

The Writers Network News, November 2015

In This Issue

One: From the editor's desk: Goodbye, My Mentor

Two: Ask the Book Doctor about Issues with Cookbooks

Three: This Month's Easy Editing Tip from Bobbie Christmas: Initials

Four: Subjects of Interest to Writers

Five: Contests, Agents, and Markets

Six: Got Muse? Life Has Lumps

The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

Contents copyright 2015, Bobbie Christmas

No portion of this newsletter can be used without permission; however, you may forward the newsletter in its entirety to anyone who may be interested in subscribing.

Newsletter Sponsor

Zebra Communications

Excellent editing for maximum marketability

Improving books for writers and publishers since 1992

As book doctors, we write, edit, and evaluate fiction and nonfiction manuscripts, book proposals, query letters, and synopses. We are a top-rated Better Business Bureau Accredited Business.

Zebra Communications

230 Deerchase Drive

Woodstock, GA 30188

770/924-0528

<http://zebraeditor.com/>

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

Meet Fellow Writers

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.

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

Writer's Quote of the Month

Novelist William Makepeace Thackeray (1811 - 1863) said, "There are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know until he takes up a pen to write."

Thackeray, an English novelist of the nineteenth century, is known for his satirical works, particularly *Vanity Fair*, a panoramic portrait of English society. Although he studied art, he did not pursue it much and lived off an inheritance for several years until he married. Thackeray said that after he married and started having children, he began "writing for his life," turning to journalism in an effort to support his young family.

One: From the editor's desk: Goodbye, My Mentor

Dear Fellow Writers:

I'm many months late, but I just found out that William Zinsser passed away in May. A writer, editor, and teacher, he wrote *On Writing Well*, a book my father gave me in the 1970s, and I have since recommended it to many a writer. It sold more than 1.5 million copies and urged clarity, simplicity, brevity, and humanity in all writing.

On Writing Well, first published by Harper & Row in 1976, has gone through repeated editions, at least four of which Zinsser revised to include subjects such as new technology and new demographic trends.

Editors and teachers encourage writers to reread *On Writing Well* annually, in the way they urge them to read another classic on the craft of writing, *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White. My father also gave me my first copy of Strunk and White, as the book became known, as further encouragement to me in my career as a writer.

On Writing Well leans toward writers of nonfiction, although much of it can be applied to fiction, and I was and am a nonfiction writer at heart. My stabs at fiction have been a lesson to myself about how difficult it is to craft a good story out of nothing. As an editor, I have learned what writers must do to create a good fiction story, yet it's one of those instances in which those who can, do, and those who can't, teach. I can teach fiction, edit fiction, and tell others how they should be writing fiction, but my novels never please me enough to take them

much further than my critique circle.

Still, hearing of Zinsser's death at 92 reminds me of the encouragement and support I've gotten over the years from my father, my teachers, my friends, and my peers as I plowed through the rough waters of writing and editing. Zinsser and others who went before me did their best to show me the way, but I've still had to hoist and pull my own oars.

Can a person make a living as a writer? I proved it's possible, and in fact, I recently pitched an article on the subject to a local e-zine and have gotten a go-ahead for submitting the article. A few years back I gave a keynote speech on the subject, as well, and many attendees later told me I gave them the encouragement they needed.

Some people have said I've been a role model for them. What an honor! I could never have done so well, however, without listening to mentors such as William Zinsser. Rest, in peace, my friend.

Don't forget to read my zany, odd, and sometimes creepy blog about my encounters with the opposite sex. Go to www.NeuroticaStories.blogspot.com, read the entries, post comments, share the blog with others, and sign up to follow it for future entries.

Yours in writing,

Bobbie Christmas (Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or bzebra@aol.com)

Author of two editions 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, click on Free Newsletter, and follow the prompts. I never share your address or send out spam.

%%%%%%%%%%%%%%

Two: Ask the Book Doctor about Issues with Cookbooks

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: I've written a cookbook. I do not have any pictures of my recipes, but would like to have them in the final book. Do I need to hire a photographer or does the publisher provide assistance with that?

A: If a publisher buys the manuscript and wants the recipes illustrated, it will take all responsibility for finding and paying a professional who specializes in food photography, an art in itself.

