

Melanie's Writing Newsletter - October 2008

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Dear Friends,

Do you ever have one of those months where you feel behind on everything? That's been October for me, but things are starting to calm down so I can catch up--I hope!

I'm really enjoying my new job at the junior high and also teaching the [UC Davis Extension](#) writing class. However, I have little time for much else beyond the minimal I need to do to keep my house running. In this economy I can't complain about having work though! Plus, Halloween (my favorite holiday) is coming. :)

This issue is packed with info to help you get busy writing. I hope you find it helpful.

Finding Editorial Contacts

How do you find the contact name you need at a magazine or book publisher? Some options:

- 1) [Writer's Market](#) (print or online version)
- 2) A magazine's masthead (the page typically right after the table of contents that lists the magazine's staff).
- 3) A magazine's writer's guidelines. These can often be found on the magazine's web site, but you may have to send the magazine a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) to get them. A good database of writer's guidelines can be found [here](#).
- 4) Call the magazine or book publisher

4) Call the magazine or book publisher and ask.

5) Network at writing conferences to get contact names.

6) Network through writing groups. Find out which editors other writers are happy and not happy with.

7) Visit the magazine or publisher and introduce yourself. Be sure to call first to arrange an appointment.

Tips for Slow Times

Great advice from Dana Cassell of [Writer-Editors Network](#) during this tough economy:

* Look for multiple, supplementary streams of income from your inventory of research material and topic knowledge. Examples: Use teleclasses, teleseminars, audio tapes, e-books and the like as revenue streams to supplement fees from writing or editing.

* Broaden your reach. Whichever of the following you have been working in--articles, books, booklets, teaching, speaking, editing, Web writing--try one or more of the others to provide supplementary sources of income.

Sacramento State Writers' Conference

More info from this conference that I attended in August:

Writing the One-Person Play:

Since I mostly write nonfiction articles, I decided to step out of my comfort zone and attend a workshop on the one-person play. The presenter was Rick

Foster, a playwright for decades. I saw one of his plays years ago, [Vivien](#)--based on the life of actress Vivien Leigh--and loved it.

According to Foster:

"The main problem is locating the center of conflict--the conflict that will drive the play. The character who is speaking in a one-person play should have a stake in the action, not merely be an onlooker. She/he should be in conflict with other characters. But, unless she/he also has an internal conflict, the play will be dramatically simplistic.

The character will either succeed or be defeated, but we won't have seen the only battle that can be actually portrayed on stage by one person, which is the battle with the self."

Types of conflict include:

- Σ Conflict between humans and nature (storms or the struggle to discover a scientific truth)
- Σ Conflict between one group of humans and another (war)
- Σ Conflict between one human and a group of humans (an individual's struggle against a social system)
- Σ Conflict between two humans
- Σ Conflict within a human (values and desires at odds with each other)

Foster says," The search for the precise nature of the internal conflict can be quite lengthy and not be finished until the play is nearly done."

Writing Updates

* It's so fun for me when my writing students get published. There are only 14 people in the nonfiction class I'm currently teaching yet, almost every week, one or more students have new publishing success stories to share.

Here's the latest email I received from one of my students last Thursday:

"Hi Melanie. I took your advice and submitted another article idea to [magazine name here]. I sent my letter on Monday and I got an email yesterday evening that they accepted the idea! I feel like I did it the right way this time thanks to your class. Thanks so much!"

* If you'd like to have your own publishing success story, please consider my writing coaching services. You can find out more [here](#).

* My workbook *Get Your Articles Published! Over 100 Tips, Exercises, and Techniques to Sell Your Nonfiction Articles* contains the information the student above used to snag an assignment. Download a free excerpt of the workbook at this [link](#).

I hope you enjoy all the candy and fun costumes this week.

Thank you for subscribing to the newsletter. If there's a writing topic you'd like to see covered here, please send an email to melaniebowden@earthlink.net

Until next month,

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