

Stet

JANUARY 2004
VOLUME 23 NUMBER 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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JANUARY PROGRAM

What's it all about, IWOC? Let's see how IWOC can help you!

BY GEORGE BECHT

What can IWOC do for you? What can you do for IWOC? On Tuesday, January 13, be sure to attend IWOC's monthly meeting to answer those questions. No, this isn't another appeal for volunteers to work on one committee or another. Although, help is always welcome in many areas.

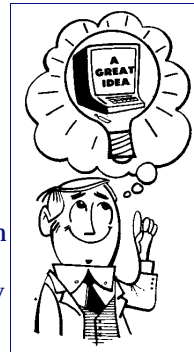
What the meeting will be is an opportunity to learn what steps IWOC's governors (the officers and board of directors) are considering to make our organization much more valuable to us, the members, this year and in years to come. And, it will be an opportunity for you to let them know what will make IWOC more valuable to you in particular. That's what you can do—come with your ideas and experience.

Times have changed since IWOC's founding in 1981 and it's time for IWOC to respond to those changes. Get ready for this meeting by considering some issues:

- ✍ How valuable is the IWOC directory? Have you gotten work because of it? How can it get you more work in the future?
- ✍ Have your clients used the IWOC Web site? Have *you* looked at it?
- ✍ Do you have a Web site? Should you? Some IWOC members do and have had notable success.
- ✍ How can IWOC augment your marketing efforts?
- ✍ Whatever happened to Writer's Line? Can IWOC help give more job leads to its members?
- ✍ Can IWOC extend beyond metro Chicago?
- ✍ What's the most important reason you're a member of IWOC?

The governors have a vision for IWOC to be THE place to which businesses turn for writing help. And, for it to be THE place to which independent writers go for marketing help. With your participation, it will happen. Come not just to feel the new energy, but also to generate that energy yourself.

Vote with your feet. Be there! January 13, 6:00 PM, Feltre School Auditorium, 22 West Erie, Chicago. ✍



“What Can IWOC Do for YOU?”

Tuesday, January 13

Feltre School

22 West Erie (at State)

Networking 5 PM

Program 6 PM

Professional members FREE

Associate members \$5

Nonmembers \$15

IWOC meets for a program
and networking the second
Tuesday of every month.

For more information,
call the IWOC office at
847/855-6670.

iwoc

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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. Copyright ©2003 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The pleasures of a Web-based freelance business: a site's the thing!

BY JIM LEMAN

I moved from an IBM Selectric typewriter to a Lanier word processor, after much grumbling and hesitation, in 1982, only to find to my surprise how easy and convenient this new-fangled technology made my writing tasks—cut and paste, revise on the go and simple formatting; how could I have been so sluggish to get aboard this new wave? In 1993, at a local library meeting, a local Internet (what the heck was that?) guru addressed the group of small-business people, real estate agents and funeral directors, and said this: "If you're a writer and you're not yet on the Internet with your own Web site, you'll be dead in a few years." How in the world did he know that I—a writer—was in that group? I met with him afterward, and within two weeks I had my own Web site.

WHO USES THE WEB AND WHY

If you recently shopped for a new vehicle, you probably did some background research on your choices online. Eighty percent of vehicle shoppers do so today. According to joint surveys done by Survey.com for Forbes.com and GartnerG2, "The Web is proving to be an indispensable tool for global executives." In fact, Web use by executives at all levels is biting into the once prominent domain of print, TV, radio and industry magazines as the source for information—including going to the Web first for product/service information. "The overwhelming majority of executives check their own e-mail ... and more than half of the respondents preferred doing their own research online," the survey showed.

WEB RESEARCH CAN BE A TWO-WAY STREET

That the Web is a great tool for conducting research isn't lost on any of us. Who among us doesn't go to it often to check a fact or spelling, find out more about real estate investment trusts or look up a potential new client to get a better handle on the nature of that client's business. You can even find the name and e-mail of live people within that business by clicking to the "Contact Us" page.

But I think that we too little consider how the Web can help those same potential clients more easily find us—whether through our own Web sites or as a link through the IWOC site, www.iwoc.org.

