

The Writers Network News, May 2015

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The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

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Follow my Write In Style creative-writing blog at <http://bobbiechristmas.blogspot.com/>

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Meet Fellow Writers

Local meeting planned for May! Do you live in or visit metro Atlanta? Sign up for local meeting notices today! Send your name and e-mail address to [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com).

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Note: I have shortened some links in this newsletter with the help of [www.tinyurl.com](http://www.tinyurl.com), a free service that takes long web addresses and converts them to short ones.

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Writer's Quote of the Month

"[Fiction writers] come along with this beautiful, extraordinary thing they've just created and they don't want an atom of it changed, and it cries out to be cut here and to be helped along here and to be clarified there. But once you get their confidence, you can sometimes soften them by taking just a little out here and there, and if they're not too traumatized by the experience they go, 'Wow, look at that--it's better.' They've begun to see how hard writing is." - Roger Angell, fiction editor for The New Yorker for more than fifty years

Roger Angell (born September 19, 1920) has won awards for his own writing. An essayist, he writes often about sports, especially baseball, and is a regular contributor to The New Yorker.

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One: From the editor's desk: Expanding My Horizons

Dear Fellow Writers:

My niece is the health coordinator at the Tallahassee Senior Center, a large, lively organization that occupies a handsome old armory building in Tallahassee. Year round the center offers classes and activities for seniors, from art classes to pickle ball, and from to trips to hot lunches. The center also sponsors an annual lifelong learning event called L3X that offers close to a hundred different seminars and events, all in the space of a week.

Five years ago, my niece told her mother, my sister, about the event, but my sister had other plans for that week. From the next year on, though, my sister and I have driven to Florida to participate. In advance we choose from classes and events so diverse that we pick at least three daytime events a day, and sometimes a few evening events, as well. The cost is minimal, considering all that we learn, and we stay free at my niece's house.

One year, for example, we were transported to a wildlife nature center, where a park ranger taught us about the habits of local bears, snakes, and other wildlife in the area. Another time we went to a center that protected alligators, and a well-educated guide taught us all about alligators and even brought his own small, docile alligator, named Fluffy, for us to touch and examine. Sis and I have taken classes that ranged from the history of harmonics to the history of stained glass. We've heard lectures on the progression of folk music and participated in art therapy. We've toured the inner workings of museums, labs, and schools. We've learned to play ukuleles, drums, and even a massive Indonesian instrument called a gamelan.

This year we took classes in songwriting, storytelling, and acting. We attended performances featuring piano players, country and bluegrass music, and a big band. We toured an austere cottage on a huge, peaceful estate that came about because a professor bought a piece of property with a giant live oak tree that she wanted to protect. We heard lectures on a variety of subjects, as well. At the end of the week we rode back to Atlanta a little tired, but extremely inspired to learn even more about some of the subjects that we touched on.

If you live anywhere near Tallahassee, Florida, and are a senior, I strongly suggest you check into the L3X program at the Tallahassee Senior Center. It could be the week that changes your life. I don't know when the next one will take place, but get your name on the mailing list, and you'll be kept informed.

Writers are sponges. We absorb experiences, sayings, events, people, and things that stimulate us. Everything we do, see, taste, feel, and think becomes material for future writing.

What will you do this month to stimulate your imagination and expand your horizons?

Yours in writing,  
Bobbie Christmas (Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or bzebra@aol.com )  
Author of Write In Style, owner of Zebra Communications, director of The Writers Network, and coordinator of the Florida Writers Association Editors Helping Writers service.

If someone forwarded this newsletter to you, please sign up to get your own copy. Simply go to [www.zebraeditor.com](http://www.zebraeditor.com), click on Free Newsletter, and follow the prompts. I never share your address or send out spam.  
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Two: Ask the Book Doctor about Nonfiction Book Proposals

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: I want to sell my nonfiction book to a specific publisher that requires a proposal. How much is enough to send in a proposal?

A: How much is enough? It depends on what the publisher's guidelines specify. If the publisher does not list guidelines, then follow the traditional route for preparing a book proposal. Because entire books are written on how to write a book proposal, one short note from me won't be enough. That said, I found a blog that has a terse report, as well as recommendations for books on the subject of book proposals. See <http://www.rachellegardner.com/2011/07/how-to-write-a-book-proposal/>

Q: I understand the importance of writing a sound book proposal for a nonfiction book. Have I outlined the proposal correctly? Here are the sections I have put in my proposal: Overview, Fascinating Journey, The Author & Associates, Marketing, Book Contents, Chapter Summaries, Sample Chapter, and Attachments.

