



Quill & Ink

winter
2016

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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.



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A Time for Reflection

We're firmly in a Vermont winter, but we're enjoying hot beverages that seem out of place in warmer months as we cozy up to read and journal in front of a fake fire on the TV (oh, to have a real fireplace!) or fill the house with the fragrance of spices and herbs from a slow-cooked, satisfying, comforting dinner. The days are gradually getting longer, and the moon reflecting off the snow fills the nighttime with light. Sometimes we think of winter, particularly in northern climates, as being desolate and barren, a time for hibernation or isolation; it can be easy to understand why one might choose to stay indoors and curl up against walls of wind and ice.

But each season has its share of advocates and detractors, and the advocates might proclaim that winter is a season filled with holidays celebrating light, togetherness, hope, joy, and peace; that the newly arriving snow

(though, in Vermont and other similar climates, snowfall often begins well before winter) means new opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, who meet the season with childlike vigor; that there's now more incentive to do things inside because there are additional reasons—too cold, too dark—to avoid the outdoors. Hopefully, we can all find something to enjoy about the winter, something to get us through.

For this issue of *Quill & Ink*, we offer some thoughts and perspective and perhaps some occasional alternatives to merely shouldering against the howling winds and bone-cracking temperatures. Let us all raise our mugs of cocoa and toast this time of reflection as we bravely spin our way through the galaxy toward milder weather and sunnier skies. Cheers!▪





A Warmer Winter

Ah, winter. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, and particularly those of us at or north of the 45th parallel (where, during the winter solstice, we see just eight hours and forty-six minutes—at best!—of daylight and where temperatures can free-fall well below zero for extended periods of time), it becomes vital to actively seek out and luxuriate in nourishment at every available opportunity. The virtues of warmth and companionship, comfy fabrics and piping-hot foods, soft light and extra rest become increasingly apparent as we arc our way around the sun on our collective journey toward spring and renewal.

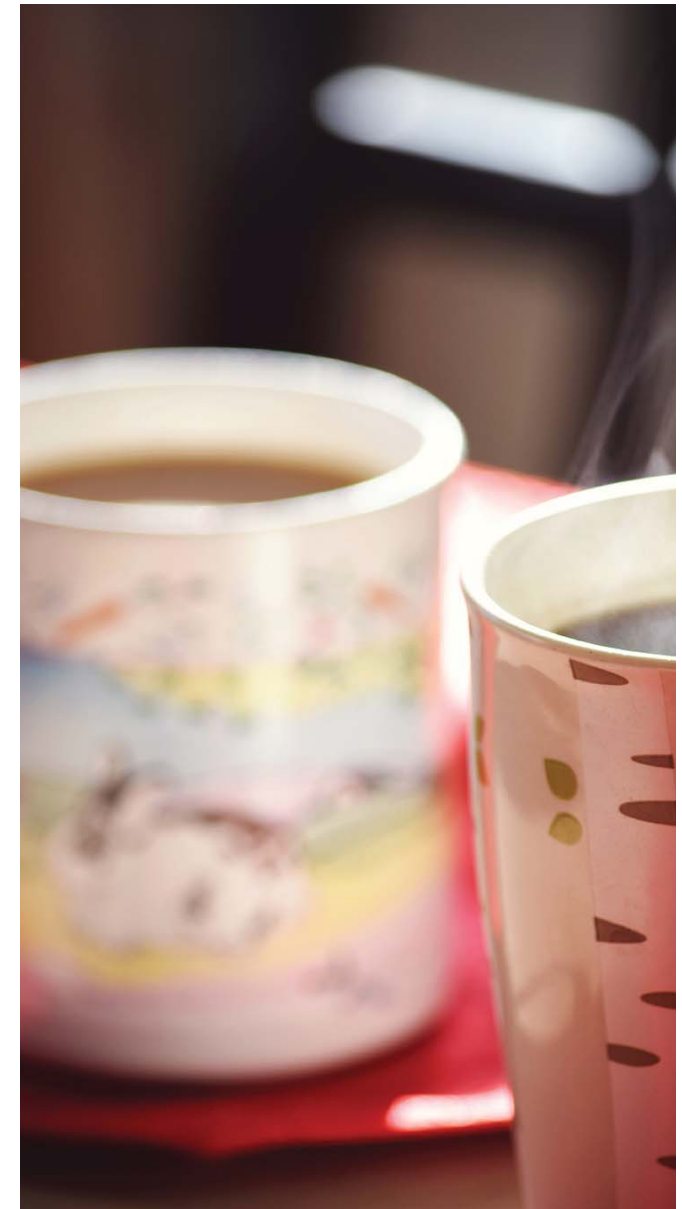
It is true, of course, that there are many who absolutely delight in this time of year and all that it brings. There are the skiers, the snowmobilers, the ice-skaters, the snowshoers, the ice climbers, the winter backpackers, the ice fishers, the ice sculptors, and those who craft astounding snow structures for the sheer love of it. There are those who tout the glories of days free of yard maintenance, ticks, and mosquitoes. Serious cooks and bakers rejoice in the luxury of spending hours in a pleasantly toasty kitchen with their ovens and their stoves creating a cheerful and cozy environment rather than a superheated torture chamber. Then, of course, there is the old joke about New Englanders, where “the weather is so bad that its people take pride in it.” Indeed, there is a sort of pride among some who build and live their lives in a climate of such harshness—the idea, perhaps, that anyone who can live in such an environment must necessarily be of commendable and admirable fortitude and

grit, capable of treading where others dare not and therefore worthy of considerable respect and veneration.

