

PIKES PEAK WRITERS

official
publication
of the
Pikes Peak
Writers

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VOLUME V, ISSUE 6
November 2005

Write Brain 2006—Kicking off the year with Open Critique

- What:** Write Brain Session “Open Critique” with Pam McCutcheon
When: Tuesday, January 10, 2006, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Colorado Springs Police Department, Falcon Division
7850 Goddard Street, Colorado Springs
Cost: Open and free to PPW Members
RSVP: Due to the nature of this workshop, you must RSVP. Please see details below.

At this session we will introduce a new option for members of Pikes Peak Writers (PPW): to participate in a group critique with other PPW members. This Open Critique session is being held during our regular Write Brain session as an introduction and “primer” for people new to this concept. Subsequently, if there is enough member interest, we will provide an Open Critique session once each month at a designated location and time.

For this first Open Critique session, we are privileged to have experienced critiquer, multi-published—in multiple genres—author and synopsis guru Pam McCutcheon. Ms. McCutcheon is a member of the famed critique group The Wyrd Sisters, and has been a regular guest critiquer for the Pikes Peak Romance Writers’ (PPRW) open critique sessions during the past ten years. At the Write Brain Open Critique, Ms. McCutcheon will instruct on the art of critiquing and demonstrate how an Open Critique session works, as well as conduct an actual critique session and provide feedback on participants’ work.

To participate in this Write Brain, YOU MUST RSVP. Send your rsvp



by writing to rsvp@ppwc.net and indicate whether you wish to participate in the critique or observe. Only ten people can have their work critiqued during this session. Those people will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis, so send your rsvp now. Space is not

limited for observers, but in order to ensure you will have a copy of the writing being discussed, please send an rsvp. Walk-ins will not be turned away, but will likely not have a hand-out to read along.

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION WHEN YOU RSVP. We must be able to notify you if you are selected to participate in the critique. Those ten people will receive instructions by e-mail prior to the session. Further, we need a way to contact you if the Write Brain Session is changed or postponed due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

For future Open Critique sessions (date, time and place to be announced) we will not limit the number of participants. The guest critiquer for each session will be announced ahead of time, and every effort will be made to add additional critiquers as needed so no participants will be turned away

“These are not books, lumps of lifeless paper, but minds alive on the shelves.”

—Gilbert Highet

Write Brain Sessions will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of each month (except in February—it’s Valentine’s Day!). These informative meetings are always free to Pikes Peak Writers members, and frequently include guest speakers, interactive exercises, insider information about the Pikes Peak Writers Conference, and opportunities to network with other writers. Plan to join us today!

From the Editor



It's that time again—time for reflecting on the past year and setting goals for the one ahead.

Somehow the years get shorter with every one that passes, don't they? They sure seem to and I never seem to have accomplished everything I wanted. I know with certainty I haven't written enough. Of course, I have tons of excuses. A new full-time job. New volunteer responsibilities. A house that needs cleaning, laundry that needs washed, cats that need balls thrown. Did I mention the dinners to be

cooked, the phone calls to return and the oil changes my car never receives within the allotted amount of time? (Don't even get me started on my e-mail inbox!) The list goes on and on.

Sound familiar? It's what's known as the never-ending cycle of daily life. And it's easy to feel frustrated and overwhelmed—and far away from the magical world of words.

What I have to remind myself is not to knock myself down for the time I didn't have/didn't take/didn't make for writing. Instead I need to be grateful for the words I did put down on paper. Give thanks for the workshops I went to, the latest amazing author I discovered, the people in line I eavesdropped on (think dialogue here). We all do much more each day than we recognize that helps us

be writers.

Yes, we need to put pencil to paper or fingers to keyboard. Yes, we need to produce if we ever want to reach our publishing dreams. But being hard on ourselves isn't going to help us get there either.

With that, I put this baby to bed, so I can pick up the Charles De Lint novel that's been haunting my brain these days. I need to stir up the characters in my head a bit, give them something new to consider, make them shiver with goosebumps.

The laundry can wait.

Best wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy holiday season and a very writerly New Year.

In peace,

Bimonthly NewsMagazine of the Pikes Peak writing community

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PIKES PEAK
Writers
NewsMagazine

Pikes Peak Writers operates as a non-profit, 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.