A: Without seeing the actual report, I can't comment in full. I can, however, say that book proposals have specific elements, usually the following: Overview, Resources Needed to Complete the Book (unless it is already completed), Competition, Marketing, About the Author(s), Chapter-by-Chapter Outline, and Sample Chapters.

The list you sent leaves me with many questions. How does the section called Fascinating Journey fit into the requirements of a book proposal? Publishers won't know what it means. Use a heading that reflects the information publishers and agents require. Also, instead of The Author & Associates, title that section About the Authors, to be sure agents and publishers know the contents. Markets, marketing, and the competition can also be part of the section called Overview. Finally, if I were an agent or publisher, I would have no idea of what the attachments were and would have no impetus for opening them. Instead I may fear opening any attachment I did not request. Avoid attachments and instead put all the information in the body of the e-mail. If you feel the need to include attachments, however, I suggest using a clear description of the attachments, such as Writing Samples.

Q: How long should each chapter summary be in a book proposal for a nonfiction book?

A: In Michael Larsen's book titled simply How to Write a Book Proposal, he shows most chapter outlines to be about one page, double-spaced. No absolute rule applies; however. I followed that book to the letter in 2003 for my first book proposal, and as a result I sold Write In Style to a reputable New York publisher.

Q: In my book proposal, I hesitate to say "About the Authors" instead of "About the Author," because I am the only author, except that I got a nationally famous person to write a two-page introduction for me. I feel the need to strengthen the author section, though, since I am not a well-known authority on the subject. I say on the cover sheet, "With . . ." Do you have any suggestion as to how I should handle that?

A: Absolutely. First, in the About the Author section, use the singular. You are the author of the book. On the cover sheet, use "With an introduction by [Famous Name]." You could probably also add one or two paragraphs in the author section explaining that so-and-so wrote the introduction and then give a brief summary of what makes the well-known person an expert on the subject.

Q: I received an e-mail from a small publisher. In it he said that [name deleted] Publishing requires chapter summaries that are limited to one short paragraph for each chapter. I understood you to say one page for each chapter. He also said the contents of a book proposal varies among agents and publishers, so that may be the answer, but I would appreciate a clarification.

A: No standard exists that pleases all publishers universally. Each has differing preferences. Always look for and follow each publisher's guidelines. If you cannot find any guidelines, use the standard approach. Although the standard is one double-spaced page for each chapter summary, if a publisher prefers one short paragraph instead, that's what you send.

Submitting proposals and manuscripts to publishers and agents would be much simpler if all subscribed to the same guidelines, but alas, nothing about submitting for publication has been standardized.

Send your questions to [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com). Bobbie Christmas, book editor and owner of Zebra Communications, will answer your questions quickly. Read more "Ask the Book Doctor" questions and answers at [www.zebraeditor.com](http://www.zebraeditor.com).

The Small Publishers and Writers Network (SPAWN) website graciously hosts dozens of past "Ask the Book Doctor" columns. To catch up on

many writing and editing tips, go to <http://www.spawn.org/editing/index.htm#bookdoctor>.

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### Three: This Month's Easy Editing Tip from Bobbie Christmas: At That Moment, Just Then, All of a Sudden, At That Point

Sometimes authors use phrases and words such as "just then," "at that moment," "all of a sudden," "at that point," and "suddenly" in an attempt to add tension and indicate an event that imposes itself into a scene. Such introductory phrases are superfluous, however, and often become repetitive. Delete them and watch the quality of the writing improve.

For more editing and creative writing tips, order Purge Your Prose of Problems here: <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>.

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### Four: Subjects of interest to writers

Free stuff for writers! See the blog by member Catherine Giordano here: <http://catherinegiordano.hubpages.com/hub/Free-Stuff-for-Writers-Advice-on-How-to-Write-Edit-and-Get-Published>

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Get 50% Off a Two-Day Writers Convention in Metro Atlanta!  
June 13-14, 2015  
Forsyth Conference Center

Register now using code Writer15 and get 50% off!  
Use this link to sign up now: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/publish15-registration-16186853314?discount=Writer15>

Because I will be speaking at the upcoming Publish15 convention for writers, I've been given permission to offer all my members of The Writers Network a 50% discount off ticket prices when you register online at [www.publish15.com](http://www.publish15.com) using code Writer15.

Publish15 will bring a variety of experts, professionals, and providers in the publishing industry together with writers. Its mission is to educate writers about the latest trends and topics in the publishing industry, as well as expose them to available publishing, printing, and marketing options.

Every writer, whether seeking traditional or non-traditional publishing, will benefit from the knowledge they gain and the interactions and networking they do at Publish15.

