

BWA Meeting 3/29/11

Mike Befeler – Geezer Lit.

Author of *Retirement Homes Are Murder* and *Living With Your Kids Is Murder*

Themes:

Aging and other minor inconveniences

Short term memory loss

POW – “Persons of Wisdom”

Golden West Girls – Golden West Retirement Homes prove that old people are still active and doing things – don’t discount them.

Downsides to aging: slowing down, needing naps, medical attention

Upsides: naps, wisdom, experience, cunning.

The elders understand the migration of the beasts and can lead their tribes to the hunt, they leave the running around and killing to the young bucks.

Majority of folk artists got their start after the age of 60 – the mid-life revelation Ah-ha!

In 2001 at the age of 56 Mike sat back and thought about what he had enjoyed doing in his life.

Model airplanes, writing and painting.

What could he retire in to?

Fiction writing worked. He worked his day job 3 days a week and wrote 2 days a week.

After age 55 you can take any course at CU for free with the professors permission, so he took writing.

His goals –

Write for himself

Write for his family

Get published.

112 submissions later – he got his first short story published!

2005 he bridged into novels.

Entered a Rocky Mountain Fiction Writer’s Contest, failed but pitched to 2 agents and 2 editors at the conference.

One editor became his publisher and in 2007 his first novel was published!

Liberation! Retired from a 39 year career.

Advice on aging:

1. Do it! (think of the alternative!)
2. Bring friends!
3. Stay involved, volunteer, be active.
4. Too old to take advice, still young enough to give it!
5. Exercise – Keep active and fit. Find something you love and enjoy doing, and then do it!
6. Take naps! “consciousness – that confusing time between naps”

7. Set priorities: You have 10 points and 4 categories –
  - Activities
  - Relationships
  - Ideas
  - Things (material things)

Mike gives 4 points to activities, 3 to relationships, 3 to ideas and none to things.

Aging population is the fastest growing segment in the USA

79 million people will be over 80 by the year 2030

In 1950 there were 12 working people for every 1 on social security, by 2050 there will only be 4 workers for every retiree.

Other good Geezer Lit:

Glady Gold character, Rita Laiken's books, "Getting old is the best revenge"

Parnell Hull, Puzzle Lady mysteries – Gun toting Granny.

Short term memory loss:

By 85 half of us will have short term memory loss. That means we'll all have 3-4 chances to make a good first impression!

Romance – main character has romance with a young 70 year old gal.

Different living arrangements:

Retirement communities

Living with children

Nursing Homes, etc.

Where do the ideas come from?

Step dad had short term memory loss

Lived on a strict schedule

Would forget his glasses and have his wife read menus – but she had vision trouble and had to fake it too.

Mike's dad loved puns, so does his main character.

Also hates taking pills, that's from Mike.

The rest is just what the character asked for.

How Mike writes:

Starts with a basic outline and then lets it meander.

"The Artists Way" by Julia Cameron

- Ideas to improve creativity

- Morning pages – first thing every morning, write 3 creative pages

Mike's way – review manuscript the night before, then first thing in the morning write 3 pages by hand. Type them in that evening getting about 2 typed pages, revising as he goes. 150 days equals a 300 page novel.

Editing: Get a team, critique group, some group of people who you trust and who will be honest.

Reviews – don't worry about them. Trust your publisher, editor, sales, and fans.

You know you're getting old when...

You spend more time reading the obituaries than the front page.

You spend more time trimming your ear and nose hair than your head hair.

You tell the same story over and over and your friends don't notice.

The highlight of your day is a nap.

The small print really is small.

The yard and garden keep getting bigger.

You have all the answers, but you don't need to prove it.

Visuals: Cut faces out of magazines to give yourself a face to work with, write about/to

Evolve – when you're writing a series plan ahead. Know if your character will age, how much?

Don't kill off characters, you might want them later. Plan your series or you'll trap yourself later.

Mike sold his first 2 books without an agent to 5 Star Publishing with a focus on the library market.

Get professional editing, either through your publisher or on your own.

Research – Attended citizen police academy, gained insight into law enforcement.

Volunteered in role playing with the police in training, got to try on his criminal side.

RMFW online critique group for mystery writers is a great group.

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers in Denver

Pikes Peak writers in Colorado Springs

Northern Colorado Writers in Fort Collins

All have great conferences where you can meet with other writers, editors, publishers, agents and aspirants.

E-books are the fastest growing segment in publishing esp. in Romance and Mystery genres.





