

The Writers Network News, June 2017

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The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

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Meet Fellow Writers

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

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CHANGING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS? HOW TO REMAIN A SUBSCRIBER

If your address changes, you must sign up again with your new address. We cannot change your address for you, because of our double-opt-in, no-spam policy. Go to www.zebraeditor.com, click on the yellow box, and sign up with your new address.

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Some links in this newsletter are shortened with help from [www.tinyurl.com](http://www.tinyurl.com), a free service that converts long links to short ones.

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Writer's Quote of the Month

"It is by sitting down to write every morning that one becomes a writer. Those who do not do this remain amateurs." --Gerald Brenan

According to Wikipedia, Edward FitzGerald "Gerald" Brenan, CBE (1894 -1987), was a British writer and Hispanist who spent much of his life in Spain. He is best known for *The Spanish Labyrinth*, a historical work on the background to the Spanish Civil War, and for *South from Granada: Seven Years in an Andalusian Village*.

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One: From the editor's desk: Resurrecting the Ancient

Dear Fellow Writers:

Recently I came across an aging notebook in which I'd kept copies of each chapter of a novel I wrote sometime between 1995 and 2001. Over the years members of my critique circle had made comments while I worked on the book, and their comments and recommendations were in the book as well. I stopped working on that novel years ago, when my critique circle collapsed. I am a nonfiction writer by trade, and when I learned more about the elements of fiction, I considered my novel unworthy of publication. The other day when I opened the ragged old notebook and read a few pages, I felt surprised and certain that the book had merit. Perhaps I could bring the book up to publishable quality, now that I am twenty years more knowledgeable.

The problem, though, is that the Word file for that book resided on a seventeen-year-old Mac computer. The computer still functioned to a small degree, but its technology was severely antiquated. It could write only to a Mac-formatted 5.25-inch floppy disk. The computer could not go online anymore, because its external dial-up modem no longer worked. My dear dinosaur of a computer could still read its own files and let me work on those files, but it limited me when it came to moving files to other computers, a necessary move if I hoped to sell or self-publish the book. Yes, I could save the file to a Mac-formatted 5.25-inch floppy disk, but my main computer is now a PC that doesn't have a floppy disk drive and anyway, it won't recognize Mac-formatted files.. Who nowadays had a Mac computer with a floppy disk drive that could read the file, go online, and e-mail the file to me in Microsoft Word for PC? If I could find a way to transfer the file to my PC, I could get the book up to speed and prepare it to send to an agent, publisher, or printer. What to do?

I had several options. I could retype the manuscript based on the printouts in the notebook, but retype a 50,000-word novel? What a pain!

Another option would be to scan the printed pages and use OCR (optical character recognition) to create a new copy. This method would also be tedious and mistake-laden.

Thanks to Google, I found a solution. RetroFloppy.com offers a service that reads, copies, and transfers files from almost any type of old computer or computer disk. That's the way I'll go. It's worth the \$20 fee.

After I solve my technology challenge, I'll see if I can make the novel worthy of publication. I enjoy a challenge, and besides, I look forward to seeing what I produced when I was almost twenty years younger than I am now.

Do you have an experience with resurrecting an old file? What happened when you tried? Were you successful? Was the manuscript worth the trouble? I'd be interested to know your experience.

Yours in writing,  
Bobbie Christmas [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com) or [bzebra@aol.com](mailto: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](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 Short Stories, Release Forms, and Good Rejections

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: I tried writing novels, but I found I was better at writing shorter things. I wrote some short stories, but they all come out as if they are a view into a certain event or something. They don't really have a beginning, middle, and end. Are they still considered short stories?

A: You probably are writing what is called slice-of-life stories, which can also come under the heading of short stories, so it is my understanding that many markets that accept short stories also accept slice-of-life stories.

Q: I am writing a nonfiction book and interviewing several people for the book. I have all interview subjects sign a release that states the following:

1. They are aware that excerpts from the interview will be used in a book.
2. They will not be compensated for the interview.
3. They will receive no proceeds from the book.

