, the weather has an impact on people. It may also have an impact on your characters. How do they respond to the weather of your story? How does it enhance or negate their moods, or the events of your plot?

Juxtaposition—a powerful tool is to play against the expected. A bright sunny gorgeous day may feel offensive at a funeral, or during a strongly emotional scene in your book, while a dreary rainy day might be an opportunity for your characters to be playfully full of joy and laughter.

As writers we are told to use what we know, and we all know the weather and what it does to us. So use it. And, as the old saying goes, if you don't like the weather, wait five minutes—it's sure to change.

Secrets to Success: Breaking into Print in Poetry and Fiction

Please join Pikes Peak Writers for our annual open meeting on Saturday, May 9th from 2-4:30.

It's free and open to the public!

Here's your chance to listen to insiders from both sides of the publishing divide talk about how to get your poems, novels, and short stories in print. Join Aaron Anstett



(Pikes Peak Poet Laureate), Doris Baker (owner/publisher of Filter Press, LLC), Beth Groundwater (author of the Claire Hanover gift basket designer mystery series and a Best First Novel Agatha Award nominee), Stephanie G'Schwind (editor of the *Colorado Review*), and Sue Hamilton (president of Dialogue Publishing, Inc.) as they answer your questions and talk frankly about how to get published.



Don't miss this opportunity to see the new Cottonwood Center for the Arts; meet local poets, authors, and artists; mingle with like-minded creative types over delicious refreshments; and hear Poet Laureate Aaron Anstett read his work.

If you're new to Pikes Peak Writers—or interested in learning more—just introduce yourself to any of the PPW staff who will be at the workshop to answer your questions or chat. Be sure to say hello to Ruh, our enormous, yellow, tail-wagging, writer-lovin' mascot.

Cottonwood Center for the Arts is located at 427 East Colorado Avenue.

To RSVP (or for more information about Pikes Peak Writers), go to www.pikespeak-writers.com, then click on "RSVP Today" in the May Write Brain description. Sending an RSVP doesn't commit you to come, but it does help us plan for refreshments and seating.

March Write Brain

Improv Writing

By Deb Buckingham

The room swirled with activity. Writers of all levels entered, hoping to be indulged with ideas to get writing. Thirty-eight writers, to be exact. It was the March Write Brain, and they called it Improv Night.

Bonnie Hagan, who has been attending an improv night for six years says, “You try and not get involved, you just access your subconscious; go for it.” Chris Mandeville teaches writer’s workshops and says, “Improv is off the cuff, it’s unrehearsed, and it’s flying by the seat of your pants. It’s a safe place to stoke your creative fires.”

I sat on the edge of my seat the whole time, sipping my too-strong Starbucks. The words they used to describe this newfound artistic expression were impressive: “vomit writing”—it comes right out of you. It taps you into the universal truth; it puts you in that last-minute frame of mind; it’s where the magic happens; it gets you in the zone.

If that’s not enough to convince you, the benefits will. Like silencing your inner critic. (Yeah, I’ve got one of those.) What’s more, they tell me, I will get to know my character better and maybe even meet some new ones. It’s an opportunity for exploration. It’s a tool to help push us through writer’s block. It’s about getting something on the page. Chris called it “uncorrected artistic expression.”

And then we were asked to work. Work? I’d been doing that all day! But what the heck—it was the reason I came. Prompt one was given: The door wouldn’t open.

We all ducked our heads and wrote like mad, in silence, for four minutes straight. It sure goes by fast when the magic happens and you’re in the zone. We wrote furiously, creating this new beginning-to-something. Or maybe not. But perhaps it would at least be worth picking apart later.

Bonnie and Chris then shared the rules of improv writing. (Rules? It has rules?) The rules were simple:

1. You have to read out loud. It provides that “I’ve got to get something on the page” pressure, to know you’ll have to share.

2. There is no critiquing—no judging—and no self-critiquing. (This was good news.)
3. No censoring when you read what’s on the paper.
4. The prompt is there only to facilitate the spark. Not to dictate where you go with it.

Okay, I thought. I could handle these rules.

