

PIKES PEAK WRITERS

official
publication
of the
Pikes Peak
Writers

contents

NewsMagazine

From the Editor
page 2

July Workshop
Review
page 3

American Icon
page 3

How to make
a Contest
Coordinator Happy
Page 4

More Paul Gillette
Contest News
page 5

Interview With
Donald Maass
page 6

November
Workshop
page 7

Spell Czech
page 7

Sweet Success
page 7

Write Now
page 7

Hot Topics
page 8

Blevins Signing
page 8

VOLUME V, ISSUE 1
September 2005

Digging Deep: The Art of Unearthing Your Own Voice

By Laurie Wagner Buyer

When I first began to receive recognition for my poetry in the mid-1990s after twenty years of submissions and rejections, the thing that stood out in the comments of readers and publishers alike was “voice”—what an unusual voice, honest voice, vulnerable and fragile voice, soul-baring voice, strong female voice, a voice closely connected to the earth. What was this whole issue of voice and why did it matter? For years I’ve pondered what it is about my voice that grabs a reader’s attention and I’ve been intrigued by and envious of the voices of other writers whose work remains searing and memorable.

During the recent readings for the Pikes Peak Writers’ American Icon event, the judges had many things to say about titles, openings, pacing, rhythm, dialog, characters, language, details, setting, and unique events, but the main item they picked to comment on after the most important one of “telling a good story” was voice.

“Insist on a great voice, one that is compelling and believable.”

“A great voice means your story is captivating.”

“I bought the voice and therefore I was hooked on the story.”

“An antic and fun voice with a witty, conversational tone.”

“Excellent voice, fast and silly, confused in a delightful way.”

There is no substitute for a writer’s voice, no easy out, no cookie cutter recipe for finding one. What connects a reader to a writer is a voice that, as renown agent Donald Maass says in his book *Writing the Break Out Novel*, “is like no other, a voice with a unique sensibility and a distinctive way of looking at the world.” The way to find this voice is to dig deep into the subconscious where stories come from, to unearth inner conflicts (of yourself or of your characters that are part of you) that are the heart of all fine stories.

Is a voice some talent you are born with, a gift from the gods? Or is it



something you can develop? Maass says, “to some extent it happens all by itself ... but you can facilitate voice by giving yourself the freedom to say things in your own unique way. You do not talk like anyone else, right? Why should you write like everyone else?”

In the Nov/Dec 2004 issue of *The Bloomsbury Review*, Jim Grinnell paraphrases from Barry Lopez’s “A Voice,” *About This Life: Journeys on the Threshold of Memory*, “. . . would be writers must first read and then read some more. Second, they must ‘get out of town,’ namely travel to and experience other cultures and places to better understand their own. And third, the novice writer has ‘to become someone,’ by which he means one must evolve a set of personal beliefs and become a genuine entity rather than a mere copy of others. Only when a writer can ‘speak to us from within those beliefs’ can he or she say anything original.”

Editor and poet Christopher Buckley, in speaking about poet Larry Levis’ work in the March/April issue of *The Bloomsbury Review*, says, “A poet’s voice—as unfashionable as it may be to talk about ‘voice’ these days—is a large measure of his soul, the over-music of the life to which we aspire. Larry’s work had great modesty, but also a great passion, a passion derived from such close and empathetic observations, from the perfect detail and image and not from any element that would hint of sensationalism. My response to a Levis poem is that he

“Writing,
like life
itself, is a
voyage of
discovery.”
—Henry Miller

continued on page 2

From the Editor



About ten days ago, I put my very first PPW editorial to rest. It had all the makings of a well-written column. It was timely—I referred to Maxine

Davenport's recent departure from the *Pikes Peak Writer NewsMagazine* Editor position, thanked her for her involvement, and wished her well in the future.

It was entertaining—or at least I liked to think so. I painstakingly weaved our front-page quote throughout the piece, attempting to give the column a

consistent theme from start to finish.

