

# INKSPOTTER NEWS

Information and Support for Creative Writers

Issue 7.01

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## EDITORIAL

BY BETTY DOBSON

### Welcome Back!

I've been trying to figure out how to start this editorial all day.

The words just won't come easy. Every variation on "Can you believe how long it's been since the last issue?" fails to satisfy.

When I released the first issue of 2009 last April, I had no idea it would also be the last issue of the year. Despite a late start, I had every intention of getting this newsletter back on track as a monthly publication.

Unfortunately, life had other plans. I won't go into details, but let's just say 2009 was a very bad year.

As 2010 drew closer and closer, I made up my mind to put all the crap and nonsense behind me. I wrote down—and blogged about—my business goals for the first time ever. I laid out my plans in specific detail, including a commitment to publish two newsletters a month.

No, that doesn't mean *InkSpotter News* will be coming out twice a month. What it does mean is that I'll also be bringing back *Heritage Writer*, a newsletter with an even more erratic track record than *InkSpotter News*.



I have a feeling 2010 is going to be a much better year. We have at least four new books coming out, including the true story of a domestic abuse survivor (see the ad on page 9) and a breast-themed anthology in support of breast cancer research (more on both next issue).

I'm extremely proud of both books and can't wait to share them with you.

Finally, check out our full-page ad for the Preditors & Editors Readers' Poll on page 6. InkSpotter Publishing is nominated in seven categories this year. If you haven't voted yet, I hope you'll consider our humble nominees.

### Inside this issue:

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## USING "I" AS A CONCEIT

BY CAROLYN HOWARD-JOHNSON

I don't know when I learned the word "conceited." I was raised in Utah, where most of us didn't use "conceit" in the sense of an elaborate or strained metaphor but rather to mean that someone thought they were extra super special.

The little girl across the street who snubbed me because I didn't wear long stockings with garters (which was an immediate tip-off that I was not her kind) was "conceited" rather than prejudiced. The kid who was quick to make a point of how bright he was when I made a mistake was "conceited" rather than arrogant (or insecure).

Gawd! I loved the word "conceited." I could apply it to so many situations and avoid learning new vocabulary words.

Of course, in a culture where being extra super humble was valued, I soon noticed that our English language was, indeed, "conceited."

I'm speaking of the way we capitalize the pronoun "I." None of the other pronouns are capped. So what about this "I," standing tall no matter where you find it in a sentence?

Recently, as I tutored students in

accent reduction and American culture, I noticed that some languages (like Japanese) seemed to do quite well without pronouns of any sort. I did a little research.

Some languages, like Hebrew and Arabic, don't capitalize any of their letters, and some, like German, capitalize every darn noun.

So, English—a Germanic language at its roots—just carried on the German proclivity for caps.

But the question remains. Why only the "I"? Why not "them" and "you" and all the others? Caroline Winter, a 2008 Fulbright scholar, says, "England was where the capital 'I' first reared its dotless head...Apparently someone back then decided that just 'i' after it had been diminished from the original Germanic 'ich' was not substantial enough to stand alone."

It had to do with an artistic approach to fonts. Long ago, in the days of handset type or even teletype machines, little sticks and dots standing all alone looked like broken bits of lead or scrappy orphan letters.

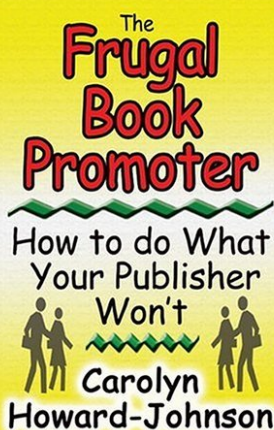
Then there was the idea that religion played a part in capitalizing the "I".

Rastafarians (and some others, too) think in terms of humankind being one with God, and, therefore—one has to presume—it would be rather blasphemous not to capitalize "I" just as one does "God." Capitals, after all, are a way to honour a word or concept.

Which, of course, brings us back to the idea that we speakers of English are just plain "conceited."

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Carolyn Howard-Johnson is an instructor for UCLA Extension's world-renowned Writers' Program and the author of the HowToDoItFrugally series of books for writers, including *The Frugal Editor: Put Your Best Book Forward to Avoid Humiliation and Ensure Success*—a USA Book News award winner as well as the winner of the Reader View's Literary Award and a finalist in the New Generation Book Awards. She is the recipient of the California Legislature's Woman of the Year in Arts and Entertainment Award and a popular speaker and actor. Her website is: [www.HowToDoItFrugally.com](http://www.HowToDoItFrugally.com).



