

The Writers Network News, Another Happy Anniversary, December 2019

The Writers Network News, Another Happy Anniversary, December 2019

In This Issue

One: From the Editor's Desk: ANOTHER HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Two: Ask the Book Doctor—CHICAGO STYLE ISSUES

Three: Subjects of Interest to Writers

Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

Contents copyright 2019, Bobbie Christmas

No portion of this newsletter can be used without permission; however, you may forward the newsletter in its entirety to fellow writers.

Newsletter Sponsor

Zebra Communications
Excellent editing for maximum marketability since 1992
770/924-0528
<https://www.zebraeditor.com/>

~~~~~  
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).

~~~~~  
Some links in this newsletter may be shortened with help from www.tinyurl.com, a free service that converts long links to short ones.

~~~~~  
Writer's Quote of the Month

"A writer lives in awe of words, for they can be cruel or kind, and they can change their meanings right in front of you. They pick up flavors and odors like butter in a refrigerator." —John Steinbeck

John Ernst Steinbeck Jr. was an American author. He won the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humour and keen social perception." (Wikipedia)

~~~~~  
CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS? DON'T MISS AN ISSUE!

If your address changes and our email to you bounces, our system automatically unsubscribes you. If you plan to change your email address, subscribe again with your new address. We cannot add you or change your address, because of our double-opt-in, no-spam policy. Go to <https://www.zebraeditor.com/> and sign up with your new address.

~~~~~  
ONE: FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: ANOTHER HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dear Fellow Writers:

December 2019 marks the twenty-seventh year that I've been operating as Zebra Communications, working from the comfort of my home and helping fellow writers produce the best books and magazines possible. When I moved to the metro Atlanta area to start Zebra Communications in December 1992 I wasn't sure if I could make a living as an independent, but I took the leap of faith. I had completed all the right things to prepare. I had several decades of experience editing and writing for a wide variety of publications. I had saved enough money to live for the better part of a year, in case money didn't flow in right away. I had gotten advice from and worked with entrepreneurs.

Fully ready to strike out on my own, I had endured my fill with corporate bureaucracy.

At first I missed having an office to go to, having pleasant coworkers nearby, and having a reason to leave the house. It took me only one three-month assignment in-house for a magazine company to remind me that I really did want to work from home. Especially in Atlanta I didn't want to commute to and from an office in bad traffic. Since then I'm content to stay home with my dog, my refrigerator (for lunch), and my peaceful existence, silently editing manuscripts.

Life has been good, and apparently my skills must be good as well, because year after year work flows in, clients praise me and recommend me to others, and I get notices that books I've edited have hit the market.

I love being my own boss, but I'm harder on myself than any other boss could ever be. I'm detailed and determined and adamant about meeting every deadline and making every manuscript the best it can be. My reward is the praise I get from clients and the many clients who keep returning with new and even better-written books for me to edit.

Being your own boss is not for everyone, though. Some folks don't have the self-discipline to walk to their computers and work until enough work is completed to stop for the day. Some are distracted by phone calls, television, dirty dishes, laundry, and other things. Some can't work alone or can't work in silence, devoid of fellow coworkers. I'm blessed that I have had none of those problems.

I work hard, but I love being able to set my own schedule. If I go bowling in the morning I can work later that evening to make up for it. If I have to leave town or want to take a vacation, I can work harder to stay ahead and not get behind on my work. If my dog asks me to take him for a walk, though, that's when it's time for me to take a break. Breaks are allowed, aren't they?

Consider this a love letter to all my clients who have made my working life a dream come true. They benefit and I get to work from home. It's a win-win if ever I saw one.

Happy anniversary to Zebra Communications and to me. We have made a loving couple for twenty-seven years and counting. Oh, and happy holidays to all the folks who receive my newsletters. Be sure to send in your accomplishments to share with others as well.

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, coordinator of the Florida Writers Association Editors Helping Writers service, and senior editor of *Enjoy Cherokee Magazine*

If someone forwarded this newsletter to you, please sign up to get your own subscription. Simply go to <https://www.zebraeditor.com/> to subscribe to The Writers Network News. My promise: I never share your address or send out spam.

%%%%%%%%%

## TWO: ASK THE BOOK DOCTOR

### CHICAGO STYLE ISSUES

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: You told me that dog breeds don't get capitalized, right? Border collie is the one in question. I prefer to do it out of respect, but that's not what The Chicago Manual of Style says, right?

A: Folks who write books should indeed adhere to Chicago style, which dictates that unless border collie is at the beginning of a sentence, both words should be in lowercase. What gets uppercased are proper nouns associated with breeds, such as German shepherd, Doberman pinscher, and French poodle.

Q: In one of your blog entries you wrote, "I did not know if the driver that hit the hydrant was okay."

In all my editing I have changed such a construction to "the driver who hit the hydrant . . ." I have always believed it was supposed to be "who" rather than "that" when referencing a person. Have I been wrong all these years?

A: Good question. It even made me look it up to double-check my own knowledge.

CMOS 5.56 seventeenth edition (page 245) states, "That refers to a human, animal, or thing."

Because driver is a thing, I used that. I would definitely use who with a name, though. For example I would write, "I did not know if John, who hit the hydrant, was okay."

Q: Someone in my writing group suggested that using a hyphen in a compound word isn't important and that dropping the hyphen is a growing trend.

At the Florida Writers Association conference last October, I attended your session on Chicago style. I can't recall anything about eliminating hyphens used in compound words. If I point out missing hyphens when judging a manuscript, am I out of step? Are hyphens in compound words no longer considered necessary punctuation?

A: I have not heard of an alleged trend toward dropping hyphens. Perhaps the following information on hyphens will help.

Hyphens join compound adjectives that modify and precede a noun. (a seven-year-old boy, his reddish-brown hair, a well-crafted table)

No space should appear before a hyphen. A space can, however, appear after a hyphen when two or more hyphenated words are linked in a sentence. Example: She had a two- and a three-year plan.

When a noun does not follow a compound adjective, a hyphen usually is unnecessary. (a boy of seven years, his hair was reddish brown, the table was well crafted.)

The only exception is not a trend but a rule that states no hyphen should separate an adverb ending in "ly" and an adjective. For example, a newly-minted coin is incorrect; the correct form is newly minted coin. Otherwise a hyphen is necessary for clarity when two words modify a third; for example, a high-rise apartment.

Q: I am repeatedly seeing introductory subordinate clauses without commas to separate them from the main (independent) clauses. I see it in fiction as well as nonfiction. I find it confusing, slowing down my reading, as I reread the beginning of the sentence to mentally determine where the comma should be. Is this comma rule (or rather lack of!) in the stylebooks now?

A: Yes, it is. The Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition states that no comma is necessary after a brief introductory phrase unless it is needed for clarity. One of my publishers has defined a "brief introductory phrase" as anything four words or fewer, but as an editor, I also use my gut to determine if the comma is needed after a short introductory phrase. You'll have to accept that the following type of sentence is acceptable today with book publishers: Everything in life changes whether you want it to or not.

Q: How do I write Biology 101 in dialogue?

A: Here's an example: "Jerry, what time does biology one oh one start?" Note that biology is capitalized only if it is the first word in the sentence.

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) or [BZebra@aol.com](mailto:BZebra@aol.com). Read Bobbie's Zebra Communications blog at <https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/>.

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 from Amazon at <https://tinyurl.com/y7ppcdkd> or buy it directly at <https://tinyurl.com/y7p9xkbb>.  
%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%

### THREE: SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO WRITERS

#### EDITING TIP: ALRIGHT/ALL RIGHT

When is alright right? Never!  
Alright is substandard English. The correct form is all right.

(Excerpt from *PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS*, a book doctor's desk reference, available only at [ZebraEditor.com](http://ZebraEditor.com).)

