

IN THIS ISSUE. . .

1/September Meeting
Member Renewal

2/President's Message

3/August Recap
Profiles of Success

4/Calendar

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Round Tables with a twist

BY MARY BETH HUFFMAN

Where's the best place to socialize, network, and learn from the pros? The IWOC Round Tables, of course! On Tuesday, September 10, after the annual business meeting, our traditional Round Table program will have a special twist.

Rather than divide tables by fields, this year's program will challenge you with various communications problems. The host for each table will facilitate

ideas, and you'll rotate to a different table every 15 minutes to face a new set of challenges. A moderator will keep track of time and lead a summary session at the end.

One of the table hosts will be attorney Michael McCready, who can answer your questions about contracts and copyright laws.

You'll have a chance to promote your own services, so bring plenty of your business cards. IWOC members

are great sources of business referrals. (See #5, page 2.) Round Tables give you the opportunity to introduce yourself to several colleagues who could send you business.

So join us at the September IWOC program, our last event at the Chicago Marriot, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Networking begins at 5 PM, and the Round Tables will star at 6 PM. It's free for professional members, \$5 for associates, and \$15 for non-members. Join us afterwards for a dutch-treat dinner at California Pizza Kitchen. ☞

Renewal Time Is Here!

BY JANE JERRARD

Did you get your 2003 renewal forms yet? With a new fiscal year starting in October, it's time to sign up for another year of IWOC membership. Renewal packets were "snail-mailed" to all members at the beginning of September, so if you haven't received one, please call the office right away at 847/855-6670.

Renewing your IWOC membership ensures another year of valuable networking, education, and information about marketing your business, setting rates, and breaking into new markets. It's also your chance to update the categories you choose for the print and online SourceBook, change your contact information, and reword your business description.

HELP WANTED

Each year we hire a professional designer to lay out the print version of the SourceBook and design the cover. If you're interested in quoting on this project, or know someone who's interested, please contact Jane Jerrard at jjerrard@mindspring.com for specifications and other information.

And if you have a propensity for proofreading, consider volunteering to proof the print directory. It takes a small group of volunteers to get this done. If you'd like to help, please contact Jane Jerrard. ☞

New Officers 2002-2003

OFFICERS

President, Christina Foster
Vice President,
Barbara Silverman
Secretary (to be selected
from new board)
Treasurer, Alan Laduzinsky
Parliamentarian, Brent Brotine

BOARD MEMBERS

Marilyn Hopkins
Harry Karabel
Rebecca Maginn
Mary Ann Porucznik
Suzanne Tague

Election of officers will be at the September meeting, prior to the Round Table program. ☞

iwoc

Independent Writers of Chicago

Officers

President:

Brent Brotine 847/869-7733
brent@brotine.com

Executive VP:

Barbara Silverman 847/256-9900

Treasurer:

Alan Laduzinsky 773/296-4349

Secretary:

Deborah Hawkins 773/281-6683

Parliamentarian:

Jennifer Oatfield 773/763-7948

Board of Directors

George Becht 847/973-2556
Christina Foster 312/274-0597
Bill Miller 847/864-8384
Carrie Suarez 847/855-0401

Committees

Directory:

Jane Jerrard 773/561-5907

Marketing:

Suzanne Tague 773/274-6546

Publicity:

Pat Terry 773/871-0087

Membership:

Judah Graubart 708/660-8399

Programs:

MaryBeth Huffman 847/426-5605

Seminars:

Norwin Merens 847/657-6011

Writers' Line:

Dianne Rowland 630/834-0209

Website: <http://www.iwoc.org>

Tom Kepler 847/483-0904
tkepler@iwoc.org (Webmaster)

Stet is published 11 times per year by the **Independent Writers of Chicago**, PMB 19, 5465 W. Grand Ave, Ste 100, Gurnee, IL 60031, 847/855-6670. Internet address: www.iwoc.org. Copy submissions and advertising materials are due by the 15th of the month preceding publication. All submissions and ideas will be considered. The subscription rate of \$1 per year is included in the annual membership dues. Copyright ©2002 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

