

from the editor

Bringing you a summer special

As we sail through summer the sultry days may have you longing to visit a lake or ocean. Although you may not be able to personally take a dip in the waves, we'll make you wish you could. In this issue we take you diving with Layne Hedrick, underwater archaeologist and travel writer. Trease Carpenter offers important tips on finding ideas for articles. Looking for motivation? Read Chrystine Shearouse's article about how to win the struggle to call yourself a writer. And for graphic designers, you'll find a graphic design Slick Trick from designer and copywriter Mike Klassen. For those of you building web pages, lessons on Frauke Nonnenmacher's Web Tutorial continue.

Freebird staffer Lyn Blair has been on an exclusive assignment. We were pleased to have the opportunity to visit with Peter Bowerman, author of **The Well-Fed Writer**. Lyn reports she is happy with the great material she got during her lengthy conversation with Peter. She remarked, "Our readers will really benefit from his advice which is so practical and cuts to the core of their marketing struggles." Look for the Freebird Special Edition featuring Peter Bowerman, coming soon.

Readers who have signed up for email alerts will be notified the moment the Special Edition is posted. If you haven't signed up as a subscriber, do so now. You won't want to miss our interview with Peter Bowerman.

Maria Thompson

The (Sometimes) Rocky Road to Success

Chapter 6 - Learning to Call Yourself A Writer

By Chrystine Shearouse

How do you overcome the inertia? How do you get the ball rolling and transform yourself—from not being a writer into being a "writer"? Despite a Master's degree in Creative Writing, I still couldn't say, "I'm a writer", when asked what I did for a living. Was it lack of confidence in my writing skills? Honestly, I still felt I needed professional writing experience before I could call myself a writer but I didn't know how to start getting that experience.

Prepare for Success

Like me, you may be *hesitant* – or maybe just unsure of the steps necessary to get started. What you need is belief in yourself and in your ability to write. Discover what is holding you back – what exactly you need to do to *become* a writer – a real, freelance writer.

If there's one thing I *learned*, it's *how to get started as a writer*. Try some of the different techniques I used to get started.

- Read books about creative visualization (any book by Shakti Gawain), manifesting destiny (books and other resources from Alan Cohen)
- Investigate prosperity workshops (www.prosperitypartnership.com).
- Look at your motivations for wanting to become a writer with counseling, therapy or psychotherapy and consider what not pursuing your dreams does to you. Determine if you really want to be a writer or just want the *feeling* being a writer gives you.
- Read books on the art and business of copywriting. Anything written by Bob Bly, Stephen Slaunwhite or Peter Bowerman provides education you need in order to be profitable.
- To make contacts necessary to build a client base join networking groups like Business Networking International, LeTip, or use a search engine like Google to look for "Networking" groups in your area.

- Consider taking online courses with Media Bistro, Gotham Writer's Workshop or American Writers and Artists International.
- Find out what educational resources are available in your area. A great starting place is a continuing education program at a community college.
- If there is an Urban League in your community, they can be a valuable (free) resource in establishing yourself as a writer.

Remind Yourself of the Pros and Cons

Once you have decided to be a freelance writer, you can remain focused on your goal by reminding yourself what the corporate world can be like. Use the dread of returning to corporate life to spur you on to market your services. Think about being:

- Chained to a desk with other people looking over your shoulder, monitoring your productivity
- Other people telling you when you can go to lunch
- Breathing recycled air
- Never being paid enough to feel appreciated
- And when the time comes, leaving your kids with strangers who will have the pleasure of watching them grow up
- The stress of deadlines you don't have input in establishing
- The boredom of work you hate
- Lack of privacy when your personal life needs you
- Inflexibility of your work schedule
- The pain and stiffness of sitting in a cubicle
- Having to talk to obnoxious co-workers or listen to co-workers who hate their jobs even more than you do

Let these points haunt you, when you think about giving up after a tough cold call.

Instead, think about what the pleasures of freelance writing mean:

- Working in your home office – or even from your bed, if you so choose – or from a distant vacation spot – can be a carrot at the end of the stick for you.
- Setting your own hours (working at 2 a.m., if you want to).
- The privacy of your workspace and the solitude you crave and need to work best
- Being paid what you think your work is worth
- Being able to concentrate on your work with your entire mind – no politics
- No dress code - you can wear your be-jeweled tiara and cut-off shorts, if you want to!
- Deadlines are about productivity and fee schedules – things that will help your business, not squelch your creativity.
- And of course, working on a variety of projects that excite you.

