

PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

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ARE YOU HUNGRY TONIGHT?

For any organization, and perhaps especially for the non-profit, fundraising poses a special challenge. PWLF is no different. Each year we face the same question. How to raise money to continue what we do without taxing (not in the literal sense) the mem-

bers of the organization?

A plan is in motion to hold a Trivia Night but ultimately, raising money remains a big challenge. Earlier this year, the Board found it necessary to raise the cost of membership this year to increase the influx of funds to support our

mission. However, this is not an option for every year. It is impractical and unfair to the membership. So the question remains, "how do we raise money?"

We think we have found a delicious answer for the moment – IMO'S!

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A WORD OR TWO FROM VICKI

I got a birthday card that said "Fifty is nifty". I know what "nifty" means but I looked it up anyway. The definition is: 1. attractive or stylish; smart. 2. fine; splendid. Huh. I've been using it as a synonym for "clever". I learned the word from context, hearing people use it, and have never looked it up before. Context alone doesn't always give a clear idea of what a word means. I've scolded people about using words that they didn't know the meaning of, and now I'm guilty of the same thing. It always seems easier to hold others to a high standard than it is to maintain that standard yourself.

Context is what I have to rely on for the meaning of the word "bemerded". Now, that one isn't in my dictionary, but in context (an article about the Frieze Art Fair), and knowing the French word "merde", I can guess at its meaning but I don't know how, or if, I'll find out for sure. It may be one of those words invented for a purpose, with limited usefulness, and thus never used enough to be taken into the dictionary. (How many "merde"-smeared objects would you talk about using elevated language?)

The same article used another word, "banal", which is kind of the opposite of "nifty", although the words are seldom

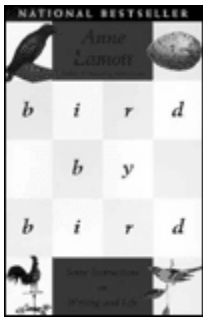
used in the same context. "Banal" means "not new or interesting; commonplace; trite." What makes them opposites is that things that are attractive or stylish, smart, or splendid -- nifty -- are NOT banal, not uninteresting, not trite.

Banal is used a lot by art critics to describe things they don't like, and is seldom used in any other setting. There are so many things around us that are banal that the word could be used much more often -- to describe our local politics, for example, or the typical and stereotypical attitudes of Chicagoans forced to

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DEAR SANTA BY CORRINE FRISCH

If you have writers on your holiday shopping list, or if you are looking for a book to relax with when things get holiday-crazy, here are a few suggestions. Thanks to the Barnes & Noble web site for "letting" me plagiarize this information.



Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott

A step-by-step guide on how to write and on how to manage the writer's life. From "Getting Started," with "Short Assignments," through "Shitty First Drafts," "Character," "Plot," "Dialogue," all the way from "False Starts" to "How Do You Know When You're Done?" Lamott encourages, instructs, and inspires. She discusses "Writer's Block," "Writing Groups," and "Publication." Bracingly honest, she is also one of the funniest people alive. Knopf. \$12.95

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King

In this master class on the craft of writing, Stephen King reveals the origins of his vocation and shares essential habits and rules that every writer can apply. A truly unique volume, it begins with a series of telling memories from youth and the struggling years leading up to publication of King's first novel. Offering read-

ers a fresh and often funny perspective on the formation of a writer's character, King lays out the tools of writer's craft and takes the reader through aspects of the writer's art and life, offering practical and inspiring advice on everything from plot and character to work habits and rejection. Simon & Schuster \$7.99

Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within by Natalie Goldberg

With insight, humor, and practicality, Natalie Goldberg inspires writers and would-be writers to take the leap into writing creatively and well. She offers suggestions, encouragement, and solid advice on many aspects of the writer's craft: on writing from "first thoughts" (keep your hand moving, don't cross out, just get it on paper), on listening (writing is ninety percent listening; the deeper you listen, the better you write), on using verbs (verbs provide the energy of the sentence), on overcoming doubts (doubt is torture; don't listen to it) - even on choosing a restaurant in which to write. Shambhala Publications, Inc. \$12.95

On Writing Well, 25th Anniversary: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction by William Zinsser

On Writing Well has been praised for its sound advice, its clarity and the warmth of its

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TRIVIAL MATTERS

Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield (PWLF) is currently collaborating with the UIS student organization Advocates for Academics for a trivia night. We are looking at later January or early February to hold this event.

A percentage of the proceeds will go to the Advocates for Academics and a percentage will go to PWLF.

Currently the plan is to hold the event on UIS campus. The cost per person will be ten dollars a person, with each group

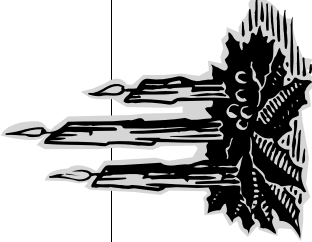
being 6 to 10 people.

