



# Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- JUNE IWOC/CWIP MIXER PREVIEW 1
- PRESIDENT'S COLUMN 2
- YOU GET WHAT YOU NEGOTIATE 4
- MORE ABOUT NEGOTIATION 4
- MAY MEETING RECAP 5
- DID YOU KNOW? 6
- WELCOME NEW MEMBERS 6
- EDITOR'S NOTE 7
- NEXT ISSUE/CALENDAR/QUOTE 7

JUNE IWOC- CWIP MIXER PREVIEW

## A Treat That Can't be Beat: Free Meet, Greet & Eat

Okay, spring — or is it summer — has finally sprung, and we're all rarin' to get out those white jeans (legal after Memorial Day of course), ditch the heavy sweater and coat, and step out to have some fun with entertaining and friendly people in our own line of work at a neat place where we can wet our whistles and chow down on some yummy food. And what if everything was free except the alcoholic beverages. Yippee! Lead me to it, you'd say. Right?

Well, strangely enough, we've read your minds, and we have just such an outing planned for Tuesday, June 10 (our regular meeting night) when members of Chicago Women in Publishing (CWIP) will join IWOCers

to greet old friends, make new ones, share war stories, and generally have a splendid time.

This soiree will take place from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Park Marcello's Father & Son Restaurant, 634 W. North Avenue. There's **free**



parking on both sides of the restaurant. Coming by El? Marcello's is located between the CTA's Brown Line Sedgwick Station, and the

Red Line's North/ Clybourn Station. It's an easy stroll from either the Brown or Red Line station.

All the meeting-and-greeting will no doubt give you a hearty appetite. Not to worry. There'll be generously sized pizza slices (vegetarian too) plus other goodies including dessert and free soft drinks.

Networking is the Holy Grail these days, and in-person meet-ups are a lot more fun than the digital "friending," "following," and "adding to the circle" that goes on among people who've never laid eyes on each other and maybe never will.

A year or so ago, we had a very successful event with another group at Marcello's, and we've already had a good response for this one. So what's not to like? We — IWOC and CWIP — are springing for the munchies, and we're looking forward to seeing you there next Tuesday. ■

— Joen Kinnan

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# The Future: What Do We Do?

About a month ago I met Bob Sacks at a Midwest Publishing Association spiffy event at the MidAmerica Club. Bob had flown in to deliver the keynote address at MPA's Presidents Night dinner. We both knew we had met before, probably in New York and definitely a long time ago, but neither of us could nail down where or when it was. No matter. We've both been involved in publishing since shortly after quill pens fell from favor. Bob's a pretty well known consultant nowadays, has neatly trimmed hair, and wears a necktie — a different persona from the guy who invented *High Times* magazine back in the seventies, when I was still smoking, um, Salems.

Bob had lots to say about the state of print and electronic communications today, which he has now summed up in his Publishing Executive magazine column; here it is, with permission:

## Why Print Media Will Never Regain Its Prominence

By Bob Sacks\* | Posted on May 21, 2014

Sometimes we in the industry get caught up in a type of professional fundamentalism. Everywhere you look in the trades, blogs, magazines, and newspapers that discuss the publishing industry, the dialog invariably ends up about the advancing death of print. There are the pro-death and the anti-death antagonists who

have taken extreme positions which blind them to the truths of the situation. Those pundits insist on taking a black and white fundamental approach to what is happening so as to make the conversation almost meaningless.

It isn't really about the death, but about a decline in prominence. At the core of the discussion is an overall lessening of the vast quantities that we used to produce and distribute. But that fact doesn't necessarily have to be about a lessening of our self-worth, unless we choose to make it so.

There was a time when print was the least expensive, least complex way to reach a mass audience. Now print is the most complex and most expensive way to reach a large audience. It is a fundamental shift from the way things were. Add to that the enormous cultural shifts in information gathering, reading and re-distribution, and you see that print has an even bigger situation to confront—that the public has only a limited time for reading anything.

More information delivered in unlimited ways on dozens of platforms, only one of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.



# President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

which is paper, doesn't add to the time people have to read. In the last report that I saw from [venture capitalist and technology guru] Mary Meeker, print received 6% of the time spent with media, while TV got 42% and radio received 9%. The internet got 20% and was rising, with mobile also on the rise. Internet/mobile was the only media category that continued to rise year over year. Time spent in the other categories was dropping.

