

PIKES PEAK WRITERS

official publication of the Pikes Peak Writers

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VOLUME IV, ISSUE 5
September-October 2006

Who's Your Daddy?

I mean, who's your BOD (Board of Directors)

By Chris Mandeville, PPW President

Effective September 1, 2006, four new members were elected to two-year terms on PPW's Board of Directors. In addition, two members were re-elected, and four others continue to serve ongoing terms. It is my privilege to introduce you to your BOD:

New Workshops Director:
Barbara Nickless

Barb's SF and horror stories have appeared in a wide variety of magazines and anthologies. Her mystery novel, *To Each Man an Island*, placed first in the Colorado Gold AND the Paul Gillette. The manuscript also received the Daphne du Maurier Award for Excellence in Mainstream Mystery/Suspense (second place) and is currently under consideration at a literary agency. Barb is the epitome of "grace under pressure" which she demonstrated as a Pitch Appointment Coordinator for PPWC 2006. She brings to our workshops program a host of creative ideas and a passion for helping writers learn more about the craft and business of writing.

New Vice President:
Beth Groundwater

Beth has published six short stories, two twice, including a recent sale to *Wild Blue Yonder*, the inflight magazine for Frontier Airlines. Her amateur sleuth mystery, *A Real Basket Case*, comes out in hardback by Five Star Publishing in March. As VP, Beth's primary duty will be working with Barb on nonconference events, contributing her considerable writing talent and organizational skills. Beth and Barb worked together on pitch appointments, so we know they make an unbeatable team, sure to bring our nonconference events to the next level.

New Contest Director:
Dawn Smit Miller

Dawn began working as the Paul Gillette Contest Coordinator in 2004 and has done a stellar job in all regards. In particular she is commended for implementing more judges' training and oversight, and for using current technology to enhance contest

procedures. We recognize her contributions by electing her to a brand new BOD position where she will continue to lead the Contest Committee. Dawn came to the Paul Gillette first as a contestant—her fantasy, *Through Spiral Eyes*, placed in the 2001 Contest. Her current book, *Rainbow Editing™*, introduces a colorful weapon in the war against sloppy writing and the eternal editing cycle.

New NewsMagazine Editor:
Pat Kennelly

Pat came highly recommended as the PPWC 2006 Bookstore Co-coordinator. She immediately impressed us with her intelligence, "people skills," and attention to detail. Since her writing and editing credentials are equally impressive, we invited her to share her skills and talent with PPW members as Editor. We are delighted she accepted, and we think you will be, too. When she's not wearing her *NewsMag* Editor hat, she's a restaurant owner, freelance editor, and writer of Chick-lit, poetry and a variety of short stories.

Member at Large: Charles Rush

Charlie was a driving force in bringing Pikes Peak Writers into existence, taking the successful Pikes Peak Writers Conference and expanding it to a year-round nonprofit organization. He has provided strong leadership in the capacity of Conference Director and Vice President. As Member at Large he will continue to serve as Chair of the Grants Committee, member of the Hotel Committee, and all-around advisor/guru to the Board.

Member at Large: Chris Olson

The Board unanimously re-elected Chris "O" to a second term as Member at Large. Chris was the first to hold the Office of PPW Secretary, where she set a high standard of excellence. Since then she has continued to set the bar high as Faculty Director for PPWC, bringing us the best editors and agents in the industry. We are fortunate to have Chris continue as Faculty Director for 2007. In addition, she has agreed to bring her considerable experience and expertise to our new Marketing Committee.

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“Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will.”

—George Bernard Shaw



From the Editor



By **Pat Kennelly**

Welcome to another issue of *PPW NewsMag*. I am thrilled to be associated with such a diverse group of talented writers.

September and October have always been my favorite months...the perfect time to enjoy the last fleeting weeks of summer and plenty of occasions to write about them.

As writer Thomas Merton said, "October is a fine and dangerous season in America... a wonderful time to begin anything at all."

What will you begin?

If you made writing goals in January, it's a good time to review how your life has

been supporting those goals. What steps could you take today to get back on track before the end of the year? I recommend reading *The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield. This small but powerful book will inspire you to break down your real or imagined obstacles.