It may even have been humorous. It made me chuckle. It made the annoying little critic sitting on my shoulder grin. My eldest cat Tai curled up and slept on the hard copy, which is always a sign she's discovered brilliance.

But that was over a week ago.

This week when I pulled myself away from the disaster in New Orleans unfolding before me on my television screen, I realized I wanted—needed—this piece to be something very different.

I know I'm not the only one whose eyes have teared up and whose jaw has dropped in shock. I know I'm not the only one who can't push images out of my head in the middle of the night—full-color pictures of naked crying newborns, broken street signs, wide-eyed mutts peering out of cracked windows, person after person after person wading through mud and muck. I know I'm not the only one worried about friends still missing.

What can I do? What can we all do? We can give dollars, hours and extra

beds to those in need. And we should. I won't list all of the opportunities here for giving, but there are many out there and I encourage you to do what you can.

More importantly though, as writers, we can write. We can write to process our individual emotional struggles. We can use this unique talent to ensure the aforementioned, and yet to come, images are recorded in the annals of history. We can write the questions that need to be asked. We can write the answers yet to be discovered. We can explore issues of safety, home, poverty, race, health, pain, goodwill, life and death. We can help give those without a voice a voice. We can write to give our children a better future.

Some days I consider myself a writer. Some days I don't. No matter what I am or am not, today I wrote. And it made me feel a little bit stronger.

I wish for you the same.

In peace,

Bimonthly NewsMagazine of the Pikes Peak writing community

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Digging Deep: The Art of Unearthing Your Own Voice—continued

continued from page 1

genuinely was speaking to me, to us, as he meant to; his poems were not rhetorical constructs to aggrandize the self; they were not constructs in the current style; they did not point to their surfaces. They were unique as his life was unique, as he paid attention to his life and spoke it."

Voice is related to many things: to passion, to life experience, to being different, to being true to one's self, to not being afraid of saying whatever it is that you must say. Maass says, "To set your voice free, set your words free. Set your characters free. Most importantly, set your heart free. . . . Your voice is your self in the story."

I've been presenting one-day, two-day, and eight-week workshops on voice because I'm currently dealing with many aspects of voice in my own work as I move from being primarily a poet who writes in the first

person voice into a novelist who is writing in many voices. This is a process of discovery, recognition, transformation, and acceptance. Every workshop I present turns out different because the people participating are different. Each voice is different and unusual. I do not see myself as a teacher—someone who can give you the right answers or the correct method. Rather, I see myself as a fellow explorer, shovel in hand, who is ready and willing to dig deep to find the voice that will make my writing compelling and unforgettable.

Bio: When she is not hiking in the high country or on the road performing, speaking, and presenting workshops, poet Laurie Wagner Buyer lives in Woodland Park, Colorado, where she also devotes time to her mentoring and editing business, Creative Adventure: A Guide Service for Writers. To learn more about Laurie, her work and her award-winning writing, visit www.com.

Have you visited the Pikes Peak Writer's Web site lately? The site is updated regularly with information regarding workshops, membership, the Paul Gillette contest and the Pikes Peak Writer's Conference. Stop by www.ppwc.net to keep up on the latest PPW activities!

PPW's First "American Icon" a Success

By Dawn Smit Miller

On Friday, July 15, Pikes Peak Writers hosted its first American Icon competition, in which entrants read up to three-minute excerpts from their original works of any genre before a panel of judges. The Grand Prize? New York agent Donald Maass will personally read a submission by the overall winner.

The judges commented on a range of issues, including:

- where to place exposition in a story;
- long sentences, and how to tighten them;
- watching for 'local references' (such as I-25 versus a more generic "the Interstate") that will not have meaning to someone who lives in another state or region

They even caught one reader's single point of view slip and brought it to the person's attention—proof that, yes, they were listening hard.

The accolades ranged from, "What a great voice," and, "Well done," to "Creepily well done" (that one went to the Grand Prize winner), "I don't like squirrels either," and, "What a way to meet your dream guy . . . in handcuffs . . . with your mail."

Four entries won the opportunity to have their submissions read by leading lights in the industry, and seven others received an honorable mention.



