

West Coast EDITOR

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

FEBRUARY 2003

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BC BRANCH

Print Futures program: what's it all about?

Here in Vancouver we are very fortunate to have access to several highly acclaimed writing and publishing programs. Over the course of the coming year West Coast Editor hopes to highlight different aspects of the various programs. What do they offer students? What are the main areas of study? Are they a guarantee of success after graduation? (Is anything a guarantee of success after graduation?)

To present a balanced view of the courses on offer we would like to hear from the graduates themselves. It need not be an in-depth page-long article—just a few words on your experience and how you have benefited from it. If you would like to participate, please contact the newsletter team at: lesley@4camerons.com or rgretton@telus.net.

This issue brings you an overview of the work-experience component of Print Futures: Professional Writing at Douglas College. Two graduates of this program whose names you may recognize are Lynn Smith, EAC-BC book sales coordinator and Continuing Legal Education copy editor, and John Vigna, Entrepreneur of the Year 2002 (Business to Business), owner of John Vigna Ink and the subject of an article in December's West Coast Editor.

What is Print Futures?

Established in 1991, this two-year diploma program provides intensive instruction in technical, public relations, business, magazine, and trade-publication writing. Students also receive training in research, editing, and document design and production. By graduation, they are skilled users of MS Word, Dreamweaver, Framemaker, and QuarkXPress.

How is the work-experience course organized?

A student works within a company to help with specific writing and related projects over a minimum of 180 hours to a maximum of about four to five months. Typically, the course is organized to accommodate the employer and the student. For example, a student might work full time for six weeks or part time for 10 hours a week for four or five months.

When do students do their work experience?

All students must complete a work-experience course to graduate from the program. Most students complete their work experience in the summer (mid-April to August) between their first and second year of full-time studies, though part-time students may be available throughout the year.

How much are students paid during their work experience?

The program (and its students!) prefer paid work-experience terms, though some students will work on an unpaid basis for nonprofit groups or for companies that offer invaluable opportunities. Unpaid work-experience terms are restricted to 180 hours. Hourly rates for Print Futures students have ranged from \$10 to \$25, with most students being paid an hourly rate of \$12 to \$14. Douglas College Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) policy covers students on unpaid work experience; the employer is responsible for WCB coverage for students on paid work experience.

Anything else?

The work-experience course is a learning opportunity for students, so they are expected to write up a report on the experience. In addition, the employer is expected to participate in a short meeting with the program coordinator and evaluate the student's performance.

If you would like to learn more about the program—or if you think you can offer a student work experience with your company—contact coordinator Maureen Nicholson at printfutures@douglas.bc.ca or 604-527-5292. For more information about Print Futures: Professional Writing, go to www.douglas.bc.ca/. ◀

Why we love editors

What's in a word? Mark Twain once said, "The difference between the right word and the wrong word is like the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."

Here are some prime examples of what he was talking about:

▶ Spotted in an office toilet:

Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.

▶ Seen in a laundromat:

Automatic washing machines: please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

▶ Poster in a London department store:

Bargain basement upstairs.

▶ Notice in an office:

After tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

▶ Sign outside a secondhand shop:

We exchange anything—bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

▶ Notice in a health store window:

Closed due to illness.

▶ Spotted in a safari park:

Elephants please stay in your car.

▶ Seen during a conference:

For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the first floor.

▶ Notice in a field:

The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free, but the bull charges.

▶ Message on a leaflet:

If you cannot read, this leaflet will

tell you how to get lessons.

▶ On a repair shop door:

We can repair anything. (Please knock hard on the door — the bell doesn't work).

Many thanks to Heidi Groschler for reminding us that we are all doing this job for a very good reason.



In defence of editors

This tongue-in-cheek editorial disclaimer was originally posted on the EAC e-mail forum by Shaun Oakey in response to a discussion about those typos that seem to leap out at you when you see the published version of work you've edited. Shaun suggested we keep a form letter to post out in the event of such typo horrors.

One is almost tempted to have a form letter on hand to send off to reviewers. Something with check boxes along the lines of:

* Please note that the author ignored the copy editor's strenuous arguments and insisted on setting her precious misspellings and inconsistently used stylistic oddities, saying that this was her "style" and that her readers would not have any trouble with it.

* Please note that the errors you listed in your review were not the result of "careless editing." In fact, the editor corrected all these errors. However, the author setted the changes, saying his original was "just fine."

* Please note that the copy editor does in fact know the difference between *prone* and *supine*, and made this and similar corrections in the manuscript. Note, however, that the author believes she knows better and erased these changes. Note also that

the in-house editor did not wish to "antagonize" the author by insisting on correct usage.

* Please note that the manuscript was consistently copy edited with British spelling and with the serial comma. However, the (American) in-house editor, while having a quick look at the second proofs, decided he preferred the American spelling of some words and did not favour the serial comma, and made "a few quick changes." It did not occur to him, apparently, that those words might occur more than once in the book and that serial commas were scattered throughout.

* Thank you for being the hundredth person to note the obvious (and hilarious) logical lapse at the beginning of chapter 7 of this novel. Please note that the illogic was pointed out to the author at first draft, at second draft, by the copy editor, and by the proofreader. Please note that the author always insisted, "It reads fine to me."

* Please note that the copy editor is not responsible for the errors, inconsistencies, repetitions and contradictions you point out in your review. The copy editor, unfortunately, never saw these sections of the book, which the author submitted long after the editing process, while the book was in final proofs. The assistant editor "could not find" the editor's style sheet and, not having read the manuscript at any stage, was of course unaware of the contradictions and repetitions.