Editor:

Mary Ann Porucznik
708/386-3796; MAP133@aol.com

Production Editor:

Elaine Fiedler
708/386-3796

Contributors:

Brent Brotine, Elaine Fiedler, Mary Beth Huffman, Jane Jerrard, Mary Ann Porucznik, Lynn Sanders

Printing:

The Printing Store

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE/BRENT BROTINE

Top 10 things I've learned at IWOC

After two years in the President's chair, I'm passing on the gavel to your new leaders—and I'm looking forward to continued activity on the Board. I'd like to pass on something else to the entire membership—the top 10 things I've learned about IWOC. You should know them too:

1. You get back what you give.

It's absolutely true: the more you contribute your time and your talents, the more good feelings, good friendships and, yes, good opportunities come your way. True, this has been a hard year for many independents, writers and others, but many of IWOC's most active members have continued to prosper. Coincidence? Not in my book.

2. Committees are the real IWOC.

Where do our most talented members hang out? Behind the scenes at IWOC committees: by the time we have our Board meeting immediately before each monthly meeting, the critical work has already been done. That's why joining an IWOC committee is the ticket to getting the most out of your membership.

3. Every IWOCer is a storyteller.

Telling stories isn't just what we're paid to do—we all have interesting personal and professional lives, and like talking about them. So next IWOC meeting, don't be shy about asking someone you don't know to introduce himself or herself. You'll be fascinated by what many of our members have accomplished.

4. Speak up to expand your skills

Certainly, it's wise to have a niche where you market

yourself, be it news releases, proposal writing or Web content. But there's something to the old saw that a good writer can write anything, and as an IWOCer you have the resources to do so. Did someone just ask you to write a newsletter, and it's news to you? There are members ready to give you the pointers you need; all you have to do is ask.

5. Jobs don't only come from the directory.

Sometimes it's wise to refer those jobs that don't fit your mold to someone else. That's the key way being active and involved pays off: the more other members who know your skill set, the more opportunity you have for a referral. As for myself, when someone asks if I do writing that's outside of my comfort zone, I routinely give them the names of two or three IWOC members whose work I know personally.

6. What bugs you bugs others.

Problem with a slow-pay or no-pay client? Struggling with word processing software? Someone in IWOC has gone through the same situation, and you don't have to solve it alone. Show up at one of our regional breakfast or lunch groups, ask for advice, and you're guaranteed to get it.

7. There's something new to learn every month.

We've always considered it a plus to be egalitarian, which is why our monthly meetings cover such a wide range of topics. But if you're a business writer, and the meeting topic is article writing, should you come anyway? Absolutely! While we all pursue the craft of writ-

ing in different ways, there are common tricks of the trade, and you'll be surprised at the good advice you can glean from a topic you might not expect to be relevant to your needs.

8. Helping new members feels great.

Mentoring members who are new to the independent scene helps us all. They'll greatly appreciate your help. You'll enjoy sharing your knowledge. And you'll be doing your part to create a more satisfied membership.

9. We're all in this together.

If there's a meeting topic you want to see, if you have an idea for a special event, if you know of a benefit we can offer our members, let us know! You'll have a receptive ear, and you'll be making IWOC better for everyone.

And finally, this time of the year I've learned—

10. There's every reason to renew your membership.

Renewing your membership every year should be a given. After all, IWOC is the premier local professional organization for independent writers, and the one with the reputation that opens doors. Joining for a listing in the SourceBook and the Web site is reason enough for many members, but there are so many other ways you can benefit by becoming involved. I'm looking forward to welcoming the new Board at our October meeting, and I hope you'll be able to join us. ☺

The gods smiled and we laughed

BY MARY ANN PORUCZNIK



The ancient Greek gods smiled on IWOC last month, stopping the rain just long enough for us to celebrate IWOC Fest on the Pegasus rooftop. Members, spouses, and friends enjoyed trays after trays of tasty morsels. Along with the food, there was catching up on the doings of friends and colleagues. Add a trio and singer to entertain with popular Greek songs, and Melina Mercouri must have been dancing on Mount Olympus.

