

# Pikes Peak Writer

## NewsMagazine

Official Publication of the Pikes Peak Writers



VOLUME VII, ISSUE 5  
September, October 2008

## July Write Brain Using Facts in Fiction

Featuring Brenda Speer

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By Bret Wright

Elvis's guitars have left the building. Sources close to *NewsMag* describe the musical instruments as being disgruntled and despondent after an appearance at the Cottonwood Artists' School for the Pikes Peak Writers July Write Brain session. The topic: "Using Facts in Fiction," presented by PPW's Brenda Speer. Speer, a legal expert in the field of intellectual property and copyright law, gave her candid insights and opinions with style and comfortable wit. Sadly, the guitars' appearance ended on a sour note after their story was utterly discredited by the audience.



Covering a wide range of topics, Speer began to dismantle the framework of a non-existent work of historical fiction called *Elvis: My Life and Times*, as told from the perspective of The King's guitars. In a filled-to-capacity room, Speer began the process by defining such things as defamation, right of publicity, and the difference between reasonable expectations of privacy versus invasion of privacy. She also told the crowd what the legal definition of a person is as it applies to copyright law. Essentially, the gig was up for the guitars before the opening note.

Persons, one might be interested to learn, can be living or dead and either natural or artificial. The natural part is easy, but artificial? "Entities such as Xerox Corporation are very protective of their names," Speer explains. Once a company name or product falls into the vernacular (used as

a verb or a noun), the company begins losing control of its trademark or trade dress, which can then conceivably harm that company's livelihood. Is this the case in all instances? "Well," she says, with a smile, "that depends. Some companies are more stringent in their pursuit of trade libel than others." A good rule of thumb when using well-known brand names is to show them in a good light. If you don't, then you had better be able to provide solid proof of what you're writing. "The truth is always a defense," she says. In the case of Elvis's guitars, a case-study that she gave the audience to practice the concepts she was explaining, the author may have gotten into trouble by using well-known brand names as the main characters. This is particularly true when they began describing certain unverifiable peccadilloes and nasty habits. Oops.

Those nasty habits could land an author into deep legal trouble if she didn't have provable evidence to back up her words. Defamation is all about "dishin' dirt about others." It's all well and good, as long as you can prove it. Those supermarket tabloids get into trouble quite a bit over what constitutes defamation and what is legally acceptable because of a person's public profile. Public figures such as Hollywood celebrities and politicians do open themselves up to scrutiny, but even they have a certain expectation of privacy. If, on the other hand, a person is simply thrust into the headlines for a short amount of time, that person has a little more legal wiggle-room to pursue defamation allegations. Private figures, which are most of the public, have the most protection under the law; they have the greatest right to be left alone and not expect their names to appear in the public eye on a whim.

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"All books reveal perfection, by what they are or what they are not."  
—Christopher Moore

## from the editor



### Back To School

The last time I set foot in a classroom as a full-time student was longer ago than I care to admit. Yet every

year at this time, I still get the back-to-school urge. I was one of those kids who loved school and school supplies. So the end of summer meant that I got to shop for my new school supplies. An office supply store is almost as exciting as a bookstore.

## Pikes Peak Writer NewsMagazine

Official Publication of the Pikes Peak Writers

Bimonthly NewsMagazine of the Pikes Peak writing community

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Even though I'm not going back to school, I stock up on ten-for-a-dollar notebooks to use for my Morning Pages and brightly colored pens (the kind they didn't have when I was in school) on sale. Pretty notebooks with different cover designs are put aside for various projects. The green ones with stenciled leaves for Project A, the lilac with a Victorian design for Project B. It's a great excuse to get organized. And organization is a great excuse to go shopping.

Another benefit of this time of year is the cooler weather. Instead of feeling like hibernating, my energy level increases. It's time to get things done. And that includes writing.

Then there is Halloween, probably my favorite holiday. What's not to like about a day centered around giving and receiving candy? Plus, we get to pretend to be someone we're not. And isn't that one of the fun things about writing? We get to play around in the heads of other people. People we create.

This issue includes articles about getting back to work and about having a good time. And one or two that combine the two. Because who says our work can't be fun. And we hear from some new contributors. Deb Courtney joins the staff as a contributing editor. Look for her unique sense of humor in upcoming issues. Ali Eickholt tells us about the Southern Colorado Writing Project and

their Writing Marathons. I can tell you from my own experience that the marathons are a fun and productive way to spend a day. Ian Healy gives you some advice on surviving NaNoWriMo. Becky Clark Cornwell shows you one of the many rewards of volunteering with PPW. And Grammar Girl (wonder who she could be?) lends us her expertise. Feel free to write in with your questions.

In addition, you'll find the usual suspects. Fleur Bradley talks about finding the right stuff when it comes to your writing. Linda Rohrbough show us how to capture those flying monkeys. (Anyone else still freaked out by them?) Janice Black compiles the Sweet Successes of some of our members. And we let you know about upcoming events you won't want to miss.

Speaking of Write Brains and the October workshop, maybe in a way I will be going back to school. The workshop features Deb Dixon, who literally wrote the book on *Goal, Motivation and Conflict*—three things every writer needs.

Even if you didn't look forward to going back to school, I think you'll enjoy spending some time learning from our contributors. And no one will make you stay after class to clean erasers. I promise.

## The Writer's Life Guts

By Fleur Bradley



As I'm writing this, it's back to school time for my kids. We pick clothes, buy supplies and start the day

nervously—especially me. I watch my girls join their classmates old and new and meet their new teachers as they look back at me with anxious faces. Will the teacher be nice? Will the other kids like me, or make fun of my new haircut? Will it all be okay??

I drive home, a little foggy-eyed, but a proud mama. Because even though they were nervous, my kids straightened their shoulders

and faced the first day of school. And that takes guts.

As a writer, I know how hard it can be to put yourself out there. To meet new people—but most of all, to put your work out there. I love to write, the excitement of that first draft, shaping my work during second, third (and sometimes fourth, fifth, sixth) drafts, until I feel pretty darned proud of myself.

But then it's time to let that baby go. Send her off to school—er, off to New York, or wherever that agent or editor may be.

It takes guts to submit your work, and I pride myself on not being afraid to take that next step. I've submitted manuscripts, revised and submitted again. Filed rejections. Celebrated acceptances.

