

## Critiquing Presentations at PINAWOR

The Pinellas Authors and Writers Organization was formed more than twenty years ago.

- We average 100 dues paying members. About twenty to thirty of us meet every Saturday morning for 2.5 hours to listen to a 5 to 7 minute reading of the unpublished works of our members.
- Each of these presentations is followed by a critiquing session by members.
- The writings we critique include essays, poems, biographies, short stories, children's books, and novels. Once a month we listen to and critique several 20 minute readings of screenplays and play scripts.

With the exception of an occasional short poem, we're not able to comment on spelling and punctuation because we don't have copies of the work to read ourselves. We also recognize that the speaking skill of the presenter can influence the critiquing.

### **Our critiques fall into two broad categories:**

- Comments on the writing
- Grammatical errors in the writing

### **Here are some of the comments frequently made about the writing:**

- There is no conflict in your story.
- I hear the author speaking.
- I want to hear more about ...
- Make sure your reader knows who is speaking.
- One of your characters is not needed.
- You are doing too much telling instead of showing me what is happening.
- Something took me out of the story.
- Start the story at a different point.
- That scene is not advancing the story.
- You are using the passive voice. Switch to the active voice.
- The dialogue is inappropriate for that time or situation.
- Those scenes are out of sequence.
- You are using too many needless words. Tighten up your writing.
- Who is your audience?
- You need a hook. There's nothing to grab you reader.
- You need more dialogue
- You're creating a story rather than telling one.
- You're telling more than one story.
- Your dialogue sounds like "talking heads."
- One or more of your characters is not credible.
- Your characters all sound alike and they sound like you.

- Your narrator is talking at the wrong age level for your audience.
- Your point of view keeps changing.
- Your words are too technical for your stated audience.
- You're using the same word too many times.
- You put the same words too close together.
- You are using too many adverbs and adjectives.
- You're using a cliché
- Try not to use so many fancy words.
- The character's conversation keeps changing tense.
- Wrong use of a word.
- It's time to kill one of your babies.

One of the advantages of a large critiquing group, like those you find in writer's clubs, is that individual members have favorite critiquing subjects and are listening for them.