Q: How should I go about formatting a manuscript for a cookbook? Are there any samples available I could look at?

A: I'm not sure if you plan to self-publish or seek a publisher. If you plan to self-publish and you want to lay out the book yourself, pull one out one of your favorite cookbooks and follow its formula.

If you plan to sell to a publisher, the format would probably be similar to any other book-length manuscript. The difference is that the ingredients list can be single spaced in Courier 12 point type, but for editing purposes, the preparation information and other narrative should be double-spaced, Courier, 12-point type with margins of at least an inch on all sides. Some publishers accept manuscripts in Times New Roman, too. Check with your potential publisher, if unsure.

Q: I am publishing my third book, and this one is more intense than the others. This is coffee table book with ninety-eight or more pages. I need to purchase a few stock photos, which are costly. I want to shop for an agent who will either represent my new publishing business and me or give it to one of the larger publishing houses. I'm wondering if I need to have a "finished" galley (exact photos and owned, in place) or just put copies of not-yet-licensed photos in the galley to be shown to an agent. If one sees the merit in my work, I would then purchase the photos or have the publishing company take it on.

My number two question is this: where online or do you know of a travel editor and a food editor? My search online has been time consuming.

A: First, I don't know if any literary agent would represent your publishing business. Literary agents usually represent manuscripts, rather than companies. Few agents handle books that are already self-published, because few publishers want self-published books unless the author can provide proof of sales of at least 3,000 copies already. That's a tough figure to hit; most self-published books sell fewer than one hundred copies.

Next, coffee table books usually use original artwork, not stock photos, so I'm not sure what the product is that you have to sell.

Third, publishers usually provide the artwork, unless the author is also a photographer or artist, so you don't have to own any art to sell your manuscript; the publisher will usually get it for you if interested in your manuscript.

I'm not sure what you mean by a food editor or a travel editor. Do you mean an acquisitions editor with a publishing house that publishes travel books and cookbooks, or a manuscript editor who will edit the manuscript for punctuation, grammar, and style? If an acquisitions editor, go to www.writersmarket.com. There's a slight fee, but it's worth it for the ease of use and quantity of material. If you mean a manuscript editor, I'm one, and there are hundreds more. Simply use a search engine and look for "book manuscript editor" or "manuscript editor" or, if your book needs editing for concept, clarity, and/or organization, search under "book doctor." If you want to check my services, credentials, and prices, go to www.zebraeditor.com.

Q: I'm writing my first cookbook. I would like to know if you have any ideas on how to beat the competition and get my book to sell.

A: My number-one idea is to be certain the writing is pristine. Because the short e-mail that asked this question had several errors, I have to assume that errors in the cookbook manuscript have also been overlooked. Before trying to sell the manuscript to a publisher or self-publishing it, be sure the manuscript is edited by a professional book editor.

My second strong suggestion is to ensure the book fills a niche, fits a market that is not being served, or solves a problem for cooks. Also look at the cookbooks that are selling and make sure your book is not too much like any of the books that are currently available.

As for other ideas on how to beat the competition and sell a book, the answers are far too complex to answer in an e-mail, but several good

books are available on how to write, sell, self-publish, and promote a book.

Note to my readers: You asked for it, and BookLogix did it. Write In Style is now available not only in paperback but also as an e-book through most booksellers. See the entry later in this newsletter for specific websites for Kindle, Nook, and Kobo.

Bobbie Christmas, author of Write In Style: Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing, book editor, and owner of Zebra Communications, will answer your questions, too. Send them to Bobbie@zebraeditor.com. Read more "Ask the Book Doctor" questions and answers at www.zebraeditor.com.

News of note: Publishers say they are looking for a fresh voice. What on earth is a fresh voice? The second edition of Write In Style, my book on how to use any computer to help you uncover your fresh voice, has been updated, upgraded, expanded, and improved and is now available. Order your copy today at <http://tinyurl.com/o4trud2> or <http://tinyurl.com/pnq5y5s>, or order a signed copy at <http://tinyurl.com/nm84p3k>.

For even more questions, answers, and comments, order the book, Ask the Book Doctor: How to Beat the Competition and Sell Your Writing. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/lexp7n>.

