

The Writers Network News, The New Normal, May 2021

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The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

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Writer's Quote of the Month

Howard Nemerov, a literature professor and author of several books of poetry, wrote, "Jokes concentrate on the most sensitive areas of human concern: sex, death, religion, and the most powerful institutions of society; and poems do the same."

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ONE: From the Editor's Desk—The New Normal

Dear Fellow Writers:

"The New Normal" is not a phrase I enjoy thinking about, because after one of my major operations that was bound to have an effect on my everyday life, my doctor told me it would take about a year to figure out my new normal. After a year I didn't like the new normal, but I learned to live with it.

As we get vaccinated and ease back into life after having been confined, isolated, restricted, and distanced from our usual people and activities, we cannot instantly go back to the old ways. We have a new normal. We don't have to like it, but we do have to live with it. We still have to wear masks in most public places, regardless of whether we're fully vaccinated. We'll probably see facial coverings here and there for many years to come, now that we've learned how kind it is to not spread our germs, especially when we don't feel well. Did you notice that winter colds and flu cases were practically nonexistent because we were wearing masks and not touching each other?

Ah, touching. I'm not used to it. When I bowl I now applaud instead of giving high-fives to folks who make a spare or strike. That's my new normal. I don't like it, but it's a safer way to be around people, even vaccinated ones.

In the realm of writing, I've watched a new normal emerge as well. Just a few decades ago anyone who self-published was considered narcissistic and fake. Nowadays self-publishing has become acceptable and sometimes mandatory. I don't like to see unedited or poorly written books get published, but it's the unfortunate new normal. I don't like when writers get swept into the self-publishing spiral and spend more money than necessary or have trouble selling their books, either. The new normal, then, is that today's writers must be skilled in writing, avoid the pitfalls of self-publishing, and also know how to market their books. Because of the depth of knowledge that successful self-publishing requires, I don't like the new normal, but it's here to stay.

THREE: Of Interest to Writers

Members Write . . .

Renea Winchester wrote, "I am printing out the following as it may be one of your best quotes ever: 'Lazy writers may grumble about having to stick to rules and guidelines, but adhering to them makes the difference between weak writing and lasting literature.'"

I thanked Renea for making me look good.

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Pam Lord wrote, "I wish your newsletter came two times a month. It's one bright spot in the dreck of email cluttering up my monthly cyberspace." She added, "Just bought WRITE IN STYLE and am taking notes before I dissect my novel. The stuff you show is simple. Why didn't any of my English teachers show it? I got A's in all those classes many years ago, and your basic tips are gold. We got the Bronze Age version in school."

She tickled me with her anecdote: "I was seven or so, and my older sister and brother were in high school. There was a copy of Roget's Thesaurus well thumbed, and I was intrigued. I knew it had to be about a French boy, Roget—Roger in English—and his dinosaur—saurus like in tyrannosaurus—and I loved dinosaurs. I opened the book and was aghast, shocked, and disappointed. No Roger ... no dinosaur ... just word lists."

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I heard this from Kjirstin Youngberg about how as an editor I avoided an ego battle with a writer: "Enjoyed how you took a walk and then came back to explain to the writer why you did what you did to his 'literary' work. I've had to face similar challenges over the years and have made a few friends that way who could have easily become enemies."

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Words Writers Should Know

#### Zeugma

Merriam-Webster has all this interesting information to say about this word: Zeugma: the use of a word to modify or govern two or more words usually in such a manner that it applies to each in a different sense or makes sense with only one (as in "opened the door and her heart to the homeless boy")

Zeugma, like the pun, is economical: it contracts two sentences into one . . . it links unrelated terms—mental with moral, abstract with physical, high with low—and thus generates surprise. (Walter Redfern, Puns) "Zeugma," which has been a part of the English language since the 15th century, comes from Greek, where it literally means "joining." The Greek word has another connection to English as well. In the early 1970s, a chemistry professor named Paul Lauterbur developed a technique for producing images of internal organs. He called it "zeugmatography," because it involved the joining of magnetic fields. Lauterbur was awarded a Nobel Prize, but the name he chose didn't stick. The technique is known today as magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI.

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Bobbie's Blog

Newest blog post: "At What Point Can You Call Yourself a Writer?"

