

## PAPER PLANES 2010 – Let Your Words Take Flight!

### Notes from Question-and-Answer Session

#### Part 1 – Working with one word titles

The first part of writing a good short story is to come up with a story idea.

Consider the following titles on the board:

GRAVITY / FACES / JUNK

Brainstorm story ideas for the title. Think of as many different meanings of the word as possible and not just the conventional meaning. Consider word form as well, can it be thought of as a verb instead of a noun, adjective instead of verb, etc. Also, you there be a metaphorical meaning instead of a literal one?

What can you do if you are given a title they don't know the meaning of. Possible ideas – title is proper noun to refer to character name, name of place or name of vehicle (ship/car/etc), title is a password to access something important, title is the solution to a puzzle.

During the contest, reserve 10-15 minutes brainstorming for story ideas and then selecting which one you would like to eventually write on.

#### Part 2 – Elements of a short story

Characters:

The next part is transforming that idea into an actual written story.

How does one create well-developed characters?

- Pick a few adjectives for each character before you start writing and in the story, make sure they stay consistent to those character traits.
- Include dialogue as well as character thoughts and emotions

Plot:

How does one create a good plot structure?

It's a short story, not a movie. Here's the conventional short story format:

Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

A short story needs only one interesting climax. It should remain focused. Try to keep the time frame short and tight.

Can you stray from conventional format? Yes!

- Start at climax, move to exposition then give resolution.
- Start at resolution then move to exposition and climax.

Tone:

Pick a tone for your story and try to maintain it throughout. This keeps the story tight and creates impact.

What are some possible tones?

- humorous
- poignant / sad
- suspenseful
- scary
- fantastical
- regretful