

Resolve, Resolutions, and a Poem-a-day Challenge.....continued

For one, writing a poem a day for a month was new to me. Not every one of the thirty poems will evolve into a finished piece, but to have such a wealth of raw material to work with is significant. I have many scraps of paper and bytes of data in my "bits and pieces" files. I need to regularly use these scraps as the prompts they are—pull a "bit" and see where it takes me. The PAD challenge renewed my ability to see the possibilities inherent in those scraps.

Second, the work on the other writers' manuscripts gave me a positive psychic boost, and challenged my reading and editing skills. I loved the push to perform and make decisions quickly; the practice will benefit me in working on my full-length poetry manuscript work-in-progress.

Third, I can do. I can write, I can edit, I can revise, I can winnow and write again. I can set a goal and achieve it. I can be kind yet effective in my critique, I can question yet be supportive of others' work, I can push and prod yet pay attention to those times when a bit of stillness is necessary and right.

So, in this new year, this new decade, as my writers' group strives to further our mark in the world of words, and we as individual writers search for our niche, I resolve to be the writer I am and no one else can be, to write from my strength and not my weakness, to speak when required, to be silent when I should, to give when appropriate, to take when offered, to integrate my Christian walk more fully into my writing endeavors.

Write on—as one friend says—write on.

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A wonderful surprise: Robert selected 21 finalists in the chapbook challenge, and my chapbook entry, *Wild Grace*, was on his list! You can read his blog entry about the finalists here:

<http://blog.writersdigest.com/poeticasides/2010/01/29/>

[FinalistsFor2009NovemberPADChapbookChallenge.aspx](http://blog.writersdigest.com/poeticasides/2010/01/29/FinalistsFor2009NovemberPADChapbookChallenge.aspx).

On February 2, Robert announced the Chapbook Challenge winner: Nancy Posey, one of the writers whose work I looked for when reading the daily posts during November. This link is to the announcement, which also names the four honorable mentions and includes three of Nancy's poems:

<http://blog.writersdigest.com/poeticasides/2010/02/02/>

[NancyPoseyWinsThe2009NovemberPADChapbookChallenge.aspx](http://blog.writersdigest.com/poeticasides/2010/02/02/NancyPoseyWinsThe2009NovemberPADChapbookChallenge.aspx).

NOTE: Jeanne Rogers is the author of *Standing Witness: Devils Tower National Monument, A History*, published by the National Park Service. Her work is included in three Houghton Mifflin collections of women's writing, several literary chapbooks juried by national award-winning writers, and many regional publications. She is a two-term past-president of WyoPoets, past-president of Wyoming Writers, Inc., and past-president of Bearlodge Writers, a successful writing and critique group of which she has been a long-time member.

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH!!

WyoPoets' main activity for National Poetry Month is to sponsor an annual poetry Workshop - see the front page of this issue. Please report any other personal or group activities that you do to our President-elect, Abbie Taylor, for the report to NFSPS.

For Poetry Month you can:

Support organizations that sponsor poetry in Wyoming. Purchase a copy of a Wyoming publication that publishes poems or submit one of your own poems to them such as the WREN.

High Plains Register from LCCC will soon publish this year's anthology; **Voices From the High Country 2007** is available from Ella Cvancara in Casper, and **Serendipity Poets of Cheyenne** will be happy to sell you a copy of their chapbook for 2009 if you contact Ed Warsaw. Don't forget our own **WyoPoets Chapbooks are available - some at sale price!!**

HISTORY OF CHAPBOOKSCONTINUED

In the 1980s the personal computer opened the world of desktop publishing to those who wanted to self-publish poetry, essays, short stories, and manifestos. The writer had complete control over layout as well as text. Then in the 1990s the internet allowed the chapbook to be distributed online, either as a file or by ordering online.

Another interesting phenomenon came along with the adoption of the digital press in the 1970s. Printers were discarding their letterpresses and people who wanted to print chapbooks and other artfully crafted paper documents were buying up the letterpresses. Today, letterpresses are hard to come by and those who print with them can command high fees to print cards, invitations, and other high-end smaller documents.

The chapbook today comes in two flavors, those put out by established presses, and those put out by the poet or artist who has a specific, limited audience or community in mind. These are put out in limited runs and distributed by hand, often given away. Bookstores aren't interested in such limited runs for their shelves.

