



# Stet

## Independent Writers of Chicago

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### OCTOBER 8 RECEPTION PREVIEW

## It's a Reception! And Supper's on Us!

In the recent past, IWOC has partnered with several other groups for meet-and-greet networking in a convivial atmosphere, but the gathering this coming Tuesday, October 8, will be something different. We're hosting a reception for the non-IWOC folks who have participated in the IWOC LinkedIn Discussion Group. We IWOCers have shared our thoughts online with people we've never met on many topics of mutual interest, and we thought it was time to get to know some of these not-yet-IWOC members in the flesh.

We've chosen a wonderful site for this reception: the Agora Party Room at Mariano's Fresh Market in Greektown (40 S. Halsted in Chicago).

Mariano's is a very special place, and you might want to come early – festivities run from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. – to check out the goodies in the store. For a sneak preview, click [HERE](#). It's a flash mob; it's an opera; it's a hoot!

IWOC is footing the bill for some scrumptious food plus wine or soft drinks, so members, come on down and put a little handshake reality into our previously virtual relationship with

the IWOC LinkedIn group. The food and wine are free, but space is limited, so everyone – member or nonmember – must register in advance on the IWOC website.



If you haven't participated in IWOC's LinkedIn Discussion Group in the past, here's your chance to find out what you've been missing. You'll have a really fun evening, eat and drink on IWOC's nickel, and share experiences with like-minded people in and out of IWOC.

Did we mention Mariano's parking garage is free too? Carless? Take the CTA #20 bus or the nearby el. ■

— Sally Chapralis

## IWOC THANKS . . .

All our renewing members. We're very pleased to have you back, and we'll do our best to make you glad you rejoined. We have exciting things planned for this year, starting with this month's reception for visitors to our various IWOC venues. (See story in adjacent column.)

Our IWOC membership drive is remarkably consistent over the years. Last year we had one more member at the end of the year than we did this year, and our renewal rates were virtually the same. In 2012, nearly all, if not all – a senior moment; I can't remember for sure – our most-experienced members re-upped. We didn't do quite as well this year, but still seniors had the highest percentage of renewals. Take that, AARP: we're not ready to shut down our computers yet, and we obviously see the merit in IWOC.

Professional members renewed at a high rate too as did 60 percent of associates, but some of them stepped up to the professional level.

All in all, it was a very successful drive. We hate to lose anyone, but some of our stalwarts took fulltime jobs or moved out of town. We wish them well. Now on to the best year ever in IWOC! ■ — JPK

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# So now whadaya wanna do next?



Over the years, IWOC has never hesitated to venture into new territory. And we're doing it again in October by suspending our regular monthly meeting and hosting a reception at Mariano's in Greektown for members of IWOC's LinkedIn Discussion Group.

The open group now has more than 400 subscribers, about 100 of whom are IWOC members. That means 300+ are writers, editors, and other assorted professionals in various areas of communications whom we have not yet met. Most live in the greater Chicago area, but several are in New York, Los Angeles, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Romania, Iran—all over the world. I'm looking forward to meeting as many as Mariano's Agora party room can hold.

We once replaced the monthly meeting with a kind of progressive dinner-like walking workshop in the South Loop that began in an advertising agency, where we talked with copywriters, then moved to a design studio where copy was combined with graphic elements. We wound up the evening at a print shop watching finished brochures rolling off the presses. So many times we as writers know only the text portion of a job; it was fascinating seeing how all the components of a project come together from con-

cept to finished piece.

Another time we gathered at Google's Chicago office for a detailed explanation of hits-per-page, website monetization, complex online searches, and optimal design techniques. Would you like to do that again? Tell the program committee.

IWOC sponsored a couple writers' job fairs, one at the IBM Building, another at Roosevelt University. Members hosted individual tables where they displayed examples of their work, passed

out brochures and dozens of business cards, and described to invited editors, communications vice presidents, and creative directors the kinds of assignments they had completed. What happened? Jobs. It was a great opportunity to talk one-

on-one with potential clients it would have been impossible to meet otherwise.

