

In This Issue of The Writers Network News...

One: From the Editor's Desk: LET'S TALK CHICKEN

Two: Ask the Book Doctor— ALL ABOUT BLOGS

Three: Subjects of Interest to Writers

Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

-----  
The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

Contents copyright 2020, 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](http://www.tinyurl.com), a free service that converts long links to short ones.

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

"Every writer, by the way he uses the language, reveals something of his spirit, his habits, his capacities, his bias.... Avoid the elaborate, the pretentious, the coy, and the cute. Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready, and able." —William Strunk, Jr./E. B. White

William Strunk, Jr., was an American professor of English at Cornell University, and E. B. White was one of his former students. Together they penned the concise basic book for writers titled THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE, a highly influential guide to English usage. The book is still an excellent resource for writers of any genre, fiction or nonfiction, and it is commonly called STRUNK & WHITE.

Elwyn Brooks White was a contributor to The New Yorker magazine for more than fifty years. In addition to coauthoring THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE, he wrote books for children, including STUART LITTLE, CHARLOTTE'S WEB, and THE TRUMPET OF THE SWAN.

~~~~~  
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: LET'S TALK CHICKEN

Dear Fellow Writers:

I refuse to write about the obvious; we've heard enough about the pandemic to last us a lifetime. I do hope you are all well, taking the right precautions, and using your time to write. I'm well and secluded and intend to stay that way. I am fortunate that I've run my editing and writing business from home for more than a quarter of a century, so working from home is nothing new to me.

Let's move on to other subjects.

Lately much of my time has been spent editing potential entries to a specific writing contest. The competition gave a one-word theme that submissions had to follow as well as a maximum word count and detailed formatting issues. I'm pleased to see the quality of the submissions and how they definitely follow the theme. What shocks me, though, is how few paid attention to the maximum word count or the required format. It is my job as an editor to fix errors in spelling, word choice, punctuation, or lack of clarity. It is not the job of any editor to reformat a manuscript or cut something down to fit a specific word count.

Whenever submitting anything for potential acceptance, it is vital not only to write well and possibly get your piece edited professionally, but also to follow every other detail of the submission requirements. Rarely do contests or publishers accept submissions that don't follow their guidelines. They have reasons for their guidelines. Please follow them!

On to the next subject, a personal one. This week I learned a new term: woody chicken. For months I've been hearing and reading the chatter about the crispy chicken sandwich at Popeye's. I rarely eat fast food, but even my own son, who not only is a foodie but also doesn't eat fast food, praised the crispy chicken sandwich at Popeye's. He kept asking if I'd tried it. I had an ophthalmology appointment early this month, though, and the doctor's office is next door to a Popeye's. It was lunchtime, so I drove over and ordered a crispy chicken sandwich. It definitely was crispy, and I was enjoying it up to the point that I reached the thickest part of the chicken breast. It still tasted the same, but it felt like I was biting into a pencil eraser. Later I had to discuss the experience with my son, who had touted the excellence of Popeye's crispy chicken sandwich.

"Parts of it had the texture of rubber," I told my son, a veterinarian living and practicing in Fairfax, Virginia.

"Oh, yes," he said. "That happens sometimes. It's called woody chicken."

It turns out woody chicken is a genetic fluke found sometimes in dark meat, which I usually eat, but much more often in white meat. I looked up the subject and learned more, and now I'm even more fond of dark meat. As a lover of words (although not a lover of white-meat chicken), I consider it a day well spent when I learn a new word or term.

Have you encountered woody chicken? What's been your experience? Have you learned a new word or phrase recently? Care to share it?

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

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

ALL ABOUT BLOGS

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: Maybe I'm too old to understand all this new technology, but what on earth is a blog?