Eric mentioned that a poet named Bill Knott frequently puts his chapbooks on the shelves of bookstores without letting their managers know. He hopes people will just take them and enjoy them. So, given the economic woes of the publishing industry and the relative ease of creating chapbooks with personal computers and small copy shops, the chapbook is staging a comeback, especially for poets. More and more good poetry is appearing in chapbooks, allowing poets to share their work.

.....Arthur Elser

RESULTS OF THE MEMBERS ONLY CONTEST 2010

We send our grateful thanks to poet and teacher, Jane Wohl, who agreed to judge at the last moment when there were problems contacting our original judge.

The standard of the poems entered were very high, and we were proud as the contest chairpersons to have the pleasure of reading all of your entries. We felt that those standards reflect the time and effort members have given, in creating and attending our annual workshops.

Congratulations to our winners, and to all of you who entered, keep sending those poems out!

First Place..... Katie Smith, Gillette - *The Ranch Office*

Second Place.... Aaron Holst, Sheridan - *An Old Dirt Road To Birney, Montana*

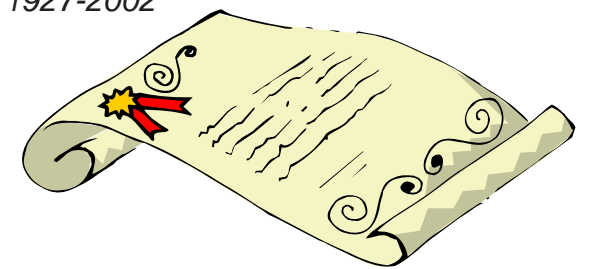
Third Place..... Art Elser, Denver, CO - *Remove this cup from me*

Honorable Mentions to:

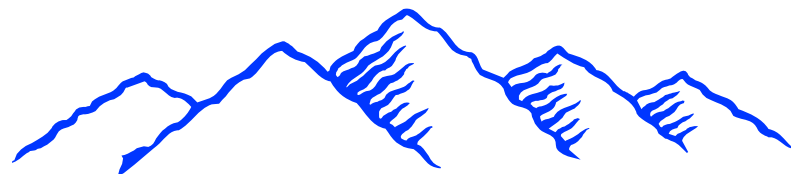
Art Elser - Denver, CO - *Brothers under the skull*

Joe Greig - Berrien Springs, MI - *.In Memory of Elmer Hoyt,
Pipeline Welder 1927-2002*

Patricia Buck, Casper- *Failed Promises*



FROM THE PEAK



WyoPoets' President, Myra Peak with her daughter Emily

Our Members Only Contest was both a creative and financial success. (See page 3) To all who entered, thank you. We can't have a contest without entries. To Jane Wohl, our judge, and Chris Valentine and Aaron Holst co-chairs for the contest, more thank you's.

At our workshop, April 24, we will have our business meeting during lunch. Abbie Taylor will become your new president (as current vice president) and I will become past president. Mary Hein, current past president, who has offered much wisdom and insight during my tenure, will now be able to write more poetry. I want to thank all of you for your efforts with writing, reading, and sharing poetry since we need that in order to be poets. I also thank you for your faith and reliance on me these past four years. They have been difficult for me emotionally with the loss of my husband and mother. My service as your president has taught me much and allowed me to grow in many ways. Thank you all for your contributions to WyoPoets and especially for the mutual support of all members which allows us, individually and as an organization, to thrive.

We have some officers and chairs who will be stepping down or out. Following are the open positions and further explanations:

Treasurer - Art Elser, Nominee

Pat Frolander has been our treasurer for two years. We thank her for her stellar service with managing our funds. She has developed some new cost summaries which should help us budget for various activities in the future.

Co-Chair Eugene V. Shea National Contest – We need a volunteer or two.

Eugene V. Shea has been the national contest chair for many years. He has decided that this fall will be his last contest to chair. He was the first recipient of our Excellence Awards and we named the contest for him. We must continue to thank him since we will be enjoying the results of his efforts for many years to come. We need a volunteer (or more) to assist Gene this fall so that person can learn more about the contest and then hopefully take it on in 2011 and continue for multiple years. Our vision is that the contest can have two co-chairs since there is some division of labor that can be assigned to two people.