### What Makes *The Frugal Book Promoter*: How to Do What Your Publisher Won't Unique?

*Frugal* is used as a syllabus for a UCLA Writers'™ Program class.  
*Frugal* is written by a former publicist who has also promoted her own books.  
*Frugal* contains practical ideas for promotion that cost nearly nothing.  
*Frugal* is USA Book News' "Best Professional Book 2004."  
*Frugal* is divided into three sections:

- What you can do to increase your chances of success before your book is published!
- What you can do once you've snagged a publisher!
- What you can do to keep it alive and kicking!

<http://carolynhoward-johnson.com>

## FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

2009 FLASH FICTION CONTEST

### First Prize

"The Veil" by Jean Blasiar

**M**arina looked at the picture in the paper then at her own image in the mirror. They were about the same age.

The young woman left her veil on the dresser that morning, ignoring the looks from veiled women in the neighbourhood, the disapproving men clustered at the corner, even the children as she walked to the bus.

When the bus approached, Marina stood where the bus driver could see her. The bus slowed, moved into the curb lane, and stopped at the corner, but the door did not open. Before Marina could make her way to where the bus was stopped, the first stone hit her back. Then the second.

For one second the bus driver and Marina's eyes met as a barrage of stones pelted the woman's back and the mob moved in behind her.

The bus stopped and the door opened. Marina walked slowly, painfully toward it. She fell as her foot reached the first step.

Screams. The bloody newspaper photo of Rosa Parks in Marina's hand would not be recognized through the blood. Marina would not be memorialized, like Rosa, but the veiled women and all those who watched Marina die that morning would always remember.



### Second Prize

"Pilgrimage" by Jane Philpott

**T**he first day of the week I learnt as a child was Wednesday. My grandfather taught me. My grandfather's shoes were always worn and scuffed. With holes near the toes, they would sit like small, tawny puppies, tongues lolling out, in front of the fire. He always used to leave them lying around the house, my nana said. "to drive her mad."

He said, "Shoes should never be lined up neat, it was a bad sign."

Every Wednesday my grandfather would go for a walk. He would bustle down the end of the street, past the red post box—that I had a vague idea a queen lived in as they showed her stamp—and would disappear round the corner. Down to the town hall he would go to sign papers, every single Wednesday. No matter what. The rain would beat down on him. The wind would lash at his wrists. The snow would cover him and take his breath away. The sun would scorch his skin and sting his eyes.

Yet every Wednesday he would come home, smile on his face and a bag of hard-boiled sweets at hand for us to crunch together.

The girls at school said, in whispered voices, he did this because he was "foreign." Nana said that was a strange word, which meant she knew the smell of distant mountains, ice cold winds and could cook cabbage a hundred different ways.

I asked him once, why he must sign his name every Wednesday, even in the rain. He said it was so he could stay in the country.

"But why doesn't the country want you?"

He laughed. The country did want him, but he wanted to walk and sign because, while he walked and signed, he thought.

"What do you think about, Grandpa?"

"I think that it is strange that my ancestors walked hundreds of miles to follow a golden star, and I walked hundreds of miles to escape one."

I didn't understand.

### Finding the Right Words 2010 Flash Fiction Contest

Theme: Open

Deadline: July 21, 2010

Details:

<http://inkspotter.com/contests.htm>

### Honourable Mentions

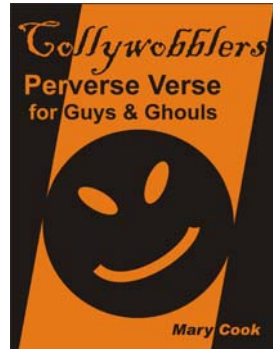
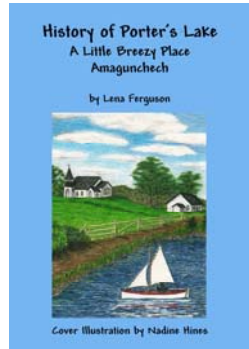
"Two Letters" by Malcolm Bray