Infuse your writing with all of your senses. Rewrite a short story with a completely different ending. Add a new character to that chapter that's missing something. Write a poem about the first day of school, falling leaves, or pumpkins.

Take a class, join an online forum, blog your writer's block away, or just be present at those writing meetings you always seem to miss. You have four months to make this your most successful writing year yet.

Plan to attend the September Open Critique for constructive feedback on your newest chapter, or just sit back and listen to the exciting voices of your fellow members.

The October Write Brain session will better prepare you to tighten your manuscript for the Paul Gillette contest. Read Dawn Smit Miller's article in this issue for some changes to this year's contest.

If you are new to PPW, welcome! We are always looking for original voices for the *NewsMag*, and we're ready to expand the Writers Pool. If you are interested, please contact me at kennelly25@msn.com.

Do you have questions, suggestions or want to know more about PPW? Look to our Member Liaison for help. Read Jené Jackson Hanna's article on what she can do for you.

I look forward to the next two years as editor of *PPW NewsMagazine*. Hearing about your successes as writers inspires me to continue doing what I love. Tell me about your new beginnings this season!

Best wishes,

Pat

Bimonthly *NewsMagazine* of the Pikes Peak writing community

PIKES PEAK WRITERS
NewsMagazine

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July Write Brain—Creating Collages to Help Your Writing

By **Suzanne Metzger**

In this hands-on session, award-winning writer Barbara Samuel gave participants a brief introduction to collaging as a tool for writing. Barbara uses collaging to flesh out the shape, form, color, and even the smell of the plot and characters in her stories.

The collaging process is a growing trend among writers and other creative artists. It helps by moving us quickly from logical linear thinking into the creative part of the brain. It stimulates associations that allow us to quickly expand our characters, plots, and other ideas. Barbara told us that the mere act of flipping through a magazine encourages the mind to drift and access more creative ideas.

For example, when Barbara explored the "scent" in the collage for her latest novel, *Madame Miribou's School of Love*, she discovered that perfume would play a key role in the story. She explained that she knows she has a book when a color or sensory theme emerges.

Barbara explained that there is not a right or wrong way to collage and that it works for nonfiction as well as fiction. Most people use a combination of pictures and words, but some people will collage with only pictures or only words. Some writers have a definite idea in mind when they start, whereas others immediately begin to collage.

Barbara began collaging several years ago as a way to access the feelings buried within her characters and plots. She said that even when she already has a clear idea of the

direction her book is taking, collaging helps pull the parts together. It offers a glimpse at new possibilities inspired by the muses.

The way she begins to collage is by giving herself permission to take a \$20 bill to a bookstore to spend on whatever magazines she's drawn to. The magazines she purchases are for the sole purpose of tearing out pictures. They are not for reading—a shocking thought to many of us.

Barbara suggested that we make up a box of collaging supplies stocked with materials for layering. For instance, the collage she had done for her most recent book depicted the mountains of Colorado with string draped into peaks across the top. Other parts of this collage contained artificial flowers, Tarot cards, and beads.

She displays the collage representing her current project in her work area. Whenever she loses momentum or feels stuck, viewing it brings her attention back to her work.

When the time came for us to begin the process of ripping up magazines and creating our own collages, we dove in like playful kindergartners armed with glue sticks and scissors. The workroom at Cottonwood Artists' School was filled with the joyous sounds of childlike adults. The balance of the evening was spent, snipping, gluing, giggling, and playing.

Thanks, Barbara, for making this Write Brain such a right brain experience.

The Business of Writing: Your Book's Theme as a Tool

By Linda Rohrbough

The theme of your book can be a useful tool. One of the biggest things knowing the theme can do is help you sell your book to an agent or editor. But before I get ahead of myself, let me first define what theme is.

In fiction, the theme is the character arc, the main thing your protagonist learns, the big take-away. Let me give you an example. In my novel, *The Prophetess*, the theme is "men are important in the lives of children." The book has two sets of bad guys. One is a doctor deliberately acting in destructive ways and quite clever about it. The other is a lost teenage boy, abandoned by his father, and easily manipulated by another father figure, my bad doc. Hence the theme comes into play, even though it's never outright stated. In fact, I'm stuck on this theme right now as the next novel I'm working on, with different characters and even a different genre, has the same theme.

