

The Writers Network News, June 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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Some links in this newsletter are shortened with help from www.tinyurl.com, a free service that converts long links to short ones.
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Writer's Quote of the Month

"Less is more, unless you're writing a 'how to get rich' book. Then even less is too much." —Alan Weiss PhD

Alan Weiss is a consultant, speaker, and author who gives more than twenty keynotes a year and has published more than sixty books and 500 articles.

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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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One: From the Editor's Desk: How to Find the Right Editor

Dear Fellow Writers:

Last weekend I sat on a panel at an event titled How to Find the Right Editor for Your Book. Two other editors from the Atlanta area sat on the panel, and our backgrounds and areas of expertise differed as much as our faces. Regardless of our dissimilarities, we were in agreement about how to find the right editor for a book, so the discussions were united in an important message to writers. In short we agreed on the following:

Do your homework/research.

1. Ask fellow writers which editors they used and ask about their experiences.
2. Check each potential editor's website.
3. Check each potential editor's references and testimonials.
4. Call each potential editor to get a gut feeling about the person.

Be sure to understand what type(s) of editing the editor does and whether that type fits your needs.

1. Does the editor line edit/copy edit only?
2. Does the editor developmental edit only?
3. Does the editor do both line editing and developmental editing?
4. If the editor does both, does the editor do both simultaneously or in separate projects with you paying for each portion separately?

Be prepared to pay a high price.

1. Ask if the editor charges by the word, by the page, by the hour, or by the project, and be sure you know in advance what your total cost will be.
2. Ask how the editor expects to get paid. Some want everything in advance (standard in the industry), but some will accept a partial payment up front. Some accept credit cards to help you finance the expense. Some ask that you pay an upcharge to use a credit card, but not all do.

Watch out for red flags.

1. If the editor refuses to give you names of prior clients for any reason, run! That editor either has no prior clients or has no good recommendations.
2. If the editor hedges about the expense and won't give you a definite figure, move on to the next editor.
3. If the editor promises a low cost, you will probably get a low-quality edit. (Anything under two cents a word or two dollars a page is suspicious, although not unusual for an editor just starting out.)
4. If the editor offers an unusually fast turnaround, that editor is not busy, is not experienced, and/or will not give your project the attention it deserves. Four to eight weeks is a reasonable turnaround time for a 50,000-word manuscript.

Listen to your gut. In the end, if you have good feelings about your potential editor, you should be satisfied with the work the two of you perform together.

I hope this information helps you, my readers, and you didn't even have to drive to Stone Mountain, Georgia, to attend the panel discussion.

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](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: Scene Shifts, Coined Words, and Finding an Agent

By Book Doctor Bobbie Christmas

Q: The members of my group write romance novels. I have always used \*\*\* to separate scenes within a chapter. One writer suggested that using asterisks or dingbats is no longer a publishing practice. Instead the new scene should be written with transitional language or use several blank lines, because readers are smart enough to figure out the change.

What do you think?

A: Not to be snarky, but I found it interesting that someone in your group presumes to know what is no longer a publishing practice. Instead of presuming anything, I turned to The Chicago Manual of Style, the book that sets the book publishing practices for American publishers. The latest edition of CMOS says that a set of asterisks (\*\*\*\*) is appropriate when a break stronger than a paragraph but not as strong as a subhead is required. The book says a blank line in a manuscript has the disadvantage that it may be missed if the break falls at the bottom of a page.

Even when using asterisks or line break, however, it is still wise to use language to help readers understand that a transition has taken place when starting a new scene.

Q: Sometimes a fiction or poetry writer invents a word to retain concision or rhythm or both. I cannot find a word for someone who acquiesces. I'm vacillating between my creations of *acquiescer* and *acquiescor*. Am I leaning toward a big, bad mistake? I certainly wouldn't do my inventive thing in nonfiction, but poetry seems to have no limits. I'd be interested if you addressed the tendency of creative writers to be, on occasion, wordsmiths of a different sort.