"Blue Beach" Towel by Laura Salamy

"What is Winston Churchill Doing?" by Joshua Brown

# BOOKMARKS

## NEWS FROM THE PUBLISHER

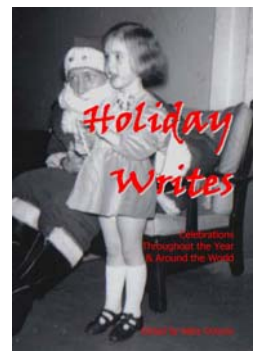
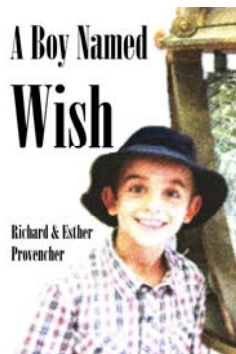


**Blogs**

- Apollo's Lyre (4th week of each month) <http://apollos-lyre.blogspot.com/>
- InkSpotting <http://www.bloglines.com/blog/InkSpotter> (included on 101 Women Bloggers to Watch in 2010)

**Books** <http://inkspotter.com/bookstore/>

- *Backless, Strapless & Slit to the Throat* (Feb. 2009)
- *A Boy Named Wish*, by Richard & Esther Provencher (Nov. 2009)
- *Collywobblers*, by Mary Cook (October 2008)
- *The Communal Desk* (Nov. 2009)
- *Family Lines* (May 2009)
- *History of Porter's Lake*, by Lena Ferguson (July 2009)
- *Holiday Writes* (Dec. 2007)
- *Paper Wings* (Oct. 2006)



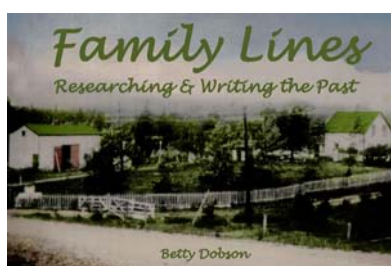
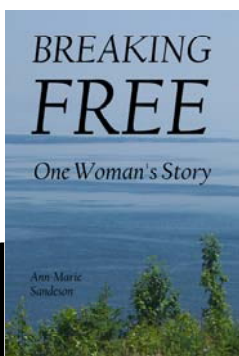
**MORE GREAT BOOKS COMING IN 2010**

**Contests**

- Finding the Right Words 2010 Flash Fiction Contest <http://inkspotter.com/contests.htm>

**Editing**

- AG Press (book and magazine editor)
- *Apollo's Lyre* (Poetry Editor)
- Red Rose Publishing (Content Editor and Line Editor)
- Virtual Tales (editor)
- *WE Magazine for Women* (Networking Editor)



# NINE SECRETS TO GETTING YOUR POEM PUBLISHED

BY SUZAN L. WIENER

**H**ave you always wanted to have your poems published but been rejected?

Do you feel despondent when you get that rejection note that reads: "Sorry, your work doesn't meet our requirements"?

These "secrets" should help you to have a better chance at getting an acceptance:

1. When you write the first draft of your poem, just write. Don't stop to think about spelling, grammar, etc. Instead, write from your heart and mind and let your words flow. Then, wait a few days and read the poem again to see if it makes sense and if each word is the best word you can use. Read out loud so you can get a better feel for how the poem sounds.
2. Don't use clichéd rhyme such as moon/June. Those types of rhymes have been overdone and will make you look like an amateur. Make yourself think of other ways to express yourself.
3. Send in your poems to the right market. Why send in a rhymed poem to a publication that only takes free verse? You will just be wasting the editor's time and yours. Research your market before you send a poem in. An editor won't be happy if she thinks you don't know her publication.
4. Send in only your best poems. This is self-explanatory, but make sure you don't send in a poem you wrote when you were a freshman in high school unless you have tweaked it until it shines.
5. Make sure your poems express something different. Even if your poem is about a subject that has been done a lot, give it a twist and make it new. That will make the editor sit up and take notice.
6. Use your spell checker. If you type on your computer, use your spell checker to make sure you don't have any typographical errors. That will make your work unappealing to an editor. Even double-

checking your spelling by yourself can uncover an overlooked misspelled word.

