

Track Changes

Batboy lives!

Fact checking and fun at the AGM

A warm new location and a veteran guest speaker made the Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba Editors' Association, held on Wednesday, October 15, a most worthwhile evening.

The AGM was held in the events space of Aqua Books, at its new and improved location on Garry Street. Events coordinator Ariel Gordon looked after our every need (and took some of the photos featured in this issue).

Business of the meeting included amendments to the bylaws, a discussion of the listserv, and the re-election of Ellen Henry to the position of secretary and the election of Bev Phillips to Events Committee chair and Cheri Frazer to the position of member-at-large.

The highlight of the evening was Annalee Greenberg, our keynote speaker. A partner and the editorial director of Portage & Main Press,



Annalee Greenberg explains the challenges of being true.

Greenberg addressed "Fact-Checking in a Fact-Challenged World."

Not only did she inform us of the "15 Fact-Checking Basics," but she inspired us to rise to the standards borrowed from academia, journalism, and law—"truth above all"—and to keep the public trust.

Fine food from Eat! Bistro added just the right combination of sweet and savoury to our evening—we hope to return to this venue for future events.



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"How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!"
— Mark Twain
in *Mark Twain in Eruption*

Special points of interest:

- In search of Bev Phillips
- Events past & future
- A capital rant
- Strategies for structure

Message from the President

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Track Changes!*

It's a new MEA year and the executive is continuing to work toward getting our policies and procedures in order to make the transition smooth for the next executive to take over in a year or so. As a volunteer organization without any staff, the challenge is to deal with the endless MEA details while still managing our own lives. We're hoping a policies and procedures manual will help.

It's also a new season of opportunities to learn and to contribute. In this issue, you'll read about some recent and upcoming events, and maybe they will inspire you to volunteer on the events or website committee or contribute to the next issue of this newsletter. If so, please email us at <meaworkshops@gmail.com>.

Enjoy the snow!

Marjorie Poor



Freelancers talk, library is revealed, 8-Step Editing returns

by Bev Phillips

Our first three events this year have been well attended and informative. Our freelancers' evening on September 30 was themed "Setting fees and other mysteries of editing for a living." About a dozen members gathered in the loft at the Park Theatre and discussed a wide range of topics relating to working as a freelancer. We also benefited from a book exchange to which members donated generously. Check out the website for copious notes taken by one of the participants.

On October 15 an enthusiastic librarian gave us a thorough tour of the Millennium Library, revealing many out-of-the-way departments and collections even die-hard library aficionados were not familiar with. We can now find both foreign-language collections (children's and adults', from Albanian to Vietnamese), the Henderson's Directory going



back to the 1800s (when exactly did Granddad arrive in Manitoba? It's here), and the Teen Room – though we may not want to go in there.

Computer diva Cheri Frazer led two workshops on November 15 on Document Design in Word 2003. Reports are not all in, but I'm sure we will hear many raves about this event.

You asked for it: Jim Taylor will return on February 21 with his full-day workshop on 8-Step Editing. MEA has

offered this excellent course twice before to sell-out crowds. Mark your calendars now!

Committee members Jillian Brown, Cheri Frazer, Susan Huebert, and Anna Olson have a plethora of ideas for the rest of the year's events. We're working on a half-day workshop on the history of English, tentatively planned for January 24. Other possibilities include a panel discussion and a second freelancers' evening. Feel free to contact us with your own suggestions!

See you an MEA event soon.



"The medium may be the message du jour, but publishing ultimately devolves upon labor-intensive investments of time, attention, care, trust, wit, technical skill, judgment, common sense, and—so we would like to think—good will."

— The Editors of *EEI Press in*

The Elements of Internet Style: The New Rules of Creating Valuable Content for Today's Readers

Letters to the editor

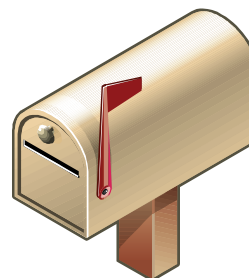


You don't write, you don't phone!

As you can see, we have space for your letters. We'd love to hear from you—tell us anything you want more of, anything you have a problem with, anything at all.