But I never had the guts to sign up for PPW American Icon. You know, that brutal contest where you read for two minutes and

*continued on page 7*



**Speer defined such things as defamation, right of publicity, and the difference between reasonable expectations of privacy versus invasion of privacy at the July Write Brain.**

*continued from page 1*

So what is it then, this “defamation?” It’s public disclosure of private facts, creating false relationships, intrusion (like peeping) and misappropriation of names and likenesses. “You have a right to control how you are used,” says Speer. “Others are prohibited from using your persona for commercial purposes without your permission.” This can be the case, even in death. “When in doubt, get permission.” In the case of Elvis, for instance, since he achieved a certain amount of fame during his lifetime, his estate controls how his name and likeness are used; the estate has a right of publicity that carries over into death.

Speer also spoke about the subject of

copyright, what it is and how it’s used. Essentially, a copyright is nothing more than legal protection against others who might steal your work. It protects a wide range of works and ensures your ability to reproduce, prepare derivative work, distribute copies, perform the work, or display your work publicly. Copyrights typically last for the life of the author plus 70 years in the U.S., though the rules are different for multiple authors and anonymous, pseudonymous, and work-for-hire products.

“And forget about what you may have heard about being able to legally copy only a certain percentage of a whole work. That’s a total myth,” says Speer. “Say you write a ten-word poem, and a person changes one word

and calls it his own. That’s ten percent, right? No. That’s infringement.”

It is possible to use others’ work, but it’s always a good idea to get permission, in writing, before doing it.

Ensuring your copyright is easy: Simply “fix it in any tangible medium.” In other words, print it and store it, maybe get a disinterested third party to sign and date it.

Speer’s presentation covered a lot of ground. In addition to the subjects already mentioned, she went into detail about things like parody and satire, negligent publication, obscenity, public domain, and manuscript vetting. “Vetting is important,” she says. “You should just write your story, and worry about the legal things later. You usually have to parse a manuscript so you have the CYA thing going for you. Remember, the Universal Legal Answer is ‘it depends.’” Translation? Write your book, then send it to a lawyer for legal vetting. This is important, because publishing houses usually don’t cover lawsuits, especially in the case of new authors.

After the official presentation, which was accompanied by a great slide show for the benefit of the many people who were rapidly scribbling away at notepads, Speer opened the floor for discussion and questions. She fielded these like the professional she is, even in the face of some pretty tough customers.

At this point, the guitars slinked out of the room, their necks bent in shame. I think Elvis smiled. I know the audience did.

## Board of Directors News

*By Chris Mandeville*

### Ron Heimbecher: President

Ron comes to us with a terrific set of skills and talents that will enhance and bolster the role of president. He’s a phenomenal writer, has tons of experience working with volunteers, and is generous sharing his time and knowledge.

### Chris Mandeville: Community Ambassador

Chris plans to increase PPW’s footprint in the community, create and cement ties with community partners, and embrace PPW members in a cohesive and supportive Arts community.

### Bonnie Hagan: Secretary

Bonnie has been a friend of PPW for many years, volunteering in a number of jobs. She led the PPWC 2008 Pitch Desk, is a regular helper at Write Brains, as well as a

regular contributor to the *PPW NewsMag*. Bonnie is hard-working, dependable, brilliant, and always has a smile on her face.

### Bret Wright: Outreach Director

After Bret Wright served for one year as both the PPW Secretary and Chairman of the Youth Committee, we asked him to focus his contributions on “outreach” programs, to include our fledgling Youth Program. We created a new Board position, Outreach Director, and promptly elected Bret to fill it.

### Barb Nickless: VP of Programming

Barb has been a stellar contributor to our Non-Conference Events team as Workshops Director for the past two years and was promoted to VP of Programming.

### Maria Faulconer: Workshops Director

Maria is a multi-published author and world traveler who has a passion for PPW.

### Pam McCutcheon, Karen Fox:

### Co-conference Directors for PPWC

After a hiatus from Board service, PPW veteran Pam McCutcheon has been elected Co-conference Director for PPWC 2009 and will share the Directorship with Karen Fox. Together, Pam and Karen bring years of experience, tons of connections, and a host of innovative ideas to the PPWC 2009 Steering Committee.

### Dawn Smith Miller: Contest Director

We are thrilled to report that Dawn Smit Miller, Contest Director Extraordinaire, has accepted a third (and sadly, final) term on the PPW Board, where she leads the way in all things related to our Pikes Peak Fiction Writing Contest (formerly the Paul Gillette).

### Returning Board Members

The above Board Members are joined by several who are beginning their second year of two-year elected terms: **Debbie Meldrum** as Editor, **Karen Fox** as Faculty Director, and **Chris Myers** as Member at Large.

# The Business of Writing

## Capture the Flying Monkeys

By Linda Rohrbough

I've heard it said writing a book is like sorting paper in a wind tunnel. That's pretty close to my experience. It doesn't matter if the book is fiction or nonfiction, during the initial stages, ideas are swooping around my head like the flying monkeys in the Wizard of Oz. I know they'll get away if I don't have some quick capture method, because it's happened before. Up until now, I've been forced to use paper. But I hate paper. Recently, I ran across a couple of tools that provide me with real flexibility to capture that energy, especially in the early stages of a project: MindManager from Mindjet Software and SuperNoteCard from Mindola.

Paramount is a tool that doesn't get in my way when I'm trying to nab my ideas. It needs to be almost transparent so I forget about what I'm using and can generate ideas at random, then organize them in any manner I choose on the fly. I don't want my hand slapped when I'm in this process, and I hate being interrupted. I tried Microsoft Word to just jot down my ideas, but they all look the same in a long list, and organizing them makes me very aware of Word as a tool. Now when I'm actually writing, Word is transparent to me. But during the idea stage, if I stop to take care of a formatting issue or I can't get a visual approach to the structure, then I get frustrated. I'm happy to report I've found a couple of new tools that work for me.