HELPING IWOC.ORG HELP YOU

Work is underway to improve this all-important part of IWOC's public presentation. Discussion on exciting Web-based possibilities and prospects will be a big part of our January 13 meeting. Please plan on attending and contributing. We want and need your input on ways we can improve iwoc.org to make it even more effective when it comes to helping potential clients find your area of expertise and, of course, you!

See you at our regular monthly meeting, Jan. 13, 2004. Until then, keep writing and making money! ✍



You Don't Have to Be an Employee to Do Employee Communications

BY MARLA KRUGLIK

Is there work to be done and money to be made in the employee communications area if you're not an employee of the company? If you're not an employee at all, but a member of the Independent Writers of Chicago?

David Murray, a freelance employee communications consultant, came to the November IWOC meeting to say yes, there is. And he was ready to share with us how to find it.

The first thing to know, Murray said, is that editors of employee publications are trying to become more "strategic," meaning to think, not write. So, if they have the funds, they are happy to farm out non-sensitive features. They have to write the articles on workforce reductions themselves, of course. But an outsider can turn a predictably dull article into a provocative, exciting one by coming from a new perspective or asking new questions.

GETTING STARTED

How do you get work in this area? Learn what's out there. Start by calling organization employee communications offices and ask to be added to their mailing lists. Editors are usually pleased to show their creations to outsiders. Look at what they publish, and you will see what you can pitch and to whom.

You can suggest a specific article or ask editors what they need. When you get an assignment, always (Murray emphasizes that "always") start by asking editors exactly what they want in the article—what they want it to accomplish. That way they are not likely to be disappointed. And if they give you enough specifications, they have practically written the article for you.

MORE TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Murray starts work by 6:30 AM to produce and send out an electronic market survey for employees of specific clients.

The minute they arrive at their desk, employees can read the daily survey on their computer screens, feel respected, and understand more of the company's business in the context of its competitors' progress.

Murray was an editor for Ragan Communications, business-to-business specialists, from 1992 to 2000. He recommends contributing to any of the Ragan publications (*The Ragan Report*, *Journal of Communications Management*, *Corporate Writer and Editor*, and *Speechwriter's Newsletter*). Ragan subscribers are employee communications editors and writers. They submit copies of their publications to get new ideas and expert evaluation, and learn from each other's work.

The IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) membership directory is another great source of editors, but you have to join to get it. And that's an expensive way to go. ✍

"Ask Not What IWOC Can Do For You . . ."

BY JANE JERRARD

When I joined IWOC in 1997, soon after becoming a full-fledged freelancer, I was eager to get involved. But not eager enough to take the bull by the horns, because I never stepped forward at monthly meetings when the inevitable general call came for volunteers to "help out with committee work." Until the day, over a year into my membership, when I was collared by one of the committee chairs for a very specific duty—sitting at the sign-in table before the monthly meetings. That task led to others, including chairing a couple of committees myself.

Looking back, I realize that if those IWOC spokespeople had asked for some very specific help, I would have comfortably answered the call. So that's what I'm doing now. As the Volunteer Coordinator—a newly created position this year—I will match up any interested IWOC member with an appropriate volunteer task, no matter how small.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

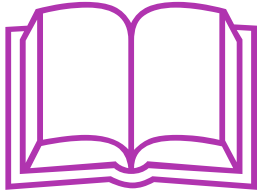
- Research community newspapers for the PR committee.
- Call IWOC seminar registrants to confirm the date.
- Brainstorm how to market the SourceBook, IWOC and its members.
- Test the online SourceBook before it goes live.
- Help plan monthly programs and find speakers.
- Write an article for *Stet*.
- Write and fax press releases.
- Help with direct mail projects to drive potential clients to our Web site.

If any of these sound interesting, or if you'd like to hear about other volunteer opportunities ranging from serving coffee to serving on next year's board—please contact me at jjerrard@mindspring.com.

My new year's resolution is to get every member involved this fiscal year—so if I don't hear from you, you may be hearing from me. ✍

Novelists make themselves heard

“How I wrote a novel in my spare time and got it optioned by Hollywood—and how you can too!”



Audrey Niffenegger, the author of the hot, new novel *The Time Traveler's Wife*, tells all at IWOC's March 9 meeting at the Feltre School.

This is Niffenegger's first novel. It was picked by Scott Turow as “book-of-the-month” on NBC's “Today” show and has been optioned for a movie by Brad Pitt and Jennifer Anniston.