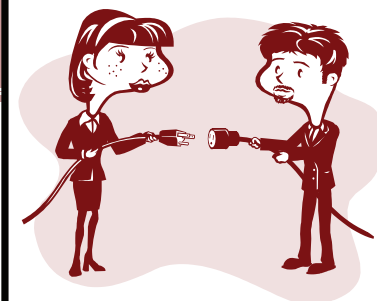
Send your comments by email to <meaworkshops@gmail.com> or by regular mail to

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Upcoming events

- ◆ January
History of English
- ◆ February
8-Step Editing with Jim Taylor



- ◆ March
Magazine Weekend
- ◆ June
Year-End Windup

Member profile: Bev Phillips

by Carrie Walker-Jones

Bev Phillips. That was a name I heard a lot when I first joined the MEA. People would refer to her wisdom, defer to her experience, or simply confer respect on her. Just who was this illustrious person? Then, she and two other members offered a workshop on freelancing—I understood a little more of who she was. **Bev Phillips: Manitoba freelance editor extraordinaire.**

After knowing her awhile, I wasn't surprised when I discovered how she started out in editing. "I always liked writing," she said. "But the most important moment happened when I was on vacation in Toronto and went to a party. There I talked to someone who was a copy editor. When I asked her what she did, I really liked what she described, and so I asked, 'How do I do that?'" The woman gave Bev step-by-step instructions on how to get started in the industry and then remained an informal mentor for years. I found another clue to her identity.

Bev Phillips: networking sage.

Bev fit editing around her day job until 1997, when she had the chance to take a buyout package at work and decided to focus solely on editing. She tells of two things that have really paid off in developing her business. First, she found it made a difference to be home during the day and answer the phone in person, rather than relying on an answering machine. And second, she has the proud distinction of asking for and getting the "proofreading" category in the MTS Yellow Pages. To this day, hers remains the only service listed. I am duly impressed with her confidence.

Bev Phillips: marketing genius.

Bev says she will edit just about anything but fiction, which she admits she has no affinity for. Among her usual projects are newsletters, calendars, websites, business brochures, and correspondence, along with an academic thesis here and there. Bev likes taking on projects where she'll learn something new. Over the years, she's edited a newspaper for farmers and a newsletter for Ducks Unlimited Canada. Perhaps one of her most interesting jobs is for a client who is an interpretive

planner—the person responsible for those signs and explanatory panels in museums and parks. I can only imagine how formidable Bev is in a game of Scrabble or Trivial Pursuit.

Bev Phillips: disparate knowledge diva.

When it comes to natural skills, Bev says she has a good eye for editing. And don't worry if you can't claim the same—she believes an editing eye can be developed. While Bev does have her own style preferences, she honestly doesn't seem to have a strong opinion in the serial comma debate. "I just wish someone would decide one way or the other." Her pet peeve? "I loathe the words *utilize* or *utilization*. I will automatically change them to *use*." In spite of her tendencies, Bev knows there are times when she has to "damp down [her] instincts and adapt to the inclination and needs of the client." Some jobs require that more than others. Bev knows from years of editing where mistakes tend to be hiding and she'll change her approach depending on what kind of document she's working with. She's also learned to be careful with headers, footers, and numbers. And if there are any math equations, she'll always do the math. "You'd be surprised," she says, "with the wrong numbers people can come up with." **Bev Phillips: talented word and number queen.**

Many of you will likely know Bev these days from her warm and witty introductions at our workshops and AGMs, a skill she has honed through her dozen years in Toastmasters International. Through them, she also learned how to give helpful feedback, a useful skill when talking to



clients about their writing. But the cross-pollination between the two interests goes both ways. She becomes aware of a vast variety of subjects through editing that can be used in her speeches. Bev recently finished the highest accomplishment in the organization. Today she is **Bev Phillips: distinguished toastmaster.**

I've found Bev to be a great source of information and always willing to share from her experience. Her advice to other aspiring editors? Get as much education as possible. She finds the MEA an invaluable resource, especially for freelancers who tend to work in isolation. Although she wasn't a charter member, she joined early on and finds she learns something at each event she attends. "I often overhear people saying, oh *that's* how you do that, or I was wondering about that. . . . The connecting with other editors is really invaluable." Bev strongly recommends that freelancers list their services on the MEA's Hire an Editor web page. She also encourages new members to join the executive, where they can learn even more through those contacts. She herself joined the executive early on and served one year each as Secretary and Treasurer. "I wasn't well suited to either position, but the organization survived." Thanks to members like her, I think the MEA has actually thrived. I think it's fair to call her **Bev Phillips: generous resource and MEA advocate.**

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We're in the phone book!