A: The term "blog" is a blend of two words, "web" and "log." In general a blog is a journal published on the Internet. Bloggers (those who write blogs) can write journal entries themselves, invite others to write entries, and invite others to leave comments. They then can either permit access to anyone or require people to subscribe, sometimes for a fee.

Most blogs cover a specific subject, such as writing, editing, cooking, traveling, music, or photography. Many authors use blogs to build a platform—a following of loyal readers who might then buy the authors' books.

Q: Has anyone ever tried blogging a new novel? For example putting up a chapter or two every week?

A: I'm sure many people have done so. One person who comes to mind is Julie Foster, who set out to follow Julia Childs's recipes and blog about her experiences. Foster turned her blog into a book titled JULIE/JULIA, which later also became the basis for a movie.

A word of warning here, however. Some publishers consider anything that has been published, even as a blog on the Internet, as published. Those publishers may refuse to buy a book that was once a blog because first rights are no longer available. If you plan to self-publish, however, you don't have to worry about such things.

Q: I need to establish a blog site. There seems to be a million choices of providers. Can you tell me if some are better sites for writers, and if so, what are they? Any information would be appreciated.

A: I don't know if one site is better than another, but I originally used Blogger, which was run by Google. I chose it because it had no associated fees and because it was easy to use. Ease of use was vital to me, because I'm not a techie.

WordPress is another popular blog hosting site, but it has (or had) limitations. For example, if you use a guest blogger, your name may still be listed as the author, which can frustrate guest bloggers. I know, because I was a guest blogger on a WordPress site, but the site always appeared to say the content was written by the person who hosted the blog, rather than by me.

Now my blog appears directly on my website, which has been the best way to blog. In this way folks need only to access my website to learn about me, learn about my services, and also read my blog entries. See <https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/>. My webmaster set up my latest blog system using WordPress.

Q: Do I need to pay an editor to edit my blog entries before I post them?

A: Have you ever asked a barber if you need a haircut? Ask an editor if you should use an editor, and you can anticipate the obvious answer.

Jokes aside, the actual answer depends on the purpose of your blog and whether it is informal or formal. If you're writing an informal blog about your day-to-day adventures and simply want your friends to read it, feel free to skip paying an editor. If you are a professional and your blog is intended to bring in business, or if you are an author trying to build a platform of dedicated readers who will then buy your books, then yes, by all means you need to be sure your blog posts are professionally edited before you post them.

I have several clients who keep me on retainer to edit their blog entries before they post them. They are all professionals who want to reach current and prospective clients. Some of these clients plan to combine their blog posts into books later, and voila! The books will have already been edited.

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

MEMBERS WRITE

Michele Sheldon wrote, "I've been reading your newsletters for years and love them. I look forward to each one arriving in my inbox. [In the October] newsletter you state to email you if I'd like a copy of your report--Bobbie's Ten Commandments of Creativity. I would like this please, if it's still available."

I responded, "It's still available. Many people have asked for it, so it will be available for a long time."

Note: If any other readers would like a copy of this report, send me an email at [Bzebra@aol.com](mailto:Bzebra@aol.com).

--

Our watchful-eyed friend and fellow editor Cynthia MacGregor sent in this dangling modifier she found in an article in THE CONVERSATION, reprinted on the Snopes site:

In the day after the January Iranian attack on U.S. military bases in Iraq, reporter Jane Lytvynenko at Buzzfeed documented numerous instances of old photos or videos being presented as evidence of the attack on social media.

Cyn notes, "An attack on social media? What is the world coming to? LOL"

--

Speaking of watchful eyes, Rich Moser spotted an oversight in last month's "Ask the Book Doctor" column and wrote, "I don't know whose responsibility it was to catch this, but it has my nomination for the Oxymoron of the Year: split infinities." He joked, "It's almost too nebulous to contemplate."

The error came when I copied and pasted a question from a reader that started, "One person in our writers group stated that avoiding split infinities is old hat."

I thanked Rich, an astrologer, for his eagle eye and tongue in cheek.