Historian/Archivist – We need a volunteer or a group of volunteers

Midge Farmer has served in this capacity for many years including the last four. She has organized our history and incorporated current events (which soon become history) in order to show how WyoPoets and its members have served the world of poetry. We thank Midge for her diligence and her continual networking for us to provide her with materials about our achievements.

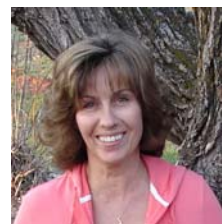
We will also be asking for volunteers with other activities so please contact me or one of the people listed on page 2 if you have questions or wish to volunteer or be nominated.

Pat Buck, our secretary, will be out of town for both our April workshop and Wyoming Writers, Inc. meeting in Cody in June. Cindy Bower has volunteered to take notes for our business meetings. Our workshop should be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with "experienced" friends and make new ones. Our motel and meeting rooms are in different establishments, and our workshop presenter, Sophia Puccini, will be encouraging our writing spirit for a day of poetry, poetry, poetry.

Here's hoping that Easter and other spring holidays lift your spirits, taxes don't bring you down too much, and that you are recovered by the time April 24, WORKSHOP DAY, rolls around.

RESOLVE, RESOLUTIONS, AND A POEM-A-DAY CHALLENGE

by Jeanne Rogers



Jeanne Rogers

A new year, a new decade—an optimal time for revising goals and dreams. The Bearlodge Writers (BLW) are no different in that respect, each of us individually and as a group making a renewed effort to more effectively pursue our writing goals, to find our niche in the world of words.

For five BLW members, the Writer's Digest November Poem-a-day (PAD) Chapbook Challenge 2009 (with its January deadline) proved to be a fantastic catalyst for producing new work. We wrote poems to the daily prompts provided by WD's blogger-poet Robert Lee Brewer, and at the end of November, we each had thirty new poems to edit.

Participants could post their poems on the blog, and four of the five of us did. We weren't used to sharing unedited work so raw and new, and certainly not used to sharing it with people we didn't know. But share we did, reaping the benefits of stepping outside our comfort zones.

Fascinating to me were the different responses generated by the daily prompts. That such diverse work could arise from the same few words reinforced why a writing voice and style are important to hone—to separate me from the crowd, and provide readers a chance to find the type of writing they enjoy.

I had given myself a personal challenge: my daily poems had to be new, and I couldn't read anyone else's work until after I posted my poem. For one prompt, I drew a total blank—absolutely no flash of inspiration, no nudge, nothing—and I resorted to my "bits and pieces" files for a line of *anything* I could craft into a poem.

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The final piece of the challenge involved culling and revising poems, then submitting a 10-20 page collection to the Writer's Digest blog by January 5, 2010. Three of us met during the early days of December to help each other craft our chapbooks.

For our first editing session, four of us planned to meet for several hours, time enough to get a handle on the material we each had and where we thought each collection might be headed. One writer had to bow out the morning of our get-together. Then, a late morning phone call changed our afternoon plan—my dad had taken my mom to our small hospital emergency room, and she was now being transported to the large area medical center 90 miles away. My dad and sister would pick me up.

We three writers worked as long as possible, and the two continued after I left. All of us were committed to the process of communal revision, however it transpired and manifested, so we set up another meeting, trying to finish our editing before the rush of holiday festivities.

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Three days before our second meeting, one husband had a heart attack—husband of the same writer who had to miss the first editing session. The same three of us met again, and made great progress on overall structure of two of the manuscripts and individual poems within those collections. Unfortunately, I had printed out the old, unedited version of my manuscript, which meant we could not work on my poems.

Big sigh. Apparently, too much on my mind (new family business concerns, health of parents, holiday company, holiday prep, youngest son in junior high and attendant activities, and so on) to focus on my writing. Nothing new in my world, of course, but distressing just the same. And yet . . . We persevered. By the January 5 deadline, four of us had submitted our chapbook collections, with the winner (and any honorable mentions) to be revealed February 2 on Robert Lee Brewer's Poetic Asides blog.

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There was no tangible reward for the winner of the chapbook challenge, aside from being mentioned on Writer's Digest blogs—it is not being published by Writer's Digest nor is there a monetary award—but for me, the experience was valuable in several ways.