%%%%%%%%%%%%%

Three: This Month's Easy Editing Tip from Bobbie Christmas: Initials

Initials that do not form a word are not acronyms but merely initials, as in FBI for Federal Bureau of Investigation and US for United States. Some initials call for periods, whereas others don't. For example, the initials for television (TV) and the initials for intravenous (IV), do not take periods, but C.I.A., initials for Central Intelligence Agency, do. Initials that stand for anti and post meridiem (a.m. and p.m.) take periods, but the initials in dates that stand for anno Domini (AD), do not take periods. Use caution with initials; be sure to check to see if they call for periods or not.

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

%%%%%%%%%%%%%

Four: Subjects of interest to writers

In last month's "Ask the Book Doctor" column, I said I could not think of a time that the first letter of a sentence would not be capitalized. Member Joe DeRosa helped me out with his immediate e-mail that said, "I thought of a case where the first letter of prose might not be capitalized, when it's the proper name of a product." He gave this example: "iPhones are the bane of my existence."

You nailed it, Joe. Thank you. Your response made me think of poet e. e. cummings, who never capitalized his name. If a sentence began with his name, it would not be capitalized either. Now we have at least two instances when the opening letter of a sentence would not be capitalized.

~~~~~

History Buffs and Researchers: Win Free History Books

From Foreword: "Following our mission to spread the word about great books from independent publishers and authors, we want to give you a chance to enter and win stacks of indie books. We'd like to announce The Indie Book Stacks Giveaway: History Books Edition. Simply enter for your chance to win stacks of indie history books for your private library—a \$500 value." <http://tinyurl.com/p4te96z>

~~~~~

Terminology Writers Should Know: Acronym

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters of a proper name or series of words. Note that to be called an acronym, the letters must form a word. A few well-known acronyms include MASH, which stands for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital; scuba, which stands for self-contained underwater breathing apparatus; radar, an acronym for radio detecting and ranging, WAC, an acronym for Women's Army Corps; and AIDS, an acronym for acquired immune deficiency syndrome. If using an acronym that is not immediately recognizable to the typical reader, write it out on first use. Example: Mothers against war who want their teenagers released from service formed a group called BOTCH (Bring Our Teenage Children Home).

For more information on initials versus acronyms, see this month's Easy Editing Tip.

~~~~~

Wow! Someone wrote a great review on Amazon about the newest edition of Write in Style. The review by babes man95 (I don't know who she is) says in part:

"Write In Style"

"After two years of searching and buying books on writing I finally came across Bobbie Christmas's Write in Style and read it in one day. Every writer should own a copy of this book. I now understand the difference between showing and telling. Bobbie's gift with editing and teaching is amazing and well worth the purchase. Thank you, Bobbie, for writing a book that is easy to read and follow. I am a more confident writer because of you."

Writing teachers and writers begged me to re-release Write In Style, my triple-award-winning book on how to use a computer to improve your writing. The second edition, upgraded and expanded from the award-winning first edition, is at last available. Buy it through Amazon or get a signed copy by ordering directly from me here: <http://tinyurl.com/nm84p3k>.

~~~~~

You may need photos for your book or blog. How can you get images legally, so you don't face a lawsuit for copyright infringement? Read this informative article: <http://www.searchenginejournal.com/legally-use-images-online/140560/>.

~~~~~

Free Tools for Writers from Bobbie Christmas and Zebra Communications

Order PDF reports on writing-related subjects, including correct manuscript format, how to form and run a critique circle, how to identify weak writing and repair it, self-publishing versus traditional publishing, and much more. Go to [http://zebraeditor.com/free\\_reports.shtml](http://zebraeditor.com/free_reports.shtml). Newest report: Genre: A Slippery Subject Essential to Fiction: Learn about genre fiction categories and the benefits of complying with genre specifications.

~~~~~

Have you wondered how to format text messages in a novel? CMOS gives the answer to that question and many other interesting questions

in a recent CMOS Q & A. <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/latest.html>.

~~~~~  
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 e-book is the best deal, because you get it immediately and pay no shipping, and it then 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>.

~~~~~  
November is National Novel Writing Month. Can you write the first draft of a novel in only one month? Challenge yourself! For more information, see <http://nanowrimo.org/>.

~~~~~  
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/lexp7n>.