One of our meetings featured an onsite speaker teamed live via Skype with another speaker in New York. Both outlined the kinds of opportunities their firms offered for a wide variety of writers. The program showcased our members simultaneously to two major markets.

The managing editor of the *Chicago Manual of Style* visited to explain the

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# President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

changes in the manual's latest edition—and brought along a couple of copies as giveaways. On more than one occasion, speakers from Lawyers for the Creative Arts have guided us through the intricacies of copyright law, works made-for-hire, and letters of agreement.

We learned from the producer and head writer of "The Young and the Restless" how that long-running daytime television drama was constructed via daily conference calls with a team of seven writers in that many cities across the country.

We got the inside dope about the way nationally syndicated newspaper columns are put together day after day by writers Roger Simon and Bob Greene. Studs Terkel gave us a behind-the-scene peek at the way he interviewed subjects for *Working*, *Hard Times*, and *The Good War*. Each of these Pulitzer Prize winners was honored with lifetime membership in IWOC.

At our fifth and tenth anniversary celebrations we were treated to the hilarious, prize winning work of Joel Sedelmaier, famous for the FedEx "Fast-talking Man," "Where's the Beef," and dozens of other commercials that changed television advertising—and sold lots and lots of product.

A Northwestern University professor of marketing and a Columbia College professor of creative writing, respectively, conducted highly focused, intensive, mini-courses in corporate communications and adaptation of fiction techniques to improve business writing. An ABC-TV anchor took us on a virtual tour of his newsroom, showing us how lead and feature stories come together seconds before air time.

We've led day-long, multi-topic high-level workshops; boot camps for rook-

ies; and special-interest sessions for food, healthcare, travel, sports, lifestyle, and technical writers. Lately we've been concentrating more on social media and meeting expanding markets. We've had a couple of wildly successful presentations to which all the participants brought laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices.

So how did all this stuff happen? IWOC has no professional staff. We're all volunteers here. That means that when members have a brainstorm and decide that an idea has merit and ought to be developed, there's no staff to turn it over to. Nobody to do the scutwork. Whatever needs to be done to turn an idea into reality is going to be done by us. I think we've accomplished an enormous array of varied programming and events.



What's the payoff? you ask. Again, jobs. Everyone always welcomes good assignments. There's another far greater benefit to many of these events, however. Every one of them required cooperative effort to pull off. For me, that's the greatest reward. I've learned to work together with people who do things I have no idea how to do. That's made my work better, I believe,

and has enabled me to look beyond an assignment as just a job. I now view each assignment as another career-building block.

Tell us—the board of directors—what you want, and we'll do what we can to make it happen. And we'll probably ask you to help. IWOC, more than so many other professional groups, takes a developmental and nurturing attitude toward career building. Sometimes, because it's generally a somewhat long-term process, new members get discouraged.

They're often the ones who join thinking they'll have a choice of jobs laid before them during their first month of membership. It doesn't work that way.

All the volunteers who worked together to bring off the above events spent a lot of time forging relationships.

That's where you find future referrals. Sometimes it takes a while, but when it clicks—and it will—you tend to end up with on-going assignments.

Come on down to Mariano's and see how many new contacts you can make in an hour or two. Ask questions. Answer questions. Think about it: everyone there will be looking for something. Maybe you're that something. Make an impression. Make a friend. Make a date for coffee. Bring along some business cards; no one can call you if they don't know who you are. Build. Build. Build. ■





## Guy Fawkes Day

In the 1500s, Martin Luther founded the Protestant Church, which had no saints and therefore no Hallows Day or Eve to celebrate. But it only took Protestants in Britain about a hundred years to find a substitute. On November 5, 1606, Guy Fawkes, a member of a radical Catholic group, tried to blow up the English Parliament where Protestant King James I was to be in attendance, in an effort to remove him permanently from the throne. Somebody ratted out this “Gunpowder Plot,” though, and Fawkes was captured. He was scheduled to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, but he escaped the drawn-and-quartered bit by jumping from the scaffold and breaking his neck. It may seem an odd holiday to others, but ever after the Brits have celebrated Guy Fawkes day on November 5 by lighting bonfires in which they burn effigies of Fawkes. Children go from door to door asking for a “penny for Guy.” ■