Just before prompt two was announced, I froze for a second. I hoped it would come as easy as prompt one—and it did! The prompt: “My first thought was that he lied in every word.”

After a few more minutes of furious scribbling, it was time for us to read aloud. I knew it was coming. I read, along with the other 37. No big deal! It was fun. It made me realize that reading aloud is a valuable tool; it does something to the words on the page, making them come alive.

The best part of the evening was the door prize at the end: an inspirational box filled with objects to inspire improv writing prompts. Guess who won it? Yeah, you’re right—me.

By the way, did you notice I started off with one of the writing prompts? I can learn. They can teach an old dog a new trick, so to speak. So, how about you? Are you willing to give it a shot? Start your own group, or ask Bonnie and Chris about theirs.

Transporting Readers Through Time

Bill Brook’s Historical Novel Workshop

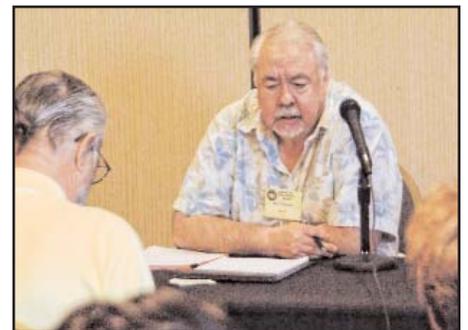
By Brandy Vallance

When I first saw Bill Brooks, he seemed very unassuming. I arrived to the workshop early and sat near the front row so I wouldn’t miss anything. After all, having 21 historical novels to your credit gives you an air of authority. A few minutes before it was time to start, Bill took his seat and scanned the crowd. I imagined that this was something one of his Western characters would do—leaning to the side slightly, taking the table that would put his back against the wall. His blue-and-white flowered shirt was a stark contrast to this vision, but his combed-back hair and grey goatee suggested that he was a rugged individual not unlike those men of chaps and six-shooters.

One of the first things Bill said to us was, “Ask yourself what intrigues you about your chosen time period.” As a historical writer, there’s always a moment that clutches your

imagination and won’t let go. This happened to Bill when he read that Clyde Barrow had been so desperate in prison that he paid a con to cut off two of his toes with an axe. When he read that Bonnie Parker had been an intelligent married woman before meeting Clyde—an honor roll student in high school who excelled in creative writing—he was intrigued again. What would make her join up with Clyde? When they were gunned down, Bonnie still wore her husband’s wedding ring. The exploration of these questions drove Bill to write *Bonnie and Clyde: A Love Story*.

Bill went on to say that, as a historical novelist, the goal is not to merely show what life was like in your time period, but to put the reader there. If a reader wants to know about history, they’ll pick up a history book. Historians tell the facts; historical novelists tell a story. “The reader might not want to know so much about a Civil War battle, but about the wife who stayed behind. The reader wants to know what motivated people to do



what they did. Your setting dictates how your characters will act.”

Bill warned us of the danger of loving our research too much. He said, “people do all this research and try to cram it all into a novel. By page two the reader is dozing off. You don’t have to let the reader know everything you learned.”

As I furiously wrote down every word this learned sage imparted, Bill paused. I could tell that it was about to be a “crux of the matter” moment.

“The main thing you have to do,” he said, “is pick a point-of-view character. Put them in history. Have something happen to them. Make them go through a quest to get what they want.” And finally: “Keep them from getting it.”

April Write Brain

How to Be a Pitch-Perfect, Network-Savvy, Send-it-to-me Star

By DeAnna Knippling

Everybody wants to know how to brainwash agents and editors into signing a contract. Unfortunately, brainwashing is both tricky and illegal, so, as professional writers, we have to learn to catch agents' and editors' attention without getting arrested (or getting annoying). Luckily, pitching is both simple and legal, when you know how. Pam McCutcheon and Ron Heimbecher presented pitching do's and don'ts and provided a list of essential items to know before you pitch. Remember, the goal is to be able to write "solicited material" on your submission, not to hide the agent or editor in your basement until they give in!

