

# Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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## SPECIAL MARCH PROGRAM

### ***Beginner's luck? Or something more? Audrey Niffenegger tells how she wrote her first novel and got it published and optioned for the movies***

BY MARILYN HOPKINS

**I**t sounds too good to be true. Young, single teacher writes a novel in her spare time, gets it published to critical acclaim, and then optioned by Hollywood for a movie.

The thing is, it really happened to Chicago's own Audrey Niffenegger, and she'll tell us all about it—how she wrote her book and what's happened since—at our March 9 meeting. IWOC is co-sponsoring this special event with Chicago Women in Publishing (CWIP). This meeting only, we'll be gathering where CWIP meets—the Chicago Athletic Association, 12 South Michigan Avenue.

"Call it 'Beginner's Luck,'" Niffenegger said when I asked what we should title her presentation. But it's got to be more than that.

Niffenegger wrote her novel, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, over a five-year period, squeezing in time around her full-time job teaching at Columbia College. The independent publisher MacAdam/Cage bought the book for six figures, with paperback rights going to Harcourt Trade. Scott Turow picked it for NBC's Today Show Book Club and film rights have been optioned by movie stars Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston. In January, Niffenegger went to England to help launch an edition there.

Not bad for a little girl from Evanston, a self-proclaimed loner and bookworm who loved to write and draw and grew up to be both a writer and a visual artist.

**See page 4 for more information  
about this special event.**

Special joint presentation  
co-sponsored with CWIP

**AUDREY NIFFENEGGER**  
Acclaimed author of  
*The Time Traveler's Wife*

**TUESDAY, MARCH 9**

Note location and time  
change this meeting only

Chicago Athletic Assoc.  
12 So. Michigan Ave.

Networking 5:30 PM  
Program 6:30 PM

Professional members  
FREE

Associate members \$5  
Nonmembers \$15

CWIP members will be  
charged CWIP fees.

IWOC meets for a pro-  
gram and networking  
the second Tuesday of  
every month.

# iwoc

Independent Writers of Chicago

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# IWOC selects Web site developers

BY JENNIFER OATFIELD

Prior to the February IWOC meeting, the board held a special extended meeting to hear proposals from five different web site developers on developing the new IWOC Web site. All five proposals had merit, and each of the companies had strengths to admire. In the end, the board chose a reliable team of IWOC members who will be using a new software package to develop the site. And—more good news—we'll still have money available to market the site, which is all-important.

Graphic designer Bob Hashioka will develop the design of the site, and Joel Kinnan and Ed Bouchard will develop the content and the functionality. Jason Kinnan will provide database expertise, and a three-person IWOC steering committee (Esther Manewith, Conrad Lawrence and a board member, currently Jennifer Oatfield) will provide input and guidance.

In addition, IWOC will purchase consulting time from one of the presenters, the Jacobs Agency, to ensure that the Web site is built to address any and all marketing possibilities.

## MORE SITE NEWS TO COME

The board is excited about the prospects. Working with IWOC members who know the organization inside and out will ensure the development addresses all our needs.

You'll be getting notices about the site as it is developed. For example, we may ask you to go to an embedded site and comment on the layout.

So keep your eyes peeled. And congratulations to Joel, Ed, and their team. ✍

## Go to your IWOC Web Site for great tips from last month's speakers



On February 10, Hilary Marsh, a content strategy and content management consultant, and Nick Gracilla, developer and user-focused design professional, presented "Writing for the Web" at IWOC's program meeting. They had lots of great tips to help writers with an interest in Web writing.

Their excellent handouts cover most of their presentation, and are available on IWOC's Web site at [www.iwoc.org](http://www.iwoc.org). Go to "calendar," then "iwoc events," and scroll down to the red-bordered blue box.

And while you're at the site, check it out. Although the site is undergoing development, you will find all kinds of links and resources there, under "community."

Go to [www.iwoc.org](http://www.iwoc.org)  
user id: iwoc  
password: chgowrtr

# *Found: An uncommon word collection that's not just for snobs*

BY RICHARD L. EASTLINE

*This is another in an irregular series devoted to books and Internet sites that are popularly classified as reference source material.*

**THE HIGHLY SELECTIVE THESAURUS  
FOR THE EXTRAORDINARILY LITERATE**  
by Eugene Ehrlich  
205 pp. plus preface & introduction  
Illustrated (spottily) with captioned line drawings  
Harper Collins, originally published 1994  
\$17 (hardbound) / ISBN 0-06-270016-2

If you want to feel important, use fancy words. Of course, the flip side to such a practice is that listeners will label you as pompous or preposterous. Somewhere, though, between the plain and the pretentious, there should be an area devoted to the much less commonplace choices in our language. Apparently, Eugene Ehrlich has discovered it and happily exploits it for both profit and enjoyment.