A: I think poets are wordsmiths of the highest order. If we didn't create new words or use old words in new ways, publishers would have no reason to produce newer versions of dictionaries. English is a changing, malleable language. Of your choices of new words, I like the second best, *acquiescor*, although both make me want to pronounce the word with a hard k sound in the last syllable. For that reason consider *concentor*, *accedor*, or even *surrenderer* instead.

Q: In my novel, if I use the word *Brobdingnagian* in dialogue, is capitalizing it adequate, or must I further acknowledge it as a word coined by another writer?

A: *Brobdingnagian* is an accepted word in the dictionary and, as you suspect, it is capitalized, but not because it is a coined word; it is capitalized because it refers to a specific land called *Brobdingnag*. There is, however, no need to give credit to Jonathan Smith, the author who created the fictional land and coined the word pertaining to that land.

Q: I am planning on writing a book. It's real life, but fictionalized, so it's a novel, not a biography. Could you give me some names and email addresses for literary agents that specialize in that field, and if not, could you suggest a book I could buy that'll help me?

A: You're correct that if you plan to write a novel (a book of fiction) you will need an agent if you don't plan to self-publish; however, don't put the cart before the horse. Unlike nonfiction, which many publishers will buy before it is written, fiction must be completed and polished before you pitch it to an agent or publisher. No agent will accept a client with an idea. Agents and publishers buy books, not ideas.

Agents often change agencies, retire, or even die, and writing a book takes time. Even if you manage to write and polish your book in only six or seven months, the information you acquire today will probably no longer be valid half a year from now.

After you write your book, have it edited professionally, revise it a final time, and are ready to send it out, only then should you research agents. I recommend using online resources, where the information is usually fresh and accurate. An even better way to find an agent is to attend writers conferences where agents are meeting with authors, hearing pitches, and often finding new clients.

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

MEMBERS WRITE...

Regarding my comment about weeping for the trees that would be cut down to publish a book written by a twelve-year-old, Pam Rauber wrote, "Your friends and significant other were correct in that you may have an impact on this child's writing, provided—and you can only hope—the child and parents take the markups as lessons learned."

She added, "You know and I know that when a manuscript is returned with red ink, a lot of writers can't face the arduous task of making the changes. Unless the parent instead of the child sits down and faces the overwhelming corrections, the possibility exists that the trees will be spared."

I told Pam, "I don't know which scenario to hope for, that the child learns lessons, makes the corrections, and the book gets published or that the parents and child are intimidated by all the required changes and the project gets canceled. Either way, it is out of my hands."

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Georgia Poetry Society Member Hosts Teen Poetry Slam in Florida

Jill Jennings is active in many organizations, and most recently acting as a Georgia Poetry Society member she produced, hosted, and served as judge for the first LeHigh Acres Teen Poetry Slam in LeHigh Acres, Florida. All contestants wrote and performed original poetry, much of it memorized. The top three winners earned cash prizes provided by the Friends of the East County Library. Jill lives in Fort Myers, Florida, and plans to host the event annually. She says, "I set up the Teen Poetry Slam because the branch of the library I frequent is always swarming with teenagers who get out of school at 1:30. They are usually waiting for parents to come get them. It seemed like a huge waste of their time and ability. Most of the kids are very interested in poetry, it turns out, so I guessed right. The library wants me to host an Open Mic starting next school year. The high school next door to the library, where my contestants came from, even has a poetry club. The library asked me to produce another spoken-word event for September for the teens. It went over that well!"

Thank you, Jill, for encouraging young writers. Perhaps you are nurturing the next national poet laureate. You never know.

