

The Writers-Bloc

OCT 2007

JBVol 1 Issue 4

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

**October 22^h
Meeting Schedule
Critique at 5: PM
Bus, Mtg. 7PM**

**ANNUAL DUES
Will be Paid Tonight
OR ELSE!
\$18.00**

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

New Officers

PRESIDENT

Peggy P. Freeman

VICE PRESIDENT

Tony Blake

SECRETARY

Janie Hall

TREASURER

Violet Pollard

HOSPITALITY

Carol Cook

NEWSLETTER

Joe Bonpensiero

Sept Meeting Minutes

In the absence of Pres. Peggy Freeman, Vice-Pres. Toni Blake opened the meeting.

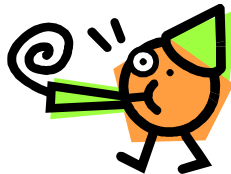
Since there was no old or new business to discuss, Toni and Barbara asked for any September BRAGS and we had a good response. They are listed in the BRAGS section for the month. Jan asked about the Writer's Market books. Some of our new members were not familiar with it so if any of you have a copy, bring it to the next meeting.

Toni and Barbara a **Quotes Quiz program**. **The object: match the quote to the source.** The winner was our visitor **Mary Beth Miller**, followed by **Jerri Jeske** and new member **Bruce London**.

Setting a date for the December meeting was discussed. The 10th or the 17th were considered and **Jan** will check on the meeting room availability and we will vote on it at the next meeting.

Reminder for the month was that our annual **\$18.00 DUES** should be paid next month. With no further business, Janie Hall adjourned the meeting.

TOOT THE BRAGS HORN



Minnie Brown's Chicken Soup story was published in the latest Chicken Soup for the Soul.

Toni Blake, won \$25 for a poem published in Ft. Worth Star Telegram and the Orange County Register. **Toni** also has a silk painting in the Rio Brazos juried art show now at the Langdon Center.

Holly Harrison sold a story to a web site and had another reviewed.

Jan Wright's one-woman photo display was a success and she got a nice sale out of the exhibit. Finally, **Connie Leonard** met with an agent submitted a proposal and was asked to send

manuscript to a publisher. All around, it was a very good Brag month.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

OCTOBER being the month for the occult and all things evil, I thought it appropriate to share on the use of (Blue words) or as George Carlin said the seven deadly swear words.. Actually, I personally ran across the problem recently while belting out a hell rising cursing #@\$%&*+ paragraph and was torn whether to use the F-word or not.

So, with a little research and a phone call to a fellow writer, I used it and it read well, or should I say was definitely appropriate within the genre.

Yesterday by chance, while reading through my current issue of Writers digest, I found a great article about the same problem. So I decided to share the following with you when deciding on **USING THE DIRTY WORD.41** Morgan Hunt, mystery writer says you can ask yourself three questions and get the answer: **"1. DOES IT WORK FOR THE READER?"** My mystery series is intended as an intelligent woman's beach read; my target readers are college-educated female Boomers. Intuition told me this demographic would tolerate occasional swearwords but would shun their constant or intense use. Research confirmed my take on my audience's tolerance of bleep-ables.

With my readers in mind, I decided my amateur sleuth would swirl azure tints into her verbal palette but would rarely paint the world blue. In *Fool on the Hill*, I questioned whether to have her quote a particular Humphrey Bogart quip without censoring his use of the f-word. I chose to allow it because it told the reader something specific about her character, which brings me to the next question.

2. DOES IT WORK FOR THE

**The Writer's Bloc meets each month at The Estates on Lake Granbury 916 E. Hwy 377
NL Suggestions to joebo1@charter.net**

CHARACTER? Are swearwords essential to help the character squirm, grow, or revel on paper? Are they not only an acceptable choice, but the best choice for a character and circumstance?

"When rewriting, I do scrutinize a character's word choices to make sure the language rings true to the situation and evokes the character's personality and mood," says bestselling novelist Lolly Winston. "If a character's swearing a lot, she may seem more harsh or bitter than I've intended. For example, I found myself toning down Elinor's language in *Happiness Sold Separately*, because I wanted her to be acerbic and funny, not bitter or hostile."

Writers sometimes kindle scenes of eroticism with swearwords. But books like Mary Gordon's *Spending* and Gabriel Garc'a Marquez' *Love in the Time of Cholera* grill characters to perfection with few obscene flames, even in the most lascivious moments. Inspired by such writers, I allow my protagonist to unleash her libido sans Anglo Saxon bluntness.

The sometimes-currish murder suspects in my mysteries present a greater challenge. We live in the real world; those who disrespect human life enough to kill aren't going to balk at a word rhyming with duck.

Certainly swearwords have been used by some of the greats to portray unsavory characters. In

Tom Wolfe's *I Am Charlotte Simmons*, there are the f-word conversations of frat boys and campus jocks. Its repetition simulates a dialect, which Wolfe calls "f*** patois." His use of swearwords is intentional; it lays bare the rebellion and arrogance of the privileged students who choose such coarse idiom.

But moral rot doesn't compel verbal raunch. Thomas Harris' Hannibal Lecter doesn't say, "I ate his liver with some f*****g beans." If Lecter spoke that way, we could perceive him as crude or inarticulate. Though Harris puts verbal venom in the mouths of other characters, the f-word he gives Lecter is "fava." We're forced to accept Lecter as a man of education and refinement, making his malignance all the more chilling.

If your readers will accept obscenities and your character could conceivably say them, your last determinant may be one of conscience.

3. DOES IT ABRIDGE MY INTEGRITY?

My spiritual beliefs influence my willingness to use swearwords. So does my concept of what it means to use my talent worthily. Some words I simply won't use. But I'll use most of the words on Carlin's notorious list when they fit the character and situation. Writing requires fine-tuning; paying due attention. A writer knows when words—obscene or otherwise—just plain work. Alan Russell, author of *The Fat Innkeeper*, which won the Critics' Choice Award and The Lefty (for humor in a mystery), agrees.

"In that book, when my protagonist encounters a beached whale at the oceanfront hotel where he works, he exclaims, Call me f*****g Ishmael!" I never second-guessed myself on that because it seemed absolutely right to me." If it's appropriate for your reader, and if the character and situation call for it, go ahead and swear.



HAIKU _____ *for those into it*
MATSUO BASHO 1644-1694

Old Pond _____
A frog leaps in _____
Water's sound.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

PEGGY TAKES THE PODIUM

Don't miss our 22nd Membership meeting. Our own Peggy Freeman will be presenting excerpts from her inspirational writing program she teaches in one of her classes. Although her class focuses on Inspirational stories for Children, the information will apply to any genre, so we all can learn something.

COLUMBIA AGAIN by Jan Wright

It's been a short year since the great tragic loss But the grief is still fresh as we add up the cost.

We lost a few tax dollars and Houston lost face. Detractors are saying the whole thing's a waste.

They won't insure astronauts, the risk is too thin. The thought of all that money loss is really quite grim.

But what about our space explorers, whose loss is just their life? It's a good thing we don't recruit insurance agents, They would probably send their wife!

If we all sent a penny for each tear we shed It might help the families to keep their children fed.

We call them all heroes, erect monuments that are new. What they really need is assurance we won't fail their loved ones too.

FELLOW MEMBERS:

This is your newsletter. If you have something to say or write, let me know and I'll put it in. If not, you'll get Joe's pot luck. So, enjoy! But, thanks to all who submitted

something. Ciao Bella.