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**“The beauty of these electronic tools for me is I don't lose stuff I generate electronically.”**

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The first is MindManger from Mindjet. MindManager is a graphical tool for generating concepts and relationships between those concepts. It can be used for project management at the corporate level, but it's great for getting my ideas on the page



without getting in the way. The learning curve was steep for me, but I can make it shorter for you by giving you a single tip: use the insert key. Once you understand the insert key is the way to generate new boxes, you won't have trouble. What's even better, it exports to Microsoft Word in a standard outline format. So once I'm ready to start filling in the details, I can use Word. It'll also go the other way, so if you have a Word outline, you can export it to MindManager and then manipulate it graphically. (MindManager)

The downside is the price. MindManager Pro starts at about \$350. However, there is a MindManager Lite version available for \$99. You'll have to move quickly if you want it because the company is phasing it out. Here's the URL for MindManager Lite: [www.mindjet.com/products/mindmanager\\_lite/default.aspx](http://www.mindjet.com/products/mindmanager_lite/default.aspx).

SuperNoteCard is another graphical tool for plotting. It duplicates on-screen the old 3x5 note card system of writing and arranging scenes. It also exports to Word or any other word processor that will import a standard Rich Text Format (.rtf) file. It's not quite as elegant as MindManager, but it has the advantage of letting you see your work sequentially. And it's a lot cheaper, as the full version is only \$29. There's a version aimed at scriptwriting for just \$34 and both are available at [www.mindola.com](http://www.mindola.com). (SuperNoteCard)

The beauty of these electronic tools for me is I don't lose stuff I generate electronically. I know writers who can buy a pack of 3x5 cards for a buck and keep what they've written on them for years. I'm not that kind of person. I lose paper, spill things on it, crumple it until it's just about unrecognizable and do other injustices to it. But electronic data I never lose. I'm a nut about backups, so I have multiple copies stored away in various places both in my office and off site with everything I've ever written or jotted down electronically. And it comforts me to know every copy of an electronic file is a perfect copy, so there's no degradation of the data. One added benefit of both these products is

they offer a try-before-you-buy feature. So you can see if you can capture your own flying monkeys using these tools before you plunk any cash. It doesn't get much better than that.

### Electronic Writing Tools

**MindManager from Mindjet Software**

**MindManager Pro \$349**  
[www.mindjet.com](http://www.mindjet.com)

**MindManager Lite \$99**

[www.mindjet.com/products/mindmanager\\_lite/default.aspx](http://www.mindjet.com/products/mindmanager_lite/default.aspx).

(available for a limited time by using this URL only)

**SuperNoteCard from Mindola**  
[www.mindola.com](http://www.mindola.com)

**SuperNoteCard \$29**

**SuperNoteCard for Scriptwriting \$34**

*Linda Rohrbough has been writing professionally since 1989, has more than 5,000 articles, seven books and numerous awards for her fiction and non-fiction. Linda's new book, Weight Loss Surgery with the Adjustable Gastric Band: Everything You Need to Know Before and After Surgery to Lose Weight Successfully (Da Capo Lifelong Books, March 2008), is now available. Visit her Web site for details: [www.LindaRohrbough.com](http://www.LindaRohrbough.com).*

# June Write Brain: Writers and the Digital Frontier

Featuring Carolyn Handler Miller  
By Erin Shaw

Are you looking for a new and exciting outlet for your creativity? Would you like to contribute your writing and storytelling skills to large projects that can cross technological frontiers and break cultural boundaries? If so, then interactive digital media may be the new niche for you.

For the June Write Brain, Carolyn Handler Miller explained to a crowded room of curious writers what interactive digital media is and how writers can participate in this groundbreaking field, which she has dubbed “digital storytelling.” The primary difference between this new type of storytelling and older forms is that digital storytelling uses technology to make the audience members active participants in the story rather than passive observers.



## Storytelling Through the Ages

Carolyn introduced the concept of interactive digital media by describing how it emerged from its historical roots in storytelling. Storytelling became an integral part of the human experience in ancient history and has become increasingly complex as humans have discovered innovative ways to express themselves. Rudimentary forms of storytelling existed as pictorial representations on cave walls and eventually evolved into theater and the dramatic expression of stories by actors. With new technologies came new expressions of storytelling. As more people acquired the ability to use written language, printed stories flourished. As moving pictures developed in the 20th century, film and television evolved to tell visual stories.

Now, as we have entered the 21st Century and computers and the Internet are widely accessible, a new form of storytelling has taken root: interactive digital media. The traditional “fourth wall” separating the audience from the action is smashed as the

audience members move out of their seats and onto the stage. Readers and viewers have become players, directing the storylines and infusing them with their own personal experiences. In this exciting new world of interactive storytelling, the line between the real world and the story world becomes blurred; story becomes life and life becomes story.

## Forms of Digital Storytelling

Carolyn described for the audience many of the endless ways that digital storytelling can manifest itself. Some forms, like video games, have been around for a few decades, but new technology has helped them become more realistic and far more immersive than ever before. As a result of evolving technology, video games have morphed into other types of digital gaming such as virtual reality and alternate reality games. A popular form of interactive gaming is massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), in which users select avatars to represent themselves in their virtual world that is visited by other gamers from around the real world. Each user’s avatar interacts with the other avatars to develop cities, exchange ideas, participate in games, and conduct many other virtual activities.

Older forms of play are also becoming more sophisticated due to technological advances. Dolls can respond to the way a child interacts with it, such as the clothes the child chooses, in order to advance the story between toy and player. The progression of animatronics allows humans to play with virtual animals that look and act like the real thing, creating a safe environment to learn about and interact with “nature.”

With various forms of digital storytelling also come various uses for the new technology. Museums use virtual reality as a way to allow visitors to immerse themselves in a different world. Companies use alternate reality games as a way to spread the word about their products. Interactive digital media can also be used to teach, train, and disperse political and social messages.

## Applying Writing to Digital Storytelling

According to Carolyn, digital storytelling is a “writer friendly” field, employing the skills writers use to craft compelling fiction. These skills include developing intriguing characters,



writing strong dialogue, and creating fascinating story worlds. In addition, writers can also create clues to solve mysteries, write fictional blogs and incorporate educational points into the story.

In order to participate in digital storytelling, the writer must be willing to make adjustments to succeed. Primarily, the writer must agree to release the more traditional “god-like” control over a story’s evolution, allowing the audience to become “co-creator.” Furthermore, while the story should still have a beginning, middle, and an end, there should be additional dimensions that account for choices the audience members make. Writers must also be willing to learn new concepts, including understanding how users interact with characters, developing ways to let users know when they are successful, and understanding how the users can move around in the virtual world.

