

West Coast EDITOR

A MONTHLY FORUM FOR EAC
MEMBERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
TO EXCHANGE IDEAS,
DEVELOP SKILLS AND
SHARE NEWS ABOUT EDITING

NOVEMBER 2000

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EDITORS'

ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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RÉVISEURS

BC Branch

Researcher shares Internet search tips

More than search engines

CATHY BRANNEN

Professional researcher, Barry Patterson conducted an informative session at EAC's first fall meeting on September 20, compressing what is usually a full semester credit course into a 90-minute discussion of valuable Internet search tips. He outlined six basic ways to access the Internet and pointed out that the most familiar method—browsing or surfing—may be fascinating, but it is also the least productive. "You have no idea where you are going when you browse, and it's easy to get lost," he said. Better ways to access the Internet are:

- Go to the site directly if you have the Url address.
- Join email discussion groups, and Usenet newsgroups. Although discussion groups are usually scholarly, they should not be considered a reference source. A good directory of email discussion groups is <listTool.com>. For a directory of Usenet newsgroups go to <liszt.com>. (Usenet is a world wide distributed discussion system.)
"The best way to get information from a newsgroup is to post the wrong information yourself," said Patterson.
- Search subject directories. With this method, you can explore the subject directly using two main directories—for academic information go to <infomine.ucr.edu>, and for business and professional information Patterson recommends the Argus Clearinghouse at <clearinghouse.net>. For a list of other subject directories go to <lii.org>, a good source for researching broad topics. Another useful site is the virtual library <vlib.org> considered to be one of the oldest and most respected sites according to Patterson.
- Explore the invisible web consisting of government, corporate and institutional databases that are not accessible through search engines. For access to the invisible web try: <gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~gprice/direct.htm>, <invisibleweb.com>, <search.com>, <www.webdata.com> and <www.internets.com>.

Patterson started his company, Purple Gopher Research, two years ago after a twenty-year career as a researcher for the provincial government and now spends many hours each day on the "Net."

He began his presentation by pointing out a few realities and pitfalls. "One hundred million people access the Internet world wide," he said. "And there are more than 300,000 million pages of information published on the web. The Internet is a self-publishing medium, so don't expect stability, as no one controls it."

Search engines have three components: an information seeker or "spider" which searches for key words among all of the World Wide Web sites; an indexing segment which receives information from the spider and organizes it by key words; and a browser (you) who retrieves the information by using key words to search.

Patterson cautions that Yahoo should not be considered a reliable research source, as the information accessed through this search engine is not evaluated. Instead he suggests using second-generation search engines such as Google, Insight, Excite, Northern Light and Hot Bot. You can also use Webcrawler or Metacrawler. For a list of search engines, try <www.albany.edu/library/internet/engines.html>.

The information that you find through search engines is different from what you may find from a subject directory. Patterson admitted that research through search engines is time consuming, however, searching through one of the more reliable engines is a good place to start when researching a broad and obscure subject or when looking for information on newer technology.

More Internet searching tips on page 3

Editing and writing courses available in the Lower Mainland

NAOMI PAULS

As professional development chair, I've had a couple of requests for information about editing courses—both locally and in BC generally. I thought an overview might be helpful for members, especially new ones. Here in alphabetical order, are the Lower Mainland education institutions that offer courses of special interest to editors and writers. I've provided a short write-up when details were available and I've focused on courses available à la carte. (Journalist wannabes need to do their own homework.) Unless otherwise noted, course catalogues are available at your local branch of the Vancouver Public Library. Please let me know whether I've missed any programs.

Douglas College

Print Futures: Professional Writing Program
P.O. Box 2503, New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2
(604) 527-5400—<www.douglas.bc.ca>

Courses cover everything from research skills to public relations writing. Not all courses are available to students from outside the program, but they do have full and part-time studies. A catalogue is available at any of the three campus locations (in New Westminster, Coquitlam or Maple Ridge) or by mail for \$7. EAC's own Maureen Nicholson coordinates the program, so it is bound to be both comprehensive and practical.

Kootenay School of Writing

201 – 505 Hamilton Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 2R1
(604) 688-6001—<www.ksw.net>

Kwantlen University College

Continuing Education, PO Box 9030, Surrey, BC V3W 2M8
(604) 599-2100—<www.kwantlen-ce.com>

Two campuses in Surrey, one in Richmond and one in Langley. Catalogues mailed out free of charge.

Langara College

Continuing Studies, 100 West 49th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 2Z6
(604) 323-5322—<www.langara.bc.ca/cs>

Creative writing courses at Langara include one on writing “short, short fiction.” (“If you've written a postcard, you're qualified”) and another on writing for young readers. The college offers a certificate program in Media Writing and Public Relations Communications (itself a bit of a mouthful). A course on “Basic Typography” (under Graphic Design) would probably be of interest to an editor, as might two of the Library and Information Technology courses: “Current Awareness and Advanced Searching on the Web” and “Designing a Library/Informational Web Site (Online).”

Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre

Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing
515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5K3
Summer Publishing Workshops
(604) 291-5242
<www.harbour.sfu.ca/ccsp/workshops>

These intensive July and August workshops cover a wide spectrum that includes computer design applications, magazine editing and various aspects of book publishing. Their strong points include a well-equipped computer lab, a stellar roster of faculty from the publishing world and their hothouse atmosphere. Most participants would probably say they're worth the cost. The ccsp also runs a 16-month Master's of Publishing program.

Change perspective when dealing with conflict

RICK ROGERS

We've all encountered people whose mission seems to be to make the lives of everybody around them miserable.

Dealing with such individuals can be like tiptoeing through a minefield and it takes a lot of people skills to emerge from the encounter with egos intact. At October's monthly meeting, facilitator Silvia Wilson demonstrated some ways to deal with difficult people.

Silvia initially lead the discussion by helping the audience brainstorm ideas on what makes a person difficult to deal with. She pointed out one of the main keys to dealing with conflict is to try to understand the other person's motivations. There are four main motivators, she said. Individuals are either task or people-oriented. A task-oriented person is motivated by either getting the job done or by getting the job right. A people-oriented individual either just wants to get along, or wants to be appreciated. Keeping this in mind, we then need to adjust our own attitudes and realize that although we cannot change the person who makes us miserable, we can change our way of dealing with them to make future relations less trying.

Everyone then divided into four small groups to discuss, in anonymity, one type of individual and brainstorm strategies to deal with them. Finally, each group presented its ideas and conclusions, which were then subject to general discussion.

The session was longer than usual, but it produced some valuable insights. The group discussions encouraged members to interact with each other, leading to some lively socializing over coffee and cookies at the end of the evening.

Join us this month when Carolyn Swayze will discuss the role of literary agents and what they require from an author—and from an editor.

Next general meeting is on November 15 at 7:30 PM in the Royal Bank Room of the YWCA Hotel in Vancouver at 733 Beatty Street.

More Courses on page 3

Courses (from page 2)

Writing and Publishing Program

Continuing Studies (address as on page 2)
(604) 291-5093—<www.sfu.ca/cstudies/wp>

This is one-stop shopping for writers and editors who need to learn the basics or want to improve their skills. Certificate programs are available in five areas: Business Writing, Public Relations and Marketing Communication; Technical Communication; Publishing; Editing; and Creative Writing. Again, the courses are not cheap, but you're sure to get your money's worth—and the most selection in town. New for January 2001 is a four-month distance education course titled "Editors and Editing: An Introduction."

University of British Columbia

Continuing Studies

5997 Iona Drive, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
(604) 822-1444—<www.cstudies.ubc.ca>

Fall 2000 courses I thought looked interesting were "The Post-Historical Novel: Six Canadian Fictions" and "Thinking Straight: Introduction to Critical Thinking." Creative writing courses range from poetry to mystery fiction. The UBC Writing Centre offers grammar and writing courses, plus a "Children's Book Workshop." Computer and Technology Studies (822-1420) has its own catalogue packed with courses to keep us all technologically (or is that digitally?) literate. Courses are held in downtown Vancouver and in Richmond as well as on the Point Grey campus.

Vancouver Community College

Continuing Education

250 West Pender Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1S9
(604) 443-8484—<www.vcc.bc.ca>

Courses listed under Technical and Business Writing include "Document Project Management," "Technical Communication" and "Designing and Writing Manuals." VCC offers several small-business courses applicable to freelancers. Its computer courses number more than 60, teaching applications from Access to PageMaker™ and beyond.

Vancouver School Board

Community Education Services

1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6J 5K8
(604) 713-4550—<www.vsb-adult-ed.com>

For marketing, business, communication, computer or even project management skills, don't forget good old "night school" (daytime courses are also available). See what's scheduled in your neighbourhood. "Aerobics for Your Brain" sounds like a good course for editors. Unfortunately, it's a Saturday course for kids!

Editing is an excruciating act of self-discipline, mind reading and stable-cleaning. If it seems like a pleasure, something is probably wrong.

