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IWOC MARCH MEETING

All about working for "the trades"

BY JAMES J. HODL

Most call them trade journals, or simply "the trades." But they represent a vast market of publications serving specific industries or business sectors, or even specialized niches within these categories. As such, they present freelance writers with a broad market for finding and selling articles. But how do you go about securing assignments from these publications?

To answer this and other questions about the trades, IWOC has assembled a panel of trade publication veterans for the IWOC meeting on Tuesday, March 8. Scheduled to appear are:

Russ Gager, currently senior editor of *Security Distributing & Marketing*, and previously editor-in-chief of *NARDA Independent Retailer* for 15 years, and an editor at *Appliance Manufacturer*.

Rita Negrete, currently senior editor at *Technomic Information Services*, and previously senior editor at *Equipment Solutions* for six years, and senior editor of *Restaurants & Institutions* for 10 years.

Jim Hodl will moderate. Jim was senior editor of *Appliance Service News* for nearly 25 years before becoming a freelance writer and IWOC member.

Come learn what it is like to work at business and industry journals, complete with anecdotes. Learn what opportunities the trades offer you and how you can go about securing assignments from these publications. Bring your questions.

Join "the trades" on Tuesday, March 8 at the Feltre School, 22 W. Erie St. As always, networking begins at 5 PM (complete with coffee and cookies), followed by the program at 6 PM. Admission is free for IWOC professional members, \$5 for associate members, and \$15 for nonmembers.

Following the meeting, plan to join other members and our guest panelists for dinner (buy your own) to continue the discussion or networking. ☞

Writing for Trade Publications

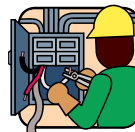
Meet the Editors

Tuesday
March 8

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
programs and networking
the second Tuesday of
every month.



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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 ©2005 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

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Contributors: Richard L. Eastline, James J. Hodl, Harry J. Karabel, Joan Kinnan, Katherine Mikkelsen, Dixie Watterson. And thanks to Mary Ann Porucznik for her help on this issue.

What is sweet?

BY HARRY J. KARABEL, PRESIDENT

Red licorice. Fannie May dark chocolate. White chocolate of any size, shape or format. Fruit pie, still warm, with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

There are other kinds of sweet, as in the "sweet spot," a sweetheart, a sweet deal, sweetbread (which is animal pancreas and, I suspect, not sweet at all), sweet corn, sweet potato, and in the *Napoleon Dynamite* vernacular of both my children, just plain sweet. This version of the word is spoken as though it had several more e's in the middle of it and means, alternately, "so much better than good" or "not good at all, I'm being sarcastic or just pretending it's even a little bit good."

I'm writing this in February, a month we think about all things sweet in association with that red heart holiday. If I were in elementary school, I'd carefully select and write on a series of character-themed cards and present them in person to the following folks who make IWOC life so sweeet (the "so much better than good" kind). I ask these folks to use your imaginations. Select your own card and visualize my barely legible scrawl underneath some pre-printed pun. It'll be just like third grade and that, too, will be sweet.

Sweet is...

... the IWOC Board (Jim, Lisa, Dixie, Ellen, Marla, Conrad and Karen), who tackle easy and tough issues alike with intelligence, creativity, insight, and a lot more IWOC experience than I have.

... Noreen Kelly and Katherine Mikkelsen, our PR committee, spreading the good word and the good news about IWOC.

... Jenny Hamby and Kim McGregor, our seminar committee, who are far ahead of the curve on planning "The Freelance Life" for April 2.

... Jeff Steele, our membership chairman, who has a lot of fun taking his job seriously at every IWOC meeting.

... Lisa Mayer and Esther Manewith, our marketing committee, waiting patiently to actually get to do some marketing for IWOC. (Your time is coming, very soon. I promise).



... Sheree Geyer, Jim Hodl and Richard Eastline, our program committee, who bring us new and interesting speakers every month.

... Joan Kinnan and Ed Bouchard for their tireless efforts on behalf of our Web site.

... Elaine Fiedler and all the regular contributors who manage to wrangle *Stet* into shape each month.

... Jennifer Oatfield, for simply going out of her way to be the invaluable resource she is.

Sweet is responding to six to ten new inquiries for membership information each week.

Sweet is seeing former members, or those we haven't seen in a while, come back!

Sweet is having a brand new member volunteer to help with the next rate survey. Thanks Diane Schneiderman! Rebecca Maginn is your partner.

Sweet is having so many people volunteer to be a part of "The Freelance Life."

Sweet is the ease with which people network before each meeting. No one has trouble working this room.

Sweet is the stimulating, funny, intense and illuminating conversation at the dinner table after each month's meeting. If you haven't joined us in a while, plan on it next month. When I called Bijan's to make a reservation last month, I told them we needed a table for 15. There was dead silence on the other end of the phone. The woman had to check with management to see if the restaurant could accommodate a group that size. After carefully taking down my name, phone number, current location and reconfirming our reservation time, she said they would be ready for us. When I got there, they were still moving the tables, spreading white tablecloths, adding chairs, and, in general, making room for IWOC.