7. Keep a thesaurus with you. When writing your poem, don't settle on a mundane word. If you can't think up something unique, check your thesaurus. It will definitely help you make more sales.
8. Use a notebook to keep your poetry submissions organized. Keep a notebook handy and, when you send out a submission, write it down with the name of the publication the date. Also, your notes should include whether the poem is accepted or rejected (along with the date you are notified).
9. Let someone whose poetry you respect read your poem with an eye toward critiquing it honestly. Giving it to your favourite aunt will no doubt result in praise, which is not helpful. Remember, the person isn't criticizing you, only your poem, and his comments will help improve the poem tremendously.

If you follow the above "secrets," you should have a much easier road to publication.

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Suzan L. Wiener has had many articles on writing, short stories, poems and other short pieces in major publications such as *InkSpotter News*, *FellowScript*, *Mocha Memoirs*, *Mature Living*, *Mature Years*, *Reader's Digest*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, etc. She enjoys writing verse for greeting card companies, as well, and has sold a number of them.



## *The Essence of Love*

Suzan L Wiener

Poems that reflect the many ways in which love touches our lives.

The perfect Valentine's Day gift is just a click away.  
<http://www.cooler-ebooks.com/inside.asp?id=133243>

Published by Stonehedge Publishing

## InkSpotter Publishing in the Running in Annual



### Readers' Poll

It's that time of year again. The annual Predators & Editors Poll for the best in electronic publishing from the past year.

InkSpotter Publishing is well represented this year, with nominations in the following seven categories:

- Anthology - *Backless, Strapless & Slit to the Throat*
- Book Art - *A Boy Named Wish*
- Book Editor - Betty Dobson
- Book Publisher - InkSpotter Publishing
- Children's Novel - *A Boy Named Wish* by Richard & Esther Provencher
- Short Story - "Bunduki's Lament" by Kerry-lyn Witherspoon
- Horror Short Story - "Names" by Phoebe Wray

Other recommendations:

- Poem - "New Orleans in Blue" by Tracye Pool
- Science Fiction Novel - *While the Gods Sleep* by Johnny Fincham
- Romance Short Story - *My True Love Sent to Me* (collection) by Elizabeth Hopkinson
- Non-Fiction Zine - *WE Magazine for Women*
- Fiction Zine - *Apollo's Lyre*
- Horror Novel - *The Further Accounts of the Imaginary Friend* by P.S. Gifford
- Poetry Zine - *Apollo's Lyre*
- Zine Editor - Lea Schizas

You only have until January 14th to cast your votes, so don't delay.

URL: <http://www.critters.org/predpoll/>

*InkSpotter News*



## WORDS WORTH

### BOOK REVIEWS

*Slang: The People's Poetry*  
by Michael Adams

Oxford University Press, 2009  
ISBN-10: 0195314638  
ISBN-13: 978-0195314632

Reviewed by Carolyn Howard-Johnson

#### Academia for the Masses

#### Equal Mix of Academics, Humour and Useful Stuff for Writers

**W**hen I teach my writing students, I urge them to keep reading, keep writing, keep taking classes. Michael Adams has cobbled together a definitive book that appeals to every side of my book-loving nature. A work of non-fiction, it even appeals to my need for entertainment.

In *Slang: The People's Poetry* (published by the Oxford Press), Adams manages to give readers equal doses of fun and information—information that our formal education in languages (English in particular) may have neglected. As an example, he gives us a veritable list of words we use for getting plastered...e.g. snookered. Then he shows us how these words may be onomatopoeic or related to the visual or how they reflect a cultural need to set ourselves apart. Those are hardly things Miss Jones would have discussed in our basic grammar class.

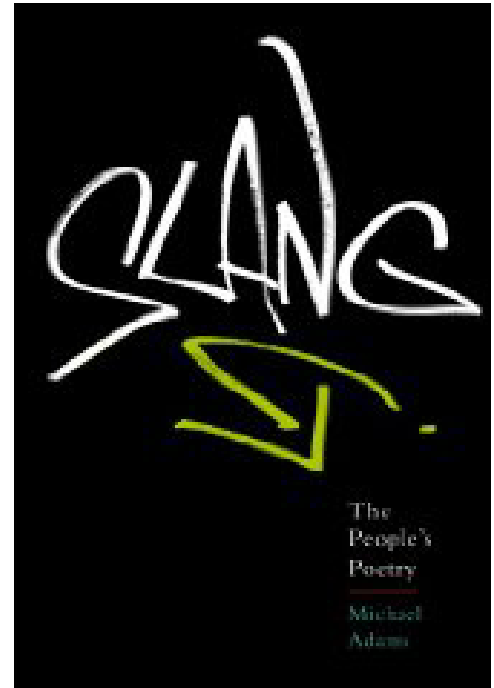
But for fun, he'll say things like,

"It's hard to decide whether visual *hurl* is more vivid than audible *barf*, as the words offend different senses." (Yes, you may be amused that your taste for dry humour develops as you read.)