Additionally I have all interview subjects record how they would like to be identified in the book on the release form, for example by name, pseudonym, or initials.

Is there anything else that I should include on the release form?

A: This is a legal issue and I'm not an attorney, so I cannot answer in absolutes. Short of having an attorney approve the form, you might look for and copy a standard media release form to see if you missed anything. I found a general media release form that can be modified for your purposes here: <https://www.tidyform.com/download/general-media-release-form-1.html>.

I have two layperson suggestions, though.

I didn't see your actual form, so it may already include what I'm about to say. Because the purpose of the form is to protect you and give you latitude to use the information, I would not use the word "will" under number one, but "may." I also would add other options, so the wording would be more like this: "excerpts may be used in a book, article, promotional literature, or other printed or electronic matter."

Q: I've been submitting my manuscript to several publishers and agents. Although I've had only rejections so far, some of them are very much "near misses." One publisher gave lots of praise for the submission but said it didn't accept unagented manuscripts. One agent said he "saw the talent," but said he'd had problems placing similar proposals recently. Do these niceties mean anything, or are they just letting me down gently?

A: Most agents and publishers have little time to let people down gently. Most rejections are sent by preprinted letters, boilerplate e-mails, or in the worst case, rubber-stamped rejection notices. Agents and publishers have nothing to gain by taking extra time to write a nice note. When you get a personal comment of any kind, it is rare, and when that comment is complimentary, frame it! You have the rarest form of rejection letter, and it means you are getting close. Keep revising and submitting your work. Keep creating more. Ponder the point that similar proposals have been difficult to place. Think how you might revise your proposal or your entire book to make it more marketable. Look at bestseller lists to see what's selling. Keep going, and take pride in the "good" rejections.

I have one more suggestion. Carefully research each agent and publisher before submitting. Publishers that don't accept un-agented material will rarely respond at all, so it's a waste of time to submit directly to those companies. Not all agents are looking for new clients, either, and submitting to those agents would also be a waste of time. With the vast amount of information available on the Internet, writers can easily research each potential agent and publisher before going to the trouble of submitting a proposal or manuscript. Remember too that one of the most successful ways to find an agent is to attend writers conferences where agents are accepting appointments for pitches. The agents who go to those conferences are actively seeking new clients.

For much more information on these subjects and hundreds of others of vital importance to writers, order PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS, a Book Doctor's Desk Reference Book at <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>.

Send your questions to [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com). Bobbie Christmas, book editor, owner of Zebra Communications, and quadruple-award-winning author of Write In Style: How to Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing, will answer your questions quickly. Read more "Ask the Book Doctor" questions and answers at [www.zebraeditor.com](http://www.zebraeditor.com).

Bobbie Christmas's award-winning second edition of WRITE IN STYLE: How to Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing is available at <http://tinyurl.com/pnq5y5s>.

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Three: Subjects of interest to writers

#### NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Member Dana Ridenour's novel titled BEHIND THE MASK won the Action/Adventure (Fiction) category of the 2017 Next Generation Indie Book Awards. I'm doubly excited because not only is Dana a member of The Writers Network, but also I was the editor of her book.

Lynn Hess reports, "My upcoming mystery Another Kind of Hero will launch at the Decatur (Georgia) Book Festival Sept.1 - 3, 2017. Desert Breeze Publishing with Editor-In-Chief Gail Delaney offered me a contract in March, and we are proofing now. Hoorah!

Logline: A casket full of drugs and money in Forsyth, Georgia, plus a ghost, put argumentative sisters and a DEA agent in jeopardy.

#### NOW ACCEPTING PAGES FILES FROM MAC COMPUTERS

When I began my editing business in 1992, I accepted only printed manuscripts and edited them with a red pen. Once the Internet became widely used, I could accept Word files and edit them using Track Changes. I am now able to accept files created in the Mac program called Pages, which also has Track Changes. As always, clients have three choices: electronic-file editing (line editing of the file using Track Changes), hybrid editing (line editing of the file using Track Changes plus a detailed report on all suggested changes, creative writing tips, and more), or hard-copy editing (line editing of the printed manuscript plus a detailed report on all suggested changes, creative writing tips, and more).

