

Finding Creativity and Connection at Camp

When my kids were younger, camps were a part of every summer. Sports camps, scout camps, church camps, outdoor camps. Whatever interest the kids had, there was a camp for it, and we took advantage of the summer to support their interests. The same should be true for adults. Invest in yourself by attending a camp (retreat, seminar, or whatever name you want to give it.)



That's what I was doing in June when I crafted and sent out the June newsletter.

Remember this picture? I took it before one of the sessions at the camp.

Besides getting photo ops, what else goes on at a writer's summer camp?

Cabins or Tents?

Neither! Unlike summer camp for kids, this writing camp is held at the Sienna Retreat Center in Racine, WI. Each writer is assigned an individual room, complete with its own bathroom. I transformed the space into my own writing area for the week. This is where I spent a lot of time--writing!



Arts and Crafts

Well, sort of. Crafting in the form of writing, of course. The writers at this particular camp can select one of 3 options: book camp, book coach, or writing retreat. For book camp, groups of students attend classes with writing exercises and exchange pages of their novels to get feedback. For the book coach option, the writers are assigned a book coach who works closely with them on their manuscript to get it ready for submission.

The writing retreat option, the one I was in, allows writers the opportunity to have lots of focused writing time, with some afternoon skills sessions, and a daily check-in with our mentor: S.J. Rozan.

Story Telling

Lots! We may not sit around the campfire with a flashlight under our chin telling scary stories, but we share our writing. Writers have multiple opportunities to read their responses to in-class writing prompts, submit a book camp experience story that is read to the entire camp, and to read during the open mic events. Reading aloud in front of a group is an essential skill that writers need to be comfortable with.



After reading the entries for the book camp experience story, a panel of 4 agents comment on query letters which are read out loud.

Making Friends

Absolutely the best part! I talked with many other writers about their writing journeys. How they plan to publish their work, plan to market their work, and what they are currently working on. Being around other writers is uplifting. They understand the frustration of writing. And some of them have even experienced the triumph of publishing success, giving hope to those of us who have yet to get that far.

By the end of camp, every writer has the name of other writers to reach out to for support and, usually, a stack of new books.

If you're ready to work on your own novel, visit the official [Novel Bookcamp](#) site.

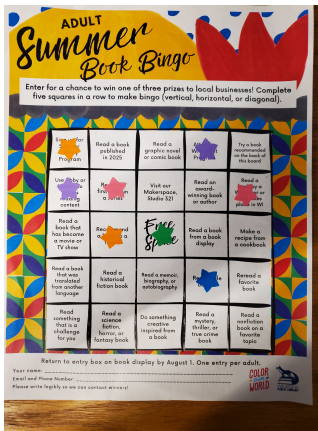


Taking time to read outside.
Reading is a critical part of a
writer's job.



Scene from the beach access at
the Siena Retreat Center.

Beyond the Books



Libraries have so many fun things to do! The Waukesha Public Library has a slew of activities for people of all ages. For adults the events include a tie dye event, trivia at a nearby microbrewery, educational programs, and bingo. That's my bingo card.

Always wanting to expand my skills, I attended the Connect & Learn: Library Apps. I know that I was advocating taking it slowly this summer and enjoying some downtime, but this class was casual, friendly, and hands-on. And it helped me check some boxes off by library bingo sheet. The purple stars were for this event.

Book Review

Murder Most Sweet by Laura Jensen Walker

The quiet town of Lake Potawatomi, Wisconsin is abuzz when acclaimed writer, Tavish Bentley, comes to town for a book event. Unfortunately, his visit brings with it two murders. Both victims have a connection to the famous author who has taken a liking to hometown author, Teddie St. John. Unfortunately for Teddie, her scarves were used to strangle both victims and her beloved American Eskimo canine, Gracie was poisoned. Teddie whips up batches of baked goods to examine the situation. Will it be enough to solve the murders, or will she be next?

I was flipping the pages of this fun book, eager to see what happens next. Teddie has strength and vulnerability at the same, and the story takes place in southeastern Wisconsin. Racine Kringles anyone?

If you enjoy stress baking (or eating) and a fun read, grab your copy of *Murder Most Sweet* today. You'll enjoy the escape.

Thanks for reading!

You received this email because you signed up on my website to get updates on my writing journey and news about my publications.

I promise to be brief and respect your time. Come join me on this adventure!

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Previous versions of the newsletter are available on traceylangenbach.com.

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