DO:

- Be professional (arrive early, dress for a job interview, be polite!)
- Be patient. Nobody offers a contract before reading the book.
- Know your story. Why is it right for the agent or editor? Who is your intended audience?
- Know the agent—is the agent looking for your type of book? The Internet knows.
- Know yourself. Be able to rattle off contest wins, publishing credentials (unpaid is

okay, but self-publishing isn't), and reasons you're the perfect person to write this book.

- Practice! Pitch to anyone who holds still long enough for a log line.
- If asked for pages, say "thank you" and "how do you want them?" Get a business card!

DON'T:

- Don't pitch an unfinished novel (you must be able to complete any edits within six weeks).
- Don't read your synopsis—it's too long!
- Don't say "my mother loved it" unless Mom's name is Oprah.
- Don't say "It's the next *Da Vinci Code*." Say, "Readers of *The Da Vinci Code* will like it."
- Don't shove your work at the agent or editor. Send requested pages later, as requested.
- Don't ask basic questions, like how to format your manuscript. Ask us at PPW.
- Don't argue—say "thank you" even if the agent or editor doesn't want it.

If you don't get a great pitch appointment (or the agent or editor is not right for you), cancel or trade the appointment. Or find the agent or editor in the hallway, during a meal, or at the bar and ask if you may pitch or send pages. Don't corner anyone—rudeness can only stifle the brilliance of your book.

Know the following information before

your pitch appointment:

- Log line: a 25-word description of your book (main character, their overarching goal, and what's stopping the character from reaching that goal).
- Setting.
- The main character's goals, motivations, and conflicts.
- The ending (yes, you really should give away the ending if asked).
- Why you wrote the book.
- Questions you want to ask the agent.
- Genre, audience, approximate word count, target market, and how your story is fresh and new.
- Nonfiction books require more information about the book's intended market, including why you're the right person to write the book and your built-in audience.

Remember, with practice, even you can pitch without stuttering, whimpering, or passing out. Good luck!



Pam McCutcheon gave her ever-popular "Writing the Fiction Synopsis" workshop at PPWC. Each year at the PPW April Write Brain, she teaches conference attendees "How to Pitch."

I Thought She Said 20 Questions

By Connie McKenzie

Laura Resnick's "20 Questions: How to Break into the Publishing Industry" answered many more than 20 questions, but opened the door to thousands.

On the question of whether or not to have an agent, Laura was quite clear—maybe. She explained that having an agent does not make it any more likely that you'll be published, only more likely to be read. Some publishers require you to have an agent. Some, especially small presses, prefer that you do not. An agent sometimes knows which editor will love your work, but sometimes an agent will give up after submitting to that editor and being rejected. The question, although thoroughly answered, left us wondering if we were going to make the wrong decision about an agent and end our careers before they even started.

Then, Laura shined a ray of hope. As

anybody who isn't currently residing on Venus with no satellite TV knows, the economy isn't exactly booming at the moment. However, books tend to do well in a depressed economy, since they are a relatively inexpensive form of entertainment. Romance books do extremely well, since people love a happy ending.

Publishers, apparently, are quite timid and afraid to take risks. Laura explained that no publisher really likes to start a trend—they prefer to be second. That way, they can cash in on the herd-like tendencies of the book-buying public without the risk, because the failure of a new twist on the genre could cost them big. Of course, the time between a manuscript being picked up by a publisher and actual release is about a year, so unless your editor is psychic, the chance of cashing in on a trend is...well, just really small.

If a miracle on the scale of parting the Red Sea occurs, you get the call from an

editor telling you that they like your book and really want to publish it. Now what?

According to Laura, when that phone call comes, show your enthusiasm, take notes, and don't agree to anything until you have had a chance to think. If you have simultaneously submitted your manuscript, be sure to let the other publishers know that you have an offer and see if they would like to compete for your masterpiece. Be aware that the contract offered by the publisher is not the one you have to sign. Negotiation is expected, and it's certainly in your best interest. The most important thing to remember is that money should flow from the publisher, make a brief stop with your agent if you have one, and finally to you—never the other way around.