The pay-off is that writers will be involved in creating innovative stories with more intricate story worlds that can touch more people in more ways than traditional forms of media. With digital storytelling, writers serve as the link between creative expression and technological entrepreneurship.

*Carolyn Handler Miller is a pioneer and an expert in the field of interactive digital media. Throughout her career, Carolyn has been involved in traditional forms of writing—including print media, television, and film—and became involved in interactive storytelling in its early stages during the 1990’s. In addition to her creative contributions, Carolyn has also served as a story consultant and currently teaches at the University of New Mexico.*

*If you are interested in learning more about this exciting new form of storytelling, check out Carolyn’s book, Digital Storytelling: A Creator’s Guide to Interactive Entertainment, which has recently been updated and released in its second edition. You may also visit Carolyn’s Web site at [www.carolynmiller.com/](http://www.carolynmiller.com/) to learn more about her involvement in these diverse and pioneering projects related to interactive digital media. She may also be reached via e-mail at [Carolyn@CarolynMiller.com](mailto:Carolyn@CarolynMiller.com).*

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

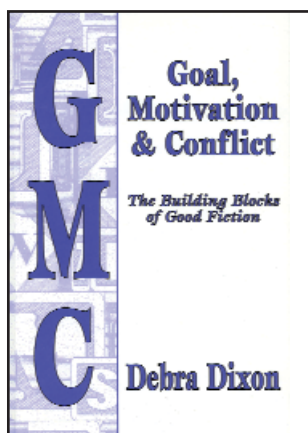
In each issue of the *NewsMagazine*, a PPW staff member will recommend a highly beneficial book on the business or craft of writing. PPW will then sell it to members at a discounted price.

Our Peak Pick for September and October is *Goal, Motivation and Conflict: The Building Blocks of Good Fiction* by Debra Dixon. It lists for \$19.95, but the PPW member price is \$18.95 plus tax. The member discount applies during the months of September and October. Read the recommendation and come to the Write Brain sessions in September and October to pick up your discounted copies. Enjoy!



### Recommended by Jodi Anderson

Since 1996, writers have had a secret weapon in the crafting of their novels—Debra Dixon's *Goal, Motivation, & Conflict*



*Conflict* (GMC). For the thousands upon thousands of writers who have already discovered GMC, it has helped to tighten and clarify the characters and plots of

their stories. For those discovering GMC for the first time, a new world is about to be available to you.

This is not an article filled with empty, sensationalistic hype. In 2000, I discovered

this helpful book while attending a national conference where Deb Dixon was presenting her GMC workshop. I have utilized her book and the GMC chart within it for writing each of my books since then. There are two books I give credit to for pushing me into the world of publication, and *Goal, Motivation, Conflict* is one of them.

Deb Dixon's belief is that "You need a strong foundation. You need compelling characters." In GMC, she provides the tools to create both in your writing. To put it in its most simplistic form, your character wants something (Goal), because of some particular reason (Motivation), but there is something/someone standing in their way (Conflict).

This is one writing craft book that I read every year and recommend to every writer. Here is what other professionals in the field have to say about *Goal, Motivation, & Conflict*.

"Without qualification, Deb Dixon's *Goal, Motivation, and Conflict* is one of the most recommended craft books for new and established writers alike. GMC is the cornerstone of every novel, every genre, and Ms. Dixon's mastery of the topic ensures it makes sense."

~ Donnell Bell

"*Goal, Motivation, and Conflict* by Debra Dixon is the perfect complement to Chris Vogler's *Writer's Journey*. Together, these two books create this novelist's bible. While Vogler paints a broad canvas from which to work, Dixon provides the crucial building blocks needed to breathe life into unforgettable characters, the stepping stone to world-building, and the cornerstones to creating a page-turning plot. If I have to give up all but one writing book in my extensive personal library—there's surely a special place in hell for anyone who would do that to a writer—*Goal, Motivation, and Conflict* by Debra Dixon would be my keeper."

~Deb Stover, critically acclaimed starring author



## Congratulations to the Pikes Peak Writers American Icon 4 Winners

**Best Overall:** Jené Jackson Hanna, *The Oat Project*

**Audience Favorite:** Jené Jackson Hanna, *The Oat Project*

**Best YA:** Ron Cree, *The Codex*

**Best Voice:** John Sharpe, *No More Bull*

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**Best Premise:** Thea Hutcheson, *The Bee Lady's Amulet*

**Best Speculative Fiction:** Natalia Brothers, *The Soul of a Stillborn*

**Best Tension:** Fleur Bradley, *Two-Faced*

**Best Action:** Matthew Dyer, *The Light of Dawn*

**Honorable Mention:** Ron Heimbecher, *Heaven's Lower East Side*

**Honorable Mention:** Kari Wainwright, *Break a Leg—Or Two*

## Dear Grammar Girl,

The other night I went to dinner with my wife. As we were going into the restaurant, she noticed a sign that said “Kid’s eat free on Tuesday’s.” She stood there and laughed until I thought she would fall down. I asked her why it was so funny, but that started her laughing again so hard that I finally gave up and just dragged her into the bar-b-que joint. I have several questions. First, why was she laughing so hard? Second, why would kid’s only eat free on Tuesdays? What’s wrong with Monday’s or Friday’s? And third, if I don’t have any kid’s, how can I take advantage of specials like these?

*Signed,*

*Billy, from Withlacoochee, Florida*

## Dear Billy,

Really, all I can say is this: is there really a place called Withlacoochee, and if so, are there alligator’s in your back yard?

No, seriously, Billy, the situation you are describing is commonly known as “misplaced apostrophe syndrome.” Once thought to be rare, scientists now understand that one in four people are seriously affected by MAS. I’ll give you a brief outline of the symptoms and the devastating aftermath of this terrible disorder, but for more in-depth information, I suggest you see your family doctor, or watch the upcoming Discovery Channel special “UnMASking MAS: Apocalyptic Apostrophe’s (or should it be apostrophes?).” It should be interesting, and I hear it is narrated by John Cleese, who tackles the issue head on, and with typical Monty Pythonesque humor (which also calls to mind whether or not it should be Monty Python’s Flying Circus, or Monty Pythons’ Flying Circus, but as the logo has already been

# Grammar Girl: Misplaced Apostrophe Syndrome



made, I suppose the issue is moot).