Speakers will include experts in all areas of publishing, book marketing, social media, and more. Exhibitors from all areas of publishing will be available to speak to writers about the options available to them to publish, promote, and sell their books.

Publish15 will be held at the Forsyth Conference Center in Forsyth County. Attendees can choose from General Admission passes to the Exhibition Hall or a Two-Day Workshop Pass to attend a series of workshops held over the two days, with nearly 20 topics to choose from.

Publish15 is a first-of-its-kind annual publishing convention that will bring together a variety of experts and providers in the publishing industry with writers interested in having their work published.

- Publishing Exhibition
- Publishing Workshops
- Demonstrations
- Prizes

Register now using code Writer15 and get 50% off! Use this link to sign up now: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/publish15-registration-16186853314?discount=Writer15>

Special added attraction: My readers begged me to re-release Write In Style, my award-winning book on creative writing that has been out of print since 2009. At the Publish15 conference, BookLogix and I will be launching the second edition of Write In Style, updated and expanded. Plan to get your copy while you're there.

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I'd Rather Be Writing

I have to cook, but my apron says "I'd Rather Be Writing." Find it and other gifts for yourself and friends at <http://tinyurl.com/nvh7dyu>.

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Will I see you at the annual Florida Writers Association Conference in October?

Plan now to be at the 14th Annual Florida Writers Association Conference, October 15 - 18, 2015. The theme is "Changing Times," and the event takes place at the Hilton Orlando in Altamonte Springs, Florida. FWA always gives smooth-running and highly informative conferences, and I'm honored to be one of the speakers again this year. I hope to see you there. For details and registration, see the FWA website at [www.floridawriters.net](http://www.floridawriters.net).

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Terminology Writers Should Know: Polysyndeton

Polysyndeton is a stylistic device in which several coordinating conjunctions are used in succession to achieve an artistic effect.

The term polysyndeton comes from a Greek word meaning "bound together." Polysyndeton uses coordinating conjunctions such as "and," "or," "but," and "nor," but mostly "and" and "or" to join successive words, phrases, or clauses where they might have been omitted. In the sentence "The boys bought candy and sodas and popcorn," the coordinating conjunction "and" is used in quick succession to join words occurring together. In a normal situation, the coordinating conjunction "and" is used to join the last two words of the list and the rest of the words in the list are separated or joined by a comma, this way: "The boys bought candy, sodas, and popcorn." The use of a polysyndeton, however, places more emphasis on the list. In the sample sentence, for instance, polysyndeton changes the nuance of the sentence, so that rather than reading a list of items that the boys bought, readers are led to perceive that the boys splurged on food that was not healthy for

them.

As with any literary device, use it once, and it adds value; use it twice, and it loses value. Use it three or more times, and it becomes boring.

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Daytona Mini Conference

May 16, 2015

Grace Episcopal Church

4110 South Ridgewood Avenue

Port Orange, FL 32127

Sessions run concurrently, all day

Cost is \$79 members/\$99 nonmembers

Workshops include science fiction/fantasy and historical fiction

AJ Robinson is an author of novels and nonfiction work. A screenplay of his was also made into a movie. He will talk about science-fiction and fantasy, including the elements within the genres and methods for building stories.

Veronica Helen Hart is an award-winning author and playwright. She will be teaching historical fiction to help make the fiction feel real and show how real historical figures can be used.

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Details & Registration:

[www.FloridaWriters.net](http://www.FloridaWriters.net)

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Last month a reader of this newsletter called to tell me her computer was getting a little wonky, so she took my advice and used my link to get Carbonite to back up her files to the cloud. Later she was able to resolve the issue with her computer, but still, she can now relax, knowing that no matter what happens, her files are safely backed up. She surely did not want to lose the book that she has been writing for several years.

On more than three occasions, now, Carbonite has saved me from major rework or near disaster. Files I thought were corrupted or gone forever, I accessed again through Carbonite. If you follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/k9mb8r9> and sign up for Carbonite, you and I both get a \$20 gift card, but even if you don't choose to use Carbonite, please be sure your computer is always backed up to a safe location separate from your computer, and preferably not even in your house. Houses can be destroyed, along with computers, so the cloud is the only safe place to keep your backup files.

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First Bookstore Dedicated to Self-Published Authors

We need more stores like the one featured here: <http://tinyurl.com/o2h6vp5>.

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Purge Your Prose of Problems

A Book Doctor's Desk Reference, Fifth Edition

Save thousands of dollars and edit your own book! Order my proprietary book-doctor desk reference book online at <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>.