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"When capitalization choices seem both arbitrary and sensitive, a writer should aim to be as impartial and consistent as possible."

– Margery Fee and Janice McAlpine
in
Oxford Guide to Canadian English Usage

Newsletter Committee

Sarah Broadfoot
Bev Phillips
Marjorie Poor
Fern Swedlove
Carrie Walker-Jones

We're on the web!

www.manitobaeditors.ca



Rants & Raves



by Fern Swedlove

It was truly heartwarming when I came across an advertisement this summer in the *Country Registrar* newspaper which simply said that Charlie Farquharson and all them Udders (featuring Don Harron and Claudette Gareau) would be appearing at the Rosthern Junior College on July 2.

Not only was it great to hear that the 84-year-old Don Harron, a venerable Canadian performer of *Hee Haw* fame, is alive and well and performing in rural Saskatchewan, but that this very modest newspaper published twice a year does not have a case of *capitalitis* as do so many publications and organizations these days. They understood the importance of following the long established rule: only proper nouns need a capital.

For all of us who have worked for organizations who insist on capitalizing almost anything that they deem to be important, you might have also jumped for joy to see that this simple capital was not being taken advantage for the mere sake of getting a little attention. But just to double check and because I am a Google addict, I searched his name only to discover that other publications such as the *Charlottetown Guardian* referred to the group as Charlie Farquharson and Dem Udders. Hats off to the people at the *Country Registrar* (Manitoba and Saskatchewan edition) who got it right!

Unfortunately, the waters of capitalization have become further muddied with the advent of technology. The new version of the *Canadian Press Stylebook* published this summer sheds some light on this problem (see sidebar). Now eBay and iPod is the way to go, but what about words such as YouTube? Why can't the technology field play by the rules in the established style guides? All very confusing.

I was so impressed with the *Country Registrar* that I had to call the publisher in Kipling, Saskatchewan, to get to the bottom of this perfectly capitalized advertisement. Turns out that the ad just came in the same way that it was published and the original author is unknown. Unless I find someone to talk to in Rosthern, likely the author will remain a mystery. But I am sleeping a bit better knowing that somewhere (likely in rural Saskatchewan) someone cares about punctuation and follows the rules for capitalization.

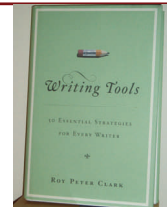
From the 15th edition of the *Canadian Press Stylebook*, published in July of this year:

"Canadian Press style now follows an organization's capitalization for trade names and other proper names. Previously, we always capped the first letter of trade names even if the organization did not do so. So it was eBay and iPod. Now it is eBay and iPod. There are two exceptions: we will capitalize only the first letter of all-caps promotional names (Scrabble, not SCRABBLE); and for all-lowercase promotional names, we will continue to capitalize the first letter to signal to readers it is a proper noun: Adidas (not adidas) shoes."

Editors' Aisle

Marjorie Poor reads up on structure, Part 1

Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer.
Roy Peter Clark. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006.



Anna Olson's workshop last spring on "Beginnings, Middles and Endings" got me reading more about structure and how to find it or, failing that, create it from chaos.

I found bits and pieces in several of my editing and writing books—I'll start with *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer* by Roy Peter Clark. Almost a third of the 50 strategies (16 to be exact) have to do with structure. Here are a few of what I think are the most useful with a focus on advice for editors:

24. **Work from a plan.** If it's obvious the writer didn't, you as the editor need to reconstruct the plan and create an outline so that you have something to manipulate as you search for the hidden structure. Clark advises just labelling the "big parts." It's a start.

31. **Build your work around a key question.** This question is what is known as the "engine" of a story—who has what at stake? Clark says, "Editors will keep lookout for holes in the story where key questions are left unanswered" (153).

39. **Write toward an ending.** Clark describes a variety of types of ending (e.g., closing the circle, the time frame, problem and solution, the apt quote, look to the future), but perhaps his most interesting comment here is to keep in mind that sentences and paragraphs have endings too, and that "each of these mini-endings anticipates your finale" (192).

I'll choose the "look to the future" ending—Part 2 of my reading report on structure will appear in a future issue of *Track Changes*.