



**Quill**



news & notes  
from  
**ScriptAcuity  
Studio**



**&**



**Ink**



**Summer  
2015**

# Quill & Ink

*Quill & Ink* (quill-ink.com) is written, photographed, designed, and published seasonally by ScriptAcuity Studio.

## Behind the Name

The quill represents creativity and self-expression, in the written word and also beyond it. Because the inky octopus utilizes a wide variety of tools in the course of its day and is associated with such attributes as adaptability, flexibility, diversity, focus, intuition, and transformation—among others—it thus seemed a fitting symbol for ScriptAcuity Studio.

A little disclaimer: all thoughts, opinions, expressions, and comments are simply our perspectives.

# Summer Is Finally Here!

After a long New England winter (and tumultuous New England spring), we have finally settled into the eagerly anticipated and much-savored summer. We've been fantasizing about sitting around a campfire with a favorite beverage, opening up the windows for more than a few minutes at a time, visiting the area's abundance of outdoors farmers' markets, and not having a forgotten bottle of water turn to a solid chunk of ice in a matter of hours while inside a bag inside a car inside a garage.

It's good to appreciate all seasons, as each brings something the other seasons cannot. And while there are farmers' markets (a few) and it's nice to get outside in the spring (despite the mud), summer seems to be unmatched for appreciation of these and more. And while the long hours of daylight may not seem quite long enough or the thermometer may occasionally bubble a bit too high, there's no doubt that this is a great season to get out and play during moments when the

confluence of factors hits a sweet spot that is truly summer. We've had numerous opportunities to really get to know the place where we live, especially when viewing them through the eyes of first-time visitors. (Traveling to new places is something we talk about more later.)

But even when there is play, there is also work. And one of those work items is this, our premiere issue of *Quill & Ink*, our seasonal newsletter. This is an opportunity for us to talk about what's going on and to share some of our thoughts and views from things on both the work and play fronts.

We hope you'll find something interesting, intriguing, informative, or entertaining somewhere within these pages. Enjoy!

S&C  
—Sara and Chris



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# A Belfast Diary

We've often remarked how we seem to become different people while we're on vacation. Maybe that's true for many travelers, but almost without fail, while on these trips, we find ourselves looking in the mirror and asking, *Who are these people?* While our excursions to other places are not necessarily transformative or even about self-discovery—certainly not intentionally—what is it that makes us seem so different from our usual selves? Perhaps it is more accurate to assert that it doesn't feel like we're becoming different people but more like we're becoming who we really are. While at our cores, our depths, somewhere in our private selves, we are perfectly at ease standing around a community campfire and engaging in light-hearted conversations with friendly strangers, in our lives ruled by decorum, we are often wary of saying the wrong thing or going out on a limb to say the right one.

Maybe it's freeing to be surrounded by strangers. Indeed, one can experience a fabulous sense of community even while also relishing nearly complete anonymity.

But why is this the case? Why do we often feel more at home while away from home? Maybe people in general feel more relaxed because they think, *I don't care if I seem foolish/uncultured/unlearned/unrefined/out of touch to these people. I'll never see them again.* Perhaps, but the world is sometimes—and ever

*Continued on page 3*

## CMS Says . . .

The *Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)*, sixteenth edition, is one of our go-to references when we edit. If you've never seen it before, it's a massive orange brick with over a thousand pages of guidelines on such topics as the roles and duties of editors and proofreaders to more esoteric topics like the placement of punctuation marks relative to others.

Here's one example, as seen in *CMS* 6.80:

*The en dash can be used in place of a hyphen in a compound adjective when one of its elements consists of an open compound or when both elements consist of hyphenated compounds.*

*the post–World War II years*  
*Chuck Berry–style lyrics*  
*country music–influenced lyrics*

An en dash (–) is only slightly longer than a hyphen (-) and shorter than an em dash (—). Each of these has a different and specific use, like mentioned above. You might also recognize the en dash in numeric ranges (e.g., 1990–2000) or linking a campus location to the name of a university (e.g., the University of Wisconsin–Madison), as well.

While it's easy to misread an en dash as a hyphen, you'll probably be surprised by the number of them that you see in the next book, story, or article you read. ■

**From page 2**  
more increasingly—smaller than we often think. Who knows whether the hand you shake for the first time today will be the same one to help you up off the ground somewhere down the road (proverbially or literally)? While the sometimes horrible, awkward, uncomfortable situations can make for better storytelling possibilities, don't the moments of unexpected warmth, gratitude, compassion, and personal connection make for better memories? The cheap laugh may be better to share, but the connection is better to live.

Still, we wonder what initiates these connections. It also cannot be a coincidence that, though our behavior or overall presentation is in no way ostentatious (many who know us well, in fact, would say *reserved*, *understated*, or *conservative*), we nevertheless manage to attract the attention of likeminded people while on our journeys; this has happened to us for years and in many different places when we've ventured far from home.

Amid appetizers and beverages on a harborside deck overlooking happily bobbing sailboats in Belfast, for example, we found ourselves chatting away with a woman who is—of all things!—an animal protection activist employed by an international agency that sends her all over the world. The very next evening, when we found ourselves unable to procure an alfresco table during the busy dinner hour, this same charming woman invited us to join her and her lovely family at their table.