— *The editor*

## Why People Do What They Do on Halloween

We think of Halloween as an American custom, but it’s actually celebrated around the world, and it has ancient roots dating back to the Celts about 2,000 years ago. The Celtic New Year was November 1, and they celebrated with a holiday the night before called Samhain (pronounced sow-en). A long hard winter was to follow, during which weaker people and animals were to die, so this time of year signified death to the Pagan Celts. They believed that the night before the New Year, the wall between the living and the dead was open, letting both good and bad spirits of the dead mingle with the living and sometimes even take possession of them, wreaking havoc all around.

Legend has it that during Samhain, people left food and drink for the spirits but also roamed the neighborhood in outlandish costumes — sometimes fea-

turing animal skulls and skins — making noise to scare the spirits off. Normally pretty stolid, at Samhain, people also did odd things: women dressed as men and vice versa; folks moved fences and gates, put horses in different pastures, and played other tricks that today we associate with Halloween.

It was also believed that fairies dressed as beggars went door to door at Samhain, asking for food. If they got it, the person was rewarded. Otherwise there was punishment. (Hence the modern practice of “trick or treat.”)

Bonfires are another Halloween tradition dating back to Samhain, when a sacred fire was lit in the village, from which people lit torches to light their home fires.

The jack o’lantern springs from the Irish folk tale of Stingy Jack, a not-so-nice person, who tricked the devil and enraged him, thus preventing Jack’s entry into

either heaven or hell. The devil took pity though, and gave him an ember in a hollowed out turnip (now pumpkin) to guide him on his eternal walk on earth.

When the Romans occupied Celtic lands, they brought two simultaneously occurring festivals of their own. One honored the goddess of trees and fruit, Pomona, whose symbol was the apple. Some believe this was the origin of the custom of bobbing for apples. Tradition has it that the first single person to actually grip the apple with his/her teeth will be the next to marry.

People still celebrated Samhain after the spread of Christianity, but the church didn’t like it, so in hope of supplanting Samhain, Pope Boniface IV proclaimed an All Saints Day to honor dead saints and martyrs, but the designated date was May 13, so people continued cel-

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# Self-Publishing Your Book: How-To's to Use

It's never been a better time to self-publish the book that's been sitting in your bottom drawer for the last 15 years, and three experts in the business provided pointers on how to get it done at the September 10 meeting.

Most writers have little choice but to self-publish given consolidation among the traditional royalty publishers, says incoming IWOC president Jim Kepler, owner of Adams Press, a producer of books for small presses and independent authors in Chicago. Indeed, about 80 percent of all new titles each year are self-published.

To self-publish means you — the writer — also take on the roles and responsibilities of a publisher, including business operations, editing, design, printing/distribution and marketing.

## Business operations

As a self-published writer, you need to own both the copyright (as the author) and the ISBN (as the publisher). The acronym ISBN stands for the International Standard Book Number. It is a 10-digit number that uniquely identifies books and book-like products published internationally. The main purpose of the ISBN is to establish and identify one unique title or unique edition of a title from one specific publisher. "Buy your own ISBN," Kepler stressed. "If you don't own the ISBN, you aren't the publisher." The ISBN identifies the book's language, publisher, title, and edition.

Owning the ISBN gives you the right to negotiate potential new uses for your work, including foreign language editions and movie rights. ISBNs are



bought in packs of 10 for about \$25 each. Don't be swayed by offers from print-on-demand houses to use one of their ISBNs. And, resist the ASBN (Amazon Standard Book Number) from amazon.com. It only applies to Amazon.

## Editing

Avoid the No. 1 complaint among readers of self-published books and get your manuscript edited professionally. Speaker Linda Wolf, owner of Network Publishing Partners, described the three levels of editing she recommends.