~~~~~

WRITING HUMOR?

Thanks to a 2017 study, no one has to feel embarrassed for laughing at benign, goofy-sounding words again. This peer-reviewed research, published in "Behavior Research Methods" by University of Warwick researchers, identified the funniest words in the English language. Warning: Some of the words are racy, but read on to discover universally funny words and words that men found funny and women found funny. <https://tinyurl.com/rlcasaa>

~~~~~

#### EASY ACCESS TO BOBBIE'S BLOGS

Read creative writing tips as well as some of my personal experiences. Access the Write In Style blog here:  
<https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/>

On the other hand, for my relationship-related blog, see my blog titled "Neurotica: Crazy Stories of Love, Lust, and Letting Go." If you like to read about disastrous dates and ridiculous relationships, I've got a ton of them, and they all happened to me. Some are funny, some are a little sexy, some are sad, and all true. My latest addition is a little scary, because it happened when I was only six years old. Read it here: <https://neuroticastories.blogspot.com>.

~~~~~

INTERESTED IN WRITING NEWS?

The Guardian offers a comprehensive article about news writing here: <https://tinyurl.com/tv32yum>

~~~~~

#### ANGRY FEMALE WRITERS

In nonfiction a raft of books has examined women's anger from personal and political angles, in memoirs, essay collections, and hybrids of the two. Read what The New York Times has to say on the subject. <https://tinyurl.com/rlrg76e>

~~~~~

BE 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 <https://tinyurl.com/ydyn3pcu>.

~~~~~

#### CMOS ONLINE Q&A

This month someone posed the following question to The Chicago Manual of Style Online:

Q. Is it correct to use commas before and after "myself," "himself," "herself," "itself," etc. in cases like "I, myself, wouldn't wear that dress"?

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, and much more. If you write fiction or nonfiction books, you will want to know about Chicago style or be sure to use a professional book editor intimately familiar with Chicago style.

