

The Writers Network News, February 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

"If writers were good businessmen, they'd have too much sense to be writers."
—Irvin S. Cobb

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Irvin S. Cobb was born in Paducah, Kentucky, and died in New York City in 1944. A journalist and humorist, he was best known for his colloquial handling of familiar situations with ironical humor.

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One: From the editor's desk: Just a Spoonful of...

Dear Fellow Writers:

Plagued with deep, painful leg cramps for many years, I've seen several doctors in search of a cure. Most told me to drink more water to avoid being dehydrated and sent me on my way. The problem was not dehydration, though. I drink plenty of water and I don't drink caffeine or alcohol, which can dehydrate a person.

Only one doctor performed a blood test to see if my potassium level was low. It wasn't.

The cramps continued, especially at night or whenever I remained still for a long period of time. I began drinking coconut water almost daily, because of its high potassium levels, and although I enjoy its taste, the nighttime cramps continued. My brother suggested magnesium pills. They may have helped a little, but still the cramps happened from time to time, and they were excruciating.

Desperate for an answer, I searched the internet and read about two homegrown remedies. One said to drink pickle juice, but didn't give specifics. How much should I drink? A teaspoon? A cup? A gallon? And what kind of pickle juice, kosher? Bread and butter? Gherkin? The other remedy said to eat a tablespoon of yellow mustard. At least the latter was more specific, but both alleged cures struck me as absurd and unfounded.

In an act of desperation around two o'clock one morning I rolled out of bed, limped into the kitchen in severe pain, and grabbed the mustard from my fridge. I slathered a small piece of bread with the yellow stuff, thinking I couldn't eat mustard by itself. I bit, chewed, and swallowed until I'd downed about a tablespoonful of the strong-tasting condiment. To my surprise the cramp released and the pain disappeared. What? Since then I've learned that I can just pour a tablespoon of mustard into a spoon and eat it a little at a time, followed by sips of water, and by the time I finish a tablespoonful, the cramp is gone. It never fails.

Recently while I was at my son's dinner party, we had sat around the table talking for quite some time when one of the guests leaped up from the table and limped away in pain. "What causes leg cramps?" she asked with a wince.

Everyone had a theory for the cause, but only I had a cure. "Grab some mustard from the refrigerator and eat a tablespoonful," I told her.

My son, a long-time veterinarian, and his friend, a laboratory manager with several science degrees, both belittled my suggestion. They stopped laughing and teasing me when our mutual friend's cramp went away instantly after she gobbled the mustard.

I'm noting the cure here for all my friends who suffer with leg cramps as well.

I wish all pains and problems were as simple as downing a tablespoon of mustard, but alas, it is not so. On the other hand, our trials and tribulations make for good stories, don't they? Of course they do, especially when we write about them to help others.

Keep writing, my friends, and when life gets too painful, take the cure, whatever it is, and then write about it.

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.
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Two: ASK THE BOOK DOCTOR

Percentages, Thoughts, and Single and Double Quotation Marks

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: In this sentence (for a nonfiction book), which version would be correct? (Or should it be something else?)

1. Most lenders expect your mortgage payments not to exceed 28% of your income, and that your entire debt obligations should not exceed 36%.
2. Most lenders expect your mortgage payments not to exceed 28 percent of your income, and that your entire debt obligations should not exceed 36 percent.
3. Most lenders expect your mortgage payments not to exceed twenty-eight percent of your income, and that your entire debt obligations should not exceed thirty-six percent.

A: You have every right to be confused, because all three ways are acceptable, depending upon what you're writing. If you are writing a book, the second example would be appropriate.

Here's part of the explanation from my book doctor's desk reference, *Purge Your Prose of Problems*:

Except at the beginning of sentences, percentages are usually expressed in numerals. In nontechnical contexts, the word percent is preferred, but in scientific or statistical copy or lists, use the symbol %. Nontechnical Context: Only 6 percent of the workers took early retirement. Beginning of Sentence: Twenty percent of the people did 80 percent of the work. Scientific/Statistical Copy: Fewer than 20% of the sharks reacted to the stimulus.

Q: I have a question regarding inner thoughts and monologue. I write mysteries in third-person deep POV. I have read many fiction works using a sentence and adding she/he thought. I've also seen the inner thoughts/monologue in italics.

I've recently read to leave off he/she thought as well as don't use italics because "real people have thoughts and speak to themselves, so it stands to reason a reader will know when characters are thinking or talking to themselves."