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A Few Words from PPW's Newest President



Hello! This is Chris Mandeville, your newly elected PPW president. Many of you know me as

Chris "M," the Workshops Director. I've also served as the Friday Read & Critique Coordinator and the Moderator Coordinator at PPWC, and have served on the PPW Board of Directors for several years. Or you might know me as the person with the very large service puppy, Ruh, who attends many PPW events with me.

I come to you from an eclectic background—although Texas-born, I was raised in central California and have lived all over the state. I'm a proud UC Berkeley grad (Go Bears!) who somehow ended up happily married to a former Air Force Academy cadet. Together we have three school-aged sons who we have dragged from coast to coast, and north to Canada, during Air Force assignments. We are now in the midst of my husband's third assignment at the Air Force Academy and plan to retire here as we consider Colorado our home.

I've had quite a varied career—I've taught pre-school, answered the phones at the Famous Amos Cookies corporate headquarters, worked in advertising, most notably as an original member of the team that launched the brand Lexus, and been a stay-at-home-parent. I consider volunteer work an important part of who I am, and

I've served in many capacities: Red Cross worker, writer and editor for a newsletter serving new parents, classroom helper and field-trip organizer, design coordinator for a nursery school, organizer of a fundraising effort to benefit a young family that had lost everything, dog-safety instructor for young children, and most recently, working with Ruh to help children in hospitals and schools, as well as working with PPW.

When I'm not volunteering, being a mom, or cheering on the USAFA and Cal football teams, I enjoy traveling, baking, walking in the woods with my kids and dogs, and reading books from almost every genre. And did I mention that I'm a writer? I write fantasy, magical realism in particular.

I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Pikes Peak Writers and feel privileged to serve you as president. My overall goal is to help PPW grow and improve, while never losing sight of the existing elements that have made us a professional, well-respected organization with one of the top ten writer's conferences in the United States. I value members' suggestions and feedback, so please e-mail me at president@ppwc.net or chat with me at a PPW event.

I want to hear your ideas for the future of PPW and PPWC so that together we can continue to build an organization and community that is beneficial, fun and supportive to writers of all persuasions.



December Write Brain Session

What: "The Good, Bad and Ugly of Goals" with Jodi Beyes (aka Jodi Dawson)
When: Tuesday, December 13, 2005, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: Colorado Springs Police Department, Falcon Division
 7850 Goddard Street, Colorado Springs
Cost: Open and free to PPW Members
RSVP: Please send an email to rsvp@ppwc.net to tell us you're coming
 (or even maybe coming...it helps us plan for handouts, seating, etc...)

Multi-published author Jodi Beyes (aka Jodi Dawson), will work with writers from all genres to design goals for the writing life. Love them or hate them, goals can make life easier, motivate those of us who need it (Jodi claims to be the Goddess of Procrastination so this may make her an expert), and get us where we ultimately want to be. Through abstract, as well as concrete, interactive exercises and discussion, we will work together to formulate our goals for the upcoming year. Don't

miss this fun Write Brain that will be a much needed break from the stress of the holidays.

For more information on Jodi Dawson, or just to make fun of her publicity photo, visit her website at www.jodidawson.com.

Membership Dues Increase

Effective January 1, 2006, the membership fee for the Pikes Peak Writers will increase from \$25 to \$35 annually.

The Pikes Peak Writers established a \$25 membership fee when we incorporated as a nonprofit several years ago. At that time we were just beginning to offer limited workshops in addition to our annual conference. Since then, we have increased our nonconference events from just three events in 2002 to SEVENTEEN events in 2005. Of those events, a full three-fourths of the events are free to members! In this new-and-improved PPW, members continue to receive reduced rates at "for fee" workshops, exclusive early registration and a reduced fee for the annual conference, and a free bi-monthly *NewsMagazine* filled with writing tips, techniques, announcements and information. We have increased our membership fee to help cover your growing member benefits. We hope you'll agree our membership program is well worth the small increase. Rest assured we will continue to offer members the high-quality programming you have come to expect from PPW, and will keep looking for ways to increase and improve PPW in order to give you the most value possible for your membership.

Your current membership will remain effective until its expiration date. Renewals will be at the higher rate. New members joining before January 2006 can still squeak in at the lower rate, so tell your non-member friends!