The trend is inescapable and denying it is counter-productive to our sustainability. The bottom line as I see it is that print will not die, but it won't ever again be the predominant way that people read. There will still be billions of revenue in print for magazines, but as an industry they will be at best 1/3 of what they once were by 2020. That prediction must be understood to be an aggregate of the entire industry, there will always be titles and publishing houses that buck the industry trend.

We're all part of the communications industry, but, as Bob points out, that industry is undergoing more changes than ever before in history. One newspaper and magazine after another is dying or already dead. Advertising collaterals have gone from print to the Web, and their content relies

far more on graphics than copy, the opposite of what was common just a few years ago.

So what do we do? We look around for new possibilities, that's what. Although so many periodicals have disappeared or morphed into being exclusively online publications, new ones, generally aimed at specific niche markets, sprout up every day. Print journalism may be imperiled, but corporations are hiring journalists to get their stories out both within the corporate community and to the whole, wide world. The prize(s) goes to the nimblest among us, those who see inventive solutions rather than problems.



Some will bemoan shortened attention spans, stylistic innovations, and previously unheard of applications and word usages. Others will see challenges and opportunities. Few would disagree that independent writing as we know it will be radically different five, ten, or twenty years down the road. One fact will hold true, however: if someone is to read it, that means someone will have to write it. And we as writers, regard-

less of our specialties, must adapt; we no longer have the option of being "blind . . . to the truths of the situation." What's adequate—even superior—today just won't cut it tomorrow. We'll need new skills, a new focus, new resources, and entirely new strategies for serving our clients wherever we find them. Okay, so we can't as individuals control cultural and business shifts. We can, however, definitely control our response. We can pay attention to what's happening around us and open ourselves to new possibilities.

Doggedly hanging onto "this is the way we've always done it" is, as Bob Sacks puts it, "counter-productive

to our sustainability." Refusing to let go of outmoded practices is not just foolish; it's a surefire career killer. ■

*\* Bob Sacks (aka BoSacks) is a printing/publishing industry consultant and president of The Precision Media Group (BoSacks.com). He is also the co-founder of the research company Media-Ideas (Media-Ideas.net), and publisher and editor of a daily international e-newsletter, Heard on the Web. Sacks has held posts as director of manufacturing and distribution, senior sales manager (paper), chief of operations, pressman, circulator and almost every other job this industry has to offer.*





## Learn More About Negotiation

Since last month's meeting had a large negotiation component, we thought you might like some other points of view on the topic. Read the article below, and then if you want more info, try these resources: [Unlocking the power of value-based pricing](#) (1 1/4 hr. podcast with a lot of excess chit-chat, but may be worth it); [Crucial Conversations: Tools for talking when the stakes are high](#) (Kindle e-book [\$9.00] or Amazon paperback [\$10.93]); [Breaking the Time Barrier](#) (name-your-price downloadable book); [How to raise your freelance rates](#) (online article on Freelancers' Union site); [Negotiation tips for small business owners](#) (a blog).

I have not personally checked out any of the above other than to verify the links work, but they' all appear to be reputable sites/products. ■

— The editor

## You Don't Get What You Deserve; You Get What You Negotiate

The headline above is the mantra of Lindsay Van Thoen, who wrote an article on negotiating fees that was distributed by the Freelancers Union. Here is my take on what Van Thoen said.

Negotiating payment is not some sleazy backstreet process, though it can be intimidating if you let it. How can you make it easier on yourself? Most freelancers want to get the money part over with as soon as possible, which is why many of us writers aren't particularly good negotiators.

To get over the hump, **understand what negotiation is**. Negotiation isn't the process of getting what you want. It's about fairness: two parties coming together on terms. You're not trying to gouge the client; you just want an equitable deal. You're representing your busi-

ness, not acting as an individual in this transaction. Businesses are supposed to thrive and grow, and you're simply looking after those interests. Why is this an important distinction? Looking at it this way, helps you to distance the work and your value from yourself as a person.

Many writers are reluctant to "brag" about themselves but don't find it difficult to praise others. But when you're negotiating for your business, not for yourself, it should be easier to talk up your services, the value to the client, etc.

