

# Stet

JANUARY 2005  
VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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## IWOC JANUARY MEETING

# *With a little planning, you can get more for your money and the future*




BY JIM HODL



ometimes earning money is the easy part. It's what you do with it afterwards that can provide the greatest benefits for professional freelance writers and editors today and well into the future. But what are your options for assuring your financial wellbeing?


Vicki Mayfield, a financial advisor with the Morgan Stanley Individual Investor Group and an accomplished public speaker, has plenty of ideas about how self-employed writer/editors can put more money in their pockets today and put some away for future needs and retirement. And she will be sharing them at the next IWOC meeting on Tuesday, January 11.

In her seminar, "Financial Planning: Understanding Factors and Strategies that Affect Your Financial Goals," Mayfield will explain how to build a better financial future. Among the topics she will discuss are the following:

-  How to take advantage of current changes in tax laws that will enable self-employed persons to shelter more of their income from taxes
-  How to set up the new medical savings plans created by Congress last August that shelter some income from taxes for future medical expenditures
-  How to use investments to plan for retirement

Calling on her 25 years experience in sales, marketing and consulting positions within the financial services industry, Mayfield will provide a check list for determining what you currently have and what you still need to plan for a better financial future.

## QUESTIONS ARE WELCOME

IWOC members are invited to bring their questions on financial and investment matters, which Mayfield promises to answer following her presentation. "Financial Planning" will be presented on Tuesday, January 11 at the Feltre School, 22 W. Erie, Chicago. Networking begins at 5 p.m. and the program is at 6 p.m. Admission is free for professional members and costs \$5 for associate members and \$15 for nonmembers. Afterwards, you're invited to reconvene at a nearby restaurant for a dinner (you buy your own) and more discussion. 

## *Financial Planning* *with Vicki Mayfield*

**Tuesday**  
**January 11**  
**The Feltre School**  
**22 West Erie**  
**Networking 5:00 PM**  
**Program 6:00 PM**

**FREE for**  
**Professional members**  
**Associate members \$5**  
**Nonmembers \$15**

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

# iWOC

Independent Writers of Chicago

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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](http://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 ©2005 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# A New Year's "revolution"

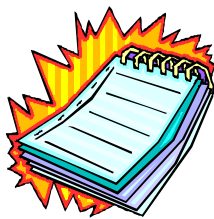
BY HARRY KARABEL

At first glance, it doesn't seem like much of a revolution. No laws were broken, no entrenched philosophies shredded to confetti. But the change has been dramatic and it has happened so fast that I find myself at my most ineloquent trying to explain it.

My brain is numb, synapses misfiring, the connections that my gray matter make with my fingertips on the keyboard are not exactly at their best. Certain sentences are highly suspect. Grammatical instincts are slipping. Prepositional phrases are creeping into otherwise clear, crisp text. Coffee is becoming meaningless, even the Ethiopian blend that I ordered from Fair Trade.

In December, I wrote a product brochure for a security company (and had to drive to Gurnee from Valparaiso to get the work), conducted interviews and wrote three stories for a community magazine, wrote a 30-minute speech and a rewrite, wrote another script for a recycling company and directed an audio session to record it (a drive to Schaumburg), finished some pharmaceutical copy, copy-edited an article for an industrial magazine, wrote some local bank and hospital ads, another article for a different magazine, and this column. Then—Christmas!

I know what you're thinking: Wah-wah-wah! And I don't blame you. As freelance writers, this is what we do, this is what we work for: the freedom of a flexible schedule and enough money to pay for that flexibility. But maintaining a balance between getting the work we need to stay ahead of the game and worrying about where the next job is coming from is a task on par with achieving world peace. It is a battle few of us win. We wrestle with the overabundance and struggle through the leaner times. Or at least some of us do. I did.



*What's on your New Year's "revolution" list?*

**This is where the revolution comes in.**

My clients are changing, my business is changing and so is the way I am approaching my business. I have become more aggressive in pursuit of new clients, new opportunities, and new ways to expand my menu of services. While this may indicate a revolution in the marketplace, driven by an economy that has not always been kind to our livelihoods, it also reflects a revolution in me.

