

The Writers Network News, January 2018

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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 email address to [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com).

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CHANGING YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS?

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

"There is only one trait that marks the writer. He is always watching. It's a kind of trick of the mind, and he is born with it." —Morley Callaghan

Morley Callaghan, (born Sept. 22, 1903, Toronto, Ont., Can.—died Aug. 25, 1990, Toronto), Canadian novelist and short-story writer. *Strange Fugitive* (1928), the first of Callaghan's more than ten novels, describes the destruction of a social misfit, a type that recurs in Callaghan's fiction. His novels examine questions of morality and social class, and his later works show an emphasis on Christian love as an answer to social injustice, as in *Such Is My Beloved* (1934), *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (1935), *The Loved and the Lost* (1951), and *A Passion in Rome* (1961). <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Morley-Callaghan>

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One: From the editor's desk: OVERWHELMED

Dear Fellow Writers:

As I write this, Christmas is approaching, followed by New Year's Eve. With two parties planned, one for each event, plus manuscripts to edit, technology issues to resolve, and an upcoming speaking engagement on internet radio—provided I can resolve my technology issues—I am in a state of overwhelm. Oh, and I wanted to get this issue of *The Writers Network News* out before Christmas as well. What's a writer to do? When will I have time to write?

The answer is this: later. The holidays don't last forever. In January I can get back to my schedule of my usual things, editing, writing, going to the gym, bowling, and visiting with friends. Of course in January I also have several appointments for things such as non-emergency doctor visits that I've put off until the New Year.

At this time of year everyone gets overwhelmed. I have to accept it and know that I will get everything done, sooner or later. I will make time to cook for my parties. I will make time to do everything on my list that is holiday related. Unfortunately writing won't be on my list for a little while.

The truth is that when I set out to write 50,000 words during November for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), I killed it in the writing department. Every morning I sat at my computer and clicked and clacked away. I didn't reach the full 50,000 words, but I felt motivated to sit and write regularly, almost every day. Methinks I'd better make every month a Writing Month (WriMo). Maybe that's my resolution for the New Year.

What's yours?

Meanwhile, I want to wish happy holidays to all who celebrate. My wish for all my subscribers is this: may 2018 bring you prosperity, happiness, and great ideas for new books, poems, and articles.

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.

Two: ASK THE BOOK DOCTOR

More Chicago Style Updates

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: I'm told not to use the Enter button or the Tab button. How do I go to the next line and to the next paragraph?

A: You've been told a little bit wrong. First, you absolutely must hit the Enter (or Return) key to start a new paragraph. In addition, to indent the first line of each paragraph, you can either set an automatic five-space indent using the indentation tool on the ruler at the top of the document or you can hit the Tab key after starting each new paragraph. In the past we were taught not to use the Tab key to indent, but the seventeenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* now allows it.

Q: In answer to my question about inner dialogue, you wrote this:

If a thought begins midsentence, it normally begins with a capital letter.

Will you please give me an example?

A: Of course.

The boy saw the package and wondered, Is this what I think it is?

I prefer the old-fashioned way of using italics to show unspoken discourse, but Chicago style now likes quotation marks or no marks, so if using quotation marks, it might go like this:

The boy saw the package and wondered, "Is this what I think it is?"

Q: In your update of Chicago style, I am not sure what this means:

It's now okay to use US (for United States) as a noun, provided the meaning is clear from the context. (10.32) (Used to be used only as an adjective)

Can you explain, clarify?

A: Sorry I wasn't clear. The sixteenth edition of CMOS said to use US only as an adjective modifying a noun, such as this: US Post Office, US government, US territories.

The seventeenth edition, section 10.32, now says that US can stand as a noun, as long as the meaning is clear.

Examples: I've been to only twenty of the fifty states in the US.  
Flying over the US gave me an idea of how its topography compares to Africa's.

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

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>.

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

FROM FELLOW MEMBERS

Wayne D. Evans wrote, "I enjoyed your very informative talk and meeting you at the Atlanta Writers Club meeting. Thanks to you and your great book, I now know why I must write. See *WRITE IN STYLE* page 213, first paragraph, second half. That's me.

"I will send you more of my learning observations as I read your books in more depth. I will incorporate most of them in my sixth book due 2018.

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Marian Goddard of Port Richey, Florida, wrote, “[As I am] of an age when wannabe writers are often dismissed, your newsletters remind me to blissfully keep plugging away. Thank You.”

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Steve Moore sent a note saying, in part, “I just wanted to say that I enjoyed your ‘shiner’ article. When I was swinging on a tree limb as a kid, my brother pushed too hard, and I broke my arm. Even though it was only partially my fault, I found it very embarrassing.

“With more than 1,000 rejections at the beginning of my publishing career, I developed a tough skin.... Publishing isn’t for the timid or faint-of-heart. ..., but I still have a lot of fun storytelling.”