Groundwork and Preparation Pay Off

Recently I finished my first assignment. To my surprise my first client found me through a friend. At last my hard work started to pay off. The prospective client liked my website and my samples. He knew I was just starting out, but agreed to give me a chance. I followed instructions given in the books I read. I acted as if I were well versed in my business. While I did not lie about my experience, I didn't go into detail about my lack of it, either. The prospect sent me a contract, and job specs. I hoped he wouldn't scoff at my prices, when I sent him my estimate. He didn't. After asking him the appropriate background questions, I did the research, the writing, and turned in the final copy. A week later, I received a check in the mail! I must have done something right because I am now working on six more assignments from the same client.

Though I have more work to do before I can call myself an "expert writer," I do have an area of expertise. I'm an expert in *Just Starting Out*. I know more about what I still need to learn. I know the difference between a well-seasoned freelance writer and myself. I know it is natural to feel nervous about "unfamiliar territory." I know the dreaded feeling of making cold calls will not last forever. I am very excited about what lies ahead. Last week, a woman asked me what I do for a living. Wouldn't you know it? – I said: "I am a writer." Just like that!

Now it's Your Turn

There's no reason not to get started right now. While you may not become a seasoned freelance writer over night, you can start on your transformation. If I can do it, you certainly can! As you become an expert in just starting out, you'll discover, as I have, how to call yourself a Writer.

The Tool Box

More than a tool – a valuable resource

Getting ready for a Direct Mail Campaign

Your AWAI copywriting course focuses on direct mail copywriting. Who knows better than you the value of direct mail, the proven and cost effective method to help grow a business? Whether you are preparing a direct mail campaign to market your freelance business or as a part of a marketing plan for a client, start with [USPS - Direct Mail](#) . Here is a valuable resource that provides a How-To Guide, Simple Formulas, Simple Steps, and Templates. Download templates for sales letters, brochures, envelopes, buckslips and postcards to your computer in PC or Mac formats. An important ingredient for your direct mail marketing plan is a targeted up-to-date mailing list. You'll find links to USPS affiliate direct mail merchants who can assist you with mailing lists and enable you to obtain bids for your direct mail projects. You will also find additional tools like direct mail calculators for [ROI](#) (return on investment and CPM (cost per thousand) on the affiliate direct mail merchant sites. And if you don't know what a "bangtail" is, head to the [USPS - Glossary](#). Find definitions for direct mail terminology. Learn to "talk the talk" and "walk the walk" and you'll soon sound and look like a direct mail copywriting pro.

A Professional Web Site – Made Easy

By Frauke Nonnenmacher

Part 6 – Tables

(If you've missed parts 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, you can get them from the Freebird archives [here](#))

Tables can be a useful tool for improving the appearance of your web site, but they have to be used with caution, as they can seriously delay the loading of your web site. One thing you must keep in mind when using tables is that the entire table will not display in a web browser **until all its content has loaded!** As a result, tables can be used very effectively for laying out text and **small** images, which will load quickly.

Bearing that in mind, let's get started on putting tables on your web site. Open up your fee schedule or biography page - they should mainly consist of text, which is ideal for tables. When you look at the page, the text should fill the entire screen, from left to right. The HTML code should look similar to this:

```
<html>
<head>
  <title>Freelance Commercial Writing Services</title>
</head>
<body>
  <h2>My Wonderful Copywriting Services</h2>
  <p>
    Rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb
    rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb
  </p>
</body>
</html>
```