*And we did.*

We wondered about the more surreal part of that experience—being offered the seat or taking it.

In fact, by the time our visit concluded, we found ourselves often recognized and greeted

around town and even addressed by name. We received job offers from people—though we are not even remotely interested in finding new occupations at the moment or even for the foreseeable future—and three different people offered to sell us their homes and assured us that we'd fit right in among the long-established residents—and not in a make-a-quick-buck kind of way. These sellers weren't looking to move away; they were looking to move *closer* to town.

It's not that we left town feeling like we'd lost parts of ourselves or that we'd promptly box up and sell everything we owned, shocking our neighbors with a For Sale sign springing up on our front lawn overnight like a dandelion. It wasn't that dramatic, storybook, clichéd, or scripted. Maybe it was simply further confirmation for us that community does exist both in a physical and emotional/spiritual/metal sense, and this sense of cohesiveness is nothing that can be forced into existence—certainly not through “closeness” via proximity or even genetics. Those things can sometimes feel like miscut pieces of a jigsaw puzzle; there's no reason they shouldn't fit, but they simply don't unless you alter or force one piece or the other. (Even then, there are usually more than two pieces that need to fit together.)

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In addition to its profound sense of community, Belfast is a darling place. Even the charming little cottage we rented with a gorgeous sloping lawn overlooking the harbor—where we spent our evenings playing games and enjoying meandering, leisurely conversations by the fire amid our family of rescued pets who always travel with us—was precious and reflected many of the town's values:

**Continued on page 4**

practicality mixed with creativity, a rich history and a bright future. Belfast is an eclectic, peaceful, pedestrian-friendly community committed to wellness, justice, creative expression, and environmental guardianship. It supports a working harbor and a revitalized waterfront, a library and a number of bookstores, coffee shops, a dog park, a farm-to-plate restaurant, Maine's top-rated farmers' market, a firmly established food co-op, numerous art galleries, a gardening club, a fiddlers' club, a community boating club, holistic and naturopathic health care, an architectural and design firm specializing in sustainable homes ... even an eco-village. (The local middle school is also renowned for its innovative greenhouse program that teaches students about botany and more while stocking the

**From page 3**

school cafeteria with fresh vegetables.) It is a mere 1.5 hours by vehicle from Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park—one of our favorite places on the planet—and it is also much more centrally located to other Maine points that we enjoy and yet is nowhere near as isolated as many parts of that region are during our brutal and sometimes desperate New England winters. It boasts miles of walking and biking trails, providing rich opportunities to commune with nature, and it is even home to the Maine Celtic Celebration and the Belfast Free Range Music Festival—all with a population of only about 6,500.

Our recent visit to Belfast essentially consisted of beautiful walks—both in and around town and in pristine natural environments—sampling the culinary offerings of most of the establishments (some

multiple times—a restaurant called Meanwhile in Belfast was a particular favorite), delighting in conversations with a wide variety of warmhearted, welcoming, and enthusiastic people, and a great deal of relaxing and with some quiet contemplation mixed in for good measure.

In a word, it was divine.

But whether or not it becomes a home to us one day is one of our great unknowns. But the kind, generous, and gregarious people who already reside there know how these truly special places are hard to find and harder to preserve. We don't expect to be remembered by sight (and especially not by name) the next time we find ourselves there for a visit, and even we may not remember the names and faces of everyone we met. But we're confident the spirit of Belfast will remain. ▪

## Your Voice and Your Style

We've heard from many friends that they're always worried that we'll critique e-mails and other correspondence we've received from them. That's not the case at all, but it brings up a good point: it can be challenging to shut off the editor's instinct—but perhaps that's what makes us well suited to our careers as editors.

True, there have been times when we've given each other a sidelong glance when noticing inappropriate or unnecessary quotation marks on a sign. There have been times when one of us, when groaning at an egregiously bad typo in a subtitle, has blurted out, "Oh, come on!" There were times even before we edited professionally when we kept

pencils on the nightstand to mark typos we found in published books. (A show of hands, please, for anyone else who's guilty of doing the same.)

But as editors and avid readers, we know it's also about respecting voice and style. If we were strict by-the-book editors, we'd probably break a sweat when editing anything by, say, Cormac McCarthy, Roger Allen Skipper, or Brian Doyle. (Those unfamiliar with their styles may assume that the punctuation keys of their keyboards work only intermittently—if at all.)

But everyone has a style and perhaps several styles. Even editors use style guides created by grammar pundits who feel that something should

be presented this way in one edition, changed in the subsequent edition, and then reverted in the current edition. (*Fifty-Seventh and Fifty-Fifth Streets* [rather than *streets*] is back in vogue in the [current] sixteenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.)

The most important thing, however, is to clearly communicate what you want to say, and that might change from audience to audience. Keep that in mind the next time you're casually relaying a story to someone who also happens to be a professional editor; hopefully, that editor will recognize and accept you and your style as being part of who you are. ▪

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