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Here's my own exciting news. My brand-new website just launched. We're still working out a few kinks here and there, but it features my new logo. After 26 years, it was time to update my logo. The new site is easier to navigate and finally has a true shopping cart, so you don't have to order each book separately. Please give it a peek and let me know what you think. Especially be my beta readers and let me know what I can improve. <https://www.zebraeditor.com/>. Thank you for your feedback. --Bobbie Christmas

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Zona Rosa Writing & Living Dream Retreat, a.k.a. Pajama Party for Grown-Up Girls with Smarts

"Rosemary Daniell is enormously gifted. . . . She is one of the women by whom our age will be known in times to come." --Erica Jong

Rosemary has announced her 17th annual writers retreat at Tybee Island, 15 minutes from Savannah, Georgia, August 25 – September 1, 2018. Application and other information is available online at www.myzonarosa.com.

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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. I use quite a few manuslips in WRITE IN STYLE too. Here's one that looks fine on first read, but see if you can tell what I spotted and corrected in a client's manuscript.

She also had a digital recorder for the telephone hidden in the safe.

Did you get it? Because of the juxtaposition, the sentence says that the telephone was in the safe, whereas the author meant that the digital recorder was hidden in the safe. To correct the sentence, I recommend recasting it this way:

In the safe she had also hidden a digital recorder for the telephone.

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WRITING TIPS FROM JOHN GRISHAM

CBS interviewed Grisham, who gave the following tips for writers:

1. Write a page every day.
2. Don't write the first scene until you know the last.
3. Write your page each day at the same place and time.
4. Don't write a prologue.

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YOU TOO, CREATIVE WRITING PROFESSOR?

Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced this month that the university will investigate allegations of sexual misconduct against creative writing professor Junot Díaz. Díaz responded with a statement in the New York Times. "I take responsibility for my past," he said. "That is the reason I made the decision to tell the truth of my rape and its damaging aftermath. This conversation is important and must continue. I am listening to and learning from women's stories in this essential and overdue cultural movement. We must continue to teach all men about consent and boundaries."

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EDIT YOURSELF: SAVE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS

The latest edition of PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS—the sixth edition—is hot off the press. It has been expanded and updated to include the most important changes in the latest edition of THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE. It answers all the vital questions you may have as you work through the editing phase of your manuscript. Order your printed or PDF copy here: <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>

Where do the commas belong? (page 59)
What's the difference between "which" and "that?" (page 174)
How do good writers create believable characters? (page 53)
What is a dangling modifier, how can you recognize it, and how can you repair it? (page 66)
What is better, "towards," or "toward?" (page 180)
What's the difference between "assure," "insure," and "ensure?" (page 40)
When should you write out a number, and when should you use the numeral? (page 128)
Which is correct, T-shirt, tee shirt, or t-shirt? (page 171)

PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS answers these and more than 700 other questions, all vital to writers who want to edit their own books.

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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. It's even the resource that many book editors use.

Order your printed or PDF copy here: http://zebraeditor.com/book_purge_your_prose_of_problems.shtml

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#### CREATIVE WRITING FOR BEGINNERS

The reports on this page look helpful for beginners and homeschoolers. See <https://tinyurl.com/y7c2jczt>

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NEW, EASY ACCESS TO BOBBIE'S BLOG

Folks complained that they were not able to access my Write In Style blog without signing up for Google+, so with the launch of my new website, anyone can access my blog without signing in or committing to anything. My blog covers tips on creative writing as well as stories about my personal experiences. Access the new Write In Style blog here: <https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/>

Neurotica: Crazy Stories of Love, Lust, and Letting Go

For my non-writing-related blog, see my other blog titled "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, some are said, and all true. I reveal all at <https://neuroticastories.blogspot.com>.

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#### EARN \$\$ WRITING WHITE PAPERS

Read more about a lucrative way to make money as a writer.

<http://writersweekly.com/this-weeks-article/whitepapers>

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BECOME MY FRIEND ON FACEBOOK

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

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Get news, writing-related cartoons, immediate updates, and other good stuff for writers.

Like and follow Zebra Communications at <http://tinyurl.com/7vcxaxu>.

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#### CMOS ONLINE Q & A

Someone wrote to the Chicago Manual of Style Online to ask the following question, which has also arisen in many of the books I've edited:

Is word-for-word hyphenated? Is side-by-side hyphenated?

