

Editor's Desk

Welcome to this issue of *The Write Place*. Once again time seems to have flown since I last put pen to paper (well, you know what I mean)! As usual, quite a lot has been

happening here at Writers Bureau. In September we held a Facebook event to announce the winners of our 2012 Short Story competition. If you go to www.wbcompetition.com you can read the winning entries and the adjudicator's comments. Please try to find the time to have a look as they are extremely good and will give you some idea of the standard you should be aiming for if you intend to enter next year's competition.

We also had a very worthy winner for our monthly competition in September. It was to write the kind of 'blurb' that you see on the back of a novel – but the novel had to be about events during the Great Fire of London. Congratulations go to Nina Hoole – if I'd been browsing for a good read I'd definitely have been tempted to buy the book. I hope she'll enjoy the Novel and Short Story course that she won. And you'll find details of this month's competition towards the end of the newsletter if you fancy trying your hand.

This issue instead of going to the forum for student successes I've decided to widen the net and include good news received by email and letter. So here goes...



*Diana Nadin
Director of Studies*

Student Successes

The first comes from Irene R who has studied the Proofreading and Copy Editing course:

Had to write to let you know that I was only given 3 – 4 days to complete the 90,000 word book 'Paradise West' before its launch date but managed it, phew! The author was absolutely delighted and the publisher likewise. He said my work was very thorough, so thanks go to you.

I have now been asked by another author to take on the proofreading of all her books, she has written 8 and is on her 9th. She is also writing a trilogy, the first of which I will receive soon. You can imagine how excited I am but also a tad anxious that I am competent enough. To this end I have taken your advice and joined the Society of Editors & Proofreaders so that I can keep learning and have somewhere to go for help... I feel a bit daunted about it all but am sure the excitement will carry me through plus I have your proofreading course to fall back on, (which I do, a lot!).

Next we have David C who has been working on the Creative Writing Course:

Just a quick update. I'm not applying for the Swiss numbered account just yet, but am very happy right now. After the last good news, I now have another steam article in print, in July's Back Track. £84 to bank. That makes a very welcome 'two months in a row'. Further, Steam World have accepted another two items pro tem, and asked to see my latest when it's ready. (This follows on from one they have pending, and I took the liberty of dropping the hint.)

Looking at the Lighter Side of Life

Craig L says:

I submitted a travel piece to the Sunday Times newspaper in South Africa, aimed at their Travel section. At first, they said that my article was too short but they would love to publish it on the Accidental Traveler slot on page 2, if I could lengthen it. I did so and the article was published with the heading of 'Fleeting Fame'.

On advice from my tutor, I submitted an invoice and was paid 1760 South African Rand. I am over the moon and ready to further my freelance career.

Colin P, the star letter writer from the October issue of Freelance Market News, has this to say:

I'd been slightly apprehensive about enrolling on the Freelance Journalism Course, possibly due to a fear of the unknown, but took the plunge last autumn. What a pleasant surprise it was when the very first article I had submitted for publication appeared in the summer edition of 'This England' magazine...

Seeing my work in print was a significant boost just at a time when I felt I'd lost some momentum in my studies and was struggling to identify a wider range of markets. With my tutor's encouraging comments and the broad range of ideas I can get from FMN, I can now press on with new enthusiasm.

[Well done Colin, you also earned yourself £10 for having your letter published in FMN!]

And finally, Alan D had this to say:

Earning my course fees seemed a very distant dream when I started. I could never have imagined seeing my name above my own work, in magazines for sale in high street shops. Having a

short story accepted for broadcasting on local radio, with a request for more to form a series, has also been beyond my wildest dreams.

Several successes have been in areas where I was convinced of my inability to achieve anything, almost to the point of not intending to try. I couldn't foresee writing travel articles, or for the Internet, yet my first every piece of published work was online for 'Hey! Portugal'. I read the booklet about writing for the internet as an 'academic exercise'; to my surprise I was accepted by the Canadian ezine 'Suite 101' as a contributing writer, since when I've had 15 articles published online so far...

Congratulations to all of you – and keep up the good work! Once again, if you'd like to share your successes either post on the forum or email me (dianan@writersbureau.com) with the details and we'll give you a mention in the next issue.

Looking at the lighter side of life

Bruna D is still causing merriment in the forum with her amusing jokes and stories. Thanks, Bruna, for making everyone here at Writers Bureau smile. I couldn't resist including the one below:

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, the British Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would become known as "Euro-English".

Five Minute Interview

In the first year, “s” will replace the soft “c”. Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard “c” will be dropped in favour of “k”. This should klear up konfusion, and keyboards kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome “ph” will be replaced with “f”. This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be ekspekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible.

Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling.

Also, al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent “e” in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th yer people wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing “th” with “z” and “w” with “v”.

During ze fifz yer, ze unesesary “o” kan be dropd from vords kontaining “ou” and after ziz fifz yer, ve vil hav a reil sensibl riten styl.

Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech oza. Ze drem of a united urop vil finali kum tru.

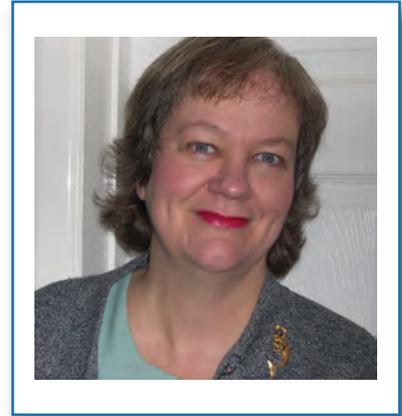
Und efter ze fifz yer, ve vil al be speking German like zey vunted in ze forst plas.

And this might hit the spot for many people:

When I got home last night, my wife demanded that I take her some place expensive... so, I took her to a petrol station.