Now insert the lines marked in **red** to put the main body text into a table and look at the result.

```
<html>
<head>
  <title>Freelance Commercial Writing Services</title>
</head>
<body>
<div align="center">
  <table width=80% cellpadding=10 border=1>
    <tr>
      <td>
        <h2>My Wonderful Copywriting Services</h2>
        <p>
          Rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb
          rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb
        </p>
      </td>
    </tr>
  </table>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

Your text should now appear centered on the page, with two margins left and right. If you like this look, read on to learn how to use it for your entire web site...

New Tags: <div>, <table>, <tr> and <td>

the first of these tags, <div>, is not directly related to tables. It is an alignment tag that controls, how the HTML elements inside it appear on the page. Putting the actual table inside an alignment tag of <div align="center"> ensures that the table will appear in the middle of the page, rather than flush on the left.

The <table> tag is a little more complicated, as it must be used in conjunction with the <tr> and <td> tags. The <tr> tag denotes a table row, and the <td> tag a cell within a row. **Only the <td> tag can hold actual content, like text and images!**

A quick word about the <table> tag attributes that were used. First, the "width = 80%" attribute specifies that the width of the table is 80% of the width of the browser window. If you look at the page and resize the browser, the table will resize along with it. You can specify any percentage you want, but 70-80% will give you the best look for your web page.

The "cellpadding=10" attribute specifies a margin of 10 pixels between the table border and each cell's contents. Set it to 0 and have a table that looks extremely crowded!

Finally, the "border=1" attribute specified a border 1 pixel wide around each cell in the table. Set this attribute to "border=0" to have a table without a visible border. However, while you're creating the table it's advisable to keep a visible border to see that all cells are laid out correctly.

More complex tables

In the previous example, you created a simple table with only one row and only one cell within that row. To create a table with, say, three rows and two cells per row, you would use the following code:

