**Editing Guidelines**

(for writers – and people who want to put writers in their place . . . and make money doing it)

**Writer’s Responsibilities**

* Don’t apologize for your piece before they’ve read it – save that for afterwards when you see the looks of horror, disgust, and disbelief on their faces.
* Give your editors the cleanest copy of your work you can manage – one that is:
  + - Revised and edited several times by the author (you).
    - Free of any mechanical/grammatical errors (to the best of your ability and knowledge – don’t waste their time being distracted by things you should be able to fix for yourself) – as a writer, you should be embarrassed to give someone a piece with too many mechanical errors.
    - Typed and properly formatted.
    - Free of any obvious clichés and/or unintended confusion.
* Have specific questions about your piece you would like your editors to help you with.
  + - It gives them points of focus and a clear purpose in reading your piece.
    - It gets you thinking about the weaknesses of your own piece.
* After they’ve read and edited your piece, engage your editors in a conversation about it because:
  + - Our notes aren’t always clear and sometimes need elaboration.
    - Such conversations often lead to new ideas and solutions (and occasionally to deeper issues).
* Remember that editor suggestions are only suggestions – don’t ignore them . . . but don’t insist on following every one of them; do whatever makes your piece better.

**Editor’s Responsibilities**

* Don’t agree to edit something if you aren’t going to do your best.
* Read the piece once through without making marks or comments.
* On the second read through:
* Circle anything you are certain is wrong (this usually only applies to grammar and mechanics).
* Underline any part of the piece you aren’t sure about.
* It might be a grammar/mechanics issue.
* It might be unclear or awkwardly worded.
* It might be inconsistent with what came before or after it in the piece.
* It might be illogical or overly unrealistic.
* It might seem unnecessary.
* It might be too obvious, too contrived.
* Write notes, questions, and/or suggestions next to anything you underline.
* If you are unable to offer constructive criticism of the piece, at least write down what the piece made you picture, feel, think or want to do; this allows the writer to know if the piece produced the desired results.
* Discuss your notes with the writer when you are done.
* Don’t forget to point out the elements/parts of the piece you liked.
* Don’t only give positive feedback as that tends to be superficial and useless (if you loved everything about it, then that may be a sign that you are not a good editor).
* Don’t be afraid to play Devil’s Advocate, even if you thought the piece was great (remember, your comments are only suggestions).