

The Writers Network News: Ever Have One of Those Days?/December 2022

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The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

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Notes:

Some links in this newsletter are shortened with help from www.tinyurl.com, a service that converts long links into short ones.

This ezine format does not support italics, so italics are indicated with underlines before and after words.

Writer's Quote of the Month

"I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil." —Truman Capote

Known to revise and delete weak or unnecessary portions of his manuscript, American novelist, screenwriter, playwright, and actor Truman Garcia Capote forged a new genre when he wrote In Cold Blood. Because he wrote it into scenes as he imagined they took place, complete with action and dialogue, he labeled the book a "nonfiction novel." Several of his short stories, novels, and plays have been praised as literary classics, including the novella Breakfast at Tiffany's and In Cold Blood.

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One: From the Editor's Desk: Ever Have One of Those Days?

Dear Fellow Writers:

I'm in my new place, and one of the perks is that it provides housekeeping. Once a week a housekeeper strips my bed, washes and dries my linens, and cleans my little apartment. We tenants are supposed to leave during the time the housekeeper is here, so I scheduled my cleaning for a time that I'm usually gone. For two or three weeks I returned to find my apartment cleaned, but my sheets had bleached-out spots, something that never happened when I did my own laundry. In addition the washing machine had clumps of white scum on the cylinder. I sent an email to the person in charge asking about those things, but never got a response.

Recently I was at my computer when my lights flickered and my computer shut down. When it came back online, my printer wouldn't print. In the middle of my frustration, my doorbell rang. It was the housekeeper, more than fifteen minutes early. I wasn't ready to leave, but in asking her to return later, I discovered that she spoke no English. I gave up, let her in, and tried to finish getting ready to leave.

When I looked up, the housekeeper had put my sheets in the washer and started the machine, and she was holding an open container of my Cascade dishwasher detergent. What? She had been washing my sheets with Cascade instead of Tide, which explained why my sheets had bleached-out spots and the washer had white scum on the cylinder. A person

who can't speak English can't read labels either. I speak a little—very little—Spanish, so I was able to explain and show her the correct detergent, but she had already started the machine, and the lid was locked.

Frustrated, I left and went out to my car. When I drove off, my sunglasses fell out of their overhead compartment and disappeared somewhere in my car. It was the second time my sunglasses had fallen inside the car. When it happened before, I had to get someone in my car dealer service department to dig them out from deep under my front seat, where I couldn't reach them. Now I was driving down the highway without my sunglasses, without knowing if I could get my printer working again, and knowing my linens were being dredged through detergent never intended for flannel sheets.

In the end all got resolved. I found my sunglasses, the housekeeper rewashed the sheets in the proper detergent, and I fixed the printer issue. In hindsight I felt gratitude that the housekeeper came early, so I could discover her mistake. I'm also glad I left my apartment and stepped away from all the chaos.

Although all turned out fine, the morning started out as if everything around me was going wrong. Ah, but those days give us something to write about, don't they?

Have you ever had one of those days?

Yours in writing,
Bobbie Christmas Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or bzebra@aol.com
Author of two editions of *_Write In Style_*, owner of Zebra Communications, editor of *The Writers Network News*, and senior editor of *Enjoy Cherokee Magazine*

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Members Write:

"I know how hard it is to downsize, but it is also liberating. I'm grateful you'll be continuing your newsletter from your new home." -Donna Parrey

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Terry Wynne notes, "I seem to be following you, as with my signing up for organ donation and now considering something smaller than my two-bedroom condo."

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Marlene Clark responded to the following in last month's newsletter: "If I use a smaller hamper, I'll wash clothes more often. If I wash clothes more often, I don't need as many clothes. If I don't keep as many clothes, I don't need all the dressers that once filled my bigger space. We used to live in houses with small closets. What made us think we need so many clothes today?"

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Marlene's response goes like this: "This one stabbed me in the heart, but your logic is impeccable (damn!). I wash clothes less often, rationalizing that I'm using less water; therefore, I have more clothes. I really think I'm just lazy." She concludes with, "I'll try to get off my butt and embrace your philosophy. Thanks!"

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Carol Folsom explains how she found more time to write: "I deactivated my Twitter account. It was such a time waster."

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Thank you all for writing. Your notes inspire me to keep providing this free newsletter for writers.

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Two: Ask the Book Doctor: About Periodical Writing

by Bobbie Christmas

Q: I want to write articles for magazines. I'm especially interested in travel writing and hope a periodical will pay for my travel. I don't know where to start, though. I need a step-by-step process.

A: The process isn't simple enough to cover in brief, although I'll give you a few tips. In addition to my information, please read and follow the instructions in a book about how to write for magazines and other periodicals. Warning: resources, payments, periodicals, and methods have changed over the years, so choose one of the most recent books on the subject.

Editors need to see proof that you are a qualified writer, so before you can get hired to write for periodicals, you must create a portfolio of your published works. To get clips, many people start by volunteering as a writer for a nonprofit or other organization. One writer I knew created imaginary articles crafted for imaginary publications.