Having the same theme in different books is not unique to me. John Grisham's books always have the theme of "escape from slavery." For example, the theme is escape from white slavery in *The Firm* and *A Painted House* and the more familiar American theme of escape from the effects of black slavery emerges in *A Time to Kill*.

Theme is not limited to fiction. In my latest nonfiction book the theme "dieting doesn't work" is stated outright and based on statistics from the National Institute of



Health. But it's also implied throughout the book in the case studies of patients and in the interviews with medical experts.

Whether you're writing fiction or nonfiction, the earlier you can identify the theme of your book, the better. Some writers don't know right away what their theme is, others

haven't thought about it much. But benefits of knowing your theme include aid in writing the book and, as I mentioned earlier, help in selling your work.

As a writing aid, knowing your theme can help you choose setting details that add depth and meaning to your book. For example, an author in my critique group announced her book's theme was "friendships are like marriages, one person tends to love more than the other." Much later in a portion of the manuscript, after a big emotional scene where things between the two girls in the book become strained, there's a torrential rainstorm that my author friend said swept the streets clean and left everything feeling fresh. One member of the group jumped on that setting detail saying, given the theme, should the streets be neat and clean? Others of us suggested the streets be a mess, littered with leaves and small branches and trash washed in from a busy street nearby, which is much more in line with the theme and with the tone of the previous scene.

Literary genre authors make use of theme to support setting details and description

almost to an extreme. But it's a great technique to set the tone along with adding a richness and depth to the work readers notice whether they're conscious of it or not.

Further, and more importantly, it's been my experience editors and agents love to hear the theme of the book. Most of these folks, especially agents, have been trained at Ivy League schools where they dissected novels over and over again looking for nuances of how the theme was expressed. Knowing your theme when you talk to an editor or agent makes you look like you know what you're doing. While not usually a long discussion, theme piques interest and agents or editors are often curious to see how I work my theme within the plot and characters I've described. The bottom line is knowing my theme works as a great pitching tool.

In my workshops, I often see experienced authors get excited about their work all over again when they start looking at this subject in their own books. So not only does theme help set direction for the work, it can regenerate energy for the project as well, which is something I think we all need at times. That alone makes theme worth looking at.

—Linda Rohrbough has been writing about the computer industry since 1989 and has more than 5,000 articles and seven books to her credit. Her work has been honored three times by the Computer Press Association. Her latest book Stepping Out of the Shadow of Obesity: The Comprehensive Guide to the Adjustable Gastric Band, co-authored with Robert Sewell, M.D., will be published by Marlow in Spring 2007. She completed her first techno-thriller novel and is working on a romantic suspense. Visit her Web site www.PCbios.com.

Untangling the Web

📖 www.writersalmanac.publicradio.org/

Garrison Keillor gives a short literary history lesson, then reads a poem. You can listen online or as a podcast, or read it as an e-mail. Great for daily inspiration and education.

📖 www.onelook.com/

One Look is a dictionary search that searches 975 dictionaries at once. You can find translations, find how the word is used in general use and sub-categories of art, medicine, slang, religion, sports, technology, and more. You can even use wildcards like "*bird" if you want all the words ending in

bird. You can also describe a concept and get back a list of related words in the reverse dictionary.

📖 www.misssnark.com/

Miss Snark is a literary agent and anonymous blogger who claims to crush writers under her stilettos. Brave souls send her their questions and query letters for posting. She offers an insider's perspective on the industry, POD, rights, and advice on agents.

📖 www.theparisreview.org/literature.php/prmDecade/

The Paris Review's Writers at Work interviews are now available online. This

"DNA of Literature" is an overwhelming resource—over 300 literary greats giving opinions and advice on writing, art, and life. The interviews are even searchable. Many of the authors have also provided draft manuscript pages with scribbles and deletions. What a comforting reminder that even these geniuses struggled.

📖 www.magneticpoetry.com/magnet/

Play with words on your computer screen at magnetic poetry online. Pick from sets for kids, Shakespeare, genius, and art.

—Lauri Griffin is a fiction writer who spends way too much time online. Please send interesting sites to her at lauri_grif@earthlink.net and visit her blog for more great links at www.laurireflections.blogspot.com.

