

Editor's Desk

Welcome to the second issue of our quarterly newsletter, *The Write Place*. When I was preparing the first one I thought that three months



Diana Nadin
Director of Studies

until the next one was due seemed an age. Now it's here and the time has just flown by. We're still being plagued by icy winds but there's a bunch of daffodils in a vase on the table – Spring isn't that far away!

Each year we hold our 'Writer of the Year' competition and the winners have just been announced. Have a look at www.writersbureau.com/writing/writer-of-the-year-2012.htm to read their stories. We're not always looking for the person who's earned the most from their writing – but people for whom our courses have opened new doors or helped them to achieve their ambitions. If you fit into either of these categories (or, of course, have started to earn mega-bucks from your writing) then you might consider entering next year. There's a £250 prize for the winner and four runners-up each receive £50.

One entrant who didn't win was Roger Allsopp. But we felt his story was so unusual that we put him forward for a Certificate of Merit to the Association of British Correspondence Colleges,

of which we are a member. Roger used his writing skills to publicise the fact that he is the oldest person to have swum The Channel and in doing so raised a huge amount of money for charity. You can read the full story at their website – www.homestudy.org.uk

These are just some of our students' achievements over the past twelve months, but here are a few more, taken from the Student Forum.

Student Successes

Lorna K says:

I haven't been on here for a while but just wanted to share my first few successes since starting the course back in March. For assignment N3 I wrote two articles for a regional parenting magazine, and both were accepted for publication. I was chuffed to bits. I won't be paid as it's a free magazine, and the articles won't be in it until next Spring as it's published quarterly, but still very exciting!

Then this morning I was leafing through Writer's Forum magazine, and noticed my letter from assignment N4 that I sent to them a few weeks ago. I thought they would have let me know they were going to put it in. So then I thought I'd better check the other magazines I sent letters to, and Women's Running has also printed a letter I sent in recently.

All very exciting and encouraging...and if you've written reader's letters recently, check the magazine regularly as they don't seem to let you know if they print them.

Good Luck everyone!!!!

Five Minute Interview

Rebecca M says:

I have written for many years but only since I joined WB did I really take it seriously and try extra extra hard. I have been so used to rejections thudding on the mat; I could fill several boxes! That has changed. My article about wishing on a star has been published in Prediction magazine, People's Friend are publishing a story I wrote in their special Christmas edition, Kindred Spirit are publishing an article of mine, Ireland's Own are publishing a feature about Valentine's Day, Best of British have published a story I wrote...the list goes on. I really thought it would never happen to me, that I would never be a published author but I am the proof that persistence and determination as well as support from a fantastic tutor here at WB can pay off in the end. Walking on sunshine has a whole new meaning for me. If I can help anybody, I'd love to share ideas and tips. Just don't give up.

And a follow up to the last issue from Natalie R:
In Oct and Dec 2011 I had features in Simply Beautiful magazine. I have another out in April 2012. In Jan 2012 I have an interview with a jewellery designer coming out in Village Life mag. Then in March I have a feature in Juno mag. I have also just secured a place as a regular contributor in Daisy Green Mag. Does this make me a 'proper' writer now?

William S says:

Success! Just heard that I have won first prize in a whisky company short story competition! It will be published in their web newsletter. The prize is £1000 towards my next adventure holiday.

Congratulations to all of you! But I've noticed that there really does seem to be a predominance of ladies talking about their success on the forum. So come on all you men out there – let us know how you're doing.

A Writer's Life!



Lorraine Mace

As I said last time, we couldn't exist without our talented tutors and this issue's Five Minute Interview is with Lorraine Mace. Lorraine originally joined us as a student, she moved on to a successful writing career and subsequently started working for us as a tutor. Many of our tutors are ex-students. There are a number of reasons for this – their success proves that our methods really do work; they are familiar with the courses and studying by distance learning; because of this they can empathise with students and give you the best possible help and advice.

But enough of that – over to Lorraine, whose writing career covers a very diverse range of writing genres.

How old were you when you knew you wanted to be a writer and what was the trigger?

I had my first writing success when I was about twelve. I won a short story competition for all ages run by my school. As I was then only in the first year, it was quite an achievement. But that was the end of my ambition until I reached adulthood.

By the time I was in my early twenties I'd read every Georgette Heyer novel. As she had died a couple of years earlier, I knew there wouldn't be any more titles to come and felt bereft. I decided to write a new GH novel, but it was a disaster. I had no idea where to start and eventually gave up the idea.

Five Minute Interview Cont ...

Then I moved abroad and another twenty years passed without me writing anything other than long letters home to family and friends.

Your writing career really is multi-faceted – articles, poetry, editing magazines, judging competitions, and now a novel. What did you hope to write when you first started out and what do you enjoy most now?

When I settled in France (too many years ago now to contemplate) I wanted to write short stories, but realised I needed help with structure and other fundamentals, so signed up for the Writers Bureau comprehensive course. All I wanted to do back then was write fiction for the women's magazine market, but found I had a knack for non-fiction which led to being a columnist for Living France, Spanish Magazine and now Writing Magazine and Words with JAM.

Funnily enough, I rarely write short stories today, concentrating instead on my novels. Bad Moon Rising (Crooked {Cat} Publishing) started life in response to assignment 13/F5. Now, all these years later, I have completed it and it's due to be released on 9th March, under my pen name of Frances di Plino.

Do you have a writing routine or are you very flexible about how you work?

Because I am involved with so many aspects of writing (tutor, columnist, writing judge, feature writer, novelist and, of course, run my own writing competitions) I have to be really organised and set definite hours for each activity.