Laura said she was happy that everyone asked good questions and remained engaged throughout the presentation. Answering those questions showed us "newbies" that we have a long way to go before being published, and a lot more than 20 questions that need an answer.

Meet the Winners

By Dawn Smit Miller

The winners of the Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest are truly writers. I can tell because when you give them a mission to write their bios in 50 words or less, they try to squeeze a bit more in. Only four came in under the limit. Fortunately, the limit was flexible, though I did draw the line at double the allowed word count.

Enjoy learning more about this year's winners, and be sure to congratulate them when you see them at future PPW events.

Sara Jade Alan

First Place, Young Adult
Spontaneous Combustion

As an improv comedian, I hear instantly from the audience if something I'm creating is working. There is such a delayed audience reaction when writing, and I'm grateful for this sign that I'm on the right track. Winning gave me the inspiration to focus and finally finish my book!

Katharine M. Bjornestad

Second Place, Young Adult
Daughter of the Wind

As a school librarian I am surrounded by books....and constantly imagining myself placing my own novel on a library shelf. I wrote my first novel in the fifth grade, and my attic holds boxes of dusty manuscripts. Now I write when I can, mostly in the summer. Juggling two boys and a husband makes me wonder why I compose 100,000 word novels. I don't know. Masochism? Or maybe just a gut-deep love of imagining other worlds and bringing them to life.

Vicki Kinzie

First Place, Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue
Dreams that Drip with Murder

I started writing after retiring from 20 years of teaching high school history. I enjoy learning about the richness and meaning of the past as I read a good mystery, and I could never find enough of these, so I embed my characters in distinct places and times where they solve murders.

Patricia McFarland

Second Place, Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue
The Third Eye

Marriage to a CSPD detective and studies in Criminal Justice inspired Pat McFarland to write the dark world of a psychopath in her thriller *The Third Eye*. The humor and insights



of critique partners, retired cop advisors and writers' organizations like the PPW are all that keep Pat sane. Sorta....

Luther M. Mays

Third Place, Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue
Dan's War

Writing is breathing—strangled by an eighth grade Littleton English teacher saying, “You can’t,” and released by a Naval Academy professor saying, “You can.” Writing sputtered as a Navy doctor 23 years until Hurricane Ivan spared and changed my life. Now in Fort Collins, I breathe deep every day. The PPW contest validated that “I can.” Zoom, zoom!

Scott Lambert

First Place, Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror
Crossing the Labyrinth

I love my day job (I teach Adult Ed/GED classes in Pueblo) but I've finally decided to get serious with my writing, and both the Contest and the Conference really helped. I learned a lot, and just as importantly, gained some confidence—which never hurts when you've just gotten your 20th straight rejection letter.

Julie Kazimer

Second Place, Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror
The Body Dwellers

Since attending my first PPWC in 2007:
320,000 words written
2 Manuscripts completed
700 rejections received
4 Contest wins
3 nervous breakdowns
1 hardworking agent
Getting to pitch to a dream editor at the PPWC—PRICELESS

Sherrie Petersen

Third Place, Children's
Secret of Undine

Sherrie Petersen started writing stories as soon as she could hold a pencil. While she worked on making them better, she interned with Mark Goodson Productions, wrote for *L.A. Parent Magazine*, sang in a rock band,

worked for the government and started a graphic design company. Now she raises two children, a dog and a cat while freelancing and writing middle grade novels from her home in Solvang, California. “Writer's spend a lot of time wrestling with self-doubt. Being a finalist in the 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest made me believe in myself again. That's worth a lot.”

Christian Marcus Lyons

Second Place, Historical Fiction
Throwing Rocks at God

I have placed in this contest numerous times with novel-length fiction, short fiction, non-fiction, and screenplay. I have been attending the conference since 2000, and credit PPW with providing the motivation and support that has taken me a long way in my career. Every year I come away with outstanding information, new friendships, tremendous new business connections, and most importantly, a fiery passion to write write write!