Now, on to your symptoms. You, too, may suffer from MAS if you answer yes to two or more of the following questions:

1. I never did know the difference between its and it’s.
2. I wouldn’t know an apostrophe if it bit me on the butt.
3. I had no idea that you misused an apostrophe in the word “alligator’s” in the first paragraph.
4. There are in fact alligators in my back yard, but they move pretty slow, so I don’t worry a whole lot about them.

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## “Kid’s eat free on Tuesday’s.”

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Unfortunately, MAS is so serious that it can keep you from being a productive member of society. It has torn apart families, and devastated untold millions. I would say your case is very far along, given that you are already experiencing communication difficulties with your wife. In short, your wife laughed so hard because the sign you read could be interpreted to say “Kid is eat free on Tuesday is,” or, since the apostrophe can indicate a possessive as well as the contraction of some word combined with “is,” the sentence could also be interpreted as “the non-mentioned and non-specific

possession of some specific kid will eat free on the non-mentioned and non-specific possession of someone else named Tuesday.”

Which is all very confusing, since everyone knows that kids don’t eat anything in restaurants. It is wholly irrelevant to offer to feed children free on any night of the week, as they

would far rather push the food around on their plates and whine incessantly that they are full (or thirsty). Thus, the grammatically correct version of the sign would have read, “Sit your kid in one of our chairs and let him or her push their food around free of charge, but only on Tuesday, as we have no desire to hear the incessant whining of your child on any other night of the week, especially on Saturday, when we usually get big tips from people who have no children and are in a much better mood because of it.”

As to your other question (believing I have explained now why your wife was laughing, why kids eat free on Tuesday, and not on any other nights), I am now ready to tackle your third and final question: how can you, having no kids, take advantage of this special?

The answer is, of course, that you cannot, unless you are very short, in which case you probably will have no problem convincing the maitre d’ that you are under twelve.

At least mentally.

Best of luck to you, your wife, and your backyard gators. And get to your doctor – don’t become just another MAS statistic!

*Yours in good grammar,  
Grammar Girl*

*Article first printed on the Colorado Springs Fiction Writers’ Group Web site  
([www.coloradospringsfictionwritersgroup.org](http://www.coloradospringsfictionwritersgroup.org))*

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## The Writer’s Life

*continued from page 2*

get critiqued by three judges. In front of a crowd. I get nervous just thinking about it.

I went last year to support a few of my friends who were gutsy enough to read, but I was too chicken to get up there myself. So when I heard about Icon again this year, I shrugged it off at first. Maybe I’ll attend, for

the great snacks and to learn from everyone else’s mistakes.

But then there was that nagging voice in my head. What about not being afraid to take it to the next level. Huh? Chicken...

So I signed up. Bring it, I thought as I sent off my registration. I have the guts. Win or lose, I don’t really care—all I want is to be able to say that I went to Icon and lived to tell. That I had the guts.

At the end of the first day of school, I go

to pick up my kids. They say goodbye to new friends, hand me their piles of paper, and tell me about their day. Everything was fine, nobody made fun of them or was mean. Nothing to worry about.

Let’s hope Icon goes as smoothly.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Fleur Bradley received the award for “Best Tension” at this year’s American Icon. She didn’t look nervous at all.

# Ten Tips to Surviving NaNoWriMo

By Ian Healy

Most writers have heard of the National Novel Writing Month contest, but most of us shy away from the notion that you can write a book in 30 days. “It can’t be done,” we cry. “We don’t have time! We can’t write that much! And what about the holidays and shopping and hockey season and football season and family and work and vacuuming the cat...?”

You get the idea.

Speaking as a four-time survivor (and winner) of NaNoWriMo, I’m here to tell you it not only can be done, but should be attempted by anyone who considers him, or herself, a serious writer. The goal is simple: between 12:01 a.m. November 1st and midnight November 30th, you write a minimum 50,000-word book. That’s all. That’s 1,667 words a day, or about seven pages typed double spaced.

Over the past four years, I’ve learned some tips and tricks to not only surviving, but thriving during NaNoWriMo, and I’d like to share those with you.

## 1. Turn off your internal editor.

You don’t have time to think about what you’re writing when you’re on this kind of deadline. Shut him or her up in a closet and just write. Don’t worry about gaping plot holes, inconsistencies, spelling, etc. You can fix all that starting in December. I promise.

## 2. Don’t fear the weird.

My NaNo books have traditionally been explorations for me outside of my normal writing comfort zone. I find it a conducive environment to the strange ideas which I would normally eschew in favor of “safe” concepts.

## 3. Break up your writing time.

Writing seven pages at one sitting can be a daunting task, especially if (like me) you’re saddled with work, family, and your two favorite sports playing three to four times a week. But what if you write one page in the morning before work, one page on your lunch break, one page before you start dinner? Take your laptop into the bathroom and write a page there. You’ll be surprised how easy it is to rattle out 250 words here

and there and before you know it, you’ve hit your daily quota and then some.

## 4. Go to bed early and get up early to write.

I know, I know. Nobody wants to drag themselves out of bed at 4 a.m. to write. But I do it in November, because I can get more work done in those first two hours of the day than I can any other time—no work, no family interruptions, nothing but write, write, write.

## 5. Turn off the Internet.

It’s the biggest distraction in the world. I love using Wikipedia for quick research, but it’s too easy to start clicking links and then deciding to check blogs and oh, what about Facebook? And say, that video looks interesting. And before you know it, you’ve wasted two hours playing instead of working.

## 6. Give yourself play time.

Playing is therapeutic, and believe me, you’re going to need the stress relief during a month of intensive writing. So don’t begrudge yourself the four hours on the Wii or the Peter Jackson film festival, so long as you’ve made your quota.

## 7. Explain to your family what you’ll be doing before November begins.

Get them excited for you. That way when you tell your spouse or significant other or children to let you have your writing time, they’ll understand. If they don’t, I suggest duct tape as an alternative solution.

## 8. Make outlandish bets that you will succeed.

Nothing will get you back to your writing desk better than the threat of having to wear a gorilla suit to work for a week.

