

# WRITER'S INK

## THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF BLOOMINGDALE

### MARCH 2008

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our March workshops will be on March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Format rules are: Minimum, 12-pt. font and double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.

#### COMPOUND ADJECTIVES

One great aspect of the English language is its flexibility. If you cannot think of the perfect adjective, you can create one by combining nouns and adjectives (do not hyphenate adverbs). Here's an official definition of compound adjectives:

“Hyphenate phrases used as compound adjectives *before* a noun. Do not hyphenate such phrases when they occur normally elsewhere in the sentence.”  
(after the noun)

For example:

*Up-to-date* expense figures  
The expense figures are *up to date*.

*Down-to-earth* projections  
These projections appear to be *down to earth*.

*On-the-job* training  
I got my training *on the job*.

Source: The Gregg Reference Manual, Ninth Edition, William A. Sabin, Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2001, p. 218.

Here's part of a *hard-working, well-thought-out* sentence with four great examples of compound adjectives:

“...until it reached the derelict foundation on which *fifty-two-year-old* Rae Newborn would build her house, that *brush-deep, moss-soft, foursquare, twin-towered* stone skeleton...”

(Also note “stone skeleton” is a great example of alliteration, which will be covered in next month's newsletter.)

Source:

Folly, by Laurie R. King, Bantam Books, March 2001, p. x.

Here's another sentence with only three great examples of compound adjectives:

“Besides, he had an *ill-fitting* storm door that, when rapped sharply with *walnut-hard* knuckles, made more noise than a horde of Hell's Angels on *muffler-deprived* choppers.”

Source:

Grape Expectations, by Tamar Myers, New American Library, 2006, p. 212.

## INSIDE WRITING & PUBLISHING

The free seminars featuring Chicago-area authors have ended. Fortunately for those members who could not participate, several of us will summarize the sessions we were able to enjoy. Member Marjorie Lee attended the February 26<sup>th</sup> program at the Helen Plum Library in Lombard, entitled “After you Type “The End...”

Author Sean Chercover graciously shared his experiences with a large audience of writers and would-be writers.

To a neophyte, one of the most important items in Chercover’s presentation was his emphasis on the need for an agent early in the writing process. Before completing and polishing a manuscript to perfection, it is important to have an awareness of what a publisher is seeking. An agent can establish the connection to an appropriate publisher and enable the writer to tailor his writing to the publisher’s market.

Another important point emphasized was that a writer should not pay a fee to obtain the services of an agent. The publisher provides the needed funds. When a contract is developed, they will allow for a commission to the agent. The only money ever going directly to an agent from a writer is a minimal amount to cover messages, copies, etc. \$100 per year is the amount author Chercover pays to his agent.

To establish contact with an agent, send a one-page query letter. The description of the writer’s work should be in the first two or three paragraphs. Do not send

attachments, but a small segment of your material may be included to provide an indication of your writing skills.

Author Chercover suggested sending numerous query letters, possibly five or ten every week, choosing agents who are connected with the type of book planned, and searching for agents in the Writers’ Guide to Literary Agents, through the Association of Authors Representatives, or in the acknowledgments of comparable books.

Author Chercover also stressed that it is important when a contract for publication is developed, to understand the specifics of the agreement, such as the number of copies to be printed, to assure for continuing availability; and the rights for possible TV and cable linkage.

This seminar was very worthwhile and stimulated good response from the audience.

## COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

(Please send any submissions to my e-mail address for inclusion in the next month’s newsletter.)

## HAPPY SAINT PATRICK’S DAY!

From Mary Ann Lufkin  
(630) 510-1759