You'll be on much firmer footing if you **first interview your client** before you get to the negotiation phase. (There's also a lot about this in the May recap article.) Ask what value this project will bring to the client. Or the conversation might go something like this: (You) "What's

your goal for the amount of traffic you'll get on this website?" (Client) "I'd like 100,000 hits within the first six months." (You) "Good to know. I'll build the website to handle large amounts of traffic. How much sales volume do you want by then?" (Client) "About \$50,000 per month, but I want to build up to \$200,000 within a few years." (You) "So we'll need a robust back-end interface to support that kind of sales volume."

You can easily see what you've done here. You've not only gathered information you'll need to do the project, but also you've opened the client's eyes as to the tremendous value your project will bring to his/her company.

Now does it make any sense to price your project on the basis of an hourly rate — even if it's a high one — for which you'll get a few

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6.

# KnowBrainer Methods to Up Your Ante & Creativity

The scheduled speaker, Gerald Haman, was unable to appear at the May meeting, so he asked James D. Feldman to present “How to Think Faster, Smarter, and More Creatively” in his absence.



Feldman is a very successful entrepreneur, speaker, negotiator, professional trainer, and consultant to major U.S. and international corporations as well as a thought leader and author of 14 books.

Since he is one of Haman’s certified “KnowBrainer” trainers, Feldman easily stepped into the breach and delivered an informative – and very entertaining – presentation of the use of the KnowBrainer tool to stimulate creativity and innovation in most aspects of our lives, but particularly with regard to the writing business.

All attendees received the KnowBrainer tool, which is divided into four sections: Investigate, Create, Evaluate, and Activate.

Initially the presentation addressed writers’ block by using KnowBrainer to move through it. However, we quickly switched to interweaving processes, ideas, and concepts punctuated by personal — and often humorous — stories from Feldman’s own life.

Feldman, an unapologetic capitalist, suggested that almost any kind

of transaction can be monetized and negotiated. Take fees, for example. Clients often ask the writer to quote a fee. Many writers come back with “Do you have a budget in mind?” Not a bad question, but how about this: Paraphrasing a question from the Investigate section of the KnowBrainer, “How much do you anticipate your sales (donations, exposure, or whatever) will increase from this PR campaign?” This puts a whole new spin on what the cost of the project should be. According to Feldman, using this tactic almost always results in more money for the project.

Here’s another Feldman-type question: “If I increase your website sales by X percent, will you pay me (his desired figure)?” Presumably one would have to quote a lower figure if the goal wasn’t reached, but that could be your original planned rate.

According to Feldman, asking questions shows the client that you’re interested in the project and want to do an outstanding job. He believes that by not involving the client in the negotiation, you’re in effect, negotiating with yourself. “Why would you do that?” he asked. “You raise value by questioning.”

Other types of questions fall more

into the consultancy area, but you might move yourself into that position by addressing fundamental issues, such as: “Will this particular method of communicating your message be the best way to address your key goals, challenges, or problems?” Most of us typically don’t question whether a project makes sense for the purpose. We just do it, but Feldman suggested that questioning in broader, fundamental areas can greatly enhance our value.

The next step in the project is to Create, i.e., do the project. During the Investigate phase, you’ve determined and prioritized your goals, and because you’ve asked so many questions, you may already have a head start on ideas, but brainstorm anyway. What are the options and possibilities? What about visuals? Are there any buzz messages you want to convey? Do you want some slogan or message conveyed by readers/users through word-of-mouth? How about an element of surprise? Considering these factors may seem time-consuming, but when you actually *start*, you should be able to dive right in.

Next, you’ll want to Evaluate. Assuming you’ve done the usual edit for grammatical errors, misspellings, redundancies, etc., does the project actually meet the client’s



Continued on page 7.

# Did you know...



**A**re you using LinkedIn to benefit from its many features? Check out these tips for improving your use of this social media platform.

**Add Links to Your Profile** – If someone Googles you, chances are your LinkedIn profile will be at the top of the search result. Take advantage of this and make your profile shine. Add links to clips, writing credits, your website or blog, other social media profiles, and links to any other places you can be found on the internet. You want to paint the best picture of “you” that you can.