## 9. Use little rewards to stay on task.

Got leftover Halloween candy? Have a piece every time you finish a page. It won’t help your figure, but if you’ve got a sweet tooth, it can be a great motivation. Feel free to forgo your diets in favor of microwaveable entrees, coffee, and ramen noodles for the duration of November. Except for Thanksgiving, of course, when you have a four-day weekend to get a ton of writing done.

## 10. Have fun.

Remember, nobody is grading you on your

work. Nobody is going to point and laugh (unless you have to wear a gorilla suit for a week). You’re giving yourself a 50,000-word jump start on your next book. It’s a rough first draft, but you’ll have 50,000 more words than when you started the month. And, like anything else you write, you can edit it until it’s worth showing around after the month is done.

For more information, visit [www.nanowrimo.org](http://www.nanowrimo.org) or e-mail me at [ian@ianthealy.com](mailto:ian@ianthealy.com). Good luck and keep on writing, everyone!

Ian’s 2004 NaNoWriMo novel, *The Milkman*, can be purchased online or directly at [www.ianthealy.com](http://www.ianthealy.com).

## VIP Judges 2009 Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest

### Children’s

Pat Gaines  
Dragonfly Publishing, Inc.

### Historical Fiction

Nathan Bransford  
Curtis Brown Ltd.

### Mainstream

Lois Winston  
Ashley Grayson Literary Agency

### Mystery/Suspense/Intrigue

Sandra Bond  
Bond Literary Agency

### Romance

Deb Werksman  
Sourcebooks

### Science Fiction/ Fantasy/Horror

Cherry Weiner  
Cherry Weiner Literary Agency

### Short Stories

Denise Little  
Tekno Books

### Young Adult

Caryn Wiseman  
Andrea Brown Literary Agency



# A Look At The Southern Colorado Writing Project

By Ali Eickholt

About two and a half years ago, my professor, Katherine Frank, asked me if I would be interested in being the assistant for the Southern Colorado Writing Project. At that point I had only a vague idea of what SCWP was and what it did. Then, in short order, we began the 2006 Summer Institute and that vague idea I began with grew incredibly detailed.

The Southern Colorado Writing Project is a branch of the National Writing Project and, like its sister organizations, has a mission every writer can love: Showing teachers of different grade levels how writing is an important part of learning in every subject area. In fact, last year, one of SCWP's showcase teacher consultants who toured local schools giving inservices about the vital importance of writing in the classroom was none other than Michelle Gray, one of South High School's math teachers.

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**“When you set aside time with friends and say ‘write now,’ it’s hard to say no.”**

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As someone who has almost finished her Master's degree in English and who has, like many of those reading this, been a creative writer for as long as she cares to remember, I think the idea of getting schools in on a love of writing is awesome. Even better, the NWP has compiled a large amount of research proving that students who write more often learn better. That's right, my friends, now you can officially tell people that being a writer is the smart thing to do. Cool, huh?

Now, just for a moment, let's say you are not a teacher. Let's also say you are not a parent. Let's just say you're a writer. Well, twice every year SCWP puts on a Writing Marathon. Held in downtown Pueblo, Writing Marathons are a free event and open to the community. All you need to participate is an RSVP.

I didn't quite know what to expect the first time I went to a writing marathon. I'd done a lot of work helping to get it organized, but as a participant, I was in the dark. I had my



spiral notebook, a few different-colored pens, and a thought of one or two of the stops I wanted to make. After an introduction from Lynette Liewers and a writing prompt, we were split into groups and off to explore downtown.

I think our first stop was a coffee shop. We all got something to drink, then found a table. We designated a time keeper and got to writing. After ten minutes or so, time was up. We finished the sentence we were on and read what we'd come up with to each other.

As writers and people who know other writers, we know the way this writing thing works. You get an idea in your head and write it down. The logistics aren't that mysterious. However, to sit there with friends and actually see someone else go from a blank page to the first few paragraphs of something, well it really brings home the fact that every great poem, short story, or novel, comes out of that blank page.

All together, I think we made three stops before it was time to head back to Angelo's Pizza Parlor to regroup and have some food. A few people pulled out their notebooks as soon as they arrived, wanting to keep up their momentum. We had one more read-around, this time as the whole group, where anyone who was willing to, shared something of what they'd written that afternoon.

I've been in writing classes. In writing groups. But never had I seen so many people actively engaged in the act of writing all at the same time. Maybe 20 people were there, and everyone had written something from scratch that afternoon. For my part, I'd written down the first paragraphs of four different story ideas that I could go back to and finish later. Four stories, one afternoon, that's pretty good math. Besides, free pizza never hurts.

That was my first writing marathon, and the first one I went to by myself. I've been to every one since, and the first one was the only one I attended alone. Since then, I've

told a number of my writing friends about them, and now it's a given that all of us will be there. Because, for all that we like the idea of being writers, the hardest part is actually doing the writing. When you set aside time with friends and say "write now," it's hard to say no. And you get to immediately show off. It's a good system for starting a new project or getting the incentive to push on in one you're currently working on.

After all, when you're only writing for 10 or 15 minutes a go, and you get to chat with other writers, it almost makes it easy. Before you know it, you've got a few pages to show for yourself and your creative batteries are suddenly recharged.

Which brings us to my favorite part of my job with SCWP—the anthologies. After every writing marathon, those who are interested are invited to submit a piece of writing they've done during the marathon for the next issue of the anthology.

As a writer, there's not much I find more exciting than putting together a book, and since I've started this job, I've worked on three anthologies for SCWP, the latest of which was the most recent edition of the writing marathon anthology.

Come on, who doesn't like seeing their name in print?

Here's the good news. The next writing marathon is less than a month away. Grab a pen and mark your calendar for Saturday, October 11. The writing marathon will go from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and will start in the Infozone on the third floor of the Rawlings Library in Pueblo. Remember, this is a free event and open to the public. All you need to do is make an RSVP, because available spaces are limited, and bring your notebook or laptop.

*Ali is working on her Master's degree in English at CSU-Pueblo. She has been the SCWP assistant for the past two years and is currently teaching Comp. 101 at the University.*

# Upcoming PPW Events

## September, October

### September Write Brain

#### An Insider's Look at the PPW Writing Contest

featuring Dawn Smit Miller

Tuesday, September 16th, 6:30-8:30 p.m.