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Cynthia MacGregor, author of more than a hundred books and an editor herself embarrassed me when she sent me this: “Tsk, tsk, Bobbie. Your own manuslip:

“American writer George Saunders has won the 2017 Man Booker Prize for his novel, Lincoln in the Bardo. He is the second U.S. author to win the award which carries a £50,000 cash prize.

“Missing: a comma after ‘award,’ needed before ‘which.’”

I admitted, “My fault for copying something and not clearly proofing what I copied. Thanks, Cyn!”

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Member Tricia Pimental of TAP Publishing wrote from Portugal, “Thanks for your recent newsletter, as always, packed with goodies. I particularly liked your plural solution to packing ‘his or her own lunch.’”

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What a surprise! I received an unexpected package from member C.B. (Bernie) Huesing. It was his latest book, KILL ABBY WHITE! NOW! He included a note that read in part, “I attended your conference sessions over the past ten to fifteen years and used your newsletters, emails, and PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS while writing a novella and, three years later, a full-length novel.... This is in appreciation for your direct and indirect help.”

I’m pleased to have been such a help to him. His book is available at Ingram, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other bookstores. I haven’t read it yet, but boy, does it sound intriguing from the cover copy. I can’t wait!

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MORE MANUSLIPS

In my Manuslips file I keep a list of errors I find that either tickle my fancy or prove a point about clear writing. Read the example below a few times and determine if you saw any errors.

She touched a puckered gouged burned raw scar.

I have several comments about that sentence. First, when adjectives are equal, a comma should separate them:

She touched a puckered, gouged, burned, raw scar.

My concern goes deeper than the commas, though. Scars are usually an indication of a healed sore. Can a scar then be raw? I doubt it. It can be new or fresh, but not raw; otherwise it would not be a scar yet.

Next I’ll bet you strong writers caught on that when you have so many commas in a sentence, perhaps something can be revised to avoid a cluster of commas. Strong writers know that adjective strings reduce the impact of the adjectives. One adjective at a time creates a stronger sentence. A robust recast of the sentence might then be this:

She touched a puckered burn, still raw.

How would you recast the sentence?

Have you ever found any errors in your own work? If so, share them with me by email. If I use them I won’t use your name, should you wish to remain anonymous.

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#### HEAR ME LIVE!

Crimson Cloak Publishing and Cynthia MacGregor (author of more than a hundred books) will be interviewing me December 26 at 2:00 Eastern Time. Tune in!

<http://main.crimsoncloakpublishing.com/crimson-cloak-radio.html>

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A GOOD SIGN FOR WRITERS OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES

In an environment in which many publishers are scaling back print issues, Bauer Media is increasing frequency on four of its weekly titles for 2018. In 2018, the media giant is not only continuing its print editions, but also increasing frequencies for four of its titles, with Life & Style slated to rise from 51 to 53 issues, and Closer, In Touch and Woman’s World from 52 to 53 issues.

Read the whole story here: <http://www.foliomag.com/bauer-increases-print-frequencies/>

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#### NEED TO FIND A QUALIFIED EDITOR? FWA CAN HELP

Are you a member of the Florida Writers Association? Did you know FWA will help you find an ethical, professional book editor? See <https://floridawriters.net/membership/editing-service/>. In the interest of full disclosure, I am the coordinator of the Editors Helping Writers service, so you will first hear from me when you contact the service, and then I choose the right editor for you. It could be me or it could be any of our other vetted and ethical professional book editors.

You do not have to live in or near Florida to be a member of FWA. You may decide it will benefit you to join, even if only for its many membership benefits. See <https://floridawriters.net/membership/join-renew/> for all the benefits you will receive.

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SAVE THOUSANDS ON EDITING

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 know 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>.

ASPEN WORDS LITERARY PRIZE NOMINEES

The Aspen Institute has unveiled the nominees for its first-ever fiction prize, a potpourri of 20 works plucked from across the world. Novels, short story collections, English-language or in translation—whatever their differences, each of the nominees "illuminates a vital contemporary issue and demonstrates the transformative power of literature on thought and culture," in the estimation of Aspen Words Literary Prize judges.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/11/30/567009799/first-ever-aspen-words-literary-prize-unveils-its-list-of-nominees>

BOBBIE'S BLOGS

Neurotica: Crazy 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 <https://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 a recent mix-up with my medications, see <http://bobbiechristmas.blogspot.com/>

EDITOR'S PET PEEVES: WATCH OUT FOR EXTRA LETTERS

One of the most misspelled words I see is acknowledgments. Yes, the Brits spell it with an extra e, acknowledgements, so our computers don't correct it for us Americans. In some circles either spelling is acceptable, but we American writers should strive for the highest level of writing and editing. Please choose this American spelling: acknowledgments.

Along the same line, let's look at the word judgement. The Brits add an e: judgement. I wrote to one of the fitness companies that advertised it was a "No Judgement Zone." I said that as an editor, I was judging the company's spelling and giving it an F. The company still uses the British spelling, even though it is an American company. Perhaps it has spent too much money on advertising and wall signs to change now.