* Please note that the editor is not responsible for how chapter 10 completely contradicts chapter 5. The editor who pointed out this glaring contradiction was ignored by the author, who accused the editor of "grandstanding her own biases."



Workshop updates

Starting and Sustaining Your Editing Career

*Saturday, February 22, 2003
10:30am—4:00pm*

@ SFU Harbour Centre.

Cost: \$79 members/\$105 non-members.

Are you interested in becoming an editor but not sure about how to get started? Are you already up and running but not sure how to sustain your editing business? Let writer and editor Maureen Nicholson show you the ropes in this workshop.

We'll look at the differences between freelance and in-house editing, outline the skills required for effective editing, discuss strategies for finding work and promoting yourself effectively, review professional development opportunities and key editing resources, and look at how to make editing a profitable and sustainable venture.

Novices and seasoned professionals alike will benefit from this interactive workshop. Bring your questions!

Maureen Nicholson coordinates Douglas College's Print Futures: Professional Writing Program. She runs her own writing and editing company, Keyline Consulting, and is an associate with the Learning Strategies Group, a customized business-education unit within Simon Fraser University's faculty of business administration. A long-time member of the Editors' Association of Canada, Maureen now serves on the Association's certification committee.

Copy Editing

*Saturday, March 29, 2003
10:30am - 4:00pm*

@ SFU Harbour Centre

Cost: \$79 members/\$105 non-members

In this one-day course you'll learn the function and place of copy editing in the publication cycle and come to

understand its importance. You'll have the chance to assess your copy editing aptitude, learn (or review) the proper use of copy editing symbols, develop style sheets to ensure consistency, and practice on excerpts from a variety of publications. We'll also discuss the differences between hard copy and electronic editing, and how to decide when to leave things alone. This course is aimed at editors with little or no copy editing experience as well as those who want a brush up on issues specific to copy editing.

Ruth Wilson has been editing since 1981. She worked in house at Self-Counsel Press for 16 years, the last several as a managing editor. Since 1998 she has been an independent consultant and is a member of West Coast Editorial Associates. Her clients now include book publishers, international associations, corporations, and government. She also teaches in the SFU Writing and Publishing program.



Look out for more details about the following workshops in next month's *West Coast Editor*.

On Saturday, March 15, print production for editors will be taught by Ron Woodward at SFU Harbour Centre. Cost will be \$79 for members, \$105 for non-members.

On Saturday, April 12, indexing will be taught by Annette Lorek at SFU Harbour Centre. Cost will be \$79 for members, \$105 for non-members.

These workshops are the perfect opportunity to brush up on your existing skills, or to explore other areas of the editing and publishing process.

Prize-winners!

You may remember that EAC-BC ran several competitions at Word on the Street and at the Surrey Writers Conference last year. We're now delighted to announce the winners.

1st prize (free spring workshop):

Nina Chatelain, Vancouver

2nd prize (*Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th Ed.): Liz Wylie, Port Moody

3rd prize (1-year subscription to *WCE*): Toni Graeme, Victoria

Congratulations to you all and we hope you enjoy your prizes.

All contributions welcome!

West Coast Editor is always delighted to receive contributions from EAC/ACR members, as well as other people involved in the publishing industry. If you have an idea for an article that might interest the members of our branch, we would love to hear from you.

Contact us at:

lesley@4camerons.com

or

rgretton@telus.net

We look forward to hearing from you!

Next deadline for submissions

to *West Coast Editor*:

February 10, 2003

West Coast Editor is the newsletter of the British Columbia branch of the Editors' Association of Canada. Views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect those of EAC/ACR as a whole.

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February 19 meeting

You've finally decided to abandon the financial safety of your in-house editorial position and to launch yourself into the uncertainty of freelance life. One of your first problems will involve setting your rates. How do you find a rate that will feed and house you without scaring off potential clients?

Branch Chair Faith Gildenhuis will talk about this thorny issue at our next meeting. She will consider both fixed prices and hourly rates, and the practicalities of charging variable rates for different services and clients.



New location reminder

Please remember that we are now meeting at the following location: **YWCA Wellness Centre, 535 Hornby Street** (Hornby at Dunsmuir).

Anyone who has battled with the problem of parking on hockey nights will appreciate the reason for our move!

We continue to meet at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of each month (except June, July, August, and December).

Non-members are more than welcome to join us to find out more about the world of editing (\$5 drop-in fee; free for members).

For more information on branch meetings, call 604-681-7184.



Working with US clients: tax information

Are you planning to work with clients in the USA? If you are working for a

private individual, you will be able to invoice and record the income in the same way as you do with a Canadian client. If the client pays you in US dollars, you must keep all the paperwork dealing with the transaction and the exchange rate, etc., for tax purposes. However, if your client is a company, you may find yourself in need of an ITIN. This is an individual tax identification number and it will essentially stop you from being taxed at source by the US government and then later having to pay taxes to the Canadian government.

The cost is approximately \$125 (Canadian dollars, you'll be pleased to note!) plus tax, and it should take around six weeks to process. The following Web site will take you to a list of local agents in Canada:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96839,00.html>

And this site will provide you with more information and the link to download the application forms:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96287,00.html>

The agent you use will need to see some form of identification—your driver's licence is generally sufficient proof. (If you live very far from an approved agent, you do have the option of posting the forms with your passport. However, this could bring its own problems and you may find that the drive is well worth the effort.) Is payment for your ITIN tax deductible? Apparently it's one of those grey areas of the tax process ...

Many thanks to Sue Innes for passing on these links.

Web site reminder

Don't forget to check our Web site at <http://www.editors.ca/bc/index.htm> for information on branch activities.

WEST COAST EDITOR

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2002/03 EAC-BC EXECUTIVE

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