```
<table border=1>
<tr>
  <td>
    cell 1
  </td>
  <td>
    cell 2
  </td>
</tr>
<tr>
  <td>
    cell 3
  </td>
  <td>
    cell 4
  </td>
</tr>
<tr>
  <td>
    cell 5
  </td>
  <td>
    cell 6
  </td>
</tr>
</table>
```

Try this on a blank page. The correct nesting of table tags is extremely important, and needs a bit of practice. Each <td> tag **must** be closed before following <td> tag opens or the <tr> tag of the row that contains the cell closes. A <tr> tag cannot contain other <tr> tags, as <td> tags cannot contain other <td> tags.

Homework:

Creating tables with multiple cells can be a very complicated affair, so practise is essential! Make safety copies of all your web pages, and then plan how you want to use tables to improve their layout. Read what 1stPage has to say about the various tags involved in creating tables, and then have a go at using tables to make your existing web pages look nicer! Also use blank practise pages to experiment with more complicated tables.

Next Issue: More in-depth information about tables and how to use them!

The World of Graphic Design

Take a plunge into the world of graphics. Enjoy the simple effectiveness of a postcard crafted with design to create an impact.



About the Designer Christine Cavaliero is the President and Creative Services Director for Cavtec Services, Inc. A full-time freelancer and copywriter, her work has been published in local business publications. She writes an ezine Biz/Buzz and a Cheesy Blog about marketing for micro & small business. Her company has been featured in Female Entrepreneur magazine as one of the top 50 companies to watch in 2004. Contact her at www.cavtec.org



Slick Trick - Lorem Ipsum

By Mike Klassen

Here's a time saving trick to use the next time you need to quickly generate text for a design project.

For years, graphic designers have used placeholder text in their designs. The text allows everyone to see where the real text will go, how much space there is for text, and the style to be used. Later, the designer can add the real text

The most famous placeholder text begins with **Lorem ipsum** . This text has an interesting history. You'll find a link to the history of this text at <http://www.subterranean.com/loremipsum.shtml>. And the good news for budding designers: this website, and others, will create placeholder text for you. Once created, simply cut and paste it into your design and apply the proper formatting. Note that some graphic design packages generate their own placeholder text.

So the next time you need to fill space with text, do what some of the pros do – think **Lorem ipsum** .

Market Research or the Idea? Which Comes First?

By Trease L. Carpenter

Do you ever find yourself scratching your head, wondering exactly where to begin in writing an article? As a writer you could eliminate a lot of confusion and frustration, if you only knew. Not only that, you could save a lot of time. Should you first conduct market research or should the article idea come first? You're not the first to puzzle over this "chicken or the egg" type question. You'll be happy to know there's a writer's technique called the "article idea process" that solves this conundrum.

Market research and the article idea belong to the article idea process. Both research and brainstorming make up an article idea.

You're bursting with ideas. Is finding the article idea the place to start? You might be tempted to say yes, but if there's no market for your ideas, it's unlikely they'll become published articles any time soon.

Roger C Palms in **Effective Magazine Writing** tells us, "For too many writers, marketing is an afterthought. They will write first, then try to find a home for their article. They've got it backwards. Marketing is a consideration from the very beginning. Your writing has to fit the editor's publication. In other words, if you're going to sell, you have to know what your market is buying."

Start by asking yourself:

- What types of articles do you want to write?
- What types of publications will be receptive to your article ideas?
- Who is your audience?
- How do you attract an editor with your idea?

Questions like these help with the market research and the article idea.

Market research is not as scary as it sounds. Picture yourself a detective ferreting out clues. It can be fun and simple to do. First go to the main sources, the **Writer's Market**, magazines you envision writing for or your local newspaper.

Writer's Market: A Must Have Reference Guide

As you delve into sleuthing, you discover a mother lode of ideas in the **Writer's Market**. Most libraries have a copy of the **Writer's Market** on hand or you can purchase one at a bookstore. The **Writer's Market** is a writer's reference book containing detailed listings of over 8,000 book and magazine editors with concise contact info. For example, if you decide to write a travel article, look in the Table of Contents under The Markets section. Check the Consumer Magazines or Trade, Technical & Professional Articles. Under each category a section lists magazines specifically for travel. Article guidelines are listed under each magazine along with contact information and writing rates. Many non-travel magazines may accept travel articles that relate to the magazine's topic and prove useful to the readers. The **Writer's Market** may open doors you didn't know existed.

Magazines, Newspapers and E-zines

Thomas A Williams in **Get Paid to Write!** tells us, "Most beginning writers come up with the idea first, then try to find a market for it. Pros, on the other hand analyze the market, find out what is in greatest need and create articles to meet that established demand. Your research analysis of sample publications will allow you to begin to do this too, and so your well-targeted queries will become even better targeted than before. The most successful freelance work is market driven, not idea driven."

Conduct further market research by reading and dissecting specific magazines, newspapers or e-zines you'd like to write for. Look at current and back issues to get a feel for the particular publication.

As you review specific magazines, note the structure and content of the articles and the advertising. You may find yourself inspired as you soak up the creativity of other successful writers. Analyzing the publication will give you clues to what's acceptable and what's not and ideas may spring to life. Contact several publications requesting their writer's guidelines.

Larger, well-known publications tend to specify using experienced writers only, so when starting out as a new writer your best opportunities will be with local publications or e-zines. Get your feet wet and begin your research analysis.

Narrowing Your Target Audience

Once you decide on a publication, it's time to consider an article idea tailored specifically to that one publication. Think about who the readers are.

- Will you be writing to hobbyists, cutting-edge young adults, middle-aged baby boomers or students of several related correspondence courses?
- What type of article appeals to the magazine's readers?
- What appeals to the readers should also appeal to the editor.