We look forward to sharing this event with a student organization focused on improving academic performance in all.

Look for more information coming soon!

December 2004

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 Open Mic at IMO's 7-9 p.m.	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Open Mic and Featured Reader at IMO's—7-9 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20	21 PWLF Fundraiser at IMO's—dine-in, carry out or pick-up from 6 to 11 p.m.	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 Open Mic at IMO's 7-9 p.m.	30	31	

January 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 Open Mic at IMO's—7 to 9 p.m.	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 PWLF Board Meet- ing @ the Pitchford's 7 p.m.	18	19 Open Mic at IMO's—7 to 9 p.m.	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

DEAR SANTA

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style. It is a book for everybody who wants to learn how to write or who needs to do some writing to get through the day, as almost everybody does in the age of e-mail and the Internet. Whether you want to write about people or places, science and technology, business, sports, the arts or about yourself in the increasingly popular memoir genre, *On Writing Well* offers you fundamental principles as well as the insights of a distinguished writer and teacher. More than a million copies

sold. Harper
Collins \$14.00

Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out by Ralph Fletcher

For the kids (or kids at heart on your list). Throw out the formidable rhythm and rhyme schemes: Ralph Fletcher's *Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out* laughs in the face of formality. Organized into two sections "Lighting the Spark" and "Nurturing the Flame" and peppered with interviews with



published poets, Fletcher's accessible volume teaches kids to write poetry from the heart. Harper Collins \$4.99

The Writing Life by Annie Dillard

With color, irony and sensitivity, Pulitzer prizewinner Annie Dillard illuminates the dedication, absurdity, and daring that is the writer's life. As it probes and exposes, examines and analyzes, *The Writing Life* offers deeper insight into one of the most mysterious of professions. Harper Collins \$11.00

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

Christmas lists, New Year's resolutions, cooking, cleaning, shopping, and finding the time to spend with family – who can figure out how to get it all done, and stay on track?! I find myself with moments when I want to say "All I want for Christmas is a plan that tells me what to do and how to do it!" Perhaps even with some hints on how

I will know if I have gotten done what I wanted to get done.

While it may not happen for me, it may happen for PWLF. David Pitchford, president of PWLF, took a course in *Managing the Non-Profit Organization* this semester. And other than giving him a headache on occasion, it gave him the inspira-

tion to re-energize the effort to create a strategic plan for PWLF.

If you are interested in being a part of this effort, please email him at prez@pwlf.com. A meeting will be scheduled for shortly after the 1st of the year to get organized and develop a plan for PWLF.

We would love to have your constructive input!

ARE YOU HUNGRY TONIGHT?

Tuesday, December 21st, we invite everyone – friends, family, and complete strangers – to dine at IMO's. Dine-in, carry-out or have your meal delivered – whatever is easiest for you. PWLF will

receive 10% from sales made between 6 and 11:00 p.m.

This opportunity, initiated by our friends at IMO's, is a chance to take a break from holiday shopping and enjoy a great meal, maybe even visit

with some friends you are sure to find at IMO's that evening. The Board will be there. We hope to see you there too!



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: submissions@pwlf.com

PWLF

To increase awareness and appreciation of Literary Arts

If you are interested in contributing to the PenChant, please contact any of the PWLF Board members.

It through the contributions and energy of all that we are successful.



Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield

Calendar of Events

Dec. 1st—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. open Mic at IMO's

Dec. 15th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Featured Reading by *Siobhan* at IMO's

Dec. 21st—6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

PWLF Fundraiser Evening at IMO's

Dine-In, Carry-out, or Delivery

Dec. 29th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m.—Open Mic at Sunsup Koffee Kafe hosted by Jill Manning



KUDOS

Congratulations to John Knoepfle for a wonderful article in the Sunday, 11/28 edition of the SJ-R. If you have the chance, checkout the feature on "Sangamon's Laureate" (as John was named by PWLF).

A WORD OR TWO FROM VICKI

(Continued from page 1)

come to the capital city: "banal proposals for ordinances that would effectively change nothing", "the banal comparisons of Springfield and Chicago, which echo those of tourists who complain that the place they have gone to isn't like home."

There are related words, banality, banalize, and banalization. Banality, a noun, means "commonplaceness, or triteness, or a banal statement, idea or remark." Banalize means "to make banal," or "to reduce something to commonplace or ordinary"; banalization is the noun form.

Not everything old is

"banal". Some old things, like the Old State Capital, are attractive and splendid. Not everything attractive and stylish, or smart or splendid (nifty) is new, and not everything new is nifty.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if nifty things were commonplace! Would we get tired of them?

Note for the person who expressed concern for truth in advertising: I asked the editor to be sure to title my articles "a word or two from Vicki". The two words are "nifty" and "banal". There are 506 words in this article and they relate to the words nifty and banal.