**Add Skills** – LinkedIn has probably suggested some Skills for you already but take a moment to add some others. Skilled corporate communicator? Experienced scriptwriter? Expert ghostwriter? The added bonus is that Skills work hand-in-hand with Endorsements; the more Skills you have, the easier it will be for your Connections to provide relevant Endorsements.

**Plan Your Connections** – Is your approach to connecting with others scattershot? Do you want to connect with other IWOC writers? What about college alumni? Current and former clients? And perhaps you want to exclude certain people. Have you looked at the connections that LinkedIn suggests for you? Take a few moments to make a plan.

**Personalize Your Invitation Language** – Yes, LinkedIn has some boilerplate language when you invite someone to connect but consider personalizing that language instead. People may be more apt to accept your invitation if they see the message was crafted just for them.

**Schedule LinkedIn Time** – You don’t have to spend oodles of time on LinkedIn to take advantage of all that it offers, but you should schedule a regular block of time each week or each month. ■

— Katherine Mikkelsen

## Get What You Negotiate

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4.

thousand dollars? For a client who plans to make 50 grand a month from your efforts? Not by your chinny, chin, chin, it doesn’t.

Your client didn’t hire you to build a website for the sake of building a website. Your client hired you to *add value* to his/her business, so you should price the project on a value-added basis. Forget the hourly rate. That’s a quick way to short-change yourself even if you boost it. And remember: this is about fairness. Fair market value takes into consideration what the client will get from the project.

Before you quote the fee, be sure to remind the client of the monetary potential he/she will realize from your efforts.

If you approach negotiation from this point of view, you don’t have to give an I-am-wonderful speech. By asking strategic questions, you can *show* the client the project’s worth in undeniable terms.

Admittedly, some projects will be harder to monetize than others, but you can talk about increased readership, greater charitable contributions, etc. Hey, we’re creatives, aren’t we? You can do this. ■

— Joen Kinnan

**IWOC Welcomes  
New Member  
John K. Arnold  
and  
Returning Member  
Tom McCauley**



# KnowBRAINER Methods to Up Your Ante & Creativity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5.

objectives. Does this project have strong potential to do the job? Is the timing right to launch this project? (Since IWOC's writers have such diversified clienteles, only you can determine what sort of evaluation is appropriate for a given project, but the point is to evaluate the finished piece for more than the quality of the writing. Make sure you've covered all required bases

The last step in the KnowBRAINER is to Activate. For other types of businesses, this could be to launch a sales campaign, revamp policies, or some other business activity. For writers, "Activate" doesn't usually apply to client activities, but there are three ways in which KnowBRAINER principles could relate to

writers: 1) developing an action plan to look for clients in a different — possibly more lucrative — area; 2) cover all bases before launching or revamping one's own website; 3) to suggest follow-up projects for the current client. So we're going to mention a few ideas from the KnowBRAINER.

For the current client, you could ask "How do you plan to monitor results of this project?" and "What are the next steps I could help you with?" Depending on the client's type of business and your skills you can probably brainstorm more concrete activities.

Because the KnowBRAINER is applicable to many types of businesses, every single question or creative

nudge is not applicable to writers, but the takeaways from Feldman are that one should aim high, take risks, and be bold in negotiating with clients. He urged us to question, question, question in order to demonstrate — and increase — our value to clients. "The more you question, the more you increase your value," he said, and he gave many examples to illustrate his point.

Attendees were very enthusiastic after the meeting as was Feldman during his presentation. ■

— John Arnold and Joen Kinnan

*Editor's Note: This was a very difficult recap to write because those who attended received the KnowBRAINER tool, while those who didn't did not. So, in order to give non-attendees some idea of how it works, the article includes some material that was not actually covered during the meeting. Examples were paraphrased to apply to writers. This seemed the best way to make the recap useful to those who were unable to attend.*

## "Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome." — Samuel Johnson

## In the next issue. . .



- **July 8, IWOC Monthly Meeting:** Join us as three former IWOC presidents reveal how they used IWOC membership and involvement to help build their successful writing-based consulting careers.
- **President's column:** Don't miss reading what's on Jim Kepler's mind. It's always entertaining and thought-provoking.
- Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.

