

WRITERS BLOC NEWSLETTER

JULY 2008

President - Peggy Freeman
Secretary - Janie Hall
Publicity - Holli Harrison
Hospitality - open position

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Writers Bloc website: <http://writers-bloc-granbury.com/index.html>
July Refreshments: Barb D'Amario & Robert Taylor

WHEN & WHERE

July 28, 2008
Critique Session - 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.
General Meeting - None this month only
The Estates, 3rd Flr Game Room
Hwy 377 behind Chili's

THE PREZ SEZ

Our Newsletter Chairman, Joe Bonpensiero, is leaving us. He and his lovely wife, Caryl, are moving out of the area. We will miss him. Happy Trails, Joe and Caryl!
In his stead, Barbara D'Amario agreed to do the newsletter.

The recently formed Pecan Critique group is up and running. The quality of writing is good and the enthusiasm high. Consider forming your own critique group. The important thing about a critique session is to follow a few basic rules. Establish the number of pages a writer can read, accept critique without rancor, be specific about what you like or don't like about the writing. This isn't the time for "if you can't say something nice ...", but neither is it the time to be

caustic. A copy for each attendee is imperative if the writer really wants a complete critique. The minutiae of grammar and spelling don't require a recitation of each misspelled word or every omitted comma, but may be marked on the paper copy. Grammar and punctuation are important, but in a critique session the writer really wants to know if his idea has legs. Fine tuning comes later.

BRAGS

Holli Harrison submitted two query letters to Kensington Press and 1 to Avon. Additionally, she received three rejections.

Connie Leonard's agent referred her manuscript to another agent who more closely reflects her genre at Tindale House. Thus far, no rejection - Hurrah!

Peggy Freeman sold a story to Chicken Soup. "Liar, Liar" was submitted over a year ago. Listen up people, patience and perseverance pay - eventually. Peggy says there is a call-out at Chicken Soup,

meaning they are asking for stories. Go to www.chickensoup.com for more info.

WORKSHOP DERAILED

Billy Bob Hill facilitated a free-to-members workshop July 11th and 12th. Mr. Hill turned down an offered ride to the event in favor of riding the rails. Train travel sounds romantic, but this adventure slowly deteriorated into the “train ride from hell.”

Passenger trains are the bottom of the Amtrack food chain and are obliged to sit idle on a siding as freight trains merrily choo-choo to their destinations. Parked on a siding in the middle of nowhere, a fellow passenger missed his sister’s wedding. Sounds like a story to me.

Arriving several hours later than anticipated understandably threw Mr. Hill off his stride. The best thing about the Friday evening session was the pizza.

Dr. Hill, in true absentminded professor mode, seemed stunned that he was the only person on the agenda. In spite of the misunderstanding, he stepped up to the podium and presented an off-the-cuff three hour class.

An easily understood explanation of presenting numbers in writing elicited “ohs” and “ahs” from the audience. Rules include but are not limited to:

1. For numbers lower than 10, use words; for numbers of 10 or higher, use figures. Note, however, that monetary amounts and percentages are written as figures, not words, even when lower than 10.
2. Treat all numbers in a sentence or paragraph consistently. If all the

numbers are nine or lower, use words. If the largest number is 10 or higher, use figures for all the numbers. Note two special cases: In newspapers, magazines and other publications following Associated Press guidelines, single-digit numbers in a mixed series, do not convert to figures.

3. When a number is the first word of a sentence, spell it as a word. Better yet, rephrase.
4. Do not repeat a spelled-out number in figures.
5. Spell out round numbers, e.g. eighty-five thousand residents.
6. Spell out ordinal numbers, e.g. first through hundredth.
7. Spell out numbers if they can be expressed as one or two words.

Additionally, Professor Hill clarified the difference between historic and historical. In general, **historic** means ‘notable in history’ as in a Supreme Court decision, a battle or a great discovery. **Historical** means ‘relating to history or past events’: historical society or historical document.

On Saturday morning the group participated in several writing exercises and willing attendees “read their writes.” Some fine prose and poetry were produced under rigid time limits.

Mr. Hill did not return to Dallas by train.

AN EXERCISE/CHALLENGE

Using a single positive word, describe members of your family. Would you describe your life as a daring adventure? Why or why not? What could you change or add to your life to make it a daring adventure?

Name five things that make you smile.

SITE SEEING

Choose from hundreds of writing prompts to inspire you or ward off that pesky writer's block. Separated into categories and prompts to suit your mood. Go to: dragonwritingprompts.blogspot.com

Need a quote? This reference site for literature searches other databases to get info you need. Go to bartleby.com

OLD BUSINESS REVISITED

Officers for the coming year and the fate of **CHIPS** are subjects up for further discussion in August.

The position of Vice President does not have a volunteer. Consider alternative ways of providing programs at meetings without placing the burden on one person. Think in terms of sharing the duties.

CHIPS publication does not have a volunteer. Should we forego this member's anthology, publish every other year or entertain another option? Think about it for the August business meeting.

POEM OF THE MONTH

The Laughter of Women

Mary-Sherman Willis

From over the wall I could hear the
laughter of women
in a foreign tongue, in the sun-
rinsed air of the city.

They sat (so I thought) perfumed in
their hats and their silks,
in chairs on the grass amid flowers
glowing and swaying.

One spoke and the others rang like
bells, oh so witty,
like bells till the sound filled up the
garden and lifted
like bubbles spilling over the bricks
that enclosed them,
their happiness holding them, even
if just for the moment.

Although I did not understand a
word they were saying,
their sound surrounded me, fell on
my shoulders and hair,
and burst on my cheeks like kisses,
and continued to fall,
holding me there where I stood on
the sidewalk listening.

As I could not move, I had to hear
them grow silent,
and adjust myself to the clouds and
the cooling air.

The mumble of thunder rumbled out
of the wall
and the smacking of drops as the
rain fell everywhere.

WORD OF THE MONTH - Euchre