Once you have a portfolio of clips, you are ready to query periodicals who may ask to see those clips. Yes, you usually have to query with your own subject ideas until and unless you become one of the stable of writers that editors then assign articles.

With the advent of the internet, travel writers today don't necessarily have to travel to a location to write about it, so I'm not sure if periodicals pay for travel anymore, but don't give up on the idea, if you like to travel. Most of the travel articles I've sold were based on travels I took for fun. While I didn't get paid for the travel, I did get paid for the articles, which helped pay for the trips I would have taken regardless. I used frequent flier miles for at least one of my longer trips, yet based on that tour I sold three different articles to three separate periodicals, which recouped most of my expenses for food and land transportation. Result: Inexpensive eighteen-day vacation.

Here's an insider's tip: Once you determine the magazines that publish your types of articles, ask for their editorial calendars. Editorial calendars outline the focus of upcoming issues. For example, the focus of the May issue might be Florida. In advance of that issue, the sales staff sells advertising to companies that have products and services of interest

to people traveling to Florida.

Although the editorial calendar is created to help the advertising sales staff, it can help writers as well. With the editorial calendar in hand, you'll know that the May issue is going to focus on Florida. If your interest is hiking, as an example, you can query six months in advance of May and propose an article about hiking trails in Florida.

In addition to studying the editorial calendar, you must scrutinize a magazine to learn of its focus, style, and preferences before you develop a query. If you're not already a subscriber to the periodical, get sample issues and study them before you query the editor.

In short, you first need a portfolio. Next you need to uncover potential periodicals and get their editors' names and preferred methods for querying or submitting. You might start with periodicals that pay little or nothing and gradually move up to periodicals that pay a decent rate—more than a few cents a word. You must formulate and send a relevant query. Last of all, you must be patient, because responses may be slow. Payment may be slow as well, because most periodicals pay on publication. You may send your story in June, but if the story doesn't appear until the February issue, you won't get paid until then.

Oh, wait! That's not all. You must also set your ego aside. Chances are strong that your articles will be revised to fit the space or comply with the style of the periodical. Do not complain, or you may not be assigned any more articles. It won't matter that you are right; the editor has the last word. Take a deep breath, exhale, cash your payment check, and ask for more assignments.

Book Doctor Bobbie Christmas, author of *Write In Style: How to 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 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>.  
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Three: Subjects of interest to writers

Editing Tip: Allude/Elude

Allude: (verb) To make an indirect reference. The candidate alluded to the recent war by saying, "We've all made sacrifices."

Elude: (tr. verb) To evade or escape from. The suspect continues to elude the police. The meaning of the speech eluded the audience.

(Excerpt from *Purge Your Prose of Problems, a book doctor's desk reference*, available only at [ZebraEditor.com](http://ZebraEditor.com).)

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Word of the Year

We've all been living in a state of permanent crisis, a "permacrisis" if you will, according to lexicographers at the U.K.-based Collins Dictionary who have anointed it the word of the year for 2022. Read *The Washington Post* article here: <https://tinyurl.com/bddm7byb>
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Is The Right Choice Everyday or Every Day? When Is Insure Right, or is it Ensure?

When to use one word or two? What's the correct word choice? You don't know what you don't know, and you may think you're right. You need an editor! Every book deserves a good editor.

Zebra Communications offers three levels of service, two of which include developmental editing and an extensive report filled with advice, explanations, and suggestions on how to improve the manuscript's marketability. See our services, pricing, reviews, and more at [www.ZebraEditor.com](http://www.ZebraEditor.com). Zebra Communications: Excellent Editing for Maximum Marketability  
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How to Write a Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir

Interesting information from Creative Writing News. See <https://tinyurl.com/25r74yp5>
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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/>  
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MANUSLIP

Meaning:
A slip in grammar, punctuation, or other error in a manuscript that results in humor; a manuscript blooper

Etymology:

Coined by Bobbie Christmas (1944 -) in Write In Style: How to Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing (2004, 2015).

Examples (actual outtakes from manuscripts I've edited):

The nurse gave me a shot in my room. (What part of the body is the room?) (Clearer: While I was in my room, the nurse gave me a shot.)

He did not consult with her before scheduling an appointment for her to see the most qualified doctor for dealing with infertility in the city. (What about dealing with infertility in the country? Clearer revision: He did not consult with her before he scheduled an appointment for her to see the most qualified infertility doctor in the city.)

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Be My Friend on Facebook

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

Follow Zebra Communications on Facebook for news for writers, writing-related cartoons, immediate updates, and other good stuff. <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, and it's an issue that often arises in manuscripts I edit:

Q. I can't get a consensus from fellow professional editors on how to punctuate the following sentence:

"So up there," Joe pointed at the window, "that was you waving at me?"

