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United States Department
of Agriculture

Office of Governmental
and Public Affairs

Washington, D.C.
20250

March 13, 1981

Volume 3

No. 13

GPA OFFERING WRITING-PUBLISHING WORKSHOPS

REQUIREMENT OF
CURRENT PUBLICATION RECORDS

WRITER'S GUIDE TO WORD PROCESSORS

USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs is offering a new program of in-house writing workshops.

The workshops, to be conducted by GPA's Publishing Center, will be designed to help improve writing skills of authors, managers, information staff and other people in the agencies whose jobs include writing.

The Publishing Center staff will work with agencies to tailor each workshop to the special needs of the agency.

It will focus on the types of publications or other documents the agency produces, on the writing problems identified by the agency, and on the authors and others who would benefit from writing training.

Agencies can also use the workshop to explain the agency's own procedures and publishing requirements to people in the agency.

The training will be offered in cooperation with the agency information staff.

The course will show how to develop a logical approach to writing; focus on key ideas; organize material logically; identify audiences; and understand the objectives of publications.

It will show how to avoid common writing problems; make writing clear, readable and accurate; improve sentences and paragraphs; and choose words for their greatest impact.

The course also will show how to use active voice, parallel construction and clear antecedents; achieve subject-verb agreement; avoid wordiness, jargon and gobbledygook.

And, finally, it will show how to use charts, tables and text to convey the message; how to use the GPO style manual; and how to proofread.

The workshop can also include a review of regulations, clearance procedures, and laws related to publishing.

The training coordinator will be Deborah Smith of the GPA Publishing Center.

(continued next column)

April issue of Writer's Digest magazine carries a lengthy feature article entitled, "A Writer's Guide to Word Processors."

Three side-bar stories add to rather comprehensive article by Robin Perry, who uses a word processor and has been studying different word processors for the past six years.

Although a word processor is more complex than a typewriter, Perry points out that it simplifies and improves writing.

"It took me a long time to realize it, but the conventional typewriters I had used during my entire writing career were limiting me," Perry says in the lead sentence.

He describes how he has improved his writing through use of a word processor.

He tells about computer complexes and computer confusion, differences between electronic typewriters and word processors.

He goes into rather detailed descriptions of the various makes and models of word processors, advantages and disadvantages of each.

One of the more intriguing side-bar stories, "The Electronic Freelancer," takes a peek at the freelance life, circa 1991.

It takes a look at all the "great revolutionary scientific and technical advances between 1981 and 1991 which changes submission of free lance articles to editors, via communicating word processors!

Another side-bar story describes how word processors have affected the work of four writers.

The article offers some tips and good advice to any information office now considering moving into the electronic age.

Smith's room number is 510-A and her telephone number is 472-4245 or 447-6624.

She says she will gladly answer any questions any one has about the new training program.

Bob Kern, who retired last year as head of Iowa State University's agricultural information staff, is on the move again.

Immediately after retirement, Kern took a position with the Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz Y Trigo (that's International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center for those who need translation) at Londres, Mexico.

Before retirement, Kern spent several months working on a special communications project with USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs in Washington.

After a couple of weeks in Iowa during March to change addresses on packing boxes, Kern will be off to his new adventure in The Hague, Netherlands.

In early April he takes up position as communication and information officer of ISNAR, newest of the international agricultural research centers under the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research.

The work will involve Kern as the resident writer-editor and as a specialist in communication.

He will be attempting to infuse appropriate concern for and application of communication process and theory into substantive areas of the center's concern for agricultural research management.

"The months in Washington last year will be put to considerable use in that work," Kern says.

"And I'm grateful to people like those in GPA and ACE for making it possible."

During his first month in The Hague, Kern is expecting to see Hadley Read and Del Dahl of the University of Illinois agricultural information staff.

Those two are stopping off to visit ISNAR as they wind up a round-the-world trip on behalf of the University of Illinois' developing countries agricultural communications program.

A new system to respond more quickly and efficiently to consumer inquiries has been set up by USDA's Food Safety & Quality Service.

Anyone with a question or complaint about the safety or wholesomeness of a meat or poultry product, the truthfulness of its labeling or the accuracy of grade names may contact a special office.

Questions or complaints may be addressed to: FSQS Consumer Inquiries
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

or call: (202) 472-4485.

Copies of the fact sheet, "FSQS Consumer Inquiries: What? Where? How?" are available from the Information Division, Food Safety & Quality Service, Room 3606-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

ANNUAL GOLD SCREEN COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

Audiovisual entries for the 3rd annual "Gold Screen" competition sponsored by the National Association of Government Communicators are now being accepted.

Deadline for receipt of entries is July 17, 1981. Programs must have been produced between January 1980 and June 1981.

The gold screen competition seeks to recognize outstanding work in the audiovisual media produced by and for government communicators throughout the country.

Programs may be entered under four general categories: Information/Educational, Training, Internal Communication, and Public Service Announcements (radio or TV).

Formats eligible for entry are: 16mm film, videotape, slide-audio, multi-screen presentations, audio only, photographs or graphics produced as part of a completed audiovisual program, and scripts prepared for live radio or television broadcast.

Gold Screen awards will be presented September 23, 1981, at a luncheon in Washington, D.C.

For entry blanks and further information, call Linda Busetti, (703) 768-4546 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays, or write to her at NAGC, P.O. Box 7127, Alexandria, Va. 22307.

NAGC is a non-profit organization which since 1976 has been devoted to educational and professional development at the local, state and federal levels.

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