What is your advice?

A: A monologue is defined as a long speech by a character. By definition, then, monologues would be in quotation marks.

As for inner thoughts, the debate on the subject continues. The Chicago Manual of Style does not say to italicize thoughts, yet writers have been doing so for years. As long as thoughts are written in a way that readers will clearly see they are thoughts, we don't have to italicize them or add tags such as "he/she thought" or "he/she wondered."

Here is an example:

Jack examined the suspicious package. Is it a bomb? Should I open it, or should I take it to the police? If I move it, will it explode? He decided to leave it where it was and call in the experts.

Q: Please tell me how to punctuate this sentence: Donald told me, My sailor friend says, Once a Navy plane, always a Navy plane.

A: The answer depends upon the context. If the entire sentence is dialogue, it would be punctuated this way:

"Donald told me, 'My sailor friend says, "Once a Navy plane, always a Navy plane.'""

If the first portion is narrative, it would be punctuated this way:

Donald told me, "My sailor friend says, 'Once a Navy plane, always a Navy plane.'"

The rule is that single quotation marks go inside double quotation marks, but if a quote appears within a quote, use double quotation marks. At the end you must have all the closing marks. In the first instance, if the entire sentence is in dialogue, the end marks would be double quote, single quote, double quote. Whenever punctuation becomes awkward in this way, strong writers recast the sentence to avoid the awkwardness. It could be recast this way, for example:

"Donald told me that his sailor friend says, 'Once a Navy plane, always a Navy plane.'"

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. Read more "Ask the Book Doctor" questions and answers at 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

FREEBIES!

Member Terry Wynne asked me to add the following to this issue of The Writers Network News:

Can anyone use Cannon 226 Chromalife 100 Creative Park Premium ink cartridges? I have 2 yellow, 1 magenta, 1 cyan. All free if you can use them.

If you or someone you know can use these ink cartridges, contact Terry here: tlwynne@bellsouth.net

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PEN AMERICA ANNOUNCES FINALISTS

The list of the 2018 PEN America Literary Awards finalists has been released. This year's awards will confer nearly \$315,000 to writers and translators whose exceptional literary works were published in 2017 and span fiction, nonfiction, poetry, biography, essays, science writing, sports writing, translation, and more.

<https://pen.org/2018finalists/>

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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 examples below a few times and determine if you saw any errors.

We will have a party and give the best male and female bowlers a gift for blowing the best.

Biographies increase an early learner's thrust for knowledge.

Yes, even typos can be funny.

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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EARN \$1/WORD FOR TRAVEL WRITING

This article by a writer based in Nepal and New Zealand may help: <https://tinyurl.com/yadzjusy>

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SAGALYN LITERARY AGENCY ACQUIRED BY ICM

ICM Partners has acquired the Sagalyn Agency, a Washington, D.C.-based literary agency, following a four-year partnership between the two firms.

The move, announced by ICM publishing division co-heads Esther Newberg and Sloan Harris, follows the acquisitions of Headline Media News and the Royce Carlton Agency made by ICM in 2017, adding an office in the nation's capital to complement the firm's Los Angeles, New York, and London offices.

The Sagalyn Agency represents a wide array of journalists, historians, biographers, scientists, public thinkers, and novelists including Rick Atkinson, Susan Glasser, Michael Dobbs, Fred Kaplan, Dan Pink, Franklin Foer, and Robert Reich

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COMING SOON: AN EVEN BETTER WAY TO SAVE THOUSANDS ON EDITING

The latest edition of PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS—the sixth edition—is in the works. I am busily updating it to comply with the latest edition of THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE, and I have added even more entries than before. Anyone who orders the fifth edition at this time will get a notice that the book is on backorder while it is being updated to the sixth edition. Until the sixth edition is released, however, anyone who orders now will pay only the price of the fifth edition. Once the new edition is published, the new book will increase in cost.

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 more than 500 subjects.

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.

Order the sixth edition of PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS today at fifth-edition prices by clicking here: <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>. The



Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

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Earthshine, published irregularly in print and constantly online, features poetry and one or two pieces of cover art per printed volume. "When the online journal is full, a printed volume is produced and offered for sale. Subscriptions will be available as the publication becomes regular. The voice of Earthshine is one of illumination, compassion, humanity, and reason. Please see the submission guidelines webpage for updated information. Poems are the ultimate rumination, and if the world is to be saved, the poets will be needed, they are who see the connections between all things, and the patterns shared. We seek poetry of high literary quality, which will generate its own light for our readers."