Since there isn't a dialogue tag, some say to use em dashes per CMOS 6.87. However, I believe em dashes should be reserved for special emphasis, and pointing isn't important. Changing the wording changes the author's consistent writing style.

It's obvious that Joe is speaking, so why would we need a dialogue tag as well as the action beat in order to use commas? Can't we eliminate "said" if it's clear who is speaking and only use the action beat?

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.

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My holiday gift to you! The perfect holiday gift to any and all of your friends who are or want to be writers, but you must hurry.

Order one or more copies of Write In Style directly from me before January 1, 2023, and I'll pay for shipping. You pay only \$14.95 per copy, with no shipping fees. To get this one-time deal, you must order the book directly from me by following the directions below.

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Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

Enjoy Cherokee Magazine Wants Love Stories  
<https://tinyurl.com/38kx6cy9>

Enjoy Cherokee Magazine, one of the magazines I edit, is looking for your love story. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/38kx6cy9> to share your personal love story. An upcoming edition of the magazine will feature select entries. A byline is given, but alas I don't think there's any payment.

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The Funny Times
c/o The Editors
P.O. BOX 18530
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
Submission Guidelines - The Funny Times

So they tell you you're funny, huh? Great! That's exactly what we're looking for!

Here are a few things you should know to submit your funny cartoons and stories to Funny Times:

Our print publication pokes fun at politics, news, relationships, food, technology, pets, work, death, environmental issues, business, religion (yes, even religion) and the human condition in general. Not much is off limits, so do your best to make us laugh. Plus we're advertising free, so whatever we like, we use.

Email submissions welcome! Cartoons should be scans (300 dpi JPG or TIFF). Please include your preferred contact information in the email. Submissions can be emailed to: submissions@funnytimes.com. Please include your full name in the subject line or body of the email. We do our best to respond to all submissions, but please be patient!

If you still want to mail your submission, please send hard-copy printouts of high-res images (please don't send your originals ... we're awfully clumsy with our coffee). We accept both single and multi-panel formats, color and black & white, though reproduction is nearly always in black and white.

Stories — the funniest you have ever written — should be about 500-700 words. Don't send us things that aren't funny. We won't publish them. There is a lead-time of several months because of our editorial calendar, meaning, i.e., December holiday material should be mailed for consideration in September. Please include a SASE for return of your material and/or our response.

We buy one-time publication rights and do not require exclusives; your work is ultimately yours to keep. We pay upon publication, not acceptance, and the rates are \$30-\$50 per cartoon based on reproduction size and \$75 each for story. You'll even get a complimentary subscription to Funny Times and some serious bragging rights.

Our website is not a complete reflection of the type of material included in our magazine. Might we suggest you send an 8.5"x11" SASE with proper return postage (about \$1.50 these days) for a recent issue sample?

Bonus Hints: Don't overwhelm the editors. Send your top 5-10 cartoons or 2-3 stories. Tell us where you've been published before and let us know who else thinks you're funny (this will not necessarily be held against you). Don't take rejection too hard; it could be that the third time is the charm and we just didn't "get" you before then. Please be patient! Don't overwhelm our lovely Customer Service department by calling to check in on the status of your submission.

Submission inquiries can be directed to submissions@funnytimes.com.

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The Puritan seeks submissions all year round, from anywhere in the world  
<https://puritan-magazine.submittable.com/submit>

Our current publication rates (as of fall 2022) stand as follows:  
\$100 PER INTERVIEW,  
\$200 PER ESSAY,  
\$100 PER REVIEW,  
\$150 PER WORK OF FICTION, AND  
\$35 PER POEM (OR PAGE, CAPPED AT \$120 FOR POEMS RUNNING FOUR PAGES OR MORE).

Check back with the magazine regularly; The Puritan is working ever assiduously to increase these figures.

Please note that we can ONLY issue payments using etransfer, PayPal, or a cheque in the mail. We also pay in CAD. If you cannot accept payment via etransfer, PayPal, or cheque from a Canadian bank, we cannot accept your submission.

Regular submissions to the magazine are free of charge and should fall under one of four categories: fiction, essays, poetry, and reviews. Unless we are soliciting your work, all submissions must be previously unpublished (this includes self-publishing, publishing on blogs, and in chapbook format). The entry fee for the Austin Clarke Prize in Literary Excellence is \$20; winners in fiction and poetry each receive \$1,000 in cash prizes and runners-up are awarded \$200.

All submissions received by March 25 will be considered for the spring issue, published in May. Those received by June 25 are considered for the summer issue in August. Those received by September 25 are considered for the fall issue, published in November. Those received by December 25 are considered for the winter issue, out in February.

Send all questions and messages to [puritanmagazineeditors \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:puritanmagazineeditors@gmail.com).

Please note that we CANNOT accept email submissions. They will be discarded.

We are open to simultaneous submissions. If your work is accepted elsewhere, please send a message via Submittable. Email notifications of withdrawals will be ignored as we simply cannot keep up with the volume of them.

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

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