~~~~~  
Trying to write a dynamite query letter? Reedsy has good information on query letters. See <http://blog.reedsy.com/launching-query-bootcamp>.

~~~~~  
Are E-Book Sales Down? Read Reports that Say Yes and No

Report from Canada: Printed Book Sales Up; E-book Sales Down

See <http://tinyurl.com/nfohcvf>.

Fortune Magazine Counters; E-Book Sales Not Falling

See <http://fortune.com/2015/09/24/ebook-sales/>.

~~~~~  
Write In Style is Now Also an E-book!

To order the Kindle version, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/orjp9v2>.
For a B&N Nook version, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/qfo55xu>
For Kobo click here: <http://tinyurl.com/ouoeejc>.

~~~~~  
Do You Subscribe to A Word A Day with Anu Garg?

If you don't subscribe, you missed this goodie for writers:

mot juste  
Pronunciation: mo ZHOOST

Meaning: The right word.

Etymology: From French *mot juste* (right word). Earliest documented use: 1896. A related term is *bon mot*.

Usage: "Bennett Miller is a filmmaker who thinks his way long and hard into each project, and indeed each sentence, always groping for the *mot juste*."

Tim Robey; 'It's a Film About Fathers and Fatherliness'; The Daily Telegraph (London, UK); Jan 8, 2015.

To subscribe to A Word A Day, go to [www.wordsmith.org](http://www.wordsmith.org).

~~~~~  
Become my friend on Facebook and follow my adventures, opinions, and observations: <http://www.facebook.com/bobbie.christmas>
Like Zebra Communications on Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/7vcxaxu>.
%%%%%%%%%%%%%

Five: Contests, Agents, and Markets

The Story Prize
41 Watchung Plaza, #384
Montclair, NJ 07042
Larry Dark, director
Website: <http://www.thestoryprize.org>
E-mail: info@thestoryprize.org
Deadline: November 15, 2015
Entry Fee: \$75

A prize of \$20,000 is given annually for a short story collection written in English and first published in the United States in the previous year. Two runners-up will receive \$5,000 each, and one entrant will receive the \$1,000 Story Prize Spotlight Award, given for a collection that merits further attention.

Publishers, authors, or agents may submit two copies of a book published between July 1 and December 31 with a \$75 entry fee by November 15. Visit the website for the required entry form and complete guidelines.

~~~~~  
Carolina Wren Press Announces Its Lee Smith Novel Prize

To submit go to <https://carolinawrenpress.submittable.com/submit>.

Deadline: November 30, 2015

\$20.00 USD

Submissions for the second Lee Smith Novel Prize are now open! Carolina Wren Press will choose one unpublished novel to receive \$1,000 and publication in honor of esteemed Southern author, literary mentor, and teacher Lee Smith. The award will be presented to a novel by an author from, living in, or writing about the American South—authors need only meet one of these qualifications, not all three. It is our hope to find and promote novelists from the South and their novels and, in the process, to explore and expand the definition of Southern literature. Electronic submissions will be accepted through November 30, 2015 (midnight, Eastern time). Submissions must be original, previously unpublished novels, written by one person, in English, at least 50,000 words in length.

Please submit the manuscript in its entirety. Author's biography and list of previously published works is not required but may be included in the cover letter. Manuscripts will be read "blind," so be sure author's name and any other identifying information only appear in the cover letter and not in the manuscript itself (including in headers or footers or on the first page of the manuscript).

Simultaneous submissions are okay, but let us know immediately if your manuscript is accepted elsewhere. Contest results anticipated in April 2016.

~~~~~

Now What?

P.O. Box 33677

Denver, CO 80233

Associate Editor Sherri Langton

bibleadvocate@cog7.org.

<http://nowwhat.cog7.org/>

Now What? is looking for personal experience stories that show a person's struggle that either led him to faith in Christ or deepened his walk with God. We're also looking for related articles that are instructional and practical, with Bible teaching and tips for readers. Material in our online magazine is more geared for those interested in the Christian faith who are seeking answers to life's toughest questions.

We pay an honorarium, on publication, of \$25-\$55, depending on published length.

We buy first, one-time, and electronic rights. We also accept reprints and simultaneous submissions.