Photo by Kirsten Akens



Morgen Leigh, American Icon Grand Prize Winner



The judges, publisher Charles Kaine, bestselling novelist Jodi Dawson, and Hollywood mogul Brad Schreiber, verbally critiqued 23 entries and then chose the winners.

Grand Prize, best overall entry:

- Morgen Leigh for "Bloodbrothers"
Prize: Agent Donald Maass will read

Best "Chick Lit":

- Victoria Thurman for "The Dating Dilemmas of Delilah Dunnfield"
Prize: Agent Kristen Nelson will read

Best Potential for Adaptation:

- Gil Porat for "Above the Dentate Line"
Prize: Brad Schreiber will read and provide a phone consultation

Best Speculative Fiction:

- Geoff Gillette for "From the Shadows"
Prize: Charles Kaine will read and have a face-to-face meeting

Audience Favorite, determined by popular vote:

- Giles Carwyn for "Damn Dog"

Honorable Mentions:

- Aaron Brown for "The Gospel of a Disgruntled Brick"
- Wanda Daniel for "Kiss of Insignificance: A Woman's Love Story"
- Maxine Davenport for "The Man Who Never Married"
- Susan Goldstein for "Bird Calls"
- Janeen Johnson for "Twist Tying the Knot"
- Shellie Kirby for "Healing Power of One-Eyed Jack"
- Zug G. Standing Bear for "General Spikers's War"

Attendees at the Writer's Journey Write Brain learned that it's important to get "all your ducks in a row" when thinking about characters and plot.

July was a busy month for Pikes Peak Writers. In addition to the first ever American Icon Competition, we hosted a Writer's Journey Write Brain session and a full-day workshop with Brad Schreiber. Thanks to all who supported these events.



Photo by Olgy Gary

Brad Schreiber leads a room full of PPW members in Writer's Journey exercises.

How to Make a Contest Coordinator Happy

By Dawn Smit Miller

They say you can't judge a book by its cover, but as the contest coordinator for the Paul Gillette Writing Contest, I'm here to tell you I can judge a submission by its packaging.

Want to know my secrets? What extra touches do superior submissions have that others lack? And what advantages do they receive in return for helping me streamline the process?

Deadline

The deadline is November 1, 2005. This means if your entry is postmarked by November 1 and conforms to the rules of the contest, we will accept it. However, consider turning it in a week or two early. That will give you the extra time you may need if you notice an error on page one as you're preparing it for mailing.

It also increases your odds of successfully entering the contest. If, for example, you send an entry that lacks a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) or one copy of your manuscript and synopsis, and we receive it a week or so before the deadline, we may call or e-mail you requesting the missing pieces. However, if we receive it after the deadline, we will place it in your SASE along with a letter of disqualification and return it to you unread.

Contest Coordinator's Advice:

Entry received before October 24—Ecstatic, and looking to help

Entry postmarked by November 1—Happy

Entry postmarked after November 1—Unhappy, and must disqualify the entry

The manuscript and synopsis

The Paul Gillette does its best to conform to the standards of the writing industry. That includes 1" margins, a 12-point font like Times New Roman or Courier New, and double spacing. This gives entrants a feel for what an editor or agent will want.



Contest Coordinator's Advice:

Manuscript and synopsis are formatted according to the rules—Happy

Font smaller than 12-point used—Unhappy; don't make me double check and disqualify you

Margins are narrower than 1"—Unhappy; don't make me pull out my margins template

What does "double spaced" mean?

The term "double spaced" comes from the time of typewriters. Editors were used to getting 25 lines per page with approximately ten words per line, for an approximation of 250 words per page. This served as a quick tool for estimating manuscript word count. Even in this era of computer printouts, editors still expect approximately 25 lines per page, since it gives them the white space they need to edit a manuscript.

For the contest, we want to aim for that 25-line ideal. However, not all word processing applications double space in the same way, so we permit anywhere between 23 and 26 lines per page. That allows writers some leeway while still giving the judges room to comment.

Underline or italicize?