That, as you might have imagined, was really sweeeeeeeet. ☺

Members hear computer expert's warnings and advice

BY DIXIE WATTERSON

Remember those creepy movies from the 1950s and 1960s? The ones about the invaders from outer space?

Perhaps we are living through another version of that time. Forces of evil are lurking, looking for ways to invade the central tool of our livelihood—our computers. According to computer expert Jim Thing, 1,300 new viruses emerge every month.

These versatile viruses, macros, worms, spyware, adware, pfish, and Trojan horses are now household words, and they are dangerous to our PCs and Macs. They have even become a source of urban legend, with at least one Web site devoted to debunking these myths (www.hoaxbusters.ciac.org).

Luckily, many of us had the opportunity to learn how to fight back at the February 8 IWOC meeting. For starters, Jim says, make sure your Internet Service Provider has online virus and spam scanning capabilities. If you are using Windows XP, download Service Pak 2. (It only works with XP.)



A firewall is vital. Be sure to install one, either hardware (a router) or software. Hardware is better, but software is a good option for a single computer. If you are a WiFi person, you can get a wireless router. Then, since you are using the airwaves, consider a program that's called pcAnywhere.

To avoid the security holes of Internet Explorer, try Firefox. You can get it free at www.mozilla.org. Thunderbird is Mozilla's email program, and a few IWOC members spoke up to say it only took 10 minutes to download the programs and get set up.



The Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, disturbed by Microsoft Internet Explorer's many vulnerabilities, recommends that consumers switch to a different browser.



Jim Thing of JGT Consulting gave timely tips on how to set up and protect your computer.

More gems from Jim:

It's okay to use a preview panel to peek at an email. It won't let the virus out.

If you see an "s" as in "https" in the URL (vs. http), you know you're on a secure Web site. You will also see a key symbol in the status bar. I checked this on my Amazon account, and it works!

If you missed the meeting, you can still benefit from Jim's expertise. His handout was a comprehensive 30-page outline filled with facts, tips and sources for more information. It's available at <http://www.scambusters.org>.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, disturbed by Microsoft Internet Explorer's many vulnerabilities, recommends that consumers switch to a different browser.

Move over, Clint. IWOCer's article earns gold award

IWOC's immediate past president Jim Leman was recently recognized when an article he wrote for *Dealer* magazine earned a gold award in the interviews category from the International Automotive Media Association. *Dealer* is the best read and used monthly business practices magazine for franchised automobile dealers and Leman serves as the contracted managing editor. Leman's article was an interview with J.D. Power and Associates partner Chris Denove and ran in *Dealer's* December 2003 issue.

"As freelancers, IWOC members often work in anonymity, so receiving this national recognition for work I did means a lot . . . even though the article was sans byline. As a freelancer I'm happy for any work that has a paycheck attached to it, byline or not," Leman said.



In the interview, Leman challenged Denove about J.D. Power and Associates' "top box" customer satisfaction survey methodology and other research practices the research company conducts for the automotive retail industry. For many years auto retailers—and to some degree, auto manufacturers—had said the survey techniques were detrimental to the sales process and to customer satisfaction. Shortly after publication of the interview the National Automobile Dealers Association called for reform of the questioned survey techniques of J.D. Power and Associates. And the Ford Motor Company recently dismissed the firm as provider of such surveys for its dealers.

If you'd like to read Leman's article, visit the online version of *Dealer* magazine at www.DEALER-magazine.com.

By Katherine Mikkelson

Beef up your computer (or PDA) with reference software

BY RICHARD L. EASTLINE

What follows is a “lite” compilation of essential reference publications that have been converted to software versions for computers and/or personal digital assistants (PDAs). Many of these programs are available only for the Windows operating system and will vary in features, such as integrating directly with MS Word toolbars, and also in formats—CD-ROM, DVD, or flash memory cards. Although these listings include special notes, there is no attempt here to recommend or rank specific titles.

DICTIONARIES

This category offers, by far, the greatest number of choices: concise, collegiate, unabridged, even multimedia. This list is only the conventional species. Where stated, the number of entries specified is loosely interpreted by issuers as being words or definitions.

✓ *American Heritage Dictionary*, 5th edition / Issued by The Learning Company / CD-ROM / \$14.95. Said to utilize an outdated interface, but integrates directly into MS Word toolbar. 200,000 entries.

✓ *Merriam-Webster Collegiate*, 11th edition / Fogware / CD-ROM / \$19.99. Claims to have 225,000 entries.

✓ *Merriam-Webster Unabridged*, 3rd edition / Fogware / CD-ROM / \$69.95 list (\$45 street price). Vendor’s specs indicate more than 450,000 entries.

✓ *Random House College Edition* / Multimedia 2000. CD-ROM / \$29.90 list (\$18.88 street price). Vendor’s listing shows 87,000 words and 207,000 definitions.

✓ *Random House Webster’s Unabridged* / Multimedia 2000 / CD-ROM / \$19.99 street price. Contents said to total 315,000 entries.

THESAURUSES

Almost all dictionaries have at least a rudimentary thesaurus feature, even if nothing more than a minimal serving of synonyms included with the definitions. Some have separate sections; several versions of the ubiquitous *Roget’s* are also available.