First, a developmental editor reads for style, story, and continuity. This editor is simultaneously your cheering section and the one "who is unafraid to slash and argue why," Wolf says. The goal is to get the story in the best possible content/story shape.

Good chemistry is important in choosing a developmental editor, Wolf says, because you want someone to understand your voice, mission, and vision. Don't be afraid to ask a developmental editor to spend an hour to do a sample edit of your work with the intended target audience in mind. Expect to pay 4-5 cents per word for developmental editing.

Second, a copyeditor reviews your manuscript for grammar, presentation, redundancy, and inconsistency. Preferably,

the copyeditor is a different person than the developmental editor. Expect to pay 2-4 cents per word for copyediting.

Third, a proofreader reviews publisher files versus the final manuscript to ensure that file conversion from word-processing to camera-ready has kept text in the

right order and without extra letters or formatting issues. Expect to pay 1-1.5 cents per word for proofreading.

## Design

People still do judge books by their covers, so make sure yours is a good one and hire a graphic designer. Bad design is the No. 2 complaint readers have about self-published books, Kepler says. Make sure the title on the cover is readable in a thumbnail picture on amazon.com. And, make sure the files are set up accurately. For example, Kindle and Nook have different requirements, he says.

Your designer will also be able to make good choices about font, leading, kerning, page margins, widows/orphans, and page-number placement. If you're lucky, you'll be like panelist and IWOC webmaster, Roger Rueff, and have a designer in the family. Rueff's son designed his self-published book, *Discovering the Soul of Your Story*. If you don't have a source for a designer, Wolf and her company can recommend designers for both layout and illustration.

## Printing/Distribution

Select your printer or print-on-demand (POD) relationship based on quality,

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# Did you know...



If nubby sweaters, football games, and crunchy leaves underfoot set your heart racing, you must be an autumn lover. Here are some fall facts to impress your tailgating pals.

The University of Alabama collects the most revenue of any college football team, an unbelievable \$81 million for 2012-13 according to the Department of Education. Ohio State lags behind at a paltry \$58 million followed by Oregon at \$51 million. When 'Bama fans shout "Roll, Tide," maybe they're thinking of the *Green Tide*, not the *Crimson*.

The average American household spends \$24 on Halloween candy accounting for \$2.4 billion in sales, according to the National Confectioners Association. The top selling-item is candy corn, followed by Snickers and Kit Kats. Get me the number of a good dentist.

Leaf peeping is big business in New England. In Massachusetts alone, the average fall foliage enthusiast spends about \$120 a day, according to *Boston Magazine*. In neighboring Vermont, tourists spend about \$375 million in the fall. Quit rubbernecking, people: they're only leaves.

Although Abraham Lincoln is credited with making Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863, FDR moved it to the third Thursday in November to spur retail sales during the Depression. Black Friday retail sales were \$11.2 million in 2012 according to CNN. Woulda been cooler if FDR thought up Cyber Monday.

— Katherine Mikkelson

# Why People Do What They Do on Halloween

Continued from page 4.

celebrating Samheim. So in 835 A.D., Pope Gregory IV moved All Saints Day — also called All Hallows — to November 1. Thus, the night before was All Hallows Eve, which morphed in Halloween.

Over the next several centuries, superstitions mounted about Halloween, especially about witches and black cats, which (the cats, that is) were killed by the thousands in Medieval times. (Ironically, this cruelty is thought to have contributed to the Black Plague because there were not enough cats to kill the rats that spread the plague.) And we all know what happened to witches in those days.

Though Halloween has its roots in both Paganism and Christianity, today it's become a secular — and very commercial — event. Americans spend about \$6.9 billion a year, second only to Christmas holiday spending. (See the adjacent column for what these sweet teeth spend on candy alone.)

Spanish-speaking countries are no slouches, either, when it comes to Halloween-like fall celebrations. People

in Latin America and Spain observe a three-day holiday, starting on October 31, which encompasses All Souls Day, and the Day of the Dead on November 2nd, which is in recognition of departed family members. Latinos in Chicago celebrate these events too.