Submission guidelines available at <http://www.earthshinepoetry.org/esSubmission.htm>

Accepted poets receive two copies of the printed journal.

Queries accepted by mail, e-mail

Sample: \$8.

Tries to respond in 2 months, query if longer.

Publish period after acceptance: Time between acceptance and publication is "almost immediate" for online publication and "TBD" for printed publication. Electronic publication is often immediate.

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PUBLISHING JOBS AVAILABLE

Want to work for a publishing company—from home? Outskirts Press is seeking three publishing consultants (sales positions).

Outskirts Press says the following:

Imagine a working/living lifestyle-blend that gives you the flexibility of living anywhere in the world while helping writers fulfill their dreams of publication. That's what it's like working with Outskirts Press. We know there's great talent all over the place and we are a 100% tele-commuting company. Regardless of your role at Outskirts Press, you will be free to work in an environment that makes you the most comfortable. Happy workers means excellent results for our clients. It's a win-win!

For more information go to <https://outskirtspress.com/rwd/openings.html>.

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SEEKING CONTENT DEVELOPMENT WRITERS AND EDITORS

We are an editorial services company providing comprehensive services to major educational publishers, and we are currently hiring writers and editors. We invite highly qualified, exceptional assessment writers with content expertise in at least one of the following subject areas to apply for consideration to join our team. Work will be done remotely, so you must be highly reliable and accurate, able to work independently, and fully comfortable with technology.

Writers with prior experience teaching test-prep courses (Kaplan, Princeton Review, etc.) are also encouraged to apply.

SEEKING content expert with at least one of the following areas of expertise:

- Math (GK-12)
- Science (GK-12)
- Social Studies (GK-12)
- English/Language Arts (GK-12)
- Higher Education subject areas (advanced HS/college - finance, medical, technical/field expertise, etc.)

SKILLS:

Successful candidates will have the following skills. Those who pass through resume review will be invited to take a writing or editing test. We look forward to hearing from you.

- strong content curriculum and assessment background
- ability to work independently
- meticulous attention to detail
- willingness to apply feedback and revise content as needed
- excellent communication skills
- ability to use technology (ftp, online authoring tools, etc.)
- ability to adhere to tight deadlines
- willingness to work occasionally on weekends

TO APPLY:

Interested writers with strong subject-specific experience in assessment should apply by sending a resume and cover letter. Please specify grade-level experience in a brief cover letter in the body of your email. In the subject line, please write: last name, first name - Subject - writer or editor; Example: WATERS, Janine - Math (G5-8) - writer.

Required experience:

- academic writing: 3 years

IMPORTANT!

Apply via this link only:

<http://indeedhi.re/2AAtr22>

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HOWARD FRANK MOSHER SHORT FICTION PRIZE

The Howard Frank Mosher Short Fiction Prize is an annual contest for short fiction and a chance for your fiction to be read by Hunger Mountain editors and guest judges.
One first place winner receives \$1,000 and online publication.
One runner-up receives \$100 and online publication.

Any writer residing in any country or U.S. state is eligible to enter; Hunger Mountain and VCFA staff and currently enrolled students are ineligible.

The deadline for 2018 is March 1, for both electronic and snail mail entries.

For electronic entries enter one original, unpublished story under 10,000 words. Your name and address should NOT appear on the story; we read contest entries blind. Click the link below to access our online submission system. Once in the submission manager, you'll need to choose "Howard Frank Mosher Short Fiction Prize" (scroll almost all the way to the bottom to find it; if you do not see the link it is because the link will only be open between Oct. 1 and March 1). Pay the \$20.00 entry fee and upload your entry:
<https://hungermtn.submittable.com/submit>

To enter by snail mail, send one original, unpublished story under 10,000 words. Include a \$20 entry fee. Make checks payable to Vermont College of Fine Arts. Entries should be postmarked by March 1. Your name or address should NOT appear anywhere on the story itself (we read entries blind.) Instead, enclose an index card with story title, your name, address, phone number, and email address. Entries should be typed, and on one side of the paper only. Send entries to:
HFMSFP
Hunger Mountain
Vermont College of Fine Arts
36 College Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Enter as many as you like, but each entry needs its own entry fee.

Send us your best work! We are looking for stories that linger, stories that grab us in our seats and shake us, stories that branch away from the cliché and grow deep roots of originality.

Have questions? Email us at hungermtn@vcfa.edu.

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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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