The rule used to be the writer must underline words to show emphasis. Italicizing was wrong because (among other reasons) a typesetter was far more likely to

miss an italicized word than an underlined word. Now, that rule is slowly changing. Some editors and agents want underlines and others will accept both. Very few specifically require italics.

Given this sea change in the industry, the contest accepts both. However, some genres (and therefore judges) still lean toward underlining, so you may wish to stick with that choice.

The envelope, please

Envelopes can become one of the biggest bottlenecks in the preparation process. Why? Because they can be too small, too fat, way too large, and padded. If the envelope is too big, it doesn't fit on a shelf or in a box, I must cut it down to size. Worse, if the envelope is too small, I have a hard time pulling the entry out and may even have to tear the envelope wide open. Then I have to get another envelope. Worst of all is the padded envelope, especially the kind with the paper padding. When torn open, that padding goes all over the place, leading to a disgruntled contest coordinator. It also takes up a lot of space and makes me sneeze.

Trust me, this little choice on your side of the Post Office makes a great deal of difference on my side.

So what's the best envelope to get for both your shipping envelope and your SASE? I recommend 10" x 13" envelopes. Tyvek® or similarly strong envelopes are best, since they won't tear open during shipping. Oh, and to really make me happy, use a self-sealing envelope for your SASE. Otherwise, the little sponge I use to seal the envelopes gets worn out, I get paper cuts on my tongue, and I promise myself this year I'm going to invent a glue that tastes good. Maybe bubble gum flavor.

In fact, the best envelope to use if you're shipping First Class or Priority is the Post Office's Priority envelope. It's a little larger than I ordinarily recommend, but it's self-sealing, it's strong, and it's free.

Postage

Use stamps on your SASE

The Post Office is light years better than it used to be about having alternatives to stamps that can be used on SASEs. Unfortunately, they don't make it easy to tell which can be mailed at some future date and which must be mailed on the same day it is stamped.

My biggest piece of advice here: Use stamps on your SASE unless you are absolutely, positively sure that the type of postage you are affixing (Pitney-Bowes, eStamps, etc.) can be delivered months later.

More is better

Another recommendation: when you get postage for the outer envelope, get the same amount (or maybe even a little more) in stamps and stick them to your SASE. Why so much postage? After all, without the outer envelope, your entry should be lighter, right?

Don't count on it.

When your entry returns, it will contain more than what you originally mailed—at the very least a scoresheet and then up to two, one-page critiques. Also, one or more of your judges may actually type out the comments to go with the scoresheet, and a few judges add a page explaining how they judge, along with a list of good writing books.

If your entry is .01 pounds over the postage on the envelope, I may tear it open, remove a few staples, and try again. It's not pretty, but it works. Or you may get an e-mail requesting more postage. That will delay the return of your entry.

Contest Coordinator's Advice:

A strong 10" x 13" shipping envelope and a strong and self-sealing SASE with stamps—Ecstatic

Two 9" x 12" manila envelopes—

Unhappy and grumbling, but won't disqualify

**Metered postage on SASE—
Unhappy, in line at the Post Office longer;
entry return is delayed**

Thank your judges

If your judges gave you a few recommendations that help you improve your work, let them know with a thank you note. Send them to me, and I'll make sure they make it into the right hands.

Please don't send your judges a list

Contest Coordinator's Advice:

**Many thank you notes—
Happy and proud**

of answers to their questions, along with acerbic comments regarding their lack of comprehension. Those questions are for you (and your critique group) to ponder. If no one else asks those same questions, then give those questions less weight.

Remember your judges may misunderstand something and come out with exactly the wrong impression of a paragraph or section. If two or more judges misunderstand the same section, you might want to consider rewriting it.

And what about after the contest is finished and you have received your entry and comments? You can still help make me a happy coordinator. Here's how.