Audrey Niffenegger teaches writing and printing at Columbia College in Chicago. She grew up in Evanston.

It took her almost five years to complete the novel while teaching full-time. She'll tell us how she did it and recount some tales about getting published and doing book tours here and in England.

Mark March 9 on your calendar. And don't miss what's bound to be an inspiring, and information-filled evening with the “overnight” literary sensation, Audrey Niffenegger. It's a program for every would-be novelist out there.

See you at the IWOC meeting on March 9, at 6:00 PM, Feltre School Auditorium, 22 West Erie, Chicago. ✍

from Marilyn Hopkins

Self-published novelist soars past 10,000 sales

Former IWOC president Jim Kepler reports that his publishing company, Adams Press, has shipped its sixth printing of Kathryn Clarke's *The Breakable Vow* (ISBN 1-929612-05-2). That brings to 12,000 the number of copies in print. The author has now sold the property to HarperCollins, who will release its own edition in 2004.

A cautionary story about dating violence and relationship abuse, the reality-based novel has been praised widely by students, educators, and law enforcement officials. Adams Press will continue to publish an accompanying instructional guide for use by police departments and prosecuting attorneys. Clarke has two more novels in the works.

You can e-mail jkepler@adamspress.com for more information. ✍

“The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes.”

Agatha Christie



Best to you in the New Year!

FYI

CHICAGO CREATIVE COALITION PRESENTS INTERNET MARKETING SEMINAR

Right on time for your New Year's resolution to "get with the Web," the Chicago Creative Coalition will present a seminar on Internet marketing strategies, featuring author and trainer Anne-Marie Concepcion.

Her program, **Finding Clients: Marketing Your Creative Services on the Internet**, promises to be a winner for anyone in the communication arts industry. And, with your IWOC membership, you can save money and attend at one-third the cost!

Concepcion, author of *Professional Web Site Design from Start to Finish*, is president and creative director of Seneca Design & Training (www.senecadesign.com) and an authorized training provider for Adobe and Quark design software.

In this seminar, Concepcion will show various ways creative professionals are using the Internet to attract and retain potential clients. These insider tips and techniques don't require a lot of money or time, and you don't have to be a programmer to use them.

Topics she will cover include:

- How to set up, publicize, and get the most out of your Web site;
- How to get your name and portfolio "out there" through content-rich e-mail;
- How to write and use a set of custom e-mail "sigs";
- How to use on-line discussion boards and creative directories where your participation can turn into a steady stream of client inquiries;
- How you can make each of these strategies feed into the others to maximize their ongoing impact.

IWOC MEMBERS: \$10 in advance (RSVP by Jan. 27)
(This also applies to C3, AIGA, APA, ASMP, CWIP, GAG, and OBD members.) OR \$15 at the door for members.
Non-members: \$20 in advance
OR \$30 at the door for non-members.

Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Time: 6:00-9:00 PM (program begins at 6:30 PM)

Location: Portage Park Center for the Arts,
5801 W. Dakin (1 block south of Irving Park Rd. and 1
block west of Central) in Chicago.
Doors open at 6:00 PM; program from 6:30 to 9:00 PM.
Refreshments will be served.

Make checks payable to: Chicago Creative Coalition.
(RSVP by Jan. 27, 2004)

Mail to: C3, P.O. Box 578477, Chicago, IL 60657-8477

Calendar

January 13 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC special meeting: A discussion of IWOC's potential, including IWOC on the Web and improving the marketing of the Directory and the membership. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

February 3 (Seminar)

Chicago Creative Coalition Presents: Finding Clients: Marketing Your Creative Services on the Internet. From 6 PM TO 9 PM, Feb. 3 at Portage Park Center for the Arts, 5801 W. Dakin (1 block south of Irving Park Rd. and 1 block west of Central) in Chicago. (See information at left.)

February 10 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting. Program topic to be announced. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. 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.

February 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 information, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

January 22 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP monthly lunch: The West Suburban group meets at noon at Poor Phil's at 139 So. Marion, in Oak Park. Contact Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.

E-mail your announcements to map133@aol.com.
Please refer to "Stet" in the subject line.

**Check out
IWOC's Web site at
www.iwoc.org
user id: iwoc
password: chgowrtr**