PPW Contest Coordinator Dawn Smit Miller will talk about contests in general, the rules and guidelines of the PPW contest, how to make this a successful contest experience, and judging your judges.

#### Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest now open—deadline November 1!

##### Objectives:

- To provide aspiring authors an opportunity to gain feedback from experienced writers.
- To provide experience in preparing a submission.
- To encourage aspiring authors to focus on producing a marketable project.
- To provide an opportunity for recognition for unpublished writers who have honed their storytelling skills to the publishable or near-publishable level.
- To provide unpublished writers a goal and a deadline, thereby encouraging them to write, write, write.

### October Write Brain

#### Three Approaches to Story Structure

featuring Daniel Abraham

Tuesday, October 21st, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Plot is one of those things that everyone understands until they have to pin it down, and yet knowing the plot of your story before you start writing it makes for stronger fiction and more productive work. This workshop examines three different approaches to plot structure (the punch line structure, the traditional structure, and the dramatic beat



structure) with examples and analysis of each one. Daniel Abraham is the author of seven novels, two dozen short stories, and several comic books. He has been nominated for Nebula, Hugo, and World Fantasy awards, and received the

International Horror Guild award.

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

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

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

### All Day Workshop

#### Goal, Motivation and Conflict and The Hero's Journey

presented by Debra Dixon and offered by Pikes Peak Writers and Pikes Peak Romance Writers

Saturday, October 18, 2008

8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Candlewood Suites Hotel

6450 North Academy Blvd.

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Cost: \$75 for PPW/PPRW members

\$95 for nonmembers

(Price includes continental breakfast, box lunch and snack.)

This intensive workshop will cover the three most important elements of popular fiction—goal, motivation and conflict (GMC), and how these elements work with the mythic structure of Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey* to help writers conceive and create strong plots and compelling characters.

### Open Critique

Wednesday, September 24th and October 22nd at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Cottonwood Artists' School (Open critique is held the fourth Wednesday of each month.)

September's Open Critique Guest is Deb Courtney. Deb is a writer and sometime journalist whose work has appeared in *The Tampa Tribune*, *Tampa Bay Business Journal*, *User Friendly Computer News*, *Builder Architect Magazine*, and *Builder Index*. Her short fiction has appeared in print and online publications, including *Conspire: a Literary Magazine*, *The MAG*, *White Mustang*, and *Apollo's Lyre*. She holds a degree in Fiction Writing from the University of South Florida, where she was a Saunders Scholar in Fiction. Deb has also worked in marketing and project management off and on for 20 years. Currently hard at work on a nonfiction book project, Deb lives in Colorado Springs with two amusing teenagers, an aging boxer, and two apparently immortal guinea pigs.

Robert Spiller is our October guest. He is the author of the Bonnie Pinkwater mysteries (*The Witch of Agnesi*, *A Calculated Demise*, and *Irrational Numbers*). His teacher sleuth uses mathematics and her knowledge of historic female mathematicians to solve murders in the small town of East Plains, Colorado. Like Bonnie, Robert is a math teacher. He lives in Colorado Springs with his wife Barbara. His three daughters and three grandchildren all live within shouting distance.

### PPW Members Night

Monday, September 22 and October 27 at 6:30 p.m. (Fourth Monday of each month.)

Location: Poor Richards Bookstore

320 N. Tejon, Colorado Springs, Colorado

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

# Sweet Success

Compiled by Janice Black

**W**e all experience lulls and pitches in our writing productivity. I happily announce that at least seven of our own writers—make that authors—have been on a roll and keeping their agents and editors busy. Here is a steaming batch of successes to report as this summer enters its third and final month.

**Carol Hightshoe**, aka M.H. Bonham, announces her latest release from WolfSinger Publications. *The King's Champion* is a wonderful fantasy featuring evil fireworms that have been attacking Citadel Heights for several decades. We must not neglect to mention the obligatory and honorable dragon. *The King's Champion* is currently available from Lulu.com and in Mobipocket ebook format from Mobipocket.com. It is available, or will be in a few weeks, on Amazon.com.

[www.wolfsingerpubs.com/KingsChampion.html](http://www.wolfsingerpubs.com/KingsChampion.html)

**Maggie Sefton** has more great news. Her new mystery, *Dyer Consequences*, her fifth from Berkley Prime Crime, was the Barnes & Noble #8 Bestselling Hardcover Mystery for a week this past July! And, the MM paperback of last year's release, *A Killer Stitch*, is the B&N's #2 Bestselling MM Paperback Mystery! A booksigning was held at the TatteredCover. Others in the series are: *Knit One, Kill Two* (6/05); *Needled to Death* (12/05); and *A Deadly Yarn* (8/06). [www.maggiesefton.com](http://www.maggiesefton.com) Blog: [www.cozychicksblog.com](http://www.cozychicksblog.com)

**Rod Summitt's** third novel, *The Nurse and the Deputy*, has been released earlier than anticipated by the publisher. It is available at [www.mmpubs.com](http://www.mmpubs.com) as well as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc. The other two, *When Past Collide* and *Reunion with a Killer*, are already at Citadel Barnes & Noble and the East Branch Library. Hopefully, before long you can get copies of all three at Poor Richard's and Black Cat. Ron is working on the local bookshops. *Return to Paradise* is due June 1, 2009 and *New Beginnings*, late 2009.

[www.rodsummitt.com](http://www.rodsummitt.com)

[www.pubs.com/catalog/summitt-rod-m-29.html](http://www.pubs.com/catalog/summitt-rod-m-29.html)

**Beth Groundwater:** Shoot, two dates have passed! In July, Beth and authors, Mike Befeler, Linda Berry, and Patricia Stoltey got together as the "Mystery Throughout the Ages" panel in the Northglenn Branch for the Rangeview Library District in Northglenn, Colorado.

Then, again, they appeared in conjunction with the Boulder Library Local Authors and Illustrators Festival in Boulder, Colorado.