Give us the benefit of the doubt

The goals of this contest and its volunteers are to reward the best entries of the bunch and give helpful comments about the submissions. We make every effort to remove judges who rub their hands and cackle with glee at the thought of tearing you down. However, the occasional tactless comment will slip under the radar. Please keep that in mind as you read. Also, the judges don't know what you do professionally, so if they make comments in your area of expertise that you disagree with, remember those comments are not an attack on your competence.

Let us know if a judge criticizes you rather than your work

Remember those hand rubbing and cackling judges we wish to rid ourselves of? We won't know about them unless you tell

us they exist. Specifically, we want to know about those judges who make denigrating comments about you rather than limiting their comments to your work. It's one thing to say your main character belongs in a mental institution; it's quite another to say the same thing about you as the author. "That's sick," can be acceptable in context. "You're sick," is inappropriate (I suppose if a judge wrote, "You're sick to write this, and I'm sick to love this," it might squeak by on a technicality, but we'd still want to know about it).

If this happens to you, please send a copy of the manuscript or synopsis that contains the comment(s) and a letter explaining what to look for to the address listed in the contest brochure or on the Web site.

Send your comments sooner rather than later

As is true with so many things in our fast-paced world, old data rapidly becomes useless data. I can act on information, whether good or bad, within a couple of months of the contest end and incorporate the lessons learned for the next year. So if you were thrilled with a change in the contest, have great ideas for the contest's future, or need to let us know about a certain judge, then please e-mail contest@ppwc.net while you're thinking about it or shortly after it happens.

With the contest rules and this glimpse into the methodical mind of a contest coordinator, you're on the road to a successful contest experience. Just remember, it's okay to stop and ask for directions.

More Paul Gillette Contest News...

Attention, Entrants

Join us in October for the popular hands-on Contest Write Brain Workshop that covers everything you need to know about contest submissions—what to do and what not to do. This workshop can help you make that final polish sparkle.

Tuesday, October 11, 2005

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Colorado Springs Police Department

Falcon Division, Community Room

Free to PPW members.

No RSVP necessary.

Attention, Judges

Announcing our first Paul Gillette Contest judges' training seminar, in which we will go through the scoresheets, describe what's involved in writing a one-page critique, and answer questions about the judging process.

Though attendance is not mandatory to become a judge, all judges who attend will receive a reward (to be announced). More information will follow in September with the Call for Judges e-mail.

Tuesday, October 25, 2005

6:30-9:00 p.m.

**East Library and Information Center,
Community Room**

You do not have to be a judge to attend.

Spotlight On . . . Donald Maass

(Part one of a two part series)

By Bret Wright

The scene is intense, not so much for the action taking place near the hotel's fireplace, but for the interaction among the players. Three men are engaged in quiet conversation. The youngest is perched on a coffee table in front of the small brown leather couch where the other two sit. He listens intently as the man in control of the conversation speaks. The young men appear to hang on every word the other says, like seekers listening to the wisdom of their guru. Not a surprising scene, really, when the man talking is their agent, Donald Maass.

Maass, known for his ability to spot new writers who are ready to make "the big jump," recently attended the 2005 Pikes Peak Writers Conference. He came to teach people about the publishing business and to help writers put "fire in their fiction." He was also on the lookout for the next big thing and meeting with clients from around the Rocky Mountain region.

Maass has authored several books, including *Writing the Breakout Novel* and *The Career Novelist: A Literary Agent Offers Strategies for Success*, both of which have become seminal favorites of authors around the globe. After years of research about what works in the world of fiction, he believes the time has come for authors to step up to the challenge of the next generation.

What is the next generation? "It's not e-books. They've been around for about ten years now and people aren't going to them in great numbers," he says. "The problem is that e-books aren't innovative, they don't add anything to the book and they're not as convenient to use." He gives an example of the Walkman to illustrate his point, "When that came out, it redefined music-listening. E-books didn't bring that sort of evolution to reading." Books are already portable. Some people argue that e-book subscribers can get free downloads, to which Maass responds, "You can get free reads at Barnes & Noble, too. That's why they have chairs and a coffee shop."

