

Write... Write as Fast as You Can!

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With less than a 25% chance of “winning,” tens of thousands of fiction writers across the globe of all ages make the annual pledge each November to write 50,000 words in 30 days under an umbrella organization called NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month.) And among the regular “WriMos,” Maryland students attempt each November to balance their hobby with school and work.

NaNoWriMo started in 1999 around San Francisco, Calif. as a writing exercise between friends. Now, thanks to its widespread popularity in part due to the website at nanowrimo.com, friends across the world can challenge each other to complete their goal.

Unfortunately, though a handful of these people come from the university, they have not been able to network.

“I only have a friend at [John’s] Hopkins that I’m writing with but that’s really all,” said Illana Greenberg, a sophomore Theatre major, and in her second year of NaNo writing as well. “A friend of mine who usually edits my stuff is helping me to write.” Though having belonged to Facebook and the blogging site Livejournal, NaNoWriMo groups in the past, Greenberg said she no longer uses them.

Diana Taylor, a freshman, is trying NaNo for the very first time this year after hearing about it through one of her “Wikipedia explorations.”

Though she posted a message on the official NaNoWriMo forums under the title “Prince George’s County Writers?” she has been unable to find any other university participants.

“A couple of my friends on campus have expressed interest in NaNo, but for whatever reason or another are not partici-

pating,” she said. “If I did know of anyone else, I would love to do some writing together.”

Having to write roughly 1,667 words per day in order to get to 50,000 by Nov. 30, the pressure is already high.

“I’m basically winging it,” Greenberg said. “I tend to sit down and turn off everything and write for an hour in order to get to a thousand words. The thing is when writing with deadline like this at least for me, harder to reach little deadlines.” She did not finish her novel last year and that her friend gave up due to “time constraints.”

“Well I set myself a 2,000 a day quota, but I’ve been neglecting it,” Taylor admitted. “Mostly I think it’s going to end up getting written much like my papers for class—very quickly and at the last minute.”

But despite the lack of “real life” community, and the high probability of failure, both participants are planning to do this again next year.

“I would definitely do it again,” Taylor agreed, citing her novel as a science fiction piece set in the year 2045. “The high-pressure environment seems to be conducive to getting an actual product out of me. Besides, we all need a little stress in our lives, right?”

Perhaps by next year, new Maryland writers will agree with her.



Image courtesy of NaNoWriMo
Students like these performed in the NaNoWriMo writing event.