~~~~~  
EDITING TIPS: DUMPSTER

While you may think that addressing a word such as “dumpster” is odd when it comes to editing tips, it’s not odd to me. My job requires that I maintain hundreds of thousands of bits of information and stay on top of trends in the English language. For years the word “Dumpster” was considered a brand name and had to be capitalized. I often passed that information on to my clients when I edited books containing reference to those refuse bins. I recently had cause to look the word up again in Merriam-Webster, the dictionary that book publishers use, and found that M-W now accepts “dumpster” in lowercase. I learn something new every day that I edit, and today I’m passing it along to you.

I will note that change in my next edition of PURGE YOUR PROSE OF PROBLEMS (available on my website), but for now my book doctor desk reference book still says always to capitalize the term. Either way—capitalized or not—is acceptable, however.

~~~~~  
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>.

~~~~~  
After Hachette Book Group announced it had acquired rights to publish Woody Allen’s autobiography, it announced that it would not publish the book and would return all rights to the author. Why? Its employees protested the deal, citing that Allen’s stepdaughter had long accused him of abuse.

~~~~~  
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. I am convinced “the prophet Isaiah” in CMOS 8.93 is a typo. So my question is: Really? Is “prophet” really down in “the prophet Isaiah”? Or “apostle” in “the apostle Paul”?

The manuscripts I edit often don’t reflect correct use of capital letters. The publishers of CMOS give a clear perspective.

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

Sometimes writers are unaware of writing awkward or easily misinterpreted sentences and headlines. The result can sometimes be funny, and I call them manuslips.

My favorite airline, Delta, sent me a notice of what it’s doing in the face of the coronavirus situation and said, “A command center in Atlanta has been stood up to guide our response.” Oh, Delta! Please saying you haven’t been stood up! The sentence needed to be rewritten, perhaps this way: “We have created a command center in Atlanta to guide our response.”

--  
Note: When I extract manuslips from manuscripts I edit—manuscripts that are not published anywhere yet—I always remove character identifications so the errors are not attributable to any specific manuscript or author.

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

Five-time-award-winning WRITE IN STYLE leaves grammar to the grammarians. Instead it uses humor and expertise to show writers how to strengthen their writing style and create a fresh voice. Available as an e-book or printed.

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

~~~~~  
SELF-PUBLISHING VERSUS TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Can’t decide whether to self-publish or seek a publisher? Whether to print on demand or lower the cost by printing a large quantity? This free white paper shows you all the options as well as the advantages and drawbacks of each potential method of publishing. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/self-publishing-vs-traditional-publishing-which-one-right-christmas/>

%%%%%%%%%

~~~~~  
Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

BENNINGTON REVIEW  
<http://www.benningtonreview.org/about>

A journal of innovative, intelligent, and moving poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and film writing, Bennington Review is a national biannual print journal housed at Bennington College.

We intend to reinforce the value of the bound print journal as an intimate, curated cultural space in which a reader can encounter and experience new work with a degree of immersion not wholly possible through other media.

Bennington Review is published twice a year in print form, summer and winter. Submissions are customarily read every fall, winter, and spring. The current submissions period is from November 1, 2019 to May 15, 2020.

We welcome submissions from established and emerging writers alike. We accept unsolicited submissions only through Submittable. There is, at present, no reading fee. We are unable to respond to paper submissions or unsolicited email submissions or to comment on individual pieces.

We pay contributors \$100 for prose of six typeset pages and under, \$200 for prose of over six typeset pages, and \$20 per poem, in addition to two copies of the issue in which the piece is published, and a copy of the subsequent issue.

~~~~~

Full submission guidelines: <https://www.kensingtonbooks.com/page.aspx/LyricalSubmissions>

Kensington is actively looking for submissions for Lyrical Press. We are looking for fresh stories in a variety of categories, including all romance genres (specifically suspense and historicals with unique settings), compelling psychological suspense fiction, thrillers, women’s fiction, new adult, and cozy mysteries. We’re hoping to find edgy and daring voices that readers will love. We welcome novellas, serials, and full-length novels as long as they tell a satisfying and well-written story.

**SUBMIT TO ONE EDITOR ONLY.** From the list of each editor’s areas of interest (see the website for this information), determine which one would be best suited for your submission, or the most interested in the type of book you are proposing. Address the submission to that editor’s attention.

We are currently not accepting Children’s, Middle Grade, Young Adult or Poetry submissions.

~~~~~  
ONE STORY

One Story is an award-winning literary magazine that publishes one story at a time. Subscribers receive one curated and edited work of short fiction each month in the mail or on their digital devices. One Story is seeking literary fiction. Because of our format, we can accept stories only between 3,000 and 8,000 words. They can be any style and on any subject as long as they are good. We are looking for stories that leave readers feeling satisfied and are strong enough to stand alone.

One Story pays \$500 and 25 contributors copies for First Serial North American rights. All rights will revert to the author following publication.

Submission Periods: January 15 - May 31 and September 8 - November 14

Full submission guidelines: <https://www.one-story.com/index.php?page=submit>

+++++  
Do YOU have news for The Writers Network News? Send it in the body of an email to [Bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:Bobbie@zebraeditor.com) or [bzebra@aol.com](mailto: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!

+++++