Articles and stories can be up to 1,500 words

We prefer articles submitted by e-mail (attachments OK). Address them to Sherri Langton, Associate Editor, at bibleadvocate@cog7.org. If submitting by regular mail, use address above.

~~~~~

BkMk Press

Ciardi/Chandra Prizes

University of Missouri

5100 Rockhill Road

Kansas City, MO 64110.

(816) 235-2558.

Ben Furnish, Managing Editor.

<http://www.newletters.org/writers-wanted/bkmk-writing-contests>

E-mail: [bkmk@umkc.edu](mailto:bkmk@umkc.edu)

Two prizes of \$1,000 each and publication by BkMk Press are given annually for a poetry collection and a short story collection. Submit a manuscript of 50 to 110 pages of poetry or 125 to 300 pages of short fiction with a \$25 entry fee by January 15, 2016. Send an SASE, call, e-mail, or visit the website for complete guidelines.

Deadline: January 15, 2016

Entry Fee: \$25

~~~~~

Jenni Ferrari-Adler

Brick House Literary Agents

80 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1101

New York, New York 10011

(212) 255-5117

E-mail: jenni@brickhouselit.com

Accepts E-mail Queries

Jenni is interested in representing fiction, literary fiction, narrative nonfiction, and nonfiction. To approach, send a query letter by e-mail and the first page of the project to jenni@brickhouselit.com. No attachments. We will ask to see more if interested and are sorry that we cannot respond to all queries. If we ask for the material, we try to respond in less than one month.

~~~~~

Bedazzled Ink Publishing Calls for Submissions of Same-Sex Marriage Stories and Lesbian Ghost Stories

Bedazzled Ink Publishing

Forever Windsor Series

2137 Pennsylvania Ave

Fairfield, CA 94533

C.A. Casey, Managing Editor

First, here's the information on the Same-Sex Marriage Novels

Read full guidelines before submitting. See <http://binkbooks.bedazzledink.com/books/books-f/forever-windsor-series/>

"Do you take this woman . . . "

You are cordially invited to join Bedazzled Ink in a collaborative celebration of Marriage Equality. We are celebrating women who are starting a life together, or are long time partners, or who've been together for a while and are ready to legalize their relationship.

These women can be new characters or existing characters you've created from other stories as long as the story revolves around the actual ceremony. Since these books are a celebration of the same-sex marriage they can be sweet, poignant, slice of life, or downright funny.

Next, here's the information on the lesbian ghost stories:

Bedazzled Ink and GusGus Press are looking for lesbian ghost stories for the anthology Haunting Muses to be published in time for Halloween 2016.

Ghosts, be they actual or the metaphorical ghosts of memories, aren't necessarily evil and hauntings may or may not be bad. How do we move beyond the foul spirits or integrate the shining beings who haunt us in the cruelest or the best ways? And how do we or our characters reconcile these ghosts into transformation and healing within present reality? From the worst ex from hell to the angel in paradise, send us fiction, poems, or creative non-fiction of ghosts, dead or living in the sense of remembered lovers, family, or friends who somehow haunt or linger. Good or bad, fully exorcised or not, recount how ghosts have spurred inner growth or resurrection, and how a character grapples with, or purges the haunting muse who has damaged or blessed the here and now. Stories can be, but are not limited to, romance. Happy endings are welcome but not required.

Length: 1000-5000 words

No simultaneous submissions.

Reprints are fine as long as authors own the rights to the story.

Payment: \$30 flat fee plus one contributor copy

Deadline: December 15, 2015

To submit go to <http://gusgus.bedazzledink.com/index.php/author-guidelines/submissions-haunting-muses-anthology/>.  
%%%%%%%%%%%%%

Six: Got Muse? Life Has Lumps

Robert Fulghum (born June 4, 1937), author of bestseller All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, made the following observation: "Life is inconvenient. Life is lumpy. A lump in the oatmeal, a lump in the throat, and a lump in the breast are not the same kind of lump. One needs to learn the difference."

For this exercise, think of lumps, bumps, inconveniences, and deadly circumstances. What comes to mind for you first? Use your first thoughts as the basis of a story. Remember that good plots are based on conflict and bumps in the road of life. How will your characters handle the inconvenient or deadly circumstances you've written for them? How will the experience change those characters?

+++++

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.

+++++

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.

+++++

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!

+++++

[EZezine Company Terms of Service Privacy Policy](#)