July Open Critique

By Lauri Griffin

Sometimes the worlds we write about are so full and colorful and real in our heads that we forget to actually put it on the page. What seems obvious to the writer isn't always obvious to the reader. Open critique sessions offer a great chance to strengthen our manuscripts.

On July 26th, R.T. Lawton, author of more than 40 published stories, offered his suggestions for re-writing. He explained what struck him as out of character and gave advice on plot and technique.

Chris Mandeville led another group, suggesting different story starts and character development. All the writers attending submitted their fresh eyes and ears to give helpful feedback on dialogue, story strengths, and weaknesses.

After a couple of hours of hard work, sharing, and laughing, the participants headed home with new ideas and insights, ready to revise and improve their works.

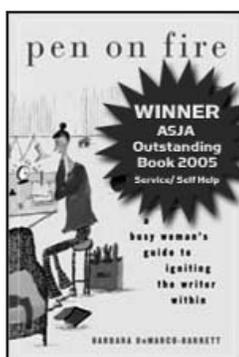
If you missed this one, consider coming next time. Even if you aren't ready to share your work, you are welcome to visit, eat snacks, listen, and offer feedback. Participating in a critique session is a wonderful way to develop your own writing skills as well as helping other writers.

OUT OF BOOK EXPERIENCE

Pen on Fire: a Busy Woman's Guide to Igniting the Writer Within

By Barbara DeMarco-Barrett

Reviewed by Lauri Griffin



Have no fear, men—although the title suggests otherwise, this book is good for anyone who struggles to find time to write, and to make the most of that writing time. Barbara DeMarco-Barrett has been teaching writing for 15 years. She hosts a weekly radio show where she interviews writers, poets, and literary agents. The wisdom of hundreds of interviews is incorporated into the book. According to DeMarco-Barrett, the biggest hurdle for aspiring writers isn't fear of the blank page but actual lack of time.

Pen on Fire helps writers find that time in their busy lives. Each chapter ends with a topic-related 15-minute writing exercise. According to DeMarco-Barrett, writers can get a lot done in just 15 minutes a day. She says that "Working in 15-minute segments also forces you to focus, which can help you to, at the very least, get started on something."

Pen on Fire covers a huge variety of topics that concern writers: the first impression of a title, constructing plot, creating tension, how to add telling details, the challenge of revision, making dialogue realistic, how to find an agent, and more. DeMarco-Barrett also covers topics that concern writers as people, writers with families, writers with day jobs. Pulling from the wisdom of a wide variety of her interview subjects, she offers realistic advice on TV, "e-ddiction," and clutter. You will find sections on motivators, ideas for getting started, tools and rituals for your writing time, mining your life for inspiration and emotion, overcoming obstacles, and the long journey of publishing.

This book blasts away excuses and provides the inspiration to put your pen on fire.

"Yes, believe in yourself, believe in your work, and set your pen on fire every day, if you can. Write as if there is no tomorrow. And stick with it for the long haul. Be an example for your friends, your parents, your children, and for so many others who, seeing someone who stuck with it, who was courageous, who took the high road and was victorious, will go on to tell stories of their own."

You can listen to DeMarco-Barrett's radio show at www.barbarademarcobarrett.com/writersonwriting/index.html.

Also be sure and visit her blog at www.penonfire.blogspot.com/.

Board of Directors

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Four BOD members continue service for the second half of a two-year term. Laura Hayden, crowned Queen of the Universe at PPWC 2006, is Immediate Past President and PPWC 2007 Director. Jennifer Webster-Valant continues to impress as Treasurer extraordinaire. Chris Myers will dutifully record the minutia for posterity as Secretary, while using her creative energy to expand Reality Track programming. And I will gratefully continue as your humble President.

4 Pikes Peak Writer

Please join me in applauding PPW's outstanding, all-volunteer Board of Directors.

If you'd like to attend the monthly BOD meeting and/or contribute to the Marketing, Workshops, Contest, Grants or PPWC Steering committees, please e-mail your contact information to: volunteers@ppwc.net.

