

Christine Buck

BUSINESS & TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION



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Hello,

I hope you've had a smooth transition into 2004! After a busy start, I'm just now taking a breath and thinking about goals for the new year - and one of them is to stay in touch with people like you.

Fresh Starts, First Drafts

Before computers, word processing and cut and paste, I hated writing first drafts. I'd sit forever trying to think of the perfect first line, then start editing almost immediately. Natalie Goldberg, in her well-loved book *Writing Down the Bones*, has advice that works well for most any kind of writing. She says to set aside a time, say 10 or 20 minutes, and keep writing for that whole time - no matter what. Keep your hand (or hands if you're at a keyboard) moving, don't stop to edit and don't worry about grammar, spelling or punctuation.

Why start out this way? Because it allows the freshest thoughts to get from brain to paper before that critical editor in our heads comes out to start picking things apart. Getting a first draft down can feel quite exhilarating. Later, go back and edit, rearrange and clean up the work. It's always easier to edit something than nothing!

Your Online Persona

Having a website for your business, family life, or hobby has become almost expected. People who love to write now create their own web logs, or blogs, to tell the world their thoughts, news and life stories. Others find it difficult to put together content for their websites. They don't like writing about themselves, so they hire a writer to help.

In the past few months, I've written bios for several small business professionals who want to convey who they are to others via the Web. I've also written or updated Web content for the Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science, my great Albany mortgage broker (Gwen Hoople) and the West Alameda Business Association. These new sites haven't launched yet, but I'll link to them from my own site once they're online.

I'm always glad to get referrals if you know someone who could use help with content for their website or has other writing needs.

Old Time Writing Advice

Some of you may know about Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*, a small book that has been around since 1918 and still graces the bookshelves of editors and writers alike for its no-nonsense approach to writing. Strunk & White's work is now available online (<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>), so you can check out where to put those commas,

decide whether to use effect or affect and be reminded to omit needless words!

On that note, I will close for now. It was great to hear from so many of you after my November newsletter. I hope you'll continue to keep in touch! And until we meet again, enjoy these expanding winter days, each just slightly longer than the one before.

Warm regards,

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