Judith Logan

Second Place, Mainstream
Tap Dancing on a Spider Web

Judy, a retired human resource manager, has written nonfiction for years. Seven years ago, she decided she could write a novel. Since then, she's often wished she'd taken up knitting. Being a finalist in this contest has given her the push she's needed to keep at it.

Alan Chaput

Third Place, Mainstream
Savannah Oak

Alan Chaput writes Mainstream and Women's Fiction. His work has finished in the Single Title Contemporary, Women's Fiction, and Mainstream categories of numerous contests and has placed first in a half dozen. A member of Mystery Writers of America and Romance Writers of America, he has presented writing workshops at three RWA National Conferences. He and his wife live in Coastal South Carolina.

Sweet Success

Compiled by Janice Black

Aside from the great news for the winners of the Pikes Peak Writing Contest (see Dawn Smit Miller's write-up in this issue), other PPW members are enjoying success too. As our Ceil Boyles noted on the e-mail loop, "It's fun and motivating to hear of successes in this depressing economic climate. You can't hold a good writer down!"



Janet Fogg is celebrating her first sale! In October, The Wild Rose press offered Janet Fogg a contract for her award-winning time-travel romance, *Soliloquy*. On January 15, 2010, *Soliloquy* will be released simultaneously in trade paperback and digital format. Janet wants to say "thank you!" to everyone in PPW for their support and encouragement throughout the years. You can visit Janet at www.janetfogg.com.

A direct-to-consumer paperback edition of

Retirement Homes Are Murder by **Mike Befeler** has been released by Worldwide Mysteries, a Harlequin imprint. "It's hard to beat a team that includes a wisecracking old fart and a straight-talking young sprout, and Befeler's second geezer-lit entry delivers," *Kirkus Review*. Mike's second Paul Jacobson Geezer-lit mystery, *Living With Your Kids Is Murder*, will appear in hardcover from Five Star in April and in a large print edition in July. Blog: <http://mikebefeler.blogspot.com> Web site: <http://www.mikebefeler.com>

We're pleased to announce that **Cicily Janus** has signed a contract with Random House/Watson-Guption for her nonfiction book, *The New Face of Jazz*. It is due on August 1. Now, as they say, the real work begins.

In the meantime, Cicily's short story, "Names of the Bones", will appear in a print anthology titled *The Best of Tuesday Shorts*. *Tuesday Shorts* is an online journal that publishes fresh micro-fiction every—you guessed it—Tuesday. This great little journal only accepts submissions (which must total 100 words or less) from noon on Saturday to noon on Sunday for the following Tuesday. To play their game, go to

<http://www.tuesdayshorts.com/>.

Upon her return from a family wedding in Cuernavaca, Mexico, **Karen Newton** learned that her YA fantasy novel *Bag of Tricks* made it to the quarter finals of the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest. Here is a link to an excerpt:

www.amazon.com/dp/B001UG39LK

Chris Myers' YA novel made it to the semi-finals of the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest. That's the top one percent of all entries!

Deanna Knippling has two book reviews posted at <http://secret-hideout.blogspot.com/2009/04/abna-reviews-up.html>.

Kathy Brandt and her son, **Max Maddox**, are finalists for the Iowa Literary Review Award for their memoir, *A Checkered Parachute*.

Lynda Hilburn was interviewed about her paranormal fiction on Friday, February 6, by COSPRadio, which is affiliated with Circle of Seven Productions. If you missed it live, you can download it from www.blogtalkradio.com/Circle-Of-Seven. Then you can check out Lynda's books for yourself: www.lyndahilburnauthor.com

Have some sweet success of your own to share? Make sure you submit it to us on the PPW Web site. We'd hate to miss out on your news!

PPW Summer Events

The weather is heating up and so are PPW's Write Brain Workshops!

Join us this summer—the third Tuesday in June, July, and August—for some sizzling programming.

For two hours each month, put aside your skateboard and video games. Leave behind the bike trails and the swimming pools and dive into plot, characters, and setting.

Write that short story! Start that novel! Find your voice, embrace your inner writer, and learn how to tell the story you always wanted to tell.

