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CHRISTMAS IN JULY?

By Mary Anne Hahn

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For many of us who live in the Northern hemisphere, the month of July means vacation, swimming, boating, picnics and camping. Long hot days entice us to slow down, turn off computers and televisions, and grab a spot in the shade of a leafy tree with a good book and a glass of cold lemonade. The very last thing most of us are thinking about is Christmas.

But writers should be. Thinking about Christmas, that is. Sure, it's still nearly six months away, but if you plan for it now, you'll be ready when the holiday season arrives.

And I'm not talking about doing your holiday shopping. July is the month to begin your holiday *writing*. Because those very same people who are frolicking outside today will start heading back indoors come September or October. They'll start making their own holiday plans. And, if you start now, you'll be ready for them.

You probably already know that you need to submit seasonal short stories, essays and article queries to print periodicals months in advance. But here are some other ideas you can begin to work on in July that can earn you some excellent income in December:

1. Offer a family holiday newsletter service. Holiday newsletters have become a popular way for people to catch each other up on family news that happened during the past year. Sometimes they are merely letters; others are more elaborate, with photos to accompany the news. You can set up a few templates, plan your advertising blitz now, and be ready to go before autumn nips the air. A little preplanning can bring you a lot of business.

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2. Write a Christmas memories book about your hometown. This could make a great stocking stuffer or a gift for those who love reading about history and holiday traditions. Have a press release ready for your local newspaper to promote your book, and start getting to know your local book dealers. An excellent guide for creating and selling your own Christmas memories book can be found here:

<http://inyurl.com/ixc> .

3. Develop your own ezine on your favorite topic. Once summer begins to wane and people head back indoors, many of them will return to their computers in search of information. Now is the perfect time to

plan an ezine, create your first few issues and begin to solicit subscriber sign ups. Not sure how to generate income with an ezine? Here's a step-by-step guide to show you how: <http://inyurl.com/ixi> .

4. Or maybe you prefer to write and sell books on your favorite topics instead, rather than maintain a regular ezine schedule. Again, sales for information products rise dramatically once the days grow short and the nights grow long. Will you have yours ready by then? You can, if you start *today*. Although the very best guide for creating and selling your own ebooks is undoubtedly Ken Evoy's "Make Your Knowledge Sell!" (<http://myks.sitesell.com/writeangles.html>), you can also find the information you need, inexpensively, in "Your Guide to Ebook Publishing Success" (<http://inyurl.com/ixt>).

These are simply just a few of the ways that resourceful writers can get a head start on the holiday season. For although it's true that the very last thing on most people's mind in July is Christmas, you can have your writing product or service ready for them when they do.

Mary Anne Hahn is editor and publisher of WriteSuccess, THE freebiweekly ezine of ideas, information and inspiration for writers. To subscribe and start pursuing your own successful writing career, <mailto:writesuccess-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>

What Do You Want This Year?

By Angie Dixon

Christmas is all around us, and many people are making up wish lists. Those who aren't doing that are busy setting down their New Year's Resolutions already. But this is a good time to sit down and do some serious introspection.

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What do you want from the holidays this year? Do you want to rush around, spend a lot of money you don't have, and yell at the kids for not playing with all twenty of the toys they asked for—at the same time? Is that really how you want to spend Christmas?

We talk about "Christmas spirit," and mostly we mean giving. Giving of ourselves, giving to people who need it. That's great, that's Christmas spirit.

But I think there's another aspect to "Christmas spirit." I think it's spiritual. And don't close your screen on me because I said spiritual. I didn't say religious, because it's not. I think it comes from our souls.

I think deep down, each of us has a spirit that wants to be expressed. And I think at Christmas, when we're naturally thinking of others, that spirit is more easily expressed. I think if you want to, you can have a spiritual Christmas. You can feel loving, caring, generous. You can feel like a kid at Christmas, just by opening up to your spirit.

So what do you want this year?

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

. For questions or

to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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What Do You Want This Year?

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