But is the e-book a complete failure? Maass doesn't think so. "There are special markets for them, and they can serve as an adjunct for out of print or teaser books . . . as an avenue for promotion." In the end, he says, people have an attachment to



traditional paper and ink books. "How many parents read e-books to their children?" Exactly.

What about print on demand books? Is that the future of publishing?

For a while there seemed to be a groundswell of books from print on demand (POD) publishers. The new technology gave birth to memorable books like *A Girl Named Zippy: Growing Up Small in Mooreland, Indiana*, and *The Adventures of Sammy Summer*. POD fueled the dreams of scores of writers when they heard John Grisham's harrowing story of selling his books out of the trunk of his car. Though not strictly a technology for vanity or subsidy press, POD is used in those areas of publishing, too. Indeed, there are many writers in today's literary canon who chose to self-publish at some point in their careers. The list includes Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Ernest Hemingway.

"When TV is more interesting than a book, then TV will win out every time."

What does Maass think about this method of publishing? "It's easier and it's faster. But if your goal is to make a living, where's the payoff?" He says he treats the POD-published books his agency receives just like any other manuscript that comes to him. In most cases, he says, the quality of such books is low. "Why put it in print in that form?" he asks. "I'm sorry, but think about it. If your goal is to write full time, then this is a hindrance to your career. There's a quick emotional payoff, and that's it. Nine-hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand what's between the covers is unpublishable by a major publisher . . . because the story telling just isn't skilled enough."

So there's the hard medicine of fact: the publishing world isn't interested much in the technological side of things outside of how it can help them get their product into bookstores faster and cheaper. What are they looking for? Many think that unless you're a carbon copy of King, Grafton,

Rowling or any of the other score or so authors who are always on the bestseller lists, then a writer doesn't stand a chance. "Look, there are millions of people buying books," says Maass, "Do you think they're getting generic fiction? No. There's something there. Those authors have voice."

He says instead of expending the energy to malign successful authors and categorize them in whatever boxes others tend to file them in, an aspiring author would do well to study them. "Ask yourself, 'What can I learn from these guys?' What people will generally find is that all of these authors share more than just success. They tend to do characters right. They make them interesting to read and they demonstrate some sort of quality that makes us interested or make us care about them." Some writers approach their characters with indifference, and this shows in both the narrative of their stories and in the way the characters interact with each other. "Too many writers write their way into the story, which leaves the whole thing, flat dead. Jettison set up. Keep the story moving and save back story for later in the novel."

The theory that publishing houses are looking for cookie-cutter writers seems entirely out of the question to Donald Maass. People pick up a story they think they are going to enjoy, and many times they will go with an author they know will tell them a decent yarn. "Look," he says, "if people want to write flat, average, dark, or cynical—that's fine . . . but don't expect to get the Grisham audience."

So then, what is the next big thing? What is the next generation? To this, Maass smiles and leans forward on the couch. He picks up a beer that has been waiting patiently for him to pay attention to it instead of to his clients (who he signed at last year's Pikes Peak Writers Conference). Sipping slowly on the beer his eyes twinkle as his answer forms. "You gotta beat TV," he says, "think in terms of tension. When TV is more interesting than a book, then TV will win out every time."

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*. Watch for the second installment in the November issue of the *Pikes Peak Writer NewsMagazine*.

World-Building: Setting for ALL Genres

November Full-day Workshop
Saturday, November 5, 2005, 9:00 a.m.
Location TBA

This is not just for science fiction and fantasy writers!

Experts will instruct and inspire writers of fiction from all genres on how to establish setting. Topics will range from the legalities of using real names and places in contemporary fiction to insightful instruction on creating pseudo-science. Laura Resnick (a.k.a. Laura Leone), award-winning fantasy, science fiction, romance and nonfiction author, will facilitate this info-packed, multiple-speaker workshop extravaganza.

Workshop fee includes a working lunch where attendees will select their lunch tables by topics related to world-building such as astronomy, botany, creating a system of measurement or currency, pseudo-science techno-babble, legal issues and more. Each table will be hosted by an expert in that field who will facilitate brainstorming exercises and answer questions in their areas of expertise.