In alphabetical order and in easy-to-understand language, Purge Your Prose of Problems covers all you need to know to revise and edit fiction and nonfiction books, including grammar, punctuation, word choices, creative writing, plot, pace, characterization, point of view, dialogue, Chicago style, format, and much more. The spiral binder lets the book lie flat in front of your computer, for easy use. Available printed or as a PDF e-book that allows you to keep all this vital information on your computer for ready reference.

The PDF e-book is the best deal. You get it immediately and pay no shipping. After you download the searchable PDF, it resides on your computer for the speediest reference, whenever you need it.

To save thousands of dollars by editing your own book, order Purge Your Prose of Problems today at <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>.

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Two Free Audio Books with Free Trial of Audible

Special to readers of this newsletter

Includes two free audiobooks with your free trial. Choose from 150,000+ best sellers, new releases sci-fi, romances, mysteries, classics, and more. After 30 days, get 1 book each month, \$14.95/month, but you can cancel easily anytime. Your books are yours to keep, even if you cancel. To take advantage of the free book offer, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/nlpofld>.

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Do your writing friends a favor, at no charge! Tell them to subscribe to The Writers Network News by going to [www.zebraeditor.com](http://www.zebraeditor.com) and clicking on the yellow box at the top. To view back issues of this newsletter, go to <http://tinyurl.com/psnmp6p>.

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Pulitzer Prize Winners Revealed in April

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr won for fiction.

The Sixth Extinction by Elizabeth Kolbert won for general nonfiction.

Digest by Gregory Pardlo won for poetry.

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Free Tools for Writers from Bobbie Christmas and Zebra Communications

What's the difference between Chicago style, the style of punctuation and capitalization preferred by book publishers, and the style you may have learned in school or seen in magazines and newspapers? How can you pick the right editor for your manuscript? (Surprise! It may not be me.) For answers to these questions and many other reports related to creative writing, go to [http://zebraeditor.com/free\\_reports.shtml](http://zebraeditor.com/free_reports.shtml).

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"Each month I write a book review for a craft book and a children's book. Readers are encouraged to leave a comment on my blog to be entered for a chance to win one of the books. <http://sheilarenfro.blogspot.com/>." --Sheila Renfro

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Ask the Book Doctor: How to Beat the Competition and Sell Your Writing answers many of the questions you wish you could ask an editing expert. Whether you write books, short stories, articles, reports, or anything else, learn more about how to write, edit, and sell your work. Paperback: \$14.95 plus \$4.99 S & H (total: \$19.94 US) E-book: \$8.95, no S & H, with almost instant delivery. You will save almost \$10 by

buying the e-book. To order either, go to <http://tinyurl.com/lxp7n>.

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Become my friend on Facebook and follow my adventures, opinions, and observations: <http://www.facebook.com/bobbie.christmas>. I have a separate Facebook page specifically for writers. Like and follow my Zebra Communications for writers here: <http://tinyurl.com/7vcxaxu>.

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Five: Contests, Agents, and Markets

### 2015 HOLIDAY BOOK FESTIVAL CALL FOR ENTIRES

The 2015 Holiday Book Festival has issued a call for entries to its competition honoring the best books of the holiday season.

The Holiday Book Festival will consider published and unpublished works in the following categories: fiction, nonfiction, romance, biography/autobiography, how-to, compilations/anthologies, photography/art, children's, cookbooks, poetry, spiritual/religious, young adult, unpublished manuscripts, wild card (anything goes!), Christmas, Santa Claus, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Thanksgiving.

There is no date of publication restriction, but all entries must be in English. Our grand prize for the 2015 Holiday Book Festival winner is a cash appearance fee and a flight to our awards ceremony in Hollywood, to be held in late July 2015 in conjunction with the Hollywood Book Festival. Winners will be announced in early July.

TO ENTER: Entry forms are available online at [www.holidaybookfestival.com](http://www.holidaybookfestival.com) or may be faxed/e-mailed to you. Please contact our office at 323-665-8080 for fax requests.

For more information and entry forms, visit [www.holidaybookfestival.com](http://www.holidaybookfestival.com).

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Motivational Press  
Justin@MotivationalPress.com  
Justin Sachs CEO

Motivational Press is distributed with Ingram (the largest distributor in the world)

Motivational Press allows our authors to purchase copies of their books at substantially lower rates than the major publishing houses (often 60-80% off retail)

Motivational Press does not pay advances competitive to the major publishing houses. We invest far more substantially into marketing our author's books rather than paying our authors advances upfront.

Motivational Press prioritizes the marketing and promotions of its authors. The average author published with Motivational Press reaches at least 15 million people through our media and promotions campaigns.

Motivational Press pays our authors 2-3 times the major traditional publishing houses.