A Writer's Life!

I mentioned in the last issue that we had a new tutor – Linda Lewis – so I’ve asked her to be my guest/victim (delete as appropriate)



for this issue. So over to Linda to see what advice she can pass on.

When did you first decide that you wanted to be a writer and what triggered this?

Too hard to answer without writing a book!

Do you have a writing routine, or are you very flexible about the way you work?

I tend to be quite flexible. When I’m in short story writing mode, I try to write two a week. I’ve found that I’m at my most creative in the mornings so that’s when I write most of my first drafts. Everything else gets fitted in, as and when.

I used to write every day. Now I try to take at least one whole day off each week.

What are your top three tips for writers entering short story competitions?

Number one: follow the rules to the letter.

Number two: don’t wait to the last minute.

Nearer Home

Number three: if the competition has a theme, don't go with your first idea. Keep thinking until you come up with something that little bit different.

Are you a 'plot driven' or 'character driven' writer?

For me it's characters, every time. If I don't care enough about the main characters, the best, the most amazing plot in the world will leave me cold.

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

Write as many stories as you possibly can, keep sending them out, and never, ever give up.

What are your favourite kinds of stories to write?

I enjoy writing stories that have a twist ending. The trick is to surprise the reader, not shock them. They have to be able to go back through the story and find the hints and clues that, if they had noticed them, would have revealed the twist before the end. The reaction you want from the reader is 'Of course! Why didn't I see that?' rather than 'How on earth was I supposed to guess that?'

Thanks for that Linda. Your final point is so important – you'd be amazed how many stories we get for our annual competition or for Freelance Market News competitions that are supposed to have a 'twist ending' but either the twist is so obvious that you spot what's coming immediately or it's so contrived that the reader is left feeling cheated.

Nearer Home



Debs Ward

This month's staff profile focuses on Debs Ward. You've probably not heard the name, but without her work behind the scenes you probably wouldn't be reading this newsletter now! So over to Debs:

I joined The Writers Bureau 20 years ago as a copy typist before moving on to audio typing. A few years later I was promoted to department supervisor and five years ago, was offered the position of typesetter (another step up) and haven't looked back.

If you've ever seen one of our advertisements in the press or a magazine, received our prospectus, enrolled on one of our courses, subscribe to Freelance Market News or receive The Write Place, then you'll know first-hand exactly what my job entails – I design and set all of our literature for print and the website. I'm also the Competition Secretary for our annual Short Story and Poetry Competitions, being responsible for all the administration involved and, I answer the telephone here in the office.

I thoroughly enjoy having a workload that is so varied and allows me to be creative. The only down side, I would have to say, are the hectic times just before deadlines – but that doesn't stop me loving what I do!

Competition Time

Competition Time

Our 2012 Poetry Competition is accepting entries until 31st December. There is prize money totalling £1100 with a first prize of £500. The fee is £5 per poem and to enter online or print off an entry form visit www.wbcompetition.com



In addition you can enter one of our free monthly competitions. For the November comp all you have to do is provide a witty caption for the picture – go to www.writersbureau.com/writing/monthly-competition.htm for details. The prize is a Freelance Journalism Course (<http://www.writersbureau.com/courses/freelance-journalism/>) worth £274.



Don't forget that if you're a subscriber to Freelance Market News (www.freelancemarketnews.com) you can also enter their monthly competitions with the chance to win £50. The competitions vary and are a mixture of poetry, short stories and non-fiction – so there's something for everyone.

Finally, this isn't one of our competitions, but I couldn't resist telling you about it. See my blog post at www.writersbureau.com/blog/writer-year-2013/2012/10/ for details of the current Readers' Digest Competition. All you have to do is tell them your favourite word and then explain in 100 words why it's your favourite. The first prize is £100 cash plus £100-worth of Chambers' products. The closing date is 14th December.

Miscellany

It's that time of year again when entries are coming in for our *Writer of the Year Award*. See www.writersbureau.com/writing/writer-of-the-year-entry.htm for how to enter. It's open to all students and it's not just about how much you've earned. We want to know if your writing has helped you at a difficult time; if it's given you confidence or helped you achieve a long-held ambition. But we do expect your entry to be a carefully crafted, readable story – the work of a professional writer!

Another alternative – and one that no-one has taken us up on yet – is to send a two-minute video clip instead of a written entry. I do hope some of you will be brave enough to do this as we'd love to see you as well as hear your story. So come on... take a deep breath and go for it!

Finally, I couldn't resist sharing something that one of our students wrote recently:

"I have picked up some great tips and habits – one being to take a pen and paper with you everywhere you go. I took mine to a hospital appointment and during the time I was waiting I had created an outline for a horror story."

It's great advice – but it doesn't say a lot for our National Health Service, does it?

Special Offers

If you've written a book (fiction or non-fiction), why not get an expert opinion on your proposal – the synopsis and first 15,000 words – and **save 10%** in November? Visit www.writersbureau.com/writing/review-appraisal.htm for full details of our Review and Appraisal service and the help our expert tutors can provide.

In Conclusion

Save 20% on your Writers Bureau Poetry Competition entries

If you already subscribe to Freelance Market News

(www.freelancemarketnews.com) you will pay only £4 per entry rather than the usual fee of £5. So if you're not already a subscriber, think about signing up today.

Special Offer

**Save £100 on
The Art of Writing
Poetry Course
(Students Only)**

In Conclusion

The latest issue of *Chapter and Verse* (our ezine written by students and edited by them) is now available and if you are already a Writers Bureau student you can log in to read it or submit to the next issue.

And 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. The nights are drawing in and it's the ideal time to draw the curtains and settle down to your writing. So, until next time...