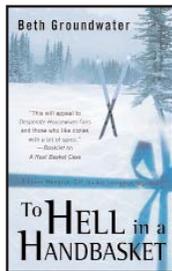
We especially welcome teen writers to our summer programs! Details coming soon to www.pikespeakwriters.com.

Local Authors Kick Off Summer Reads

Here are three reasons you should attend the local author signing and fundraiser at the Briargate Barnes & Noble in Colorado

Springs on the last weekend in May:

1) Fabulous authors. Beth Groundwater, Laura Reeve, and Barbara (Samuel) O'Neal (one of the truly inspirational speakers at the recent Pikes Peak Writers Conference) will be signing their feet-up, glass-of-wine, by-the-pool, you-called-me-for-dinner-how-long-ago books.

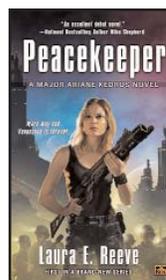


2) Fun books.

On Saturday, May 30 from 2-4 p.m., Beth Groundwater will sign her mystery, *To Hell in a Handbasket*, about a Colorado Springs gift basket designer with a talent for wrapping up dead ends. Treats and balloons will be provided.

And on Sunday, May 31 from 2-4 p.m.:

• Laura Reeve will sign her military science-fiction novel, *Peacekeeper*, about an alleged war criminal who must betray her



civilian employer to protect her previous commander.

• Barbara (Samuel) O'Neal will sign her contemporary novel, *The Lost Recipe for Happiness*, about the impossibilities of love, food, and restaurants.

3) Enlightened self-interest. Pikes Peak Writers, support your authors! Because you love to read. Because you don't want your book signings to be held to the applause of crickets. Because signed first editions are nothing to sneeze at. And because it's fundraisers like this that keep us from having to say, "Call now! Our operators are standing by" for the next three weeks.

Don't forget to pick up your PPW fundraiser vouchers from the PPW desk by the front door!



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

Cottonwood Center Collage Project

Charlie Rush, retired board member and PPW Legacy Award recipient, represented Pikes Peak Writers on Friday, April 24th for the grand opening of the Cottonwood Center for the Arts (427 E. Colorado Avenue). For those of you who are not aware, our partnership with the new facility has enabled us to have a permanent office adjacent to the classroom where we hold Write Brains and other sessions. Charlie approached us with an idea on Saturday morning that was an instant winner.

We are going to produce a large collage (somewhere in the neighborhood of six feet by four feet) containing cover art for the dozens of books published by PPW members. There are three stages to the project: 1) acquire the cover art graphics in digital format, 2) assemble a design team, and 3) create the final collage. The mechanics for stage one are already in place. If you have cover art you would like to submit, please see the instructions at the end of this article. The criteria for cover art are that the book must

be, or have been, available for purchase by the general public; the author must be a current PPW member, or a former member who has passed away.

If you would like to volunteer for, or perhaps chair, the design team, please contact president@pikespeakwriters.com with Cover Art Collage as the subject.

Instructions for submitting cover art:

1. Go to <http://pikespeakwriters.com/gallery>
2. Click on the "Registration" link on in the left menu and follow the registration instructions. Your user id and password may be anything you like. They are NOT CONNECTED to your user id and password for our Web site.
3. After your membership is verified, you will receive an email that your gallery account has been activated.
4. Return to <http://pikespeakwriters.com/gallery> and log in.
5. In the Categories box, click on Cottonwood Project.

6. Click on the UPLOAD button near the upper right under the yellow bar and follow instructions.

Cover art must be jpg, gif or png format with a maximum file size of 2MB and a maximum height or width of 1024 pixels.

IMPORTANT: Please read the language on the gallery main page. By uploading your cover art, you are giving PPW rights to permanently use your cover art in a work of art with an indefinite life. Please, do not submit artwork if you do not own the rights to do so.

Growing Writers

The Colorado Gold Conference will offer an orchard of short sessions and two three hour in-depth workshops to nurture creative seeds, branch your craft knowledge, and blossom your writing.

**Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers
26th Annual Colorado Gold Conference
September 11-13, 2009
www.rmfw.org
E-mail: conference@rmfw.org**