President Brent Brotine remembered to buy Robert Shoemaker a drink in grateful appreciation for suggesting IWOC's new meeting place (unfortunately, not the Pegasus rooftop). Past president Jennifer Oatfield was a gracious hostess, even if she

did have to mime the winners of the door prizes. (Even her cabaret voice couldn't be heard over the band and the OOOPPH-HAAS of the wait staff.)

Ed Cooper went home with the little green Grinch figure. Esther Manewith, who came with her husband Bob, went home with a masked man who vaguely resembled Al Gore. Jesse Ventura went home with Barb Goodheart, and you'll find George W. Bush a permanent fixture in Sylvia Friedlander's office. Okay, so it wasn't the Maltese Falcon; it was still fun.

The next IWOC party is in December. If past celebrations are any indication, it, too, will be a blast. Don't miss it. ☺

Two recommended resources

by Elaine Fiedler

There are bushels of how-to books about writing and the writer's life. Two guides for freelance corporate writers are *How To Start a Home-Based Writing Business* by Lucy V. Parker and *The Well-Fed Writer* by Peter Bowerman.

Both books are aimed at beginners, yes, but veterans might learn some tricks, too. Parker's *How To* is a no-nonsense view of freelance corporate writing. Much of it is presented in a surprisingly informative worksheet format. A section called 60 Key Assignments, for example, is a good resource for independent writers who either are

just starting out or have gone to the same well a few too many times. It identifies specific categories of writing and where they are needed, which might get your wheels turning. Also helpful: 30-plus pages of bibliography and resources.

If you're not one for worksheets, try *The Well-Fed Writer*. Bowerman's book is livelier and more personal (a grain of salt is advised). Although Bowerman has a light touch, he delivers a step-by-step guide for the independent corporate writer, with solid tips about marketing yourself, handling clients, and more. ☺

Profiles of Success

BY LYNN SANDERS

Meet Sally Chapralis—
Specialist in Marketing Communications

Length of IWOC Membership: "Since 1983 or '84."

Why Are You An IWOC Member? "Initially, I joined to learn the nitty-gritty of the business of writing. I discovered that IWOC can teach you how to be a business person through the programs, services, and the people you meet."

Background: "I started as a writer/editor for several different business-to-business magazines. Then I moved into marketing communications. Soon afterwards, I became involved with public relations. When I joined IWOC, I was ready to go off on my own."

Why Freelance? "In '84, I decided to freelance because I wasn't finding a staff position I liked, and the timing was right to go out on my own. I discovered it suited my personality. I liked the variety of topics, industries, and types of projects as well as the opportunity to try different things. I also welcomed the flexibility of freelancing."

Expertise: "My strong suit is having a real sense of what any particular client wants and is looking for... where they're coming from. When we come up with the final product, it's in tune with the client's vision."

Most Proud Of? "I teach a course at Roosevelt University in Public Relations. You get as much back from teaching as you give. It's wonderful having that interaction. I still hear back from former students. The same is true in freelancing. When a client has something to express or share... and they don't know their own potential, but you help draw it out so they can see what they have to offer, that's a delight."

Other Interests? "I love reading—fiction, non-fiction, magazines. The cultural things—plays, dances, music, and traveling when I can. I just came back from a long weekend in Manhattan with friends, and we saw *Private Lives* by Noel Coward. Now I'm enjoying the *New Yorker's* annual food issue."

Best Advice To Others? "First, you have to know that you went into freelancing because you wanted to do it—not by default. Once you're a freelancer or consultant, you owe it to yourself to approach it as professionally as you can."

Personal Heroes? "So many people. Via the Internet, I learned of a marketing communications writer who has published numerous books. I get a kick out of her and admire her chutzpah—Marcia Yudkin. She's a professional role model not only for her many achievements and help to others, but also because she's always pitching with new ideas and approaches. She is always out there... on top of it!"