Strong writers avoid variant spellings, and strong American writers use American spellings.

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

Someone wrote to the Chicago Manual of Style Online to ask the following question:

How do you feel about lastly, as in, "Lastly, a study of cancer patients...?"

To get the answer to this question and many more based on Chicago style, go to <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/latest.html>.

THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE sets the standard in book publishing for issues such as punctuation, capitalization, whether to spell out numbers or use numerals, and much more. If you write books, you will want to know more about Chicago style or be sure to use a professional book editor intimately familiar with Chicago style. The seventeenth edition was just released, changing some old issues, so be sure your editor is familiar with the seventeenth edition of Chicago style, rather than an older version.

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>. WRITE IN STYLE 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

CRIMSON ENDINGS

Crimson Endings is the next in Crimson Cloak Publishing company's Crimson Tales anthologies series, a paid anthology comprising fictional items broadly on a theme of death. That lets in western shootouts, ghost stories, murder mysteries and the like. Royalty split will be per author so we ask that each piece be a minimum of around 6,000 words, but aside from that you may let your imagination run riot! Applications to carly@crimsoncloakpublishing.com please. The book will be readied for publication once we have enough submissions.

BOY'S LIFE
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

Major articles run 500 to 1,500 words; payment is \$500 to \$1,500. Subject matter is broad. We cover everything from professional sports to American history to how to pack a canoe.

All articles for BOYS' LIFE must interest and entertain boys ages 6 to 17. Write for a boy you know who is 12. Our readers demand crisp, punchy writing in relatively short, straightforward sentences. The editors demand well-reported articles that demonstrate high standards of journalism. We follow The Associated Press Stylebook.

Query first. Please query by mail (with SASE), not by email or phone.

For full guidelines, see
<https://media.scouting.org/boyslife/about/contributors/writers.pdf>

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WATERSEdge POETRY CHAPBOOK CONTEST

The efforts of water sedge to flourish despite difficult odds seems kindred in spirit to poets hoping to successfully publish their poetry books and chapbooks in an uncooperative publishing environment. With the WaterSedge Poetry Chapbook Contest, we can help our winning poets get published and thrive. The winning poet's chapbook will receive both print and ebook publication through our Self-Publishing Relief division. All royalties belong to the winner.

Deadline for entering the Second Annual WaterSedge Poetry Chapbook Contest:  
January 31, 2018 11:59 p.m. ET

Full guidelines and submission link here: <http://writersrelief.com/watersedge-poetry-chapbook-contest/>

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ANNICK PRESS SEEKS FICTION AND NONFICTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

With editorial offices in Toronto and Vancouver, Annick publishes over twenty-five titles per annum, which are distributed in the United States by Publisher's Group West, represented in Canada by Ampersand and University of Toronto Press, and licensed internationally. Annick also publishes ebook editions of select titles, which are available through Kobo, Sony, Barnes & Noble, Blio, Follett, and OverDrive.

Picture books

Annick is currently accepting picture book submissions. Keep in mind while crafting your story that picture books are typically 32 pages in length, and that a minimal amount of text is often better. Generally, we prefer to receive the manuscript alone, without illustrations, though you are welcome to include illustration suggestions in your submission. Please send to annickpress@annickpress.com.

Teen fiction

Annick Press invites writers to submit original proposals for teen novels that capture strong and distinctive contemporary voices. There should be creativity and authenticity in the use of language, reflecting a style that is lively, dramatic, and vivid. Please send a complete synopsis, together with a sample chapter, to annickpress@annickpress.com.

Middle reader fiction

Annick Press seeks middle reader fiction (8-11) that captures the imagination of readers and readily engages their interest. The story must be memorable, well-written, and notable for its originality. Humor, even if used occasionally, is an asset. The characters in the novel should come to life for the reader and the settings must be rich in detail. We look for gripping action, even though it may be delivered in a subtle form. Stories should involve the reader while simultaneously provoking thought and reflection. Please send a synopsis, together with a sample chapter to annickpress@annickpress.com.

Nonfiction

Originality is key to our nonfiction program, whether in the idea itself or in the approach to a given subject. How does your idea differentiate itself from books that may already exist on the same topic? The subject matter must have inherent appeal to the readership. The key is to combine the skills of a fiction writer, including narrative techniques, to draw the reader in; at the same time, there must be a dedication to accuracy. The text should encourage the reader's natural sense of wonder, and avoid any tendency to become didactic. Look for ways to highlight little-known details that will fascinate readers and encourage further exploration. The work should have a distinctive voice that uses language in an engaging manner. The topic must be thoroughly researched and a passion for the subject matter must be evident. The writing level must be age appropriate. Submissions:

Please send a synopsis, together with a sample chapter, to annickpress@annickpress.com.

For all submissions:

- Remember to include a cover letter telling us a little bit about yourself.
- Please address your submissions to the Associate Editor, to ensure we can properly direct anything that comes in. Due to the amount of submissions we receive, we regret that we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual manuscripts.

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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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