I'm in the process of changing my website to indicate that I can accept files in Pages, too, but if you see a message that says I accept only Word files, ignore it, and let's get your Mac-based or PC-based manuscript edited and ready for publication together. ([www.zebraeditor.com](http://www.zebraeditor.com))

#### FREE BOOK REVIEWS

How can you get your book reviewed? Paying a reviewer does not often get you an unbiased review. Instead find free reviewers in the Book Reviewers Yellow Pages. Access it here: <http://www.bookrevieweryellowpages.com/book-reviewer-list.html>.

#### SAVE THOUSANDS ON EDITING

Let's face it: editing is costly, because editors must charge for their time and expertise. What if an editor put all her time and expertise into a book that allowed you to edit your own book? You could save thousands of dollars using such a book. PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS, A Book Doctor's Desk Reference, is that book. In fact it's the resource that many book editors use.

PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS covers all you need to revise and edit fiction and nonfiction. Get information on grammar, punctuation, word choices, creative writing, plot, pace, characterization, point of view, dialogue, Chicago style, format, and hundreds of other subjects.

Order PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS today at <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>.

#### THINKING OF CROWDFUNDING YOUR NEXT BOOK?

Read this article by Dorit Sasson: "How I Built a Platform of 100 Crowdfunding Supporters in 45 Days" <http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/70-FE-Crowdfunding.html>

#### BOBBIE'S BLOGS

Neurotica: Stories of Love, Lust, and Letting Go—If you like relationship stories, I've got a ton of them. Some are funny, some a little sexy, and all true. I reveal some of my stories at <http://neuroticastories.blogspot.com/>.

In my Write In Style blog, you'll find more tips on creative writing and other subjects. For my latest blog on people who inspired me to become a writer, see <http://bobbiechristmas.blogspot.com/>

#### HOW MUCH IS YOUR TIME WORTH?

Trying to estimate what to charge for a job? You may want to consult the National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for the United States, which is updated monthly. Note that it relates to employment wages, not freelance wages, but it's a good place to start. [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm)

Become my friend on Facebook

Follow my adventures, opinions, and observations: <http://www.facebook.com/bobbie.christmas>

#### FOLLOW ZEBRA COMMUNICATIONS ON FACEBOOK

Get news, writing-related cartoons, immediate updates, and other good stuff for writers. Like and follow Zebra Communications at <http://tinyurl.com/7vcxaxu>.

#### CMOS ONLINE Q & A

THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE dictates such things and where commas go, when and what to capitalize, when and how to abbreviate words, when to spell out numbers and when to use numerals, and much more. If you write books, you will want to know more about Chicago style or be sure to use an editor intimately familiar with Chicago style. This month's Chicago Manual of Style Online addresses the following question: I see three different treatments for upper right in the Q&A responses: upper right, upper-right, upper right-hand. Are there any guidelines for this term? Is it hyphenated as an adjective and not as a noun? ("In the upper-right corner" vs. "In the upper right"?)

Read the response to this question as well as many more questions and answers at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/latest.html>

#### WRITE IN STYLE: How to Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing

My book on creative writing titled WRITE IN STYLE has won seven big awards. Copies are selling fast on Amazon, but please order it here, directly from the publisher: <http://tinyurl.com/zeq6z5g>. Please note that this book is not about grammar. It teaches writers how to find their fresh voice. If you want a book on grammar, order PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS, mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

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Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

PULP LITERATURE

<http://pulpliterature.com/submissions/submission-guidelines/>

Rather than limit ourselves to a single genre or fiction format, we pick from two specific segments: exceptional emerging talent, and established writers and artists who wish to break out of their genre confines.

Pulp Literature magazine contains short stories, novellas, novel and graphic novel excerpts, illustrations and graphic shorts.

