Writing Forums info sheet Number 1

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Thank You and Welcome

I take this opportunity to say Thank You to our many special members and staff, past and present, who have contributed to making WritingForums.com (WF) the best forum for writers and creative artists on the net.

Towards the end of 2012, WF experienced two milestones: its 10th Anniversary, and a change of ownership. The first was celebrated with a 10th Anniversary prize challenge, and a subsequent anthology in the making. The second was marked with tweaks to the forum structure and to the rules. Plainly, the second was much less fun.

The construction of a showcase and workspace for our Tavern-based* professional members is taking longer than planned or hoped. This is partly due to delays in planning approvals and red tape, and partly due to the builder** not having a clue about online construction.

I also want to bid Welcome to our newer members, and wish you the best of fortune in your chosen pursuits.

Good things to you,
Cran

*Tavern-based is shorthand for Friends of WF, Veterans, and WF Staff.
**That would be me.

The Motley Tavern

Rumours are that activity increased behind the green door ever since **Bazz Cargo** took up residence behind the bar, and installed a dart board. **Moderan** very kindly donated a jukebox and a karaoke machine which “fell off the back of a passing pack mule”. And, if you cross the palm of **alanmt** with silver, or your credit card details, he will match your writing style to a drink, or he will drink to your writing style; reports vary.

…….

The Solstice Prize Challenge

The 2013 Solstice prize challenge is now up and running. The theme is also the deadline for submissions: midnight GMT on June 21/22.

Participation is open to subscribers, veterans, and staff members only. When submitting an entry, participants must include a statement of permission to publish; otherwise the entry will be excluded from winner selection.

Categories - Fiction (short stories or stand-alone excerpts), Non-Fiction (essays or anecdotal tales), Poetry (poems or lyrics), Visual Arts (by hand, computer or camera), and Music (songs or soundtracks) if people would like to try.

Winner selection – opinions are leaning towards popular polls; votes per person should be calculated as n-2 to a maximum of 3 (where n is the number of entries in the category).

Polls will be carefully monitored to prevent cheating.

Prizes - will be the winners’ choice selections from our BookStore; say, 3, 2 and 1 for first, second and third place respectively.

If a follow-up anthology is produced, included participants will be entitled to a share of any proceeds.

~ ~ ~

Quote me: Terry D
I was going to say, "write by ear", but I didn't want to be responsible for all the injuries which would occur when well meaning readers started slamming the sides of their heads into the keyboard

~ ~ ~

Poetry and LM challenge winners

LM and Poetry Challenge Awards

I don't know if it's a first for WF, but extra congratulations should go to **Leyline** for scoring First Places in the same month in both challenges!

February - LM - Contradictions -
First Place: **Leyline**
Second Place: **Kylecolorado**
Third Place: **Bruno Spatola**

March - LM - A Picture Prompt -
First Place: **lasm**
Second Place: **ppsage**
Third Place: **alanmt**

Leyline and **toddm** were declared co-winners of the February Poetry Challenge after it was learned that the vote was compromised by a cheat.

I suppose

I suppose that someday
it will come to pass
that even sunlight
will be considered crass.
"Because," they will moan,
"it is much too bright
and we are rather
content with night."

By toddm
From February Challenge - "Looking to the Future"

~ ~ ~

Quote me: Loulou
Personally, I don't believe in breaks. Breaks is not writing.

Quote me: Loulou
A book is as long as it needs to be.

~ ~ ~

Catfish Soup.

Loulou: *I see these little 'signs' as I call them all the time... That's why I need to write. To explore all the crazy stuff.*
From Interview with Loulou[2]

Professional writer and popular member, **Loulou** was the first to be individually grilled for a second course of Catfish Soup. Our MC (Maestro Chef), **Tiamat** delivered this extra helping on a mixed platter, opening with a live chat interview and winding up with the more traditional correspondence.