~~~~~

MANUSLIP TIME

We writers all make mistakes, but when I find funny errors in manuscripts I'm editing, I save them and call them manuslips. *WRITE IN STYLE* uses many manuslips, and here are a few that aren't in the book. I hope they make the grammarian in you grin a little:

They spread a bunch of horrible tales about her, most of which were nothing but lies, pigments of their distorted imaginations. [Intended word: figments]

He pictured her as fat and lumpy with a pocked face and shallow skin. [Intended word: sallow]

His eyes were glued to mine, not daring to leave at any sound or distraction. [Not only did his eyes have the misfortune of being glued,

but his eyes also did not dare to leave.]

~~~~~

HILARIOUS HEADLINES

I have seen some of these crazy headlines, but not all of them. Click here and enjoy:

<https://tinyurl.com/r95jt5o>

~~~~~

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

In October I was delighted to receive this message:

On the advice of an editor, I purchased WRITE IN STYLE about eighteen months ago. This little gem catapulted my fiction writing style to a whole new level.

My new editor told me the other day that she can't believe I have not been published, given the high quality of the work I submitted to her for copy-editing. High praise indeed!

I wish I had read WRITE IN STYLE before I submitted my first novel to agents three years ago. No wonder they rejected my work.

I'm happy to say that since adopting a more vigorous editing pen, thanks to you, my work has improved immeasurably (Oops! Adverb sneaked in.)

This book should be compulsory reading for any and all writers.

Sincerely,

Michele G. Charrier

Yes, WRITE IN STYLE teaches you how to strengthen your writing style and create a fresh voice, one that publishers and readers want to read.

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

~~~~~

%%%%%%%%%

FOUR: CONTESTS, AGENTS, AND MARKETS

IN THE FRAY SEEKS ARTICLES ON CULTURES AND COMPASSION

We are looking for writers and artists who can contribute original pieces in the categories described below. Generally speaking, feature articles are in the range of 1,000 to 4,000 words. Blog posts (unpaid) are 1,000 words or shorter.

We prefer pieces with a strong connection to the magazine's themes of understanding other people and cultures, encouraging empathy and compassion, and defying categories and conventions. Review essays must concern works of relevance to the magazine's themes and discuss those issues at length.

The types of pieces we publish, and the honorariums we pay, are described below. We are not publishing fiction or poetry.

- News (in-depth profiles and other reportage): \$50-100
- Commentary (personal essays, op-eds, and travel writing): \$25-75
- Art (photo essays, artwork, videos, multimedia projects, and accompanying photos/art): \$25-75
- Interviews (Q&As): \$25-75
- Reviews (reviews of books, film, music, and art): \$20-50 (plus copy of book, event admission, etc., when possible)
- Blog (shorter pieces, in any genre): unpaid

We will make a determination after reviewing your first draft whether a piece will be published as a feature article or an unpaid blog post.

See full submissions guidelines here: <https://inthefray.org/submissions/>

~~~~~

CINASTE OPEN TO FREELANCE SUBMISSIONS

Cineaste (subtitled "America's Leading Magazine on the Art and Politics of the Cinema") is a quarterly publication that offers a social, political, and aesthetic perspective on the cinema. We are interested in all areas of the cinema, including Hollywood films (old and new), American independent cinema, quality European films, and the cinema of developing nations. Familiarity with our editorial policies and publishing history is a must for authors. The most frequent reason we reject material is that the potential contributor has sent material that because of its length, style, or subject matter, is clearly inappropriate for either our magazine or our website (where we post some contributions we are unable to publish in the magazine as "Web Exclusives").

Our target audience is the intelligent general public, a public that is fairly sophisticated about both art and politics. No matter how complex the ideas or arguments advanced, we demand readability. We think it is the job of the writer to clarify his or her thoughts and not for the reader to decipher clumsy formulations. We dislike academic jargon, obtuse Marxist terminology, film-buff trivia, show-biz references, or obscure theoretical references. We do not want our writers, for example, to speak of how they have "read" or "decoded" a film, but to convey how they have viewed, analyzed, and critically interpreted a film. Discussing both the strengths and weaknesses of a film is more important to us than uncritically promoting it simply because the film's producers or politics are agreeable. For guidelines see <https://www.cineaste.com/writers-guidelines>.

~~~~~

BITCH MEDIA

Bitch Media's content demonstrates our commitment to building community, deepening feminist conscience (individual and collective),

and challenging systematic and cultural oppression with three standards.

(1) We create and curate original, responsive, interrogative, and engaging content that prioritizes the complex and shifting understandings of feminisms as a personal tool and social movement for liberation, justice, identity, and growth.

(2) We celebrate content that best challenges, reflects, equips, and empowers diverse feminist communities who are in robust conversation with mainstream media and pop culture.

(3) We choose and shape editorial content to deliver boldness characterized by originality, depth of insight, savvy, wit, and the practice of claiming an elusive truth that is either avoided by or escapes mainstream media outlets. To submit, create an account here:

<https://tinyurl.com/sorpsb7>

~~~~~

%%%%%%%%%

+++++

Do YOU have news for The Writers Network News? Send it in the body of an email to Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or bzebra@aol.com.

Deadline: 18th 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

<https://www.zebraeditor.com/> and signing up for The Writers Network News.

+++++

With the exception of Zebra Communications, information in this newsletter is not to be construed as an endorsement. Research all information and study every stipulation before you enter a competition, pitch or accept an assignment, spend money, or sell your work.

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

+++++