He can buckle down to business, too. He warns us early on that we are to come away from this book with something more than a guffaw: "...it might be wise to distinguish slang even more precisely from jargon, argot, and colloquial use." And that's something, gratefully, he does frequently.

What I'm not crazy about is his tendency to fall back on snooze-producing syntax and Latinate words. He doesn't do it so frequently that casual readers won't enjoy what he has to say, but they'll have a better chance of not relegating this book to their "maybe later" pile if they skip the introduction.

Writers, on the other hand, will want to buy and keep this book handy for research. It will be invaluable for producing accurate



dialogue. In which decade, as an example, would one be more likely to use *gone Borneo* for *getting blasted*? Writers who pick the wrong one may find their credibility *trashed* by those *hip* enough to know.

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Reviewed by Carolyn Howard-Johnson, award-winning author of *This Is the Place* and *Harkening: A Collection of Stories Remembered, Tracing*, a chapbook of poetry and the How To Do It Frugally Series of book for authors.



**InkSpotter Publishing's  
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<http://inkspotter.com/bookstore/>

## BRAGGING RIGHTS

SUBSCRIBERS SHARE THEIR SUCCESSES

Carolyn Howard-Johnson's first book in her HowTo-DoItFrugally series of books for retailers—*A Retailer's Guide to Frugal In-Store Promotions: How To Increase Profits and Spit in the Eyes of Economic Downturns with Thrifty Events and Sales Technique*—was named a finalist in USA Book News' 2009 award for professional books.

∞

In 2008, after my sister encouraged me, I re-started writing haiku after a 40-year break. This winter, I was lucky to get some of them published in *Eclectica* and *The Battered Suitcase*.

*Eclectica* (Oct/Nov 2009) published my "Morning in Shantiniketan" ([www.eclectica.org/v13n4/daniels.html](http://www.eclectica.org/v13n4/daniels.html)) and *The Battered Suitcase* (Winter 2009) published 10 haiku by me at: [www.vagabondagepress.com/90901/V2I2PT7.html](http://www.vagabondagepress.com/90901/V2I2PT7.html)

I hope you get a chance to read them.

Michael Chacko Daniels

∞

In response to a post on my personal blog about rejection, a reader suggested I publish a series of interviews in which editors "list, in excruciating details, all that each editor desires in his/her stories." Wow. What a great idea. Not only does this provide authors with specific information about what editors are looking for in the submissions they receive, it offers editors a venue for advertising their publications and getting the word out about what, in their opinion, constitutes "good writing."

To support this effort, I created the Six Questions

For... blog. You can learn more about this project by reading the "About this Blog" message and current post at <http://sixquestionsfor.blogspot.com/>. A new set of responses will be posted every Monday and Thursday.

A sampling of participants includes: *Anderbo*, *Apollo's Lyre*, *Black Velvet Seductions* (publisher of romance novels), *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Camroc Press Review*, *dcomp*, *Dew on the Kudzu*, *Flash Me Magazine*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Toasted Cheese* and *Vestal Review*.

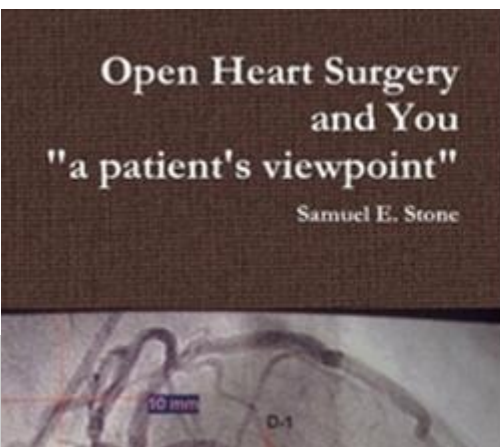
∞

We love to hear about your writing and publishing successes and to share them with all our readers. Whether you just sold a story, finally finished writing that long-standing novel or won an award, drop us a line at [editor@inkspotter.com](mailto:editor@inkspotter.com).