New Board Aboard

Each fall a transition happens with Pikes Peak Writers. A new Board of Directors takes office. This year PPW is proud to announce its most recent Board.

President:	Chris Mandeville
Vice-President:	Charles Rush
Treasurer:	Jennifer Webster-Valant
Secretary:	Chris Myers
NewsMag Editor:	Kirsten Akens
Member at Large:	Chris Olson
2006 PPWC	
Conference Director:	Laura Hayden

E-mail contacts can be found for each of these Board Members on the PPW Web site at www.ppwc.net. Feel free to contact any of the members with questions or feedback.

In addition, Martha Lancaster returns once again as our Administrative Coordinator, *NewsMag* Designer and Registrar. Joining her as PPW's Program Coordinator is Pam McCutcheon. Pam will be helping the Board with a variety of miscellaneous projects

Volunteers (Always) Needed

Are you searching for a way to become more active in the local writing community? Pikes Peak Writers depends on volunteers for all of its activities. We're currently seeking individuals to

- 1) Help assist with monthly Write Brain and other educational workshops
- 2) Write articles for the *Pikes Peak Writer NewsMagazine*
- 3) Get involved in the planning of the 2006 Pikes Peak Writers Conference

If you're interested in spending a few hours a month growing Pikes Peak Writers and your own resume of writerly activities, contact our new volunteer coordinator, Dave Moja, at volunteers@ppwc.net.

Spotlight On . . . Donald Maass

(Part two of a two part series)

By Bret Wright

Donald Maass is considered by many to be one of only a handful of heavy-hitters when it comes to literary agents. With a reputation like that, it would be easy to develop an ego to match, but Maass is unpretentious and grounded in reality. At the 2005 Pikes Peak Writers Conference where he is teaching a seminar and meeting with clients, he shares his easy-going personality with writers from around the globe. It's sometimes hard to distinguish him from the hundreds of other people who fill the hotel's lobby and conference areas during the course of the day. Dressed in blue jeans and a pale buttoned-down shirt, he blends in with the crowd, which suits him just fine.

Maass started life in the publishing business as an editor at Dell, but was downsized after a relatively short amount of time. "That's when I went to work for an agency and I found I really enjoyed it." But getting established as an agent takes time. "I wrote a lot of fiction to support myself when I started, so I think I have some good insight into the writers' life."

Armed with experience and genuine concern for writers, Maass travels frequently during the year teaching and talking to established authors and aspiring authors about their craft. He doesn't pull his punches, though. If a writer wants an opinion from Maass, she should be prepared to hear unvarnished truth. What that author takes away from the experience is certainly a concern of his, but Maass doesn't feel that it serves an author to hear platitudes and boilerplate information. This approach, this hands-on, take-no-prisoners and make no apologies strategy to confronting problems makes him a very popular man at seminars and conferences.

The truth is what you'll hear from him in an average pitch-session at a conference, too. "The pitch is the key. Most authors over-do their pitches. They're too long—too much information," he says. What works better is just the reverse. "It's better to intrigue briefly than to be exhaustive. Intrigue makes me ask questions and ask for the manuscript."

He says that some authors are really good at this, while others are so intimidated they either completely shut down or



they rattle out every detail of their book. "The most important thing is to just take a deep breath, get over the anxiety, and intrigue an agent." A good way to do that is to focus on what makes a story different from the others in a genre.

It's the content of the book that is important and that's what he focuses on with his clients and in his workshops. "We've done a lot of research," says Maass. "We push our authors because 90% of success is in the content of a book." What's the other 10%? Hype. Branding. Marketing.

"When pitching, the most important thing is to just take a deep breath, get over the anxiety, and intrigue an agent."

But what is that "pushing" of authors all about? Maass says that even if a writer attends workshops, in many cases their work will still be lacking. "Authors," he says, "don't fully understand what it means to have tension in a book all of the time." It's this tension that he is referring to when he says that to be successful as a novelist a writer has to beat television. He pushes authors to recognize this and utilize it in their writing.

Many people attribute the advent of television to the downfall of literacy. Donald Maass doesn't go quite that far, but he does recognize a need in literature to make novels more engaging. Always a pace-setter, Maass is on the leading edge of a new brand of novel that is taking hold in the major houses. Where many stories of the past have been firmly plot-driven pieces of intricate detail, the new novelist would be wise to look in a different direction if he or she wants to succeed. Plot is important, according to Maass, and will never be replaced by anything else, but an author who looks beyond plot and sees tension will succeed in the business where others fail. "The old method of scene and sequel is really outdated," he says. "The pace of life has changed and fiction has to move with the same speed and interests that lives do."

