



# The Beacon

Your guiding light for writing and publishing

Number 12, Summer 02

## Clips and Tearsheets . . . how to send them?

Clips and tearsheets refer to original articles published in newspapers and magazines that have been clipped (torn) out and kept. Periodical publishers usually send three to six copies of a print magazine to contributors along with the payment cheque. They do this so freelancers have several copies in the original to send to other editors as examples of their work when they query.

With 88% of all print magazines and all e-zines accepting queries via email these days, how do writers send editors their print or electronic clips? Well, the short answer is—we can't send originals via email! The long answer is that there are ways to get around this dilemma.

Firstly, don't even think about sending attachments with your e-query! Why? Attachments are the means by which electronic viruses are carried and multiply, so editors rarely risk opening them, especially from someone they don't know. Another reason is that the editor may not use a word processing program that is compatible with yours.

So how can we send our clips? Writers have a variety of options. If you have clips only in print, the most obvious, is to offer in the e-query to snail-mail them. However, I have found that I am rarely asked to do so. If you have a website and you own the e-rights to a particular article, get the text up on your site and send the editor the URL as the next best way. For all my e-articles that have been published, I put the website address where they can be found into the email – the article may be on my own website if the e-rights have reverted to me or, if the piece is still under licence to another e-publisher, I include their URL where it can be seen. Several editors have followed hyperlinks to see my work and I've found that this method works well.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Clips and Tearsheets .....	1
From the editor's desk.....	1
Query letters for books.....	2
In the News.....	2
Forthcoming Events.....	2



### From the editor's desk

**D**o you want the good news or the bad news first? Both items impact Canadian writers and readers and can be found on page 2 under **In the News**.

I have been writing quietly in the background these last three months and have completed two ebooklets for writers and speakers – see page 2 also.

Summer is almost upon us and, for me, it is a time of recuperation from a very hectic season of writing and leading workshops. I usually take a quiet two months with no speaking engagements and play as much golf as I can to recharge my batteries. This summer, I will also be (slowly) working on the fully-narrated CD-ROMS and e-booklets of the rest of my workshops so that I can reach writers who do not live locally. I am also going to Rome and northwest Italy, gleefully clutching a new digital camera.

I wish all my readers a wonderful summer of work and play and you can expect the next issue of *The Beacon* around Labour Day.

Julie H. Ferguson

## Query letters for books: a review.

What are the essential components of a good query? How long should the letter be? What exactly does a query achieve?

The purpose of all queries is **to get an editor's or agent's invitation to submit more material**. These arbiters of the publishing world are experts at recognizing a brilliant idea, outstanding writing, and solid author credentials from just one page.

The components of a good query include:

- ☞ A compelling hook (optional) or intro with genre, category and word count
- ☞ For non-fiction, the book's subject, scope, structure, market and competition; and, For novels, a 2-3 paragraph synopsis
- ☞ A short author's bio
- ☞ Call to action

Writing your book's query is not a task to be undertaken casually. Aspiring authors need to read current books on the subject, take courses, and expose their queries' drafts at a writer's group to have a hope of crafting something truly rivetting.

Queries for books take hours and hours of work to perfect, as well as outside eyes. A student of one of my workshops is into her sixth attempt and, while the letter has improved immensely, it is still not ready to mail....

### Forthcoming events

#### 2002

**Sep 24:** **Writing with Power!!** for SD 42 teachers' professional development Session, 4-7pm, Resource Centre, Brown St., Maple Ridge.

**Oct 19-21:** Tenth annual **Surrey Writers' Conference**. Join Julie again in the Blue Pencil Café for an insightful and an encouraging discussion about your career and work-in-progress.

**Oct 26:** **Writing with Power!!** available through Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma program, 9-noon. \$32.00. Call 604-589-2221 to register after Labour Day.

**Nov 23:** **Writing Online** through Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma Program, 9-noon. \$32.00. Call 604-589-2221 after Labour Day.

**Nov 30:** **How to Write Irresistible Query Letters** through Surrey's Creative Writing Diploma Program, 9am-4pm \$63.00. Call 604-589-2221 to register after Labour Day.

#### 2003

**Jan 21:** **Writing for Success: Essay Planning and Self-editing** for SD42 grade 5-12 teachers' professional development session, 4-7pm, Brown Centre, Maple Ridge,

**Feb 21:** **Writing with Power!!** (9:30am) and **Essay Planning and Self-editing** (1:30pm) for SD 43's teachers' Professional Development Day, Coquitlam

## In the News...

\*\* Writers-world.com reported in May that **Amazon.com** may launch a Canadian site this summer with Raincoast Books of Vancouver as their major distributor. Canadian customers would get quicker delivery without custom duties and publishers would benefit because orders would be filled with Canadian editions instead of American. Amazon.com will neither confirm nor deny the rumours.

\*\* A sad day this spring – one of Canada's oldest publishers went out of business, Jack **Stoddart's** General Publishing. This company also owns several small publishers and distributes books for most of the literary presses in Canada.

\*\* **Beacon Literary Services** now offers writers' tools on the website. The first are fully-narrated presentations on CD-ROM and e-booklets of the workshops – *Writing Online* and *Speaking and Writing: A guide to Promotional Writing for Professional Speakers*. These tools are ideal for those who cannot participate in the workshops in person or for those who want a detailed reference to keep after attending. Additional tools will be available as they are completed. To discover how to order, please click:

[www.beaconlit.com/beaconlit/writerstools.htm](http://www.beaconlit.com/beaconlit/writerstools.htm)



*The Beacon* is published quarterly by Beacon Literary Services and is distributed electronically free of charge to those who are interested. If you do not wish to receive the newsletter, please notify the editor:

Julie H. Ferguson  
#5-300 Maude Road,  
Port Moody, BC  
Canada, V3H 2X6  
P: (604)469-1319  
F: (604)469-1316

info@beaconlit.com  
www.beaconlit.com

© Beacon Literary Services 2001

All right reserved