In the tradition of our "Crime Scene Investigation" workshop, this full-day event will include interesting demo's, fabulous guest speakers and a wealth of resource information for attendees.

Don't miss out on this whirlwind of speakers, information, inspiration and fun, all for the incredibly low price of \$45 for PPW members. More information to come soon on speakers, topics and location. For now, save the date on your calendars. Better yet, guarantee your spot at this workshop by registering at www.ppw.net or by phoning (719) 531-5723. As always, due to catering requirements, fee only includes lunch when registration is received in advance, so don't delay.

Sweet Success



Margaret Aunon, writing as Maggie Sefton, reports that the first in her new mystery series, *Knit One, Kill Two*, released June 7, 2005, has gone into a second printing. Not only that but during July *Knit One, Kill Two* made two of Barnes & Nobles Bestseller lists: Mystery Mass Market and General (Overall) Mass Market, and it was #1 on the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association Bestsellers' list for June 2005. Berkley Prime Crime is scheduled to release the next two in the series during December 2005 and June 2006.



Margaret Brettschneider's latest book, *Shadows on an Iron Curtain*, a story of recovery, camaraderie, and intrigue on the former East/West Cold War Border, was published in June 2005, and joins her previous 2003 Paul Gillette winner, *Muttis War*, on a California and Arizona tour for former Vietnam Helicopter Pilots and Overseas Teachers. Margaret says, "Hopefully, they'll like the second one as much as the first."

Spell Czech

By Candace Paugh

Although I take a few minutes, to demonstrate straight why spell checking your manuscripts is so important. After all, the spell checker in your word processing program may not catch every problem.

If you are lazy and would rather not read over your manuscript, than err that you may overlook some errors I planned to use, were caught using spell-check. Shirley, you do want to take advantage of the spell checker feature if it is available. However, you do not want to rely on it as you're only one method of editing.

I hope you are enjoying this demonstration. The things I wrote in it were very hard to get right. I think you will make my point, though. At least, I hope so.

P.S. How many mistakes can you find, spelling and grammatical, in this brief article? My spelling/grammar search found nothing.

Write Now

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

A bare light bulb in an otherwise plush office suite

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.

Hot Topics

Volunteers 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
- 4) Bake brownies for monthly meetings (Just kidding...although honestly, we'll never turn down brownies)

If you're interested in spending a few hours a month growing Pikes Peak Writers and your own resume of writerly activities, contact info@ppwc.net.

Also Looking For...Space

Every month PPW hosts one to two

workshops for the membership and the writing community at large. As a non-profit without a home base, we depend on local agencies and businesses to provide space for these events. If you have access to, or know of, a cost-free facility that can seat between 30 and 75 individuals on evenings and weekends, please contact info@ppwc.net. Ideally we'd like someplace we could use on a regular basis to provide continuity for all of you!

Legal Q&A's

Do you have legal questions concerning copyright law, fair use of another's work, trademarks, or contracts with agents, publishers, and co-authors? Brenda Speer, a local attorney who specializes in patent, trademark, and copyright law for technological and creative arts, has offered to answer questions for PPW members in a bi-monthly column for the *PPW NewsMagazine*. If you have a question, send it to editor@ppwc.net.

The Final Word

Mark your calendars and get writing. The deadline for the Paul Gillette Writing Contest is November 1, 2005.

Discussion and Signing with the Blevins

When: September 25, 2005,
3:00 p.m.

Where: Barnes & Noble
1565 Briargate,
Colorado Springs

Cost: Open and free to all

Pikes Peak Writers and Barnes & Noble will jointly sponsor Win and Meredith Blevins for an interactive discussion and book signing at the Barnes & Noble Briargate store on Sunday, September 25, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Win and Meredith will kick off with a discussion at 3 p.m., so try to be there a little early. Win will be signing his just-released book, *Dancing with the Golden Bear*, number three in the Rendezvous series, as well as other books. Meredith will be signing *The Red Hot Empress*, number three in her Annie Szabo mystery series, plus other books. Join us!