

A BSB Interview With Consulting Editor: Cindy Cresap

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Publicist/Author Liaison

October 1, 2007

1. What is your background as an editor?

I've been editing fiction for about six years now. Like most editors I know, I sort of fell into the role of fiction editor. It's not like you can major in Content Editing in college, and I've never seen an ad in the classifieds saying: Fiction Editor Wanted—
No Experience Necessary <g>

I had done some fiction editing here and there, but most of my early experience was with non-fiction. I then had an opportunity to volunteer on a small literary magazine, where I got to work with a wonderful editing mentor who taught me that the hardest thing about editing isn't figuring out what's wrong with a story; it's figuring out how to help an author to fix it. She was right.

2. Describe an ideal manuscript.

An ideal manuscript has an interesting, well-developed plot that draws you in from the very first page. It has real, complex characters who capture your attention the moment they appear in the story. An ideal manuscript has evocative writing, great style, and strong technique. But most of all, an ideal manuscript is one where I don't have to do anything to it!

3. Describe how the author-editor relationship at BSB works for you.

The author-editor relationship is one of the things I love most about working for Bold Strokes. Bold Strokes authors are more willing to work with their editors and place a higher value on the importance of the editing process to the success of their novel than any other group of authors I've worked with.

4. How do you try to insure that you respect the unique voice of the author whose work you are editing?

In college I was a writer and later a managing editor for a best-selling college guide with a distinctive style of humor. As an editor, I had to remove the author's unique voice so that each article conformed to the specific artistic style of the guide. That experience helped me recognize the elements that mark an author's unique voice.

You often hear writers talk about being afraid of the editing process because they fear that their "voice" will be lost in the process. But often, an author confuses voice or style with having bad habits that actually mask the author's style. The editing process isn't about removing an author's voice; it's about clearing away the literary static so the author's true voice can be heard.

-continue page 2-



Order Bold Strokes Books from these Distributors:
CDS.....800 343-4499 Baker & Taylor.....800 775-1100
Ingram.....800 937-8000 Bookazine....800 548-3855
Direct from BellaDistribution 800 533-1973



A BSB Interview With Consulting Editor: Cindy Cresap

www.BoldStrokesBooks.com

Page 2

5. What working tools are essential to you when you edit? (Include reference books and remarks on style guide.)

I usually have only a dictionary and the *Chicago Manual of Style*. I also use Google to fact-check all kinds of things—Were oranges available in 11th-century Spain? Was the U.S. Bicentennial on a Sunday or a Monday? How long does it take a helicopter to fly between Atlanta and New Orleans? Google makes my life much easier.

6. What process do you use when you edit a manuscript?

I always work from hard copy. I always try to do my first read-through in one sitting, and I try to shut off my editor brain for that first reading. I want to experience the novel as a reader would. From there, I write down my first impressions, and then I read the manuscript a few more times, taking more extensive notes and marking up the text. Each project is different, but generally, I start big and work my way down— from larger issues such as fixing plot holes and developing characters, down to line-level issues.

As I'm writing my notes and inserting comments into the text, I always try to keep in mind that I'm being critical of someone's creative work. So I find kinder, gentler ways of what amounts to telling a parent her child is ugly. I use humor as much as possible, and I also point out the good things in the writing in addition to the things that need a little more attention.

7. In your spare time, what do you like to do?

I like to shoot pool. I'm on an 8-Ball team, and we play every week. I also like to have friends over to play board games until all hours of the night. And, of course, I love to read Bold Strokes Books (and the occasional non-BSB book as well).

To see more about Cindy, go to her bio on the About page on the Bold Strokes Books Web site at:

www.boldstrokesbooks.com/about.html.



Order Bold Strokes Books from these Distributors:
CDS.....800 343-4499 Baker & Taylor.....800 775-1100
Ingram.....800 937-8000 Bookazine....800 548-3855
Direct from BellaDistribution 800 533-1973