For this personal revolution, I thank my IWOC colleagues. By showing up for meetings, sharing stories and business tips with other members, and listening to and actually applying some of the knowledge I gained from our guest speakers, I have a revolution on my hands. It's not one of those revolutions that will change the world. But it changed me. I may still be learning to live with the change. My brain hurts, but this is a good thing. And I'm not going back to the way things used to be.

Maybe you've achieved an even-tempered balance between life, work and cash flow. Maybe your business is all it can be. Maybe you don't need a revolution.

Or maybe you have been to our Web site, and have seen the phenomenal number of jobs listed on the hotline. Maybe you've heard that a lot more writers are taking their IWOC participation seriously and, in the process, are making us a more interesting, vital, noteworthy and valuable organization. Maybe you've heard about our all-day seminar scheduled for March 19 called "The Freelance Life" that is being designed not only to help freelancers at any stage in their careers, but also make IWOC the place to belong if you're a freelance writer in Chicago. Maybe you've heard that we're having fun.

Join us those second Tuesdays of every month. Renew your membership. Join a committee. Volunteer to help with the March seminar. Make 2005 the year you made a change you have always wanted to make. Your revolution could start right now.

**Harry J. Karabel**  
**President, IWOC**

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## Important Notice About Membership Renewals

As most of you know, membership renewal normally begins in late September, with the cut-off date for guaranteed listing in the print directory occurring in late October or early November.

This year we were very anxious to be able to offer membership renewal through PayPal, and so we delayed the renewal period because the shopping cart developer we hired needed extra time to adapt the shopping cart to work with our very complicated renewal process. Unfortunately, this particular developer has now decided

that he can't make it work after all.

We cannot afford to wait any longer for renewals, so we will regretfully have to do it the old-fashioned way: on paper. You will need to go to the Web site to download the renewal forms, fill them out, and send a check along with the forms to the office. Further details about the process, such as the length of the renewal period, will be hammered out at the next IWOC board meeting on January 11. (To meet the *Stet* deadline, I needed to write this while some details are still pending.) When we

know the complete plan, you'll receive a broadcast e-mail, so be sure your correct e-mail address is both on your profile on the Web site and in the hands of Elaine Fiedler, the *Stet* editor (at [elainefiedler@comcast.net](mailto:elainefiedler@comcast.net)). The details will also be posted on the Web site as soon as we know them, so check in often. PayPal may be an option for renewal in the future if we can get the bugs worked out. We're terribly sorry we haven't been able to make it work for you yet.

JOEN KINNAN

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## A vocabulary book for the know-it-all writer

REVIEW BY RICHARD L. EASTLINE

I ALWAYS LOOK UP THE WORD "EGREGIOUS" by Maxwell Nurnberg  
290 pp. incl. index. Barnes & Noble reprint (1998), Simon & Schuster (1981). Hardbound (pricing varies), ISBN 0-7607-0837-1

It's one of life's small pleasures to browse shelves of unfamiliar books. No telling what to expect. And so, in the true spirit of serendipity, you may fortunately have come across this title.

Lucky you—for it's one of those not-so-famous-but-so-admired books that add some spritz to a writer's library. Identified on the jacket as "a vocabulary book for people who don't need one," be forewarned that this is not a book for wimps. It's a full-strength dose—quirky, picturesque, elegant, grandiloquent, and sly—of hundreds of words and phrases. It is a collection that satisfies to the mind and can excite the imagination, often at the same time.

An appropriate skill classification for Maxwell Nurnberg would be "word collector" in honor of his endless obsession with capturing fascinating words, some utterly useless but others that merit a "right on!" recognition. This volume

originally was published nearly a quarter of a century ago, but it remains essentially fresh, other than the compilation of slang, most of which long ago was absorbed into the play of conventional communication and, in some cases, already has exited the stage.