## WORDS WITH A RAREFIED PEDIGREE

Although this thin volume technically has been around for ten years, it seems to have found a new life and is appearing regularly in various book listings and reader-directed mailings. If you haven't as yet made its acquaintance, be forewarned that this thesaurus is highly specialized. The choices are mainly words that most commercial wordsmiths probably don't encounter daily. They are legitimate, but many are of a rarefied pedigree. So, why think of using them? Not many reasons leap to mind, but credit those that do, such as adding a piquant touch to what could be prosaic prose. Like the insertion of a French or Latin phrase, a perfectly poised English word surprises and nudges the reader.

Ready for some examples?  
beg = obsecrate;  
gibberish = galimatias;  
insensitive = pachydermatous;  
lottery = pakapoo;  
village = dorp

(Altogether now: I obsecrate that you avoid galimatias to hide your feelings, no matter how pachydermatous, about my losing the pakapoo in my dorp.)

The author's name should be familiar if you've counted NPR's *All Things Considered* among radio's treasures. As the program's judge of word searches, he's had the privilege of playing the part of the kid in the toy shop, but is generous enough to share with us. His eager participation is blithely recounted in the introduction by Noah Adams, the program's host. And just to show that Ehrlich is not simply a one-book wonder, he has compiled a companion dictionary.

If investigation of either of the books proves to be enlightening and even generates secretly devilish applications, you'll probably want the other one. In that case, watch for sales promotions that package the two together at an advantageous price. Call it a higgly (bargain)! Besides, with such extravagantly worded titles, how could they not also be considered great gift items—or benefactions, if you prefer? 



## Audrey Niffenegger program

Continued from page 1

**N**iffenegger said she wanted to write a story about waiting and inevitability. She wove these themes into the story of Henry and Clare. They fall in love but must deal with a genetic flaw that causes Henry to travel, without any control, into the past or future leaving Clare desperate for his safe return. The book is set in Chicago and is full of references to places we know like the Newberry Library, the Aragon Ballroom, and the Berghoff Restaurant. Niffenegger will sign her book and Sandmeyer's Bookstore will have copies for sale.

We'll be meeting at a new location—the Chicago Athletic Association, 12 S. Michigan Ave., just south of Madison St. Our usual schedule will begin half an hour later, with networking from 5:30 to 6:30 PM and the presentation at 6:30 PM.

Regular meeting fees apply for IWOC and CWIP members. The nonmember fee is \$15. There will be refreshments and a chance to meet the author and to mingle with new friends and old.

If you plan to attend, please call the IWOC office (847) 855-6670 so we'll know how many to expect.

The Chicago Athletic Association (CAA) is easy to reach by any El train or bus serving the Loop. Best parking is in the Grant Park North Garage. If you're heading north on Michigan, use the entrance at Madison. If you're heading south on Michigan, use the entrance at Washington. Both entrances are in the middle of Michigan Ave. Park on the lower level and use the Monroe St. pedestrian exit.

Plans for our "buy-your-own" dinner are still in the works. Details will be announced at the meeting.

See you March 9! ✍️

E-mail your announcements to [map133@aol.com](mailto:map133@aol.com).  
Please refer to "Stet" in the subject line.

## Calendar

March 9 (2nd Tuesday)

**IWOC monthly meeting: Novelist Audrey Niffenegger. The author of the hot, new novel *The Time Traveler's Wife* reveals how she wrote it, got a six-figure publishing contract, and more.**

**Note location and time change—**

The March program is co-sponsored with Chicago Women in Publishing (CWIP), and presented at the Chicago Athletic Association, 12 South Michigan Avenue, south of Madison Street. Please call the IWOC office 847/855-6670 if you plan to attend. Regular meeting fees apply: IWOC professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

April 13 (2nd Tuesday)

**IWOC monthly meeting: TBA**

At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

***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.***

March 4 / April 1 (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.

March 25 (4th Thursday)

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

**Check out  
IWOC's Web site at  
[www.iwoc.org](http://www.iwoc.org)  
user id: iwoc  
password: chgowrtr**