To contact a Board Member directly with a question, compliment or suggestion, please e-mail:

Chris Mandeville, President:

president@ppwc.net

Beth Groundwater, Vice President:

vp@ppwc.net

Chris Myers, Secretary: secretary@ppwc.net

Jennifer Webster-Valant, Treasurer:

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Pat Kennelly, Editor: kennelly25@msn.com

Barb Nickless, Workshops Director:

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Dawn Smit Miller, Contest Director:

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Charlie Rush, Member at Large:

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Chris Olson, Member at Large:

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Laura Hayden, Immediate Past President:

conference@ppwc.net

Upcoming Events: September, October, November

September Write Brain

How to Write and Market Short Stories

Tuesday, September 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cottonwood Artists' School, 25 Cimino Dr.

Join published authors Beth Groundwater, Carol Hightshoe, R.T. Lawton, and Bret Wright as they discuss how to write and market short stories.



Beth Groundwater's first foray into fiction writing was a series of short stories about a protagonist named Freddie written in sixth grade. As an adult, Beth has finished three

mystery/suspense novels, a novella, and numerous short stories, six published. Her amateur sleuth mystery, *A Real Basket Case*, will be published in hardback by Five Star Publishing in March, 2007. Beth recently placed second in Paranormal Romantic Mystery/Suspense category of the 2005 RWA Daphne du Maurier contest.



A native Texan, Carol Hightshoe found her way to her current home in Colorado by way of a five-year detour in The Netherlands—courtesy of her husband Tim and the U.S. Air Force. An

avid reader at a young age, her strong desire to write came from her love of (her husband calls it her obsession with) *Star Trek*. It was this early love of *Star Trek* that led her to the science fiction and fantasy genres. In addition to her own writing, she is the editor of the e-zine, *The Lorelei Signal*.



R.T. Lawton has 45 published short stories, 11 of them in *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, one in the *Who Died In Here?* anthology, and a minimystery in *Woman's*

World Magazine. Having a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice, R.T. is a Vietnam vet and a retired federal law enforcement agent. He currently resides in Colorado Springs with his wife, Kiti, who is also his first reader.



Bret Wright is the co-publisher and chief editor of *Apollo's Lyre*, the award-winning online magazine for writers. In addition to publishing articles of interest to writers of all

levels, *Apollo's Lyre* publishes fiction from micro-fiction to serialized novellas. Bret is widely published as a short story author and freelance writer, as well.

October Write Brain

An Insider's Look at the Paul Gillette Writing Contest Featuring Dawn Smit Miller

Tuesday, October 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cottonwood Artists' School



Are you entering the Paul Gillette Writing Contest? Thinking of entering? Then come to this Write Brain workshop. We'll talk about contests in general, the rules and guidelines of

this contest, how to make this a successful contest experience, and judging your judges. Taught by PPW Contest Coordinator Dawn Smit Miller.

November Write Brain

Journey of a First (Published) Novel Featuring Denise Vega

Tuesday, November 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cottonwood Artists' School



Walk through the evolution of a first published children's novel from idea to manuscript to finished book, including editorial letters for revision, copyedited pages and galleys. The workshop will include why the author believes this book sold and the five novels before that did not, and what it means to persevere for a dozen years to make that first novel sale.

Denise Vega's first novel, *Click Here (to find out how I survived seventh grade)*, was acquired by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers shortly before placing third in the 2003 Paul Gillette Writing Contest. It was

published in hardcover in 2005 and paperback in 2006 as well as being translated into Swedish.

All Write Brain sessions are held at Cottonwood Artists' School, 25 Cimino Drive, 6:30-8:30 p.m., and are FREE to PPW members.

Registering for events: To participate in Write Brain sessions, PLEASE RSVP to rsvp@ppwc.net, or mail to: 4164 Austin Bluffs Pkwy., #246, Colorado Springs, CO 80918 and INCLUDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION. We will attempt to post program changes on the Yahoo! loop. Also, check the Web site for updated information. If you RSVP, you will receive notification of any changes or cancellations to the workshops.

September Open Critique

Featuring Robert Spiller

Wednesday, September 27, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Cottonwood Artists' School

PPW's Open Critique session allows members to bring a work in progress to be critiqued.

Everyone who comes gets to read the five or so pages they bring (even the peanut gallery), but only those who brought work critique each other. We are led each time by a guest who has experience in the critique process. This way we all get to learn how to be productive critiquers, meet people with similar interests, and hopefully spin off into our own critique groups some day.