See <https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/at-what-point-can-you-call-yourself-a-writer/>.

For other writing tips and some personal experiences, access the Write In Style blog here:
<https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/>

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#### Norton Publisher Takes Blake Bailey Book Off Market

The New York Times reported that Julia A. Reidhead, president of publisher W.W. Norton, announced that the publisher will permanently take Blake Bailey's biography of Philip Roth out of print, following allegations that Bailey sexually assaulted multiple women and behaved inappropriately toward his students when he was an eighth grade English teacher.

The announcement came after the publisher decided last week that it would stop shipping and promoting the title, which it released earlier in April. On Wednesday, the digital versions of the book were no longer available on Amazon or Barnes & Noble's sites, and Recorded Books, which published the audio version, said it was removing it from sale. It wasn't immediately clear what would happen with existing printed copies of the book.

Reidhead also said that Norton would make a donation in the amount of the advance it paid to Bailey, who received a mid-six-figure book deal, to organizations that support sexual assault survivors and victims of sexual harassment.

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Get news, writing-related cartoons, immediate updates, and other good stuff for writers.
Like and follow Zebra Communications at <https://tinyurl.com/ydyn3pcu>.

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#### CMOS Online Q & A

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

Q. Would it be "the Cherokee Nation" or "the Cherokee nation"?

For the detailed and interesting 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.

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Want to Start Freelancing?

Elna Cain gives twenty ways beginners can land freelance writing work.
<https://elnacain.com/blog/20-ways-find-freelance-writing-jobs/>

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FOUR: Contests, Agents, and Markets

73 New Literary Magazines

Lit Mag News Roundup found new markets for literary works. Check them all out at <https://tinyurl.com/3nzwmhnr>

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The Preservation Foundation Seeks Unpublished Writers

Our purpose is to publish your works, and you don't have to enter any contests for us to do that. There is no payment except for the winners of contests, however.

Rules for the 2021-2022 contests for previously unpublished writers: For purposes of these contests, unpublished writers are defined as those whose job pay is not now or was not earlier based on their writing abilities or their freelance writing never produced revenues of over \$500.00 in any single year.

Note: We love to read and post your non-contest stories, both fiction and nonfiction, so send them in. After all, our primary purpose is to preserve those stories for your children and grandchildren and maybe even for your grandchildren's children. Regular Story Submissions--No Limit. While there is a limit of two entries in each of the contests, there is no limit for stories not meant for the contests, whether nonfiction or fiction.

Rules For the 2021-2022 Contests

Stories must be between 1000 and 10,000 words in length. Stories from any country are fine, although they must be written in English. Language should be free of words or scenes not suitable for children, since many children read the stories and some post their stories. Be sure your stories are ready for publication. We do not provide copy editing services. If they aren't ready to go up on the site, don't send them until they are. We like to include a short author's introduction at the beginning and a brief biography of the author at the end. This helps us determine if you are truly an "unpublished writer." Send these along in the body of your email or as attachments. Stories should be submitted as electronic text files. See How to submit a story here: <http://www.storyhouse.org/how.html>

First prize in each category will be \$200. Runners-up will receive \$100. Winners, runners-up, and finalists in each category will receive certificates of recognition suitable for framing.

Contest for entries between April 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021: General Nonfiction Contest

Any appropriate nonfiction topic is eligible. Stories must be true, not semi-fictional accounts. So-called "creative nonfiction" will not be considered.

See more information for future contests and full guidelines here: <http://www.storyhouse.org/contest2021.html>

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Bath Novel Award

The Bath Novel Award is given annually for the best unpublished, self-published, or independently published novel.

The winner will receive £3,000. The writer of the most promising longlisted novel will win a place on Cornerstones' 18-week online course Edit Your Novel the Professional Way, worth £1,800. This year's guest judge is literary agent Julia Silk. To enter, send the first 5,000 words of an unpublished novel manuscript of at least 50,000 words. Novels may be in any genre for adults or young adults. Writers who have accepted an offer of publication with an advance for the submitted novel or any other novel are not eligible to enter.

The entry fee is £28 per novel.

The closing date is 31 May.

For full details see <https://www.writers-online.co.uk/news/creative-writing-competition-the-bath-novel-award-2021/#News>

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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.

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