The challenge is for an author to take his manuscript and look at it with new eyes. Identify where tension could be built in. "A lot of manuscripts lack passion. Why are writers slogging through page after page? Where's the emotion, the change, or the challenge that makes a hot point in a story, a chapter or a paragraph? Why not use those emotions and situations to change the dynamic of the whole manuscript?"

To Maass, the story arc that allows the reader to breathe and sort things out is gone. Readers need more of everything, it seems. "They need more story, more transformation, more excitement, more tension, more death." In short, all those elements that make a really good page-turner—the books that readers can't put down because they won't be able to sleep anyway—contain the requisite tension that competes with and wins out over television.

The old standard that novels need to have ebb and flow is out. Instead, says Maass, the tension of the book must rise and keep rising. Every chapter should build some sort of tension. Every paragraph should be in the service of the story and the tension. Every sentence should count.

And the reader? Has the reading public really changed that much? Maass feels that modern readers are used to tension now. In a world dominated by action, multitasking, multiple hazards of every sort, today's reader is acclimated and even demands higher stakes (a.k.a. "tension") in almost every aspect of life. In a nutshell, Maass thinks that the reading public of today is far more demanding in terms of attention-grabbing content than they were even a generation ago. Self-pacing is a fact of life and most people do it as a matter of course, he says. "If they feel they need a break, they'll build one in."

"Readers need more story, more transformation, more excitement, more tension, more death."

Maass has plenty to say about today's market and "the next big thing." Though one can never know with certainty what will hit and what will fall flat, one thing he is certain of is that there will always be a

market for good, original writing. In his opinion, voice, tension, originality, and more tension are the ingredients for healthy and publishable manuscripts with real commercial futures. If you want to make a living with your fiction, you have to think commercial fiction, and if you think commercial fiction then, in Donald Maass' mind, you have to think about tension.

As if to underscore his devotion to writers, as he sits nestled in the comfortable leather of the couch in front of the fire, conference goers approach and respectfully offer their thanks, and many ask for time to go over questions one-on-one with him. Turning from his clients for a moment, he checks his planner for each person and writes on a business card a time that he can sit down with them. His clients understand, and each time they smile as if remembering when they were searching and hoping, too. It is this kind of one-on-one relationship that Maass tries to build with not only his clients, but with the writing community as a whole.

By the end of the evening, Maass has talked strategy with his authors, enjoyed an adult beverage, and offered advice to writers seeking a way to break out. In all, Donald Maass can be seen as a visionary of sorts—a mentor who's an understanding voice in the wilderness that is publishing. For Maass, it's all part of his unique passion for the craft and the for those who would perfect it. People understand that, and they flock to him like seekers to their guru.

Bio: Bret Wright is a writer and editor from Colorado. His interviews regularly appear in Informart Magazine and Futures Mysterious Anthology Magazine. He writes short fiction as well as novel length fiction, and is the publisher/editor of Apollo's Lyre Ezine, a recipient of Writer's Digest's Top 101 Sites for Writers in 2005 (www.apollos-lyre.com).

Note: This article first appeared in *Futures Mysterious Anthology Magazine*. If you're looking for Part One, dig out your September issue of the *PPW NewsMagazine*

PPWC— The Best Deal Going

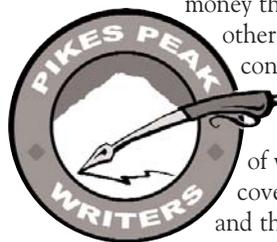
The Pikes Peak Writers Conference, April 21-23, 2006, will continue to be the “best deal” a writer can find in commercial fiction conferences, despite slight “cost of living” increases to our registration fees.