The author's approach was to extract fascinating words from a variety of active periodicals, which included the *New York Times*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *The New Yorker*.

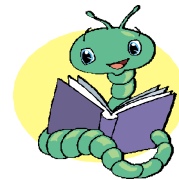
As for constructing the contents, Nurnberg uses convenient categories as containers. They range from pejorative to pretentious (a personal favorite he includes is "sesquipedalia," literally "words a foot-and-a-half long"), along with direct importation of foreign words plus words appropriated from places and persons (words that have lost their upper-case status). A particularly useful chapter is devoted to pairs of words with similar sounds, spellings, or meanings that trap the innocent and unwary.

Within each grouping is a potpourri of personal choices, each usually accompanied by a pertinent quotation by way of illustration, a definition, and occa-

sional reference to origin. There is no lengthy exposition to dull the pleasure of discovery; his pithy commentary allows for several entries per page. And, for those of you addicted to skill testing or interactive participation, the author includes a brief chapter made up of five word games based on synonyms. He feeds you two complete words that are derived from two of three language sources (Latin, Greek, or Anglo-Saxon) and gives you the privilege of supplying the third. No prizes, alas, but at least there's a curiosity-resolving list of answers.

You could label Nurnberg's efforts a reference work but it more properly belongs to that category of delicious word treats—something that's rather more like a container of addictive snacks than a full meal.

By the way, those who acquire this volume may be surprised to discover that the uncommon word in the book's title is not included in the collection but, rather elusively, is discussed in the introduction (the "prolegomenon" to those of us in the know). ✍



# FYI

## YOUR COMPUTER GOT YOU DOWN? SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPUTER QUANDARIES FOR IWOC'S FEBRUARY 8 PROGRAM AND GET ANSWERS

You say the computer you use to write and edit articles, execute page layouts, and sundry other tasks seems to have a mind of its own? Help is on the way!

Jim Thing, a computer programming professional with 30 years experience and owner of JGT Consulting Co., Streamwood, IL, has graciously agreed to appear at the February IWOC meeting. And, so he can tailor his presentation to the PC-related needs of IWOC members, Thing is requesting input from members prior to the meeting.

Do you need information on how specific functions of your computer work? Are there any tasks you'd like to do on a PC that you can't find the instructions for? And are you experiencing any bedeviling problems?

Send your questions by January 31 to:  
IWOC program committee co-chair Jim Hodl at  
phone: 773-777-5710  
fax: 773-777-9308  
e-mail: j.hodl@worldnet.att.net.

## IWOC STALWART ROBERT SHOEMAKER LEAVING CHICAGO



If you don't know Robert Shoemaker, you've missed one of the most dedicated writer-scholars and IWOCers around.

Now Bob is moving to Portland, Oregon to be near his son. And we at IWOC will miss him. With a 50-year career and many a story to tell, Bob Shoemaker has indeed been an IWOC fixture — not to mention that it was Bob who was the IWOC Santa at the annual holiday party for as long as any of us can remember. He came with

his own beard, you see. In his last appearance in December, he was given a round of applause and a warm farewell.

Professor emeritus of history and Fulbright lecturer in Germany, Shoemaker is an award-winning writer whose work has appeared in books, newspapers, and magazines.

His colleagues and friends at IWOC all extend to him their best wishes.

# Calendar

January 11 (2nd Tuesday)

**IWOC monthly meeting: "Financial Planning: Understanding Factors and Strategies that Affect Your Financial Goals," with Vicki Mayfield.** At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

February 8 (2nd Tuesday)

**IWOC monthly meeting: Jim Thing, computer programming professional and owner of JGT Consulting, answers your questions about PC computer functions, offers how-to help, and presents solutions for nagging problems.** At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

March 8 (2nd Tuesday)

**IWOC monthly meeting: To be announced.**

March 19

**IWOC all-day seminar scheduled: "The Freelance Life," designed for freelance writers at any stage in their careers.** Mark the date on your calendar! More information will be available in the weeks to come.

***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.***

January 6 (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 27 (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)**