With your editor's hat on, is there one major fault that guarantees rejection?

Apart from poor grammar and spelling, a weak opening paragraph guarantees rejection. Whether it's a short story or an article, the opening paragraph has to grab the editor's attention. Editors receive more work in a day than they can use in a month (and some editors receive a higher volume even than that) so they will quickly move to the next contribution if the opening paragraph doesn't compel them to read on.

As a Writers Bureau tutor, if you could give one vital piece of advice to students, what would it be?

Read the assignment questions and requirements, and then follow them to the letter! The assignment guidelines should be treated (in my opinion) as training for following magazine guidelines. When a student sends work to a magazine, if it isn't written to the right word count, subject matter, tone or style, the editor will pass. So they need to get into the habit of noting exactly what is required in each assignment – don't send anything that isn't requested and make sure that every question has been answered.

Lorraine Mace is humour columnist for Writing Magazine and a deputy editor of Words with JAM. She has won and been placed in numerous creative writing and poetry competitions. From the other side of the writing fence, she runs the international flash fiction and humour verse competitions at Flash 500.

In addition to this, she is a writing competition judge for Writers' Forum and is head judge for the short story competitions held by Lancashire Magazine and Yorkshire Magazine.

She is a fiction and non-fiction tutor for the Writers Bureau, and is the author of the Writers Bureau course, Marketing Your Book. She is also co-author, with Maureen Vincent-Northam, of The Writer's ABC Checklist (Accent Press).

Writing as Frances di Plino, she is the author of the psychological thriller, Bad Moon Rising.

Thanks to Lorraine for some excellent advice – and for showing us a little of how she 'ticks' as a writer. If you'd like to watch a video of her talking about her writing, you can see more of her at www.writersbureau.com/video.htm

Competition Time

Nearer Home

But it isn't only the tutors that make your studies flow smoothly – the staff here in the office play a large part. Whenever you receive an email from us or are alerted to something on the website – it's Vicki Roscoe, working away behind the scenes, that makes it possible.



Vicki Roscoe

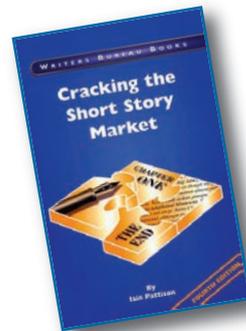
Vicki says:

I've been a part of The Writers Bureau family for almost six years now, and it's safe to say I've covered many roles during my time here. I currently work in the marketing department and my job covers most things related to our websites. At the moment I'm attending a night course at college to prepare me for university. I'm half way through the intense twelve month course and I'm very much looking forward to starting my English & American Literature degree later on this year. Having had my nose stuck in a book since I could read my first word, this is something I'm extremely excited about. Seven years after leaving high school, I'm proof it's never too late to pursue your ambitions.

Thanks for that, Vicki – and now it's confession time. I'm something of a Luddite when it comes to computers. I can manage the basics, but break out in a cold sweat when asked to do anything too technical; so I'm not sure what I'd do without Vicki's backup!

Competition Time

The results for the 2011 Poetry Competition should be announced before the end of February – the winning poems will be on our website. In the meantime, we are now accepting entries for the 2012 Short Story Competition at www.wbcompetition.com. As usual, there is prize money totalling £1100 and the closing date is 30th June.



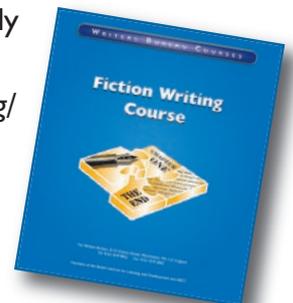
Plus, if you want some tips on writing a first-class short story then you might consider *Cracking the Short Story Market*.

Full details are available in the 'Resources' section of our website. Incidentally, Ian is the competition adjudicator,

but that's not the only reason for buying his book. He really knows his stuff, has won numerous competitions himself and is a humorous writer who really brings the subject to life.

Next up, we have our monthly competition at www.writersbureau.com/writing/monthly-competition.htm

In February you have the opportunity to win a Fiction Writing Course and to celebrate Valentine's Day, and the fact that it's a leap year, we want you to concentrate your writing skills and produce a love story in less than 50 words. Make sure your entry reaches us by 29th February if you want to be in with a chance of winning. And while we're on the subject, congratulations to Adrian who won last month's 'First Line' competition.



End Piece ...

Miscellany

The latest issue of *Chapter and Verse* is now available in the student area. The Editor, Amanda John, had something of a problem putting together this issue as none of the 'twist in the tail' stories was particularly impressive. So, if you want some good advice on the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of this genre, read what she's got to say in the February issue. Plus you might be tempted to make a submission to the next issue with the theme of 'Spring'.

And while we're on the subject of getting your work out to the public – when you approach someone to publish your work (whether in a magazine, ezine or guesting on their blog), make sure that you meet the deadline.

Alternate weeks I have a guest on my blog at www.writersbureau.com/blog. Quite a lot of people contact me to see if they can post. I usually let them know the date by which I need the piece – and you'd be surprised how many people never get back to me, or send it in late. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot! But I must add a word of thanks to all those who have contributed over the past few months – your words of wisdom have been invaluable.

**Special
Offers
(Students only)**

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In Conclusion

That brings us to the end of our round-up of what's going on at the Writers Bureau, but until the next issue, you can keep up-to-date by joining the Student Forum, or following us on Facebook and Twitter.

If you have any queries about your course, just contact studentservices@writersbureau.com and if you've any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter I'd love to hear from you – dianan@writersbureau.com

So, until next time...