We continue to offer more for your money than any of the other top writer's conferences we've found—

- Three days of workshops covering the craft and the business of writing—over forty to

choose from with offerings for the experienced writer, the newbie and everyone in between

- Ten-minute personal pitch appointments with editors and agents—which you request from a list of more than a dozen names—at no additional cost
- A beautiful conference setting at the foot of Pikes Peak in a luxury hotel



- Conference registration fee includes six meals, with sit-down meals at tables hosted by PPWC faculty

- New offerings each year—recent examples are the on-site micro fiction contest and the “Reality Track” activities which included the participatory “Surveillance” workshop

Members of Pikes Peak Writers may register January 1-31, 2006, for \$260. Open registration begins February 1 and non-members will pay \$285. Registrations post marked after April 1 will be \$325 (members) and \$350 (nonmembers). This is a \$25 increase across the board from PPWC 2005.

Come to PPWC 2006 to see first hand why we have earned a reputation as one of the best deals going in commercial fiction conferences, as well as the “friendliest” conference, not to mention being ranked as one of the “Top Ten” writer's conferences in the nation by *Writers Digest Mazine*.

Golden Nuggets

You know your character needs one—but what is it and how do you get one?

It is a character arc, and it was the focus of November's Write Brain.

Novelist Angel Smits gave an overview of character arc, and followed it with an improv exercise designed to aid writers in creating that arc for thier own characters.

Can improv aid in writing your novel, you may ask? Smits is a firm believer that it can—and she should know. She wrote a large part of her first novel during her regular Thursday night improv sessions.

The Character Arc discussed at Write Brain is based on the Hero's Journey—from status quo, the hero confronts something new, must deal with the new situation, must accept that reality is not what he or she thought, must obtain new information from a trustworthy source, has to confront his or her own demons, and finally meets the original goal in a different way than originally expected.

Smits stressed that a flaw is what enables a character to have an arc—without a flaw,



Novelist Angel Smits

having some change take place in a character is difficult.

She also stressed “morning pages,” several pages of freewriting completed immediately upon waking, as a way to charge one's creativity.

Smits provided three prompts, and encouraged participants to use characters from their works in progress as the subjects. The prompts: 1) Your character has a deep, dark secret. 2) Your character wishes for something. 3) Today “I” (the character) succeeded at something.

If you were unable to make it to the Write Brain, try your hand at the prompts above—you have nothing to lose, and you may just gain a fresh perspective on your characters.

Legal Writes

By Brenda Speer

QUESTION: Can I get a patent for my story?

ANSWER: My initial reaction would be to say no, but I recently read an article that has made me reconsider my answer. I'd say no, because patents are a form of intellectual property meant to protect inventions and discoveries, not original works of authorship. A story is an original work of authorship and as such would be subject to protection under copyright law. The article I read, "A Potentially New Intellectual Property: Storyline Patents," by Andrew Knight, argues the premise that a story, specifically the storyline or plot, may be subject to patent protection.

Under United States patent law, a patent grant may be given to any new, useful and non-obvious invention or discovery. The types of inventions or discoveries subject to such protection are any new and useful process, machine, article of manufacture or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof. Within the last few decades, several types of processes have been afforded patent protection, which in the past were not considered patentable, in particular software and business methods.

Software was not originally provided patent protection under the legal principle that it was written matter (the code) and written matter is not subject to patent protection, but rather to copyright protection. That principle has since been rejected with regard to software by the courts and the method or process (functionality) directed by the software code is recognized as patentable.

Knight states that software has two valuable components: the written expression, or code, and the underlying method or process which the software program instructs a machine to perform (functionality). In the same vein, Knight asserts that storylines also have two valuable components: the underlying storyline and the particular expression of that storyline. Accordingly, Knight suggests that the methods of performing and



displaying fiction plots are functional and, therefore, by analogy, the underlying storyline, like software functionality, should be patentable for innovative storylines.

The concept of whether story lines are patentable has not yet been tested or accepted.

Although Knight himself has filed

some patent applications for storylines, they have not been granted a patent. Also, even if a patent were to be granted by the U.S. Patent Office on a storyline, the courts may find such a patent to be invalid.

The biggest challenge in my view is for a storyline being able to pass the non-obvious requirement of the patentability test. It be would easy enough to establish that a storyline is new and useful, but to establish it as non-obvious would be difficult. The non-obvious requirement means that the invention/storyline must not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. As a simplistic example, if a table with a rectangular surface is already known in the art of carpentry, then it would be obvious to a skilled carpenter to modify the rectangular table surface to a square (a specific type of rectangle) table surface. Since the modification is obvious, the square table surface would not be patentable, even though it may be a useful and new expression of a table surface.