And if you forget, don't worry. We'll send out a reminder to all subscribers about a week before publication.

Not a subscriber yet? We can handle that, too. Signing up is easy at:

[http://four.pairlist.net/mailman/listinfo/inkspotter\\_news](http://four.pairlist.net/mailman/listinfo/inkspotter_news)



Ships in 3-5 business days

This particular story is a true story about discovering that I had cardiovascular disease in which all my arteries were severely blocked. One of the arteries was 99% blocked and could have changed to 100 % at any given instant. I was extremely lucky. I could have dropped dead at any moment. I wrote this piece to provide some insight to cardiovascular disease and open heart surgery. I hope you find it helpful.

Samuel E. Stone

# VIEWS ON THE NEWS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi Betty,

Glad to hear you survived 2009...and wishing you the best in 2010..

I just had my latest book published today... [Ed: See ad for *Open Heart Surgery and You* on page 10]

Based on a true story of my last eight weeks....with the grace of God I survived too...

Happy New Year....

Samuel E. Stone

∞

Well, I've missed you. So it's time! Welcome back. (-:

Carolyn Howard-Johnson

∞

Best wishes, Betty, on your comeback issue. I missed *InkSpotter News*.

All the best.

Sincerely,

Michael Chacko Daniels

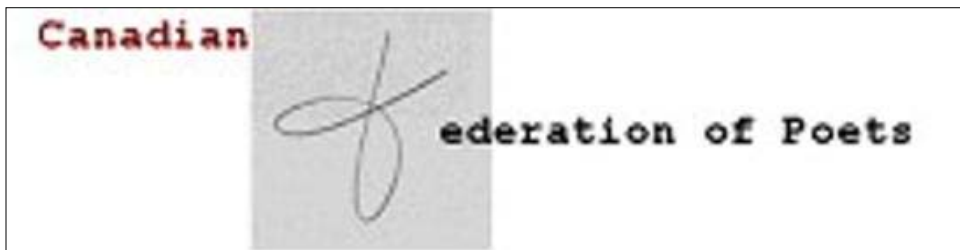
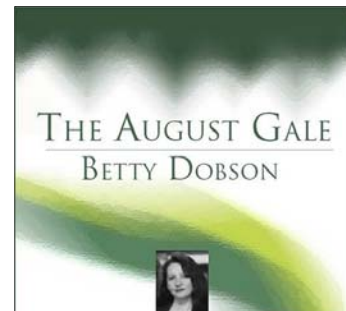
∞

Hi, Betty,

So glad *InkSpotter News* will be making a comeback this year. That's terrific.

Suzan Wiener

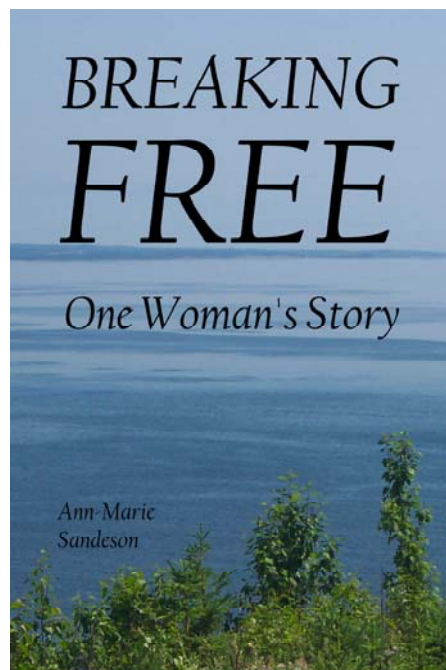
*Email your comments to editor@inkspotter.com or to the postal address on the back page.*



## COMING SOON From InkSpotter Publishing

The inspirational true story of one woman's endurance through and escape from an abusive marriage.

Ann-Marie Sandeson writes with sometimes painful honesty about a difficult topic. But she believes that sharing her story will shine a much needed light on the ongoing problem of spousal abuse.



### Monthly Advertising Rates

Classified (25 words)	\$2
Boxed Classified	\$4
Business Card	\$8
Quarter Page	\$15
Half Page	\$25
Full Page	\$40

\* Canadian funds \*

Discounts available for quarterly and annual block purchases.

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