



# The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

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## Freelance editors: should I hire one?

Aspiring authors ask this question almost as often as they ask, "Should I get an agent?" Well, freelance editors charge a lot to edit a book-length manuscript - about \$2500.00+ - and it can take work to find the right one for you. But, once found, good ones are treasures indeed, not to be given up lightly.

If you can afford it, **why would you want to hire a freelance editor?** Perhaps you are unsure of your grammar and want the ms to be as near perfect as possible. Maybe you need an expert to look at your plot, flow, and characterization. Or you may know that something is not quite right but you cannot put your finger on it. My advice is to pinpoint exactly why you want your work scrutinized by an editor, then go looking, because editors do different things and have various specialties. Some prefer technical mss, some edit only fiction, and still others work on text books or special subjects.

**Where do you find freelance editors?** The best place to start, and perhaps all you need, is the Editors' Association of Canada's (EAC) website at [www.editors.ca](http://www.editors.ca). This gives advice on hiring an editor, an on-line directory, contact numbers and addresses for their regional branches, etc. The really good news is that non-members can attend their inexpensive local workshops led by experts for writers.

**How do you know if an editor can do the job you need?** First you need to understand that there is no regulatory body in Canada governing editors - anyone can hang out a shingle. However, EAC does list the editorial standards that they expect of their members on their website. Many editors do not have a degree in English and writers should understand that this is not necessarily a hindrance. Once you have found a fit with the expertise and preferred areas of 3

...continued on p.2.



### From the editor's desk

**I**nkspot.com, one of the world's best writing sites, closed down in February, leaving many regulars shaking their heads. It was such a good source for both beginning and published writers; it had won numerous awards; and, it was Canadian. Last year the owner, Debbie Ridpath Ohi, sold Inkspot to Ex Libris, a US company. Debbie and her managing editor, Moira Allen, both wrote to me last week expressing their shock and dismay. What can I say that would be useful? Not much!

My adventures with royalty-paying e-publishing continue unabated -- but I am going to give it a rest in this issue. I am the only person I know who has trod this path and I have collected enough material for a book. Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma program recognized my "expertise" in this field and has asked me to do a half-day workshop in early 2002 for their *Non-Fiction Day*. I hope that I can protect others from the pitfalls I dropped into and encourage those who want to give it a try.

Julie H. Ferguson

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Freelance editors: should I hire one?.....	1
From the editor's desk.....	1
Promoting your book.....	2
Forthcoming Events.....	2



## Promoting your book: 5 proven ways

No! You won't get a book tour and you are unlikely to end up on Oprah's book club unless you are very well-known. Publishers do very little promotion of the average authors' books, so you must undertake most of it yourself. Here are five suggestions to get you started (there are many more):

1. **Design and print your own color flyers** - Include a scan of the book jacket, some endorsements (quotes about the book), the catalogue blurb, and a short author's bio. Don't forget the ordering info and then send/deliver it to your audiences - bookstores, associations, companies, interested groups, etc.
2. **Compose and distribute press releases** - one page (in b&w) is sufficient. Include a summary of above items and make sure you provide your contact info. Fax to local, regional, and national newspapers, radio and TV stations, and periodicals.
3. **Develop a reviewers' list and an informative package** to send out with copies of your book.
4. **Throw a couple of book launches** - Bookstores and libraries are always keen to feature a local author and will hold a reading and book signing for you, often at no charge..
5. **Your own website is a good idea** as long as you have plenty of links to it.

To learn more about promoting books - try *Guerrilla Marketing for Writers* (Writers Digest Books 2000) and [www.parapublishing.com](http://www.parapublishing.com)

## Forthcoming events

- Mar 7: **Essay Planning and Self-editing for Elementary Grades** for the teachers of Pitt Meadows Elementary School, 3 pm.
- Apr 23: **Writing with Power!** for 3 grade 6-7 classes at Glenwood Elementary School, Maple Ridge.
- Apr 24: **How to Write Winning Non-fiction Book Proposals!** Four Tuesdays at 7:00pm at Guildford Park School as part of Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma program. \$52.00
- Apr 27: **Writing with Power!** for Maple Ridge School District 42's professional development day (elementary and middle teachers). 8:30-11:30am.
- May 5: **Writing with Power!** for a Surrey writers' group. 9:30am
- May 12: **Writing with Power!** 9:00am-12 noon at Johnston Heights school as part of Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma program. \$25.00.
- Jul 14: **Getting Your Book Published in the New E-ra** (am)  
**Speaking and Writing: the Indivisible Twins** (pm)  
 Both for the BC chapter of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers at Vancouver Museum's Vanier Room. (Non-members welcome at morning session \$30.00)

## Freelance Editors.....

or 4, at the very least interview them and ask for references, see some of their work at the before and after stages, and request that they edit 2-3 sample pages of your manuscript. You need to establish, not only their skill level, but also a relationship. Taking criticism from someone you dislike does not come easily to anyone. Pick an editor to whom you can relate comfortably.

**How do editors charge?** This varies and can be hourly, by the page, or a fixed price/project. Rush jobs are 10-20% more. Don't forget to find out your chosen editor's fee schedule ahead of time.

**What steps can you take if you cannot afford editors' fees?** Take some self-editing courses through Continuing Ed departments of school districts or colleges, sign-up for EAC's local workshops, and/or join a local writers' group.



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