We're looking for any genre or between-genre work of literature, or visual art (black and white) up to 75 pages in length. Short stories, novellas, poetry, comics, illustrations—bring it on. We do not publish nonfiction, memoir, or children's stories. Aside from that, we want anything entertaining and well written.

If you're a published author, we want you to submit the pieces you've hidden under your bed, your midnight experiments that didn't fit into your genre, and the little things that have no other home. Go wild! Send us your genre-breaking stuff!
If you're a new writer send in your most thrilling, funny, or heart-rending work in any genre.

We accept simultaneous submissions. Previously printed pieces may be considered.
We ask for a small reading fee that is entirely voluntary, and the amount is up to the author. Most people chip in \$10. The contests have set entry fees between \$10 - \$25, and those are listed on the contests page. <http://pulpliterature.com/contests/>

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##### THE GUARDIAN

<https://www.theguardian.com/info/1999/nov/22/contributors-guide-and-contacts>

Accepts articles on the following subjects: politics, the world, opinion, sports, soccer, tech. arts, lifestyle, fashion, business, travel, and the environment. If you want to offer us a contribution, consider which section of the newspapers or websites is most likely to be interested and contact the commissioning editor for that section--ideally by phone or e-mail--and briefly outline your idea.

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ELEANOR TAYLOR BLAND CRIME FICTION WRITERS OF COLOR AWARD

The Eleanor Taylor Bland Crime Fiction Writers of Color Award is an annual grant of \$1,500 for an emerging writer of color. An unpublished writer is preferred, although publication of one work of short fiction or academic work will not disqualify an applicant. This grant is intended to support the recipient in activities related to crime fiction writing and career development.

Deadline June 15.

Full details here: http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.sistersincrime.org/resource/resmgr/bland_award/ETB-2017-Flyer.pdf

SCARY MOMMY

<http://www.scarymommy.com/write-for-scary-mommy/>

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##### SEEKING MESSAGES FROM BEYOND

Cynthia MacGregor has produced quite a few books, and she's at it again. She sent the following:

After your pet died, did you in any way experience what seemed to be a "message" from "the other side of Rainbow Bridge"--from your departed pet? This could be anything from him or her coming to you in your dreams, to the sound of his/her toenails clicking across the floor even if he/she isn't there anymore, to finding his/her toys in unexpected places after you thought you'd put them all away, to a message delivered to you by a spiritualist or medium, to...well, anything that seemed to connect you to your beloved four-legged companion and be a message from him/her after he/she had crossed Rainbow Bridge? You may remain anonymous; otherwise I would like you to sign your contribution with your first name (or nicknames are OK too). Take as much or as little space as you wish to tell your story.

The book will not have pictures, so it is not necessary to send me pictures of your beloved pet. Just tell me the story--or stories, if you have more than one story to tell, whether that's different stories about different pets or more than one story about the same pet.

Send it to: [Cynthia@cynthiamacgregor.com](mailto:Cynthia@cynthiamacgregor.com).

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SCARY MOMMY

Scary Mommy is not a paying market, but if you're just starting out, it could be a way to get your name in print.

We are always in search of highly relatable and general humor material. Lists and short essays (under 900 words) seem to work best, while personal anecdotes or specific personal stories do not.

Interested in seeing your work appear on Scary Mommy? Please agree to licensing terms and e-mail your submission to submit@scarymommy.com.

Some other important notes:

- Include a two- or three-sentence bio with your submission (social channels and blog hyperlinked, please!)
- Paste your post directly in the body of your e-mail. If a post has previously run, please also include the link to where it appears online.
- Please do not double space after periods or between paragraphs.
- If you are submitting a photo, it should be high resolution and landscape size (horizontal). Please send the original photograph rather than Instagram image.

Due to the high number of submissions we receive, you will hear from us within one week if we are able to run your post. If you do not hear

from us within that time frame, please feel free to submit elsewhere.

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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 enter a competition, pitch or accept an assignment, spend money, or sell your work.

To access past issues of The Writers Network News, click here: [http://live.ezine.com/feeds/ezine/886\\_2](http://live.ezine.com/feeds/ezine/886_2).

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

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