So, whatever your ethnic origin, there's probably a folkloric Halloween in your past. Now, the question is, what are you



going to do about it this year? Trying to find an outdoor horse — let alone moving him to another pasture — seems a bit beyond the pale, and redefining your property lines by moving your fences, more than a bit illegal, but you'll think of something. Just leave my black cat out of it. Boo! ■

— Joen Kinnan

## NOTE

In last month's *Stet*, I mentioned a free downloadable program called Gimp that supposedly has most of the features of Photoshop but without the cost. This month I thought I'd review it, so I downloaded it.

Luckily, I read the agreement for use and discovered that one has to allow the Gimp site to download advertising and other unspecified materials for the privilege of using the program. You may still want to use it. It gets good reviews, but I thought you should know. — JPK

iWOC WELCOMES  
NEW MEMBERS

SUSAN GIDEL  
NANCY GIER  
BARBARA HOWER  
GENA RIEGER  
HELENE TURNER

AND RETURNING MEMBER  
REGINA DOVE



# Self-Publishing Your Book

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production cost, and profit margin, Rueff recommends. He uses Lulu.com and likes that he can set his own list price based on production costs and desired revenue. Also, Lulu supplies books to amazon.com on an as-needed basis. The maximum price of a Kindle e-book is \$9.99, with one of two royalty structures that range from 50 percent to 70 percent.

## Marketing

Selling your book is not as simple as listing it on amazon.com and waiting for the orders to roll in. Kepler advises knowing your target market well and reaching out to that audience in as many ways as possible.

Rueff has gone to the extreme and developed a website and online community to support his book. He also recommends taking the time to create a Kindle version of the print book, and to “be anal” about the details. “It helps to

know HTML,” he says. He also prefers bookmarks to business cards. Rueff has a Twitter account, with Facebook coming soon, and he sends e-mails with links to the book’s website with ConstantContact. To sell books on the spot, Rueff uses PayPal Here, a credit card reader that plugs into his iPhone. ■

## Resources

### *The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing*

By Marilyn Ross

Where to buy: : [http://www.amazon.com/Complete-Guide-Self-Publishing-Everything-Publish/dp/1582977186/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=book&ie=UTF8&qid=1380036320&sr=1-1&keywords=the+complete+guide+to+self+publishing](http://www.amazon.com/Complete-Guide-Self-Publishing-Everything-Publish/dp/1582977186/ref=sr_1_1?s=book&ie=UTF8&qid=1380036320&sr=1-1&keywords=the+complete+guide+to+self+publishing)

### *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing*

By Mark Levine

Where to buy: [http://www.amazon.com/Fine-Print-Self-Publishing-Fourth-Everything/dp/1935098551/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1380036375&sr=1-1&keywords=the+fine+print+of+self+publishing+by+mark+levine](http://www.amazon.com/Fine-Print-Self-Publishing-Fourth-Everything/dp/1935098551/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1380036375&sr=1-1&keywords=the+fine+print+of+self+publishing+by+mark+levine)

com/Fine-Print-Self-Publishing-Fourth-Everything/dp/1935098551/ref=sr\_1\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1380036375&sr=1-1&keywords=the+fine+print+of+self+publishing+by+mark+levine

## CreateSpace

Self-publishing at amazon.com  
<https://www.createspace.com/>

## Lulu

Self-publishing house  
<http://www.lulu.com/us/en>

## Jm Kepler

\*Info on e-book file formats for Kindle vs. Nook

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## Linda Wolf

Editor and designer resources  
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## Roger Rueff

<http://soulofyourstory.org/>  
Website that supports Roger Rueff’s book *Discovering the Soul of Your Story*

— Susan Gidel

**\*Editor’s note:** You can now download a copy of the various e-book formats from Members/Member Resources on our website.

“The freelance writer is a person who is paid per piece or per word or perhaps.” — Robert Benchley

# In the next issue. . .



- **November 12, IWOC Monthly Meeting.** Save the date. Topic TBA.
- **President’s column:** A new president and a new column. Don’t miss reading what’s on Jim Kepler’s mind. It’s sure to be interesting.
- Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.