Motivational Press as a strong foreign rights time in house to support you with foreign sales. We are seeking the following:

1. Established Authors: These are individuals who have built their platform, have a substantial following on social media, e-newsletters, live events, etc. Our team's top priority is to expand this author's platform even further and support them with capitalizing on all available profit centers sourced from the books release.
2. Emerging Authors: These are individuals who are closer to the starting line. We work with authors in this category who have exceptional content but need strategic guidance on building the audience, platform, and marketing systems behind any campaign they do.
3. Business and Community Leaders: Motivational Press' team will work with you to develop your message, create your content, package it into a manuscript, and publish it globally.

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Transatlantic Agency Seeks New Clients

Transatlantic agents work within their own defined areas of interest, but they jointly share a commitment to excellence in the craft of writing and professionalism in the business of publishing.

Transatlantic agents do not charge reading fees and its US agents are active members of the AAR.

Our preference is that you submit to one agent at a time, but if you plan to submit your material to more than one agent, then we ask you to declare that overlap in your covering letter.

Several Transatlantic agents are currently accepting submissions. Review the individual mandates and guidelines carefully before making any inquiries. For complete information and submission guidelines, go to <http://transatlanticagency.com/agents/submissions/>.

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We primarily publish nonfiction books and scholarly journals, along with a few titles per season in contemporary and regional prose and poetry. On occasion, we reprint previously published fiction of established reputation, and we have several programs to publish literary works in translation. Through our Bison Books imprint we publish general-interest books about the American West. Our primary mission, defined by the University of Nebraska through the Press Advisory Board of faculty members working in concert with the Press, is to find, evaluate, and publish in the best fashion possible, serious works of nonfiction.

Victoria Lowes  
The Bent Agency

Victoria Lowes is looking for both commercial and literary fiction as well as young adult titles. Her favorite genres are historical fiction, suspense, mysteries, upmarket women's fiction, and romance. Before submitting, read the guidelines at <http://www.thebentagency.com/submission.php>. Following the guidelines, submit queries to [lowesqueries@thebentagency.com](mailto:lowesqueries@thebentagency.com).

Lydia Blyfield  
Carol Mann Agency

The Carol Mann Agency was established in 1977 and has long been home to highly regarded writers of fiction and nonfiction. We are a boutique agency that prides itself on giving individual attention to all our clients and regularly placing projects with leading publishers both in the United States and overseas. Our broad range of tastes, experience shepherding books from their most nascent stages to publication, and relationships with co-agents throughout the world make us one of New York's top literary agencies.

Lydia Blyfield joined the Carol Mann Agency in 2013 and is seeking new clients. Lydia is looking for edgy, modern fiction and timely nonfiction in the areas of business, self-improvement, relationship, and gift books. She is particularly interested in female voices and experiences.

For fiction, please send a query letter including a brief bio, and the first 25 pages of your manuscript. For nonfiction, please send a query letter including a brief bio, a synopsis/proposal and the first 25 pages of your manuscript. All material should be pasted into the body of your message; attachments will not be opened. Queries may be e-mailed to [submissions@carolmannagency.com](mailto:submissions@carolmannagency.com).

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Six: Got Muse? Something Bad from Something Good

I was a journalist in 1976 when the government encouraged all reporters to promote swine flu shots. In a huge photo op, we journalists lined up and received free swine flu shots. We were given stickers that read Swine Flu Shot: I Got Mine. I put mine on the back of my notepad, so that whenever I interviewed people, they could see the sticker while I took notes.

Decades later some folks may remember the aftermath of that mass vaccination. Although I suffered no consequences, the swine flu vaccine caused more deaths, paralysis, and illness than it was intended to prevent.

For this exercise think of something that started out with good intent but went wrong. Perhaps one character wants to help another quit drugs cold turkey, and you can imagine where such a scenario could lead. Maybe someone goes to a foreign country to provide aid, and anything could go wrong in that situation. Use your imagination and have a character begin with good intentions before the story takes a turn for the worse. How will your story end? Only you can decide.

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Do YOU have news for The Writers Network News? Please send it in the body copy, not an attachment, to [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com).

Deadline: The 15th of each month.

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Send a copy of this newsletter to all your writing friends. Tell them to join The Writers Network F-R-E-E by visiting [www.zebraeditor.com](http://www.zebraeditor.com) and clicking on Free Newsletter.

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With the exception of Zebra Communications, information in this newsletter is not to be construed as an endorsement. Be sure to research all information and study every stipulation before you accept assignments, spend money, or sell your work.

The Writers Network News: a newsletter for writers everywhere. No fees. No officers. No Rules; Just Write!

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