Arthur Plotnik

Jean Lawrence to coordinate bc branch *An immodest introduction*

JEAN LAWRENCE

I can't claim the enviable editing credits of some of our very experienced members, but hey, my first job was proofreading sheepskins! (The academic kind, I mean. In the early 70s, UBC was still using the real thing for doctoral diplomas.) I worked on campus for a number of years and picked up a couple of degrees for myself in Linguistics and Library Science. In the 1980s and 90s my strong interest in social justice led me to work with small non-profit organizations whose goals I shared. The social change racket, as it is affectionately known, gave me an opportunity to strengthen my administrative and organizational skills. Like some of you, I embraced editing after being fingered so often as the only person in the room who could spell. The abundant praise that followed saving someone's butt with a semi-colon reinforced the feeling that I really wanted to do this for a living some day. Now it's some day and I'm a beginning freelancer, a bit in awe of the many seasoned editors I have met in EAC. However, the members I have met in the last two years have been without exception friendly, generous and welcoming to me as a newcomer. I look forward to getting acquainted with even more associates and to working together over the next year.

Internet searching tips

(from page 1)



Here are some tips for using search engines more effectively:

- Read the directions on each site.
- Use the search engine's advanced search capabilities. For example, in Northern Light, click on "power search."
- Use Boolean search terms, i.e., "Dog breeders" *and* "British Columbia" to refine search parameters.
- Set a goal for what you are looking for and limit your time.
- Create bookmarks of useful sites you may need again.

Patterson's final advice is to always evaluate a site. "Edu" in an Url address means that the source is an educational institution; "gov" is a government source and "com" refers to a private company. Further evaluation should include:

- Checking the site for evidence of bias.
- Evaluating whether the data is comprehensive, current and relevant. (Look to see when the site was last updated.)
- Determining whether links are relevant and functioning.
- Finding the site's search capabilities.

Despite the convenience of the Internet, Patterson firmly believes that it cannot replace libraries. "The Internet is merely a good place to start your research," he said.

A few words from Word on the Street

SHEILAGH SIMPSON

From the Alcuin Society to the Writers' Union of Canada, almost 100 writers, exhibitors and performers read, talked, joked and sang their way through this year's Word on the Street (wots). Also attending was an appreciative audience of agents, consultants, editors, illustrators, publishers and writers, as well as representatives from many bookstores, magazines and newspapers.

The Editors' Association of Canada offered its services from a table near enough to the main stage to enjoy the music but not too close to be drowned out. We answered questions, offered pamphlets and directories, and took orders for the second edition of *Editing Canadian English*. Brochures for our professional development workshops were eagerly read and pocketed (that's sure to translate into more attendees).

Some volunteers felt that fewer people attended wots this year (last year our booth was swamped from opening to shut-down—this year traffic was steady and manageable). Others said the brochure rack was eye-catching and colourful, that it helped make our booth appear professional and that we should buy one for future use. Still others suggested that having a draw and prizes (a workshop, a copy of *Editing Canadian English*, 2nd ed. and an EAC t-shirt) attracts attention—but not necessarily our target audience. It was also felt that we should keep the misprinted banner* and “correct” it with proofreader's marks to display our humour and humility (and, obviously, our editing skills). Above all, wots was fun!

Thanks to our volunteers: Ann-Marie Metten, Elspeth Richmond, Susan Wilson-Murray, Suzanne Bastedo, Heather Prime, Jean Lawrence, Rick Rogers, Cheryl Andrews and Jacqueline Wood.

**The new logo banner sent from National was misprinted “Editor's Association of Canada.” It was all we had—so we used it, watching to see if anyone noticed—and nobody did!*

Footnotes

Welcome Jean Lawrence, new branch coordinator

Please extend a warm welcome to Jean Lawrence, who has recently taken on the paid volunteer role of branch coordinator for the BC branch of the Editors' Association of Canada.

Jean has plenty of experience with small non-profit organizations whose needs correspond with ours, including designing and maintaining records and information systems and coordinating book sales, publicity, member services and fundraising.

She has been a member of EAC-BC for two years and brings a strong interest to her new job. Welcome, Jean!

EAC-BC also welcomes the following new members

Andrew Binks—Andrew is originally from Ontario and has a background in theatre. For the past five years, he has taught ESL in Vancouver and also in Japan. Having completed two novels, he is working on a third and is looking for a publisher. Andrew's editing experience is mainly with fiction. He attended EAC's conference last spring and would welcome any surplus editing work.

Kim Doyle—Kim is not new to EAC but has been a member for years, first in Toronto and then in Saskatoon. She recently moved to Vancouver to pursue a Master's in Publishing at SFU.

Lee Kotsalis-Thulin—Lee has been a (part-time) freelance writer and editor for more than seven years, and has worked as a (full-time) counsellor for five years. Following the birth of his daughter last December, Lee decided to focus on writing and editing full time, hoping to establish a career that would allow him to work from home.

Betty Taylor—Betty has a broad background in the areas of law, agriculture, seniors and non-profit organizations, and enjoys doing substantive and stylistic editing on books and legal documentation. She loves a good project and is open to all challenging requests.

WEST COAST EDITOR

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