Also, Beth had a poem, "Ride the Wind," published August 4th (opening day of the Sturgis 2008 Motorcycle Rally) in *Rubber Side Down, The Biker Poetry Anthology* edited by Jose Gouveia ("JoeGo"). All the poetry is about motorcycle riding, including hers, even though she's never ridden a motorcycle! The contributors include the late Allen Ginsberg and Thom Gunn, Diane Wakoski, and a host of writers from the motorcycle press, including Dr. Martin Jack Rosenblum (Harley-Davidson Historian Emeritus), Susan Buck, and K. Peddlar Bridges. It features photos by noted motorcycle photographer, Michael Lichter ("Choppers, Heavy Metal Art"). The anthology will be published by Archer Books. You can see the cover art and a description of *Rubber Side Down* at [www.archer-books.com/](http://www.archer-books.com/). Working with JoeGo has been a hoot, and Beth can't wait to get her hands on him—oops—her own copies. [www.bethgroundwater.com](http://www.bethgroundwater.com)

**Pam McCutcheon** just sold a YA urban fantasy to BelleBooks' new Bell Bridge line. The title is *Bite Me* and the book will come out in October 2008 under the name Parker Blue as (hopefully) the first book of a new Demon Underground series. It features Val, a part-demon vampire hunter, and Fang, her part-hellhound dog who registers a 10 on the snark meter.

Pam McCutcheon (writing as Pamela Luzier) also has a short story in the August 2008 *Enchantment Place* fantasy anthology, titled "Make-a-Mortal" from DAW. In it, werewolf Ted "don't call me Teddy" Braun owns Make-a-Mortal, where magical creatures of all kinds can build their own adorably cute humans. It's a real hit with pre-adolescent ogres, unicorns and dragons, but mortal protestors don't find it at all amusing. So, when someone enchants the stuffed creatures and turns cute into cut-throat, Ted must stop them before they ruin his business and harm any customers. See below for details about Laura Hayden and Deb Stover's contributions to the anthology.

Pam has another fantasy short story (writing as Pamela Luzier) coming up in *Witch High* from DAW in October 2008. In "Chemistry 101," fire witch Kenina Bailey is gearing up her courage to ask her chemistry lab partner to the

Sadie Hawkins dance—he's a total hottie, even for a water witch. But when a blaze breaks out in the lab, the water witches accuse her and call for her expulsion. How can she clear her name and find a date for the dance? Karen Fox and Debra Dixon also have short fantasy stories in it, but we have to wait for them to give us some gruesome details! OR, better yet, buy the book! [www.pammc.com](http://www.pammc.com)

**Deb Stover:** Her story "Witch Stitchery" is coming out in the August 2008 *Enchantment Place* fantasy anthology. Magical seamstress Zoe reserves her special stitches for only deserving patrons until a gang of pixie thugs kidnaps a young girl and holds her hostage. They demand Zoe create a special cloak for their queen in exchange for the girl's release. Zoe may have to deliver more than they bargained for to win the girl's freedom.

**Laura Hayden:** In "Steel Crazy" (Laura's contribution to the *Enchantment Place* anthology), swordmaker Peter Saxon must recover his stolen window display of Excalibur before its magic goes awry and destroys the mall.

In other news, Laura has completed her second book in the America the Beautiful series, called *Red White & Blue* which is slated to be published this upcoming Winter 2008 from Tyndale. The first book in the series, aptly entitled *America the Beautiful* is already available in a bookstore near you.

## 2009 PPWC Conference Sneak Peek—April 23-26, 2009

Conference co-directors Karen Fox and Pam McCutcheon are delighted to announce the winners of the slogan contest. Yes, we have two! We liked them so much that we combined them. Thanks to the creativity of Elizabeth Wrenn and Jo-Ann Costa, we have a wonderful tag line that shows our emphasis on craft for 2009:

### High ATTITUDE Writing: Cut to the Craft

As a sneak peek for the conference, we wanted to let you know we have some great folks coming, including Jeffrey Deaver, James N. Frey, Laura Resnick, Deborah LeBlanc, and Bill Brooks, plus other not-to-be-missed writers, editors, and agents. And, for the first time ever, we will have an added day—Thursday, April 23! We have something special planned for the day before the regular conference starts, so reserve that day on your calendar and watch for more information soon!



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

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# PPW Volunteer Retreat

By *Becky Clark Cornwell*

**M**onkey pee. Nipple rings. Alien abduction. The undead. Stuff you see at a carnival? 4-H projects? College essay topics? No. Well, maybe, but let's not think about that. Actually, those were some of the excerpts read at this year's PPW Volunteer Retreat held on Saturday, August 9th at Chris Mandeville's house.

We shared delicious food and drink throughout the day, indulged in massages given by Barbara Spiller, curled up in corners for solitary writing time, and attended a plethora of workshops.

Jené Hanna woke up some people with "Sun Salutations" yoga. The rest of us sat in comfy couches, drank our coffee, and said "Ouch" a lot.

In her "Monkey Business" class, Susan Goldstein Mitchell turned everyone into mad-lingual-scientists using some vocabulary tricks

and shuffling literary concepts with pop-culture elements.

We received editing advice, too. Chris Myers covered the pet peeves of editors and agents in her manuscript editing workshop, and Dawn Smit Miller walked participants through her "Rainbow Editing" software to help find writing patterns that bog down our writing.

Karen Fox and Pam McCutcheon explained the techniques of the "Plotting Board," and Bret Wright even won one!

Karen Albright Lin led workshops illuminating "High Concept" writing to develop your hook and "Nonfiction Book Proposals" from idea to pitch.

Managing multiple plotlines and characters isn't a problem anymore since Deb Courtney recommended tools for our writer's toolbox.

Beth Groundwater and Chris Mandeville gave tips and tricks to turn our characters into real people.

Lise Fuller's workshop was "Writing in the Danger Zone—Using Real Live Experiences to Enhance Your Story." Nuff said.

You know how writers notice everything? Ron Heimbecher talked about the "Writer as Observer," so we could use all those little details in our writing.

And if that wasn't a full day of fun and learning, at 3 p.m. we gathered in Chris' Wretched Pun Pub for libations, public readings, and yes, wretched puns. Those planning to participate in the American Icon competition got some practice reading, and the rest of us simply got feedback on our WIPs. Our lovely judges, Jodi Anderson and Bret Wright, accepted bribes of wine and Tootsie Rolls. The joke was on us, though, because we were all winners!

The annual retreat allows the Board to thank all the PPW volunteers for working so hard throughout the year. Don't tell the Board, but we'd probably volunteer anyway.

Monkey pee, nipple rings, alien abduction and the undead are clearly added bonuses.