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**NATIONAL NOVEL WRITING MONTH:
THE LARGEST WRITING CONTEST IN THE WORLD!**

No Judges. No Prizes. Winning Manuscripts Deleted. Appeal Remains a Mystery.

Chicago, IL --- www.NaNoWriMo.org / www.ChiWriMo.org --- September, 2009 --- There are some who say writing a novel takes awesome talent, strong language skills, academic training, and years of dedication.

Not true. All it really takes is a deadline – a very, very tight deadline – and a whole lot of coffee.

Welcome to **National Novel Writing Month**: a nonprofit literary crusade that encourages aspiring novelists all over the world to write a 50,000-word novel in a month. At midnight on Nov. 1, **150,000 writers from over 90 countries** – poised over laptops and pads of paper, fingers itching and minds racing with plots and characters – will begin a furious adventure in fiction. By 11:59 PM on Nov. 30, tens of thousands of them will be novelists. Locally in Chicago, over 2,300 people registered for the event last year, nearly 600 of those actively participated, and 239 (40% of those active writers) crossed the 50,000 word finish line.

NaNoWriMo is the largest writing contest in the world. In 2008, over 120,000 people took part in the free challenge. And while the event stresses fun and creative exploration over publication, more than 30 NaNoWriMo novelists have had their NaNo-novels published, **including Chicago native Sarah Gruen, whose New York Times #1 Best Seller, *Water for Elephants* began as a NaNoWriMo novel.**

Around 18% of NaNoWriMo participants "win" every year by writing 50,000 words and validating their novels on the organization's website before midnight on Nov 30. Winners receive no prizes, and no one at NaNoWriMo ever reads the manuscripts submitted.

So if not for fame or fortune, why do people do it?

"The 50,000-word challenge has a wonderful way of opening up your imagination and unleashing creative potential like nothing else," says NaNoWriMo Founder and Program Director (and ten-time NaNoWriMo winner) Chris Baty. "When you write for quantity instead of quality, you end up getting both. Also, it's a great excuse for not doing any dishes for a month."

If you would like more information about National Novel Writing Month, or would like to talk to participants from NaNoWriMo chapter in Chicago, please visit our website at www.NaNoWriMo.org, or contact Tim Peacock at 773-968-1321 / ml-tim@chiwrimo.org / www.ChiWriMo.org.