For those of us, however, who neither relish such elements of winter nor bask in the (actual or merely perceived) awe of those whose winters pass much more mildly, pursuing that which soothes and comforts is not only a practical survival strategy but an opportunity for exploration. It is not uncommon, for example, for us to voyage a considerable distance to spend time with a handsome, hard-working little man named Ferdinand, a delightfully happy and good-natured retriever who works in a cheerful flower shop called Botanica. We sometimes cozy up at a table at Down Home Kitchen to enjoy some comfort food and to feel taken care of for a little while. Burbbling stews and leisurely soaks in a relaxing bath are somehow enhanced by the knowledge of the breathtaking cold just outside. A snapping, dancing campfire on a moonlit night, a steaming mug of cocoa cupped between mittened hands and the firelight flickering off the snow, is an enchanting experience. Courageously stepping into snowshoes and onto a dazzling snowscape, surrounded by prismatic ice crystals scattering glinting, brilliant color, can be breathtaking. And perhaps most importantly, reveling in interpersonal connections and good conversations during this time of the year, sharing stories and smiles and laughter with those we care about and cheering one another on during the seemingly ceaseless days of ice and shadows, is especially essential.

When it is coldest, we can create our own

warmth. When it is darkest, we can create our own light. Doing so inspires and strengthens our resolve and helps us to remember that we’re all in this together. ▪



Accentuate Your Words

Think about how a simple accent or punctuation mark can change the entire meaning of a sentence or enhance its readability and fluidity. In many cases, context may be sufficient to get your point across, but in others, a few small changes may help your readers truly understand and connect with your intent.

In our last issue, we discussed the many style guides—*CMS*, *OSM*, *AP*, and even publisher-specific house styles—and the variations in rules and presentation. Similarly, even dictionaries published by the same company—like *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (MWCD)* and *Merriam-Webster’s Unabridged (MWU)*—might differ in their spellings on some words. For example, *MWCD* prefers *lightbulb* (though *light bulb* is an acceptable alternative) while *MWU* features only *light bulb*.

In some cases, a word whose spellings may include accents is often clear, regardless of context,

such as the following:

- naïve (or naive)
- façade (or facade)
- à la (or a la)

It’s unlikely that any of the spellings would confuse readers as to their meanings. But what about in cases where the accents might indicate a completely different word? Take the word *resume*. Even in the previous sentence, the context is unclear whether this refers to a verb meaning “to begin again” (which is just one of many definitions) or to a noun referring to someone’s education and professional experience. In the latter, *MWCD* prefers the accented spelling *résumé*. Though the spellings *resume* and *résumé* are both acceptable for the same word, the accents will inform readers of your intention immediately.

On a related note, there are also some terms in *MWCD* when a hyphen indicates a completely different word. One common case is *recreate* and *re-create*, as well as other words derived from them. The first, *recreate*, means—among other things—“to engage in recreation,” while *re-create* means “to create again.” Similarly, *recreation* could refer to a hobby, while *re-creation* could refer to a reenactment. (Of course, someone’s hobby could be engaging in reenactments ...)

Another simple example might be *coop* versus *co-op*, both nouns. The first can refer to where chickens live, and the second is a shortened form of cooperative (which isn’t hyphenated!).

In other words, it’s worthwhile checking a dictionary, though sometimes you might not find consensus when checking multiple sources. When in doubt, we prefer to lean more toward the side of clarity over “preferred” spellings.▪

Bonus Tips for Windows Users

There are a lot of ways to help optimize adding dashes, special characters, and accents in your programs. Many programs will allow you to hold the **ALT** key and type in a numeric value (from the extended ASCII table) on the numeric keypad:

- **ALT + 0150** = – (en dash)
- **ALT + 0151** = – (em dash)
- **ALT + 0215** = × (multiplication symbol)
- **ALT + 0233** = é

Once you know many of the common symbols editors use, such as en dash and em dash, you may find it easier to use the **ALT** combination than using Word’s Insert Symbol feature.

Additionally, Word has another shortcut feature to help you add accents. The process to add these is slightly different, and it has two steps. The first is to hold **CTRL** and press the punctuation mark that is to be added to a letter. For example, to add a diaeresis over the letter *o*, hold **CTRL + :** (in other words, **SHIFT + ; = :**), release the keys, and then press **o**. You should end up with this: *ö*.

Keep in mind that you may need to hold the

SHIFT key, depending on which punctuation symbol you’re looking for. Essentially, if you need to use the **SHIFT** key to type that symbol normally, you’ll need to use the **SHIFT** key to use that symbol as an accent. The same applies for capital letters. To apply an accent to a capital letter, you’ll need to press **SHIFT + letter**. Also, note that to apply the cedilla to a **c**, use the **CTRL + ,** (comma) before pressing **c**.

This won’t solve all accent issues, but when you become more familiar with the process, you will definitely save time with the most common.

Happy editing!▪