Our guest critiquer for September is Robert (Bob) Spiller. Bob won second place in the 1999 Paul Gillette Writing Contest for his SF/F novel *The Children of Yei*. His first novel, *The Witch of Agnesi*, a YA mystery, was published by Medallion Press in August 2006.

RSVP: You may come to simply observe or participate, but either way, our Open Critique Coordinator, Laura Harvey, needs you to RSVP to critique@ppwc.net so she can either reserve a spot for you or ensure we have enough materials available if you plan only to observe.

Sweet Success

Compiled by Janice Black

Angel Smits: This talented writer is one of PPW's regular speakers. On July 15th, the Chapel Hills Barnes & Noble held a book signing for her novel, *Raging Spirits*.

Beth Groundwater: Beth recently signed a contract with *Wild Blue Yonder*, the in-flight magazine of Frontier Airlines to publish a short story in their September/October issue.

This story has also appeared in the *Kansas Writers Association's Words Out of the Flatlands* anthology. In that anthology, the story was titled "Global Domination," but the folks at Frontier wanted a less terrorism-related title, so the title is "Power Play." It's a story about a mother who uses playing a game of Risk to resolve issues in her family.

If you fly on Frontier in September or October, grab a couple of copies of the magazine for Beth.

Also, Beth's mystery novel, *A Real Basket Case*, (Five Star Publishing) is coming out in March 2007.

James Rothrock: James will have his first book signing at Barnes & Noble Citadel store on Saturday, September 16th

from 2-4 p.m. His nonfiction book is *Divided We Fall: How Disunity Leads to Defeat*.

Kathy Brandt: Critic Clive Cussler has this to say about her latest released book in the underwater investigation series, *Under Pressure*: "A terrific writer. The scene with the sharks inside the aircraft was enough to cause nightmares. Well done!" For more, go to www.ksbrandt.com.

Kimberly Reid: Kim attended her first PPW conference in 2004, where she pitched a story idea. Now, with the help of agent Kristin Nelson, the resulting book will be printed. Here's the posting from *Publisher's Marketplace*:

"Kim Reid's debut memoir, *No Place Safe*, a look at how her childhood was shaped by the search for a serial killer and her cop mother's involvement in the Atlanta Missing and Murdered Children Investigation (which captured the nation's attention and ended with the 1982 conviction of Wayne Williams), to Stacey Barney at Kensington in a nice deal by Kristin Nelson at Nelson Literary Agency (World English)."

And now, some great news from **Maggie Bonham:** Two of her novels have been accepted by different publishers. *Runestone of Teiwas* will be out next year through Yard Dog Press and *Lachlei* will be out with Dragon Moon Press. She also has two more

pet books under contract.

Oh yes, and a few other notes: *Prophecy of Swords* is available as a podcast through www.Podioobooks.com.

Robert Spiller: Last May, Medallion Press purchased his young adult mystery, *The Witch of Agnesi*. They are releasing it at the end of August. Please go to his Web site at www.rspiller.com. The first chapter of *Witch* is there and so is a contest. With prizes!

Additional cool stuff for this author:

September 9th at 2:00 p.m.: A reading and signing in Lake George.

October 27-29: Texas Book Festival, Austin, Texas.

November 2: Symposium for new authors, Manitou Springs Library. Signing and reading and a possible presentation.

November 4: Big Book Bash, Denver. A convention for Colorado libraries and independent booksellers.

Also, Robert was chosen by NovelTalkAuthors as the featured author for the month of August. Please visit www.noveltalk.com.

Please report your success stories to Janice Black at sweetsuccess@ppwc.net.

American Icon 2 Winners

Aspiring novelists read short excerpts from their original work. A panel of "Celebrity Judges," Colleen Collins, Todd Fahnestock, and Charles Kaine, gave insightful and useful off-the-cuff comments and suggestions.

American Icon 2 Winners

- **Audience Favorite: Bret Wright**
Prize: Free one-night stay at the

Wyndham Colorado Springs for two.

- **Best Pacing: Bret Wright**

Prize: One hour one-on-one consultation and professional editing of five pages by writer/editor Laurie Wagner Buyer.

