

Workshop offers advice to writing hopefuls

By SUSAN TAUBER

"Force yourself to be constantly stimulated. Ninety per cent of non-fiction work isn't done at your typewriter. It's the seeing, feeling, touching and constant stimulation you get that helps you write."

"These were words of wisdom Diane Pawlowski gave to the 30 people attending her workshop Saturday Oct. 21, at the 17th Annual Craftsmanship Creative Writing Conference at Oakland University.

Though Ms. Pawlowski was talking about the theme of her workshop, only one of the 26 workshops conducted throughout the day, she was indirectly making a reference to why 400 people gave up a rainy Saturday and spent money to spend the day inside a college building.

They came to be stimulated by the advice given in the various workshops and main speeches by author A. Scott Berg and Carole Baron, vice president and editor in chief of Pocketbooks.

"It's our efforts to reach out and help talented writers," said Jean Madern Pitrone, in her welcoming speech. "It's our hope that you get advice and inspiration from this conference. Our endeavor is to share the expertise of the speakers with you."

Mrs. Pitrone gave the welcome as president of Detroit Women Writers, the group which co-sponsored the conference with Conference Department, Oakland University.

WITH TOPICS such as "How to Write How-To Books," "Writing about 'Real' People," "The Art of Interviewing," "Selling Your Short Story," and Audio-Visual Writing: A Hungry Market," the information was there.

It was up to the conferences to attend the workshops and grab what help they needed.

In the workshop "Pennies in the Dust" by Ms. Pawlowski, visitors were told not to moon about the blank sheet of paper in their typewriter, but to moon about the stories they didn't write.

"Moon about the evenings we didn't spend studying books, moon about the magazines that we didn't read to find out what editors are buying," Ms. Pawlowski said.

Writers are on call 24 hours a day, just like doctors. We have to be continuously aware of what's going on."

Among her words of advice, Ms. Pawlowski told people lacking ideas to spend time studying speakers schedules around Detroit for potential stories, to listen to and read public service announcements for ideas and to check out school board meetings for a plea for funds.

"There are stories we are all sitting on that we don't see. These are the ones that are so obvious. And when we do see them, they are some of the best we've ever written," said the blind writer and teacher for Writer's Digest School.

AFTER LEARNING how to get story ideas, Sheila Roberts in her workshop, "Structuring the Short Story," told potential published writers how to turn non-fiction into fiction stories.

The assistant-professor of English at Michigan State University discussed taking a personal experience with "real truth" and converting it into a story with "fictional truth" by doing this, the writer is entering his own experience into a wider human one, she said.

Then in Julia Grice's workshop, "Planning the Novel," the aspiring author learn practical tips and working techniques for doing research, preparing the synopsis and plotting the novel.

Ms. Grice, author of the romantic

historical novel "Lovefire," told she does the final typing of her manuscripts.

"I can't hire a typist because the mistakes in my script leap out to me from the clean paper. A whole paragraph will leap out and I'll know I have to take it out," she said.

Ms. Grice also advised writers that once they mail their manuscript off to their agent, to start immediately on another book.

"You can't sit around and wait. You can wait two years until that manuscript is done. I wrote six books before 'Lovefire' was published," said the Ann Arbor resident.

AFTER HAVING a chance to attend many more workshops, mingle with authors, publishers, dramatists, the conference listened to Ms. Baron, formerly of Detroit, talk about the changes in the pocket book market.

"The whole paperback business is looking for books and we're looking for originals," said the Editor-in-Chief of

Pocketbooks publishers. "Certain books don't need to come out in hardback the first time. Paperback books are no longer reflecting the hardback book market."

But trying to get this across the authors is still a challenge for Ms. Baron, whose parents are Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel Coim of Southfield.

As she was discussing the paperback market, a woman approached her and said she knew she would have to settle for being published in paperback because her "book isn't good enough for hardback."

"You don't have to settle for paperback," was Ms. Baron's gentle reply. "The stigma of being in paperback is diminishing."

"THE BEST advice I have for writers trying to get published is to get any agent. We don't pay a lot of attention to unsolicited manuscripts. If we get a manuscript from an agent, at least we know it's been screened already."

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"Writers are on call 24 hours a day," said Diane Pawlowski. (Photo by Randy Borst)

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In the adjusted gross income range of \$10,000 to \$50,000, fewer than three per cent of personal income tax returns were audited last year, the IRS reports. Chances of an audit increased sharply if your adjusted gross was more than \$50,000, or if you took larger-than-average deductions, whatever your bracket.

\$2 Bills Unpopular

Pragmatism and superstition seem to be working against acceptance of the new \$2 bill, with more than half of the \$227 million dollars worth printed still undistributed. Businesses, asked by the Treasury Department to push the bill, say they have no cash register compartment for the new bill, and that many consumers consider the bill unlucky.

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