The recent change of direction for **The Motley Press** provided the perfect excuse for a smorgasbord of three previously grilled members**. Baron**, **Potty** and **Sam** explained the new focus on reviews in a tag team style live chat interview.

Sam: *We already had a dedicated readership for Motley, and we wondered how we could make that work in our favour, because most of us are authors with work out there. I believe Motley can be that medium to push an author's work to the next level.*
From Interview with Baron, Potty and Sam

For more information, or to participate in the online magazine's forum, visit **The Motley Press**.

~ ~ ~

Quote me: Tiamat
The creative bursts are when one such snippet of an idea grabs me by the hair and drags me across the room to my laptop, demanding to be written.

~ ~ ~

A brief essay from Olly

I had been to see my friend Martin, and as I came out of his house I saw a bus coming, hurried, and got on it. I am a forgetful sort of a bloke. I lose hats and scarves all over the place, and the last time I visited Martin I had left the cheerful red set tartan scarf I had been given for Christmas.

I mentioned it when I was arranging the visit. I meant to pick it up. I arranged to pick it up, but other people were there. We got talking, and I forgot. I might have remembered in time to turn back if the bus had not been coming; but it was and now I was sat on it without my scarf.

I got my phone out and sent Martin a text, "Forgot to pick up my scarf. And it is cold for the time of year."

I looked at it and remembered a young lady who wrote a book on punctuation in which she had done a survey, asking people in the street if they punctuated texts properly. The vast majority said, "Yes".

A likely story, I thought, looking at my own punctuation. The full stop is on the keyboard; simply hit 1. A comma means opening up the symbols, scrolling along to it and then selecting it. I wouldn't leave it unpunctuated, but there are limits.

By the way, I am not citing the author or title of the book, as in the front there is a long and explicit warning that threatens anyone who quotes it in any way without writing to author and publisher first and receiving their permission.

I am not going to all that trouble to give a plug to someone who threatens me, and have carefully avoided quoting anything verbatim, even the title, but if you really are interested it is the one that tells the silly version of the story about the panda having sex; the one where the panda doesn't have sex.

I digress. The next stop for my wandering mind was the observation that spelling and grammar are not constants, God-given, writ in stone and brought down from the mountain. And that it is generally more profitable to observe grammar 'as she is spoke' and figure out what is happening than to reject it as 'wrong' and not bother with the user's point of view.

I suspect there are a number of variations and sub groups when it comes to texting. One group might start a sentence with "And ..." to avoid finding commas, another's choice of words is conditioned by what works with predictor text; it can be easier to type 'okay' than 'O.K.'.

For another group style dominates: "Yo man, don forgt meeee c u ltr", the 'unimportant' words reduced to minimum, and 'important' ones with a whole row of extra vowels, but individuals are consistent.

There is a story of Diogenes at the Olympic games seeing some Cretans pass in gorgeous billowing cloth, "All is vanity," he said. Then came some Spartans in horse hair tunics, "All is vanity," he said.

There are always different fashions, but is this really the cutting edge of grammar. Will it change anything in the 'real world'; will there be a lasting imprint on the language?

Only time will tell, but I will make a guess: the memo and post-it-note cultures of the sixties and seventies left mainstream language largely untouched. Even though most of their grammatical quirks and short-hands are intuitive enough, I reckon text talk will be the same.

Change in language is slower in a literate society. Most of the unwritten slang of my youth has changed several times, but the changes of text talk were partly fuelled by the limitations of the devices recording it, and the technology is overtaking that.

Some things are constants: change; the conservatives who reject it; and, most importantly, the unpredictability of change. Something will happen, but I don't believe those who say they know what it is.

~ ~ ~

Quote me: garza
The problem with my kind of life is the number of years and the amount of effort needed to get here.

Quote me: garza
With a 1,500 word limit you can wander all over creation. With a 300 word limit you must be organised and focused with carefully selected points. Your writing must be precise and concise with not a word wasted.