Per both the new and the non-obvious patentability standards, storylines that are already known would not be subject to patent protection (i.e., boy meets girl, boy gets girl, boy loses girl), despite different expressions of that same storyline (i.e., *Romeo and Juliet* versus *West Side Story*). When you consider the works of Joseph

Campbell and his insights into the basic storylines throughout the world, it is difficult to imagine what new, non-obvious storyline a writer would have to create in order for the storyline to not be obvious. Some enterprising writer aspiring to a storyline patent will have to not only create such a storyline, but also convince the U.S. Patent Office and the courts that the storyline is subject to patent protection.

It remains to be seen whether Knight will be successful in his attempt to secure patents for his storylines. But he does make a strong case for making the attempt, because in his words, "When the average cost of making and marketing a Hollywood movie exceeds \$100 million, there is no good excuse for saving \$20,000 on a few storyline patent applications." The economic returns could be immense, because the holder of a patent for a particular storyline would have a limited term monopoly (on average, about seventeen years) on that storyline and would have the exclusive right to make, use and sell that storyline. So, a writer who would want to use a particular, patented storyline, no matter how the writer would express that storyline, would have to seek permission from the patent owner to do so.

Bio: Brenda Speer is a member of PPW and has been practicing law for over sixteen years in support of artists and innovators with an emphasis on intellectual property law (patent, trademark and copyright). Currently in private practice in Colorado Springs, Colorado, she provides legal services for the creative and technological arts. You may contact her by phone at (719)381-1708 or by e-mail at brenda@blspeer.com.

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Check It Out

Have you visited the Pikes Peak Writers Web site recently? It's THE place to find updated information about workshops, Write Brain Sessions, the Paul Gillette Writing Contest, and the Pikes Peak Writers Conference.

Drop by today—www.ppwc.net

Untangling the Web

By Lauri Griffin

Some writers are afraid of the Web, others are unaware of the marvelous resources online. Plus, so many resources can be overwhelming. Try some of these links for inspiration, writing help, and fun.

www.mjroseblog.typepad.com/backstory/

Do you ever wonder where other writers get their ideas? This blog has postings from many authors explaining what sparked their ideas for their works. Be sure to check out the archives. Inspiring and fun. Also a good place to publicize your own book!

www.hollylisle.com

An amazing Web site from author Holly Lisle with articles on plotting, revision, inspiration, voice, world building, finding an agent, making a living as a writer, and much more.

www.newpages.com/npguides/litmags.htm

An A-Z guide to literary magazines, includes links to contests. Brush off those stories and start submitting.

www.etymologic.com/

Words are a writer's tools. In this fun etymology (study of word origins) game - you guess where these words or phrases came from. Not an easy game, but fascinating, and you'll be a little wiser after you finish your ten questions.

www.magneticpoetry.com/magnet/

Magnetic poetry online. Pick from Shakespeare, Genius, Animal Lovers, High School or Pick Up Line Sets. A great place to play when you are stuck.

www.wikipedia.org/

If you don't know about this free online encyclopedia yet, you should. There are over 700,000 searchable articles, along with pictures, maps, recent news, reference tables and timelines.

Bio: Lauri Griffin is a fulltime mother of three who spends way too much time online. She is currently revising her first novel, and recently won first place in the Mom Writers Literary Fiction contest for her short story, "Stripped." Please e-mail your interesting links to lauri_grif@earthlink.net for future columns, or for more links visit her blog at www.laurireflections.blogspot.com.

Write Now

Grab your favorite writing utensil and paper and set a timer for five minutes. Think (briefly) about the following:

Morning arrives earlier every day.

Now hit that timer button and write! Don't think about punctuation or grammar. Don't edit. Just let the thoughts flow through your pen—and have fun.

Want to learn more about the process of freewriting? Look for books by Natalie Goldberg and Judy Reeves.

Okay, finished a piece you love (or will love with a little editing)?

Once your timer has beeped, go ahead and edit a little (if it needs it). Then submit your entry to editor@ppwc.net no later than December 30, 2005. We can't offer money or prizes, but we'll pick our favorite to highlight in an upcoming issue of the PPW NewsMagazine and run it with your bio.