How Would You Like To Be Remembered? "She gave it her best shot!"

Sound Off!

Editor's Note: With an electronic STET, we're no longer bound to four-page folio limits. We can do five or seven pages, if there's enough copy. So this issue introduces a new column...just for you. I'll get the ball rolling with one of my own aggravations: the missed and misused apostrophe.

I recently heard a story on NPR about the American Apostrophe Association, a group I immediately wanted to join. It seems two fellows who met regularly for coffee noted that a new store was going up opposite their breakfast spot. The sign on the store read "Albertsons." The two fellows, neither of whom was an English teacher but both of whom knew an error when they saw it, immediately dubbed themselves the American Apostrophe Association and began sending letters to the corporate headquarters, noting that the lack of an apostrophe was grammatically incorrect and highly upsetting to their membership (each other). After several months and several letters, they finally received a response—from the corporate legal department!

The story underscored what, for me, has become an issue. Because so many people can't figure out when to use an apostrophe, they don't use it at all. The problem is particularly vexing for possessives and for the ubiquitous "its." As one client recently told another IWOC member who objected to the use of *its* for *it is*, "the person who's reading the [e-mail/manual/sign] will know when *i-t-s* means *its* or *it is* so why bother with the apostrophe?" (But why make the reader stop and detour his/her thoughts to make that decision, before getting your point?)

What's so difficult about reading the sentence both ways before you punctuate? If it makes sense with *it is*, use an apostrophe. If it doesn't, don't. It's that simple.

Possessives are also fairly simple. If something belongs to someone, it's someone's something. Like Albertson's store.

The two members of the American Apostrophe Association are still meeting for coffee, though they've stopped writing letters. They're retired and don't want to be sued for harassment. The sign still doesn't have an apostrophe. But give them high marks for trying.

Is there something in the language or its usage that really gets to you? Do words like "virtual" and "really" (used as everything from an adjective to an interjection) make you grit your teeth every time you hear them? Release your frustrations. You can even do it anonymously, if you don't want people to be self-conscious when they talk to you.

Pen your peevs and e-mail them to the STET editor at map133@aol.com.



Write it down:
User ID: iwoc
Password: chgowtr

(Share only with other IWOCers.)

Calendar

September 10

IWOC monthly meeting. The annual meeting and election of officers is followed by the best networking session in town—the annual IWOC Round Tables. Chicago Marriott Downtown, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Ample parking nearby. Buy-your-own dinner follows at California Pizza Kitchen nearby. Networking at 5 PM, program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

September 19

Chicago Women in Publishing Fall Kickoff Party, 6 PM - 8 PM. Author Carol Anshow is the keynoter. Chicago Athletic Association, 12 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Membrs \$20, nonmembers \$25. Call 773/508-0351 or e-mail events@cwip.org

October 8

IWOC monthly meeting. NEW LOCATION! Join us at the Feltre School, State and Erie, Chicago. Do use a parking lot if you come to network, so your car won't be towed. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15. Come and check it out!

The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted. The groups welcome nonmembers.

September 5 (1st Thursday)

IWORP monthly breakfast. Join the Rogers Park IWOC contingent for breakfast at 9 AM at the A&T Grill, 7036 N. Clark St., Chicago. For more info, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

September 19 (3rd Thursday)

IWOW monthly meal. Join IWOCers in the far western burbs. For time and place, call Barb Rozgonyi at 630/942-9542.

September 24 (4th Tuesday)

IWOOP monthly lunch. Join near-west suburbanites at noon for an outdoor lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park (summer location). For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.

If none of these meet-and-eat groups is in your neck of the woods, start your own group. Be sure to notify *Stet* so your group can be included in the calendar. A Streeterville group is in the works right now. For information, call Christina Foster at 312/274-0598.

For details about IWOC monthly meetings or seminars, call the IWOC office at 847/676-3784 or check out www.iwoc.org.