✓ *Franklin Thesaurus + Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* / Britannica.com / CD-ROM / \$24.95 list (\$16.95 online). Thesaurus has 340,000 entries; Dictionary: 225,000.

✓ *Oxford American Thesaurus + Dictionary* / Handmark / CD-ROM for PCs, \$29.99 list (\$24.75 street price / SD flash memory card, \$49.99 / Download for PDAs, \$29.99 / Thesaurus contains 175,000 entries; Dictionary has 100,000.

✓ *Roget’s Thesaurus* / Town Compass / Download only for Palm, Pocket PC, and Windows Mobile operating systems for PDAs / \$7.95. Abridged version (no edition noted) with 30,000 entries.

OTHER REFERENCE PRODUCTS

This section includes a very brief menu of wordy collections. There are many other references that could be included, such as foreign-language, medical, or scientific dictionaries, and atlases. For those who need them (or have a curiosity compulsion), just access your favorite Net search engine.

✓ *Compton’s Complete Reference Collection* / The Learning Company / CD-ROM / \$9.95. The choice of references varies by year of issue. Typical contents would include concise editions of *Compton’s Encyclopedia*, *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, *Compton’s World Atlas*, *World Almanac*, *World History* (people, places, events), *Home Medical Guide*.

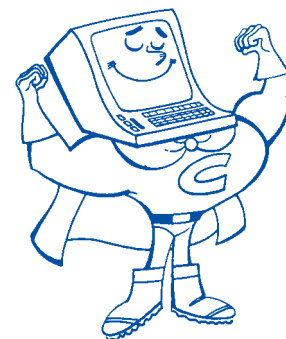
✓ *Encyclopedia Britannica 2004 Almanac* / Atari / CD-ROM / \$9.99.

✓ *Encyclopedia Britannica Deluxe 2005* / Britannica.com as 3 CDs for \$29.95 / Atari on DVD for \$70 list (\$40 street price). It contains 83,000 articles and 13,000 photos plus the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (215,000 entries) and *Thesaurus* (340,000 synonyms).

✓ *The Library of the Future*, 4th edition / World Library, Inc. / CD-ROM / \$12.99. Nothing else quite like this seems to have surfaced. Some 1,000 complete works are part of the 5,000 items on this disk. Content selection was made from out-of-copyright documents and illustrations. Included are 2,044 books—in full or excerpts—by 278 authors (ranging from Aesop to Wordsworth), 39 multimedia clips (mainly audio readings), and 300 illustrations (meteorology, Darwin, plus some large helpings of “Pinocchio” and “Alice in Wonderland,” oddly enough). Even includes the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and speeches by Mark Twain.

AVAILABILITY

For reference resources in CD-ROM or DVD format, it’s best to try online services first—booksellers, particularly. Amazon.com gets points for having not only its own inventory but esoteric titles offered through its “partner” arrangement. For PDA users, the chief Internet vendors are PalmSource, Handmark, and Handango. ☞



FYI

Now You See It, Now You Don't

BY JOEN KINNAN

If you haven't already renewed your IWOC membership, time is running out. With our new automated Web site, your listing will disappear into thin air when the membership drive closes. You won't be able to get into the members-only pages—we have 32 new jobs of all sorts listed on Writers' Line just since February 21! With the Writers' Line gaining momentum almost daily, it promises to be a good source of work during what may be lean times ahead.

LOW-COST YEAR-LONG ADVERTISING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

If you let your membership lapse, your profile won't be online either. Where else can you get the amount of advertising your profile provides for all the world to see for an entire year for the cost of your membership? Just one job will more than pay your dues. (And you can post samples.) Plus, we send the print directory to potential clients who ask for it. This year we only have five directories left from our print run: proof that we're reaching a really targeted audience for the print directory.

SO MANY BENEFITS, SO LITTLE TIME—RENEW NOW!

Add in the other benefits: informative and worthwhile meetings, seminars, the rate survey (a new one's coming up this year), sample contracts, online resources, a bulletin board, possible job referrals from other members, and just plain camaraderie. We're also developing some exciting marketing strategies this year. You don't really want to miss out on all this, do you? Please rejoin now to ensure being in the print directory. We really are down to the wire, and we'd hate to think that a client with a gazillion bucks to spend in just your area of expertise might come up empty because you aren't with us anymore.

Register now for IWOC's April 2nd seminar

In the February *Stet*, we included news about IWOC's seminar "The Freelance Life." Designed for freelance writers at any stage in their career, this new all-day seminar is one you really shouldn't miss.

Your cost for the seminar is:

\$99 for IWOC members

\$109 for members of other writing associations

\$129 for all other nonmembers

For details and registration, call 815-254-4939.

Calendar

March 8 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: "Writing for Trade Publications." Join a panel of experts and find out how to break into this burgeoning market. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

April 2 (Saturday)

IWOC's new full-day seminar: "The Freelance Life," designed for freelance writers at any stage in their careers. Mark the date on your calendar! Watch for *Stet* and your e-mail for more details and registration information. (See bottom left on this page.)

April 12 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: To be announced.

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 3 / April 7 (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 24 (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