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.

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

Now in paperback or ebook!

My book on creative writing titled WRITE IN STYLE has won seven big awards. It helps writers in all stages of their writing careers learn what to look for in their manuscripts that they can improve. It helps writers find their fresh voice.

Order your copy today at <https://tinyurl.com/y8fp5nym>.

Warning: WRITE IN STYLE is not about grammar. It teaches writers how to strengthen their writing style. If you want a book on

grammar, punctuation, and rules of Chicago style, order PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS at <https://tinyurl.com/y8rpo3jp>.

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#### FLORIDA WRITERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The FWA puts on one of the best and biggest conferences in the Southeast, and you can get a discount if you sign up early for the October conference near Orlando, Florida. I'll be one of the many people giving helpful seminars. I hope to see you there. See <https://floridawriters.net/conferences/florida-writers-conference-2018/>

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AND NOW THE BAD NEWS

Those of us who write for magazines (or in my case used to write for magazines) have seen the downward trend that began around 2007 and continues. More and more magazines have been folding, and recently Folio magazine reported that the salaries for magazine editors have also declined. The reduction in salaries is understandable as magazines garner fewer readers and therefore fewer advertising dollars.

I'd love to hear from all of you who used to write magazine articles and those of you who are still doing so. Share your tips to help fellow journalists stay afloat. What have you done to buck the trend, or how did you shift your career path to continue to make money writing?

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Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

GLAMOUR MAGAZINE

Condé Nast
1 World Trade Center
New York NY 10007
Phone: (212)286-2860
www.glamour.com
Cyndi Leive, editor-in-chief.

Glamour is edited for the contemporary woman. It informs her of current trends, recommends how she can adapt them to her needs, and motivates her to take action.

Needs freelance articles on personal experience and travel. Query before submitting.

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##### HAL LEONARD PERFORMING ARTS PUBLISHING GROUP

Hal Leonard Performing Arts Publishing Group welcomes submissions pertaining to music and the performing arts.  
Proposals should be sent by e-mail. Please attach your proposal as a separate Word document or PDF.  
As a first step in submitting a manuscript, we recommend that you send a book proposal consisting of the following items:

1. A note describing the purpose and audience of your book, along with your background and qualifications
2. An outline or table of contents and an estimate of the length of the completed manuscript in numbers of words
3. A sample chapter or two
4. Sample illustrations as well as an estimate of the total numbers and types of illustrations planned for your book
5. Your schedule to complete the book

Due to the large volume of submissions, you may not receive a response from us.

Hal Leonard Performing Arts Publishing Group does not accept any songs, sheet music, musical scores, music manuscripts, or recordings for publication consideration.

Carol Flannery  
Editorial Director  
[submissions@halleonardbooks.com](mailto:submissions@halleonardbooks.com)

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KAR-BEN PUBLISHING SEEKS BOOKS WITH JEWISH THEMES

Editorial Office
Kar-Ben Publishing
241 First Ave. No.,
Minneapolis, MN 55401
editorial@karben.com

Kar-Ben publishes 15 - 20 new titles each year. All are books on Jewish themes for children and families. We are happy to review unsolicited manuscripts and artists' samples.

We consider fiction and nonfiction for preschool through middle school, including holiday books, life-cycle stories, Bible tales, folktales, stories about Israel, Jewish history, Jewish heroes, and any other Jewish topic of your imagination. In particular, we are looking for stories that reflect the rich cultural diversity of today's Jewish family.

Your story should be concise, have interesting, believable characters, and have action that holds the readers' attention. Good prose is far better than tortured verse.

We preferred that manuscripts be emailed as a Word document attachment. Don't forget to check spelling, grammar, facts, and typos. It is not necessary or desirable to include art or art direction with your text. Unfortunately, we do not have the time to critique unsolicited manuscripts.

We offer contracts based on royalty.

While we try to respond to all inquiries, if you do not receive a response from us within three months, we have likely decided not to publish your manuscript.

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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 18th 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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