As you step into your reader's shoes you should be able to come up with an article idea to write about that fits the publication and its readers.

Kammy Thurman, an AWAI graduate, now working as a copywriter and magazine article writer says: "Please DON'T write your articles, then try to find a magazine to take them. To sell more articles (like 75% or more), you have to do just the opposite. Start with four to six magazines you'd like to write for. Study these magazines. Study the articles and the ads to really get an understanding of the audience you'd be writing to, the magazine's niche and purpose, and its "voice". Now when you go on a trip, or get an article idea, mold your idea to fit the kind of articles your chosen magazines use."

Learn How to Grab the Editor's Attention

"Unless the editor likes your material no one else is going to read it. How do you discover what the editor wants? The time-tested way used by successful writers is to read what the editor has already selected for publication. For magazines, don't rely solely upon the so-called "writer's guidelines" furnished by the magazine. Instead study the published articles and advertisements," John McCollister points out in his book **Writing for Dollars**.

Isn't the name of the game to get published? Think about it. Conducting market research first and then coming up with the article idea makes sense.

You may think that now... finally you're ready to start writing your article. Find out in an upcoming issue why your next step is NOT writing the article but instead is writing a brief query pitching the article to the editor. How do you write a query letter? I'll tell you how and you'll be well on your way to not just writing the article but also getting it published.

Diving the Gardens

By Layne Hedrick

The water was so smooth I could have skipped a rock from the West Bank back to Freeport as we prepared to dive. I was back for my 10th trip in six years.

I first experienced the wonders of the Flower Gardens in 1996. Each return trip has been unique, beautiful, yet challenging with different obstacles and experiences in each dive. The Flower Garden Banks definitely leave a lasting impression.

Located 110 miles off the Texas-Louisiana border in the Gulf of Mexico lies what many consider 'the perfect dive.' [The Flower Garden Banks Marine Sanctuary](#) is home to the northernmost coral reefs in North America. These large underwater coral formations, more commonly called the Flower Gardens, have been drawing divers for years. As their popularity grows so to does our fascination with them.

The Gardens, named for the colorful corals and sponges that fishermen sometimes landed or fouled on their hooks, exist at depths of 70' and extend deeper. The reefs sit on top of two salt domes formed 160 to 170 million years ago with the coral formations developing 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. The two 'Banks', East and West cover 41.7 square nautical miles and create a vast underwater feeding ground for fish of all sizes. During the spring and fall, hammerhead sharks and giant mantas are common.

As my buddy and I descended off the port side of our dive boat, the *Spree*, 20 large barracudas met us, floating lazily beside our boat. Barracudas are one of the usual inhabitants of the Gardens and were constant companions throughout most of our dive.



Photo Ed Valdez

Although the water temperature was a cool 65 degrees, the coldest I had ever experienced in the Flower Gardens, our spirits were not dampened. With visibility maxing out at 60-70 feet we decided to make a free descent from the safety line towards the sea floor. As we descended, I immediately noticed three very large shapes moving directly below us. At first, I couldn't believe my eyes. I had heard of different varieties of sharks in the Flower Gardens, but had never heard anyone talk of seeing Tiger Sharks! Approaching more closely, I noticed the unmistakable vertical stripes on the sides of three sizable sharks swimming directly below us. My buddy, who was closer to the Tiger sharks than I, had not even noticed them. I immediately pulled out my dive knife and started banging my tank. After I pointed them out, she stopped her descent, hovering at a distance. I continued down to her depth and then maintained my distance about 30 feet away. What a great view. As we continued hovering, one shark looked our way; then immediately swam off. The remaining two followed suit. Within seconds, they disappeared. I was thrilled with the sighting.

It took me a second to realize the dive had just started; we had only been underwater for 10 minutes. As I looked towards the surface, watching my air bubbles rise in the current, I was again stunned to see more sharks. A school of hammerheads was moving right above us.



Photo Ed Valdez

A few moments later, my buddy pointed out two small eagle rays nearby and a reef shark lurked off in the distance.



Photo Ed Valdez

Absolutely amazing! We followed the hammerheads for about five minutes until we got too far from the boat. Stopping, we watched them finally disappear from view.

What a dive! I saw 3 tiger sharks, 22 hammerheads, three reef sharks and a small squid. I have never experienced a dive like that.

When we ascended to the boat, everyone was buzzing with excitement, so amazed at our good fortune. It was equally apparent no one wanted to leave.

Usually, the boat would move out to a deep-water platform for the next dive, but everyone wanted another chance to swim with the sharks. Our dive-master, took a vote and we decided to stay. As we entered the water, we had high expectations. It would really take a lot to top what we had witnessed, on our earlier dive, but as luck would have it we saw two reef sharks. One 5-foot reef shark kept us company throughout our safety stop. He would slide in and out of the down lines coming within a few feet of us. Usually, this sighting alone would have been a great experience. Added to our earlier dive, we were chalking up a remarkable trip.

Our last dive of the day was a night dive, one of my favorites. Night dives draw me to the Flower Gardens not necessarily because of the difference in marine life at night, but because of the surreal experience. The water is so clear you can see other diver's lights and the strobes identifying the safety lines. I've seen sharks at night, manta rays and large jellyfish. There are various iridescences and thousands of small shrimp whose eyes light up all over the reef. At night I always feel as though I am exploring an alien landscape.

For an adventure in the "perfect dive" or a deep-sea alien exploration treat yourself to a trip to the Flower Gardens. You too can capture lasting impressions and experience a diver's dream.

Located in Freeport, Texas [Gulf Diving LLC](#) operates two 100' foot dive boats, the [Fling](#) and the [Spree](#). [Tom's Dive and Ski](#) in Austin, Texas is one dive shop where you can book a trip. Contact them at (512) 451-3425 or visit their website at <http://www.tomsscuba.com>

About the Author

Layne Hedrick is an underwater archaeologist and travel writer. He is an avid scuba diver who travels the world to dive and photograph marine life. For more information on the above article and dive trips visit, Liquidtravel.org