- **Best Imagery: Natalia Brothers**

Prize: Review and Critique of synopsis by Pam McCutcheon, author of *Writing the*



Fiction Synopsis: A Step-by-Step Approach.

- **Best Chick Lit: Ron Heimbecher**

Prize: Personal reading of a proposal by agent Kristin Nelson of the Nelson Literary Agency.

- **Best Voice: David Farrell**

Prize: Critique of a proposal by Five Star editor John Helfers (and review for possible publication).

Your PPW Member Liaison

By Jenè Jackson Hanna

What is a "Member Liaison"? I am your voice.

What kind of voice? Megaphone? Sounding board? Instigator? Investigator? Bestest friend forever?

All of the above. My job is to represent you, the PPW membership, to the board and leadership.

6 Pikes Peak Writer

If you have questions about PPW, if you have suggestions—like the recent conversation on the PPW listserv about workshop possibilities—or if you have concerns, feel free to voice them to me. I will make sure you are heard!

Apart from being your voice, I also hope to do the following:

1. Grow our membership base.
2. Help attract and retain new and

existing members.

3. Seek out relationships with organizations to add value to PPW membership.

4. Promote membership at PPW and other arts events.

If you have suggestions about these goals or ideas on how to accomplish them, please contact me! I love to brainstorm. You may e-mail me at jenejacksonhanna@hotmail.com. I can promise that I'll try to be the best Member Liaison, no, Liaison, I mean, Liaison ever!

What's Happening with the Paul Gillette?

By Dawn Smit Miller



Summer is almost gone, school has started, and the Paul Gillette Writing Contest has begun. Entries are now being accepted for this, the contest's 15th year. For complete rules, read the brochure or visit the Web site, www.ppwc.net/contest.html. Here are important details and changes from last year.

The Category List

The 2007 contest will have eight categories:

- Mainstream
- Historical Fiction (HF)
- Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue (MSI)
- Romance
- Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror (SFH)
- Children's (for ages 8-12)
- Young Adult (for ages 12-18)
- Short Stories (fiction only; all genres)

Historical Romance and Contemporary Romance have merged into one Romance category. Time travel romance, futuristic romance, paranormal romance, and romantic suspense all fall into this category as well.

The Creative Nonfiction category has been dropped due to lack of participation.

Fees and Awards

The entry fee structure has changed depending on whether entrants are members of Pikes Peak Writers. Also, the award for third place in each category has gone up to \$30.

Multiple Entries

For the first time, entrants may submit up to two entries per category. They may also submit the same work in multiple

categories. For example, a writer could enter a book-length story with suspense elements in both the Mainstream and MSI categories and receive

feedback from judges on the relative fitness of the story in each category.

VIP Judging

For the second year, the Paul Gillette Contest will have editors and agents serving as VIP judges. As in past years, at least two judges will read, judge and comment on each entry. Then the VIP judges will determine the order of the top three entries in each category. This will give entrants the opportunity to get their manuscripts before industry professionals in their genre. Due to time considerations, entries sent to the VIP judges will not be returned.

Technological Change – Sending an email copy of your entry

For the first time, the contest requires that entrants e-mail a copy of their submission to pgcontest@gmail.com. Then entrants only have to mail two hard copies instead of three. The reasons? First, some of our VIP judges require an electronic copy, and we want to keep our VIP judges happy. Second, it decreases the cost of printing and shipping for both the entrants and the contest.

The Deadline

Wednesday, November 1, 2006, is this year's deadline. Entrants, make sure your entry is postmarked on or before this date.

As the contest coordinator, and unlike the judges, I get to read any of the entries that grab my attention. I look forward to yours.

Grammar Gremlins

By Pam McCutcheon

This is a new column that I hope will help writers with some of the more confusing aspects of our language. There seem to be a lot of misconceptions as to the proper usage of some words, and many mistakes even make it into print. So, each month I hope to highlight a few of the mistakes I see most often, starting with those pesky creatures, the Horrible Homonyms.

• **Problem sentence:** *She waited with baited breath.*

To "bait" means to lure something into a trap. The word you really want here is "bate" which means to restrain or hold back. So, assuming the woman is holding her breath, you should write: *She waited with bated breath.* Use "baited breath" only if she really is trying to lure some unsuspecting creature into a trap with her breath.