Here are the rules:

- Judging criteria are inventiveness and creativity.
 - Only one entry per person. Please include your full name with your entry.
 - All entries will receive an e-mail confirmation.
 - Entries become the property of PPW and the decisions of its judges are final.
 - Entries must be 100 words or less. Titles are recommended but not necessary.
- Questions? E-mail editor@ppwc.net. Happy writing!

NaNo...what?

November is known as NaNoWriMo—National Novel Writing Month—a fun, seat-of-your-pants approach to novel writing. NaNoWriMo's goal is to get people writing. More specifically, writing a 50,000 word novel between November 1 and midnight, November 30.

PPW wants to hear from its members. Did you participate in NaNoWriMo this year? Have you ever participated? E-mail editor@ppwc.net to share your experience. And if you just want to learn more, visit www.nanowrimo.com.

Sweet Success



Beth Groundwater's humorous mystery story, "Flamingo Fatality," appeared in the *Manhattan Mysteries* anthology officially released on October 1. Another of her short stories, "Covered Dish Casseroles," was accepted by NEWN (formerly the *New England Writers' Network*) for their summer, 2006 issue, and her poem, "Ride the Wind," won third prize in the Mandy Poetry contest sponsored by *Mindfire Renewed* and will appear in an upcoming issue.



After winning in four categories in the Paul Gillette contest this year, the dominos kept tumbling into place for Karen Albright Lin. Her novel was a finalist in the Colorado Gold contest. She signed with a great agent she met at the Pikes Peak Writers Conference, had an article published in the October 2005 issue of *Alternative Medicine Magazine*, and now she was notified that "Dancing With John Wayne" won honorable mention in the 2005 Writer's Digest Writing Contest in the personal essay category. It is an excerpt from "Culture Shock," her series of humorous essays about marrying into a Chinese family. For more information, stop by Karen's Web site, www.karenalbrightlin.com.

Hot Topics

Workshop Cancellation Policy

As the weather turns snowier, icier and potentially messier, PPW wants to make sure its members aren't left out in the cold. For last-minute workshop changes of any reason (bad weather, developing or questionable weather, or other unforeseen circumstances such as a regional or national disaster), please plan to check the following sources for information on cancellation, change of venue and/or rescheduling of events:

- 1) The PPW Web site at www.ppwc.net.
- 2) The recorded message on the PPW Main Phone Line at 719-531-5723.
- 3) Your e-mail (we will post messages on the PPW Yahoo! loop).

We will attempt to make decisions on changes or cancellations no later than two hours prior to the start of an event.

Please continue to send RSVP's for Write Brain sessions, but due to logistical difficulties it may not be possible for us to notify you individually by phone or e-mail.

The best way to ensure you receive up-to-date announcements and information is to join our Yahoo! e-mail loop. If you're not signed up for the Yahoo loop, join today by visiting www.ppwc.net and clicking on "About PPW." It's the easiest way to keep up to date on the organization's activities (as well as network with other members, ask for advice or just lurk). For help with the loop, please contact our Registrar at 719-531-5723 or e-mail registrar@ppwc.net.

Congrats!

Congratulations to everyone who entered the Paul Gillette Writing Contest. The judging process is underway and winners will be notified in early April 2006.

The WRITE Series Video Collection

Have you seen the WRITE Series Video Collection? Forest Rose Productions, L.L.C., is delighted to produce **The WRITE Series** in association with the Pikes Peak Writers Conference. The first volume, *Getting There from Here: Getting Published*, is an exciting introduction for the series. It presents valuable information in an entertaining way, for all writers at any level. The second volume, *I Have the Story*

You Want: Writing the Successful Query Letter and Synopsis, focuses on influencing editors, agents and publishers to be interested in you, your writing and working with you to get your work published.

The WRITE Series intends to:

- Inform, educate and motivate writers of all levels
- Take novice writers to the next level of professionalism
- Record and preserve comments and advice from renowned publishing professionals for historic and archival purposes.
- Provide continued support of writers and future authors by contributing a portion of sales' proceeds to PPW

You can purchase The WRITE Series videos through the PPW Web site at www.ppwc.net. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Pikes Peak Writers Conference Scholarship Fund.

And one last note...

Conference registration for PPWC 2006 is right around the corner. Members, watch your mail for the 2006 conference brochure and get ready to register beginning January 1.