• **Problem sentence:** *He was a shoe-in for the position.*

Meaning what? That they'll boot him in? The proper usage is: *He was a shoo-in for the position.* It originated in racing circles when it was suspected a race was fixed and the winning horse only had to be "shooed in" the right direction to win. These days, of course, the phrase has lost its negative connotation.

• **Problem sentence:** *The word she searched for was illusive.*

The root for "illusive" is the same as that for "illusion" and they share the same meaning—deception. However, its homonym, "elusive," means hard to grasp or define, so the proper usage is: *The word she searched for was elusive.* Unless the word really was being sneaky and trying to deceive her...

Thank You for Your Service

The Board of Directors thanks Kirsten Akens for her devoted service to Pikes Peak Writers. We met Kirsten when she moderated a workshop at PPWC 2003. We were so charmed by her warmth, intelligence and poise, we weren't going to let her get away! She began working on nonconference workshops, where she was instrumental in shaping the Write Brain series. She went on to become PPWC Director, guiding the Steering Committee with a steady hand, a level head and a quiet voice. At the conference, she remained our strong, poised leader, no matter the crisis. In addition, she created the highly-successful Reality Track and the Relax and Renew Room, new that year. Shortly thereafter, Kirsten was the obvious choice to fill the vacant editor position, and she did not disappoint. She brought grace and wit to that job, just as she has all others, creating the "Write Now" segment and leading the team brilliantly. Kirsten resigned as editor and BOD member due to increasing responsibilities at another nonprofit. She will be sorely missed, but luckily her contributions remain, plus we hope she will continue to share her insights and expertise as a consultant.

Thank you, Kirsten. It's been a joy and a privilege.

Hot Topics

Rainbow Editing™ Workshop at the Colorado Romance Writers Fall Retreat

Dawn Smit Miller will teach her Rainbow Editing™ workshop at the Colorado Romance Writers Fall Writing Retreat September 23-24. Go to their Web site for more information: <http://www.coloradoromancewriters.org/retreat.html>.

Paul Gillette Writing Contest

Guidelines for this year's Paul Gillette Writing Contest are posted on the PPW Web site at <http://www.ppw.net/contest.html>, and a brochure will be mailed this month. Deadline for entering the contest is November 1, 2006.

NOTE: In the Contest Brochure, the entry form states titles category "Contemporary and Historical Romance." However, the correct title for that category is "Romance."

Robert Spiller Booksigning

September 9th at 2:00 p.m.: A reading and signing in Lake George.

Bob will sign his first young adult mystery *The Witch of Agnesi*, which will be released the end of August. Please go to his Web site at www.rspiller.com for more information. The first chapter of *Witch* is there and so is a contest. With prizes!

Write Now

This feature is a free-write prompt to access and stretch your right brain—flex your writing muscles. Here's how to do it. Think briefly about this issue's prompt. Set a timer for about five minutes and start writing. Don't edit or think about punctuation or grammar. Let the thoughts flow and the words go! When the timer beeps, edit as little as needed. Submit your entry to kennelly25@msn.com no later than October 1, 2006. We can't offer prizes, but the winning submission will be in an upcoming issue of *PPW NewsMagazine*.

Rules: Judging criteria are inventiveness and creativity. Titles recommended, but not necessary. One entry per person allowed. Include your full name with entry. All

entries will receive an e-mail confirmation. Entries become the sole property of PPW and all decisions are final. Must be 100 words or less.

New Prompt:

If only Margaret had thought of a better Halloween costume. When the door opened, the look on Frank's face...

Last Issue's Winning entry (submitted under the condition of anonymity):

He threw the weapon out the portal and shouted, "Juliet, I renounce my warmongering father's feud. Away to the Escape Module!"

"Cut! Stick to the lines."

"Dude, you're stifling my artistic freedom. My character's a vegetarian pacifist who'd never handle laser pistols. He'd be spreading soybeans to all the impoverished planets."

"This commercial's for the Bluetooth Romeo Module, not Peacenik-Romeo in Space. If you want the part, get the cellphone out of the trashcan and quit improvising."

"Trashcan? That totally makes more sense. If it was an open portal I'd be dead from explosive decompression. But can I still be a vegetarian?"