

APRIL MEETING

IWOC: How to Use It to Get a Great ROI

INVESTING IN AN IWOC MEMBERSHIP HAS MANY BENEFITS. LEARN HOW TO BEST USE IT TO IMPROVE YOUR BOTTOM LINE FROM THOSE WHO HAVE DONE JUST THAT: OUR OWN SUCCESSFUL MEMBERS.

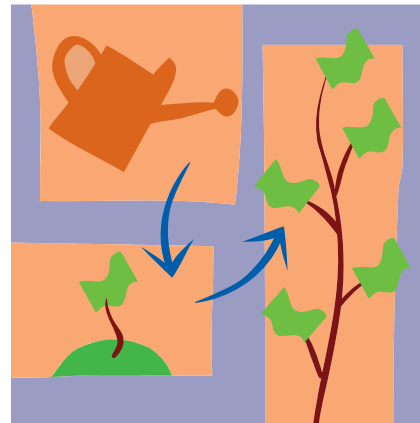
BY DAVID EPSTEIN

Bernanke says the “R” word. Some pessimists have muttered the even more dreaded “D” word! Stocks are swinging not sweet, but low. Bonds are busted. Can banks be trusted?

Brother—and sister—if you can still spare a dime, how can you turn it into a dollar? Our hot investment tip is an IWOC membership.

Next Tuesday, April 8, a roundtable of members will tell just how IWOC has helped them find and keep clients and give specific ideas other IWOC members can use to increase their success. The panel, including Jim Kepler, Jennifer Lyng, Catherine Rategan and Jeff Steele, will draw on their own experiences to show how an investment in IWOC can produce positive financial returns in addition to the intangible benefits of hanging out with other writers and enjoying good company and lively conversation.

The panelists will talk about getting jobs through Writers’ Line, client leads that began by exchanging referrals with other IWOC



members, business that developed from talking with speakers at IWOC meetings, and many other ways that their active participation in IWOC has helped them build their clientele and enhance their professional network.

Audience members will also learn from the panelists’ real-life wisdom about how to get and keep clients, and how to develop new assignments into

long-term client relationships that produce repeat business.

So—unless you already have more clients and assignments than you can handle—come next Tuesday, April 8, and hear how you might achieve that happy state. And if you are already overloaded with work, come anyway, because everyone needs a break sometime.

Networking with snacks and beverages begins at 5 p.m. and the meeting at 6. Nonmembers are cordially invited. The meeting is free for IWOC members and \$15 for nonmembers. Plan to stay for a buy-your-own dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting. Remember: the location is National-Louis University, 122 South Michigan, Room 5008. This is now our permanent room. National-Louis U. is across the street from the Art Institute. See you there! ♡

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN/ROGER RUEFF

The Remote Possibility

A good friend of mine called the other day to let me know that she signed up to volunteer at the next Parliament of the World's Religions, which is scheduled to be held in Melbourne, Australia in December 2009. The Parliament is a gathering of people from around the world, the goal of which, according to its website, is "to deepen our spirituality and experience personal transformation; recognize the humanity of all and broaden our sense of community; foster mutual understanding and respect; learn to live in harmony in the midst of diversity; seek, peace, justice, and sustainability; and actively work for a better world."

Now that's a tall order.

My friend called to tell me the news of her volunteerism because I'm the one who alerted her to the Parliament's existence. Although neither of us is religious, we share a common interest in things that have to do with spirituality (broadly defined) and the health of the world community at large. I knew about the Parliament because I had attended the one held at the Palmer House in Chicago in 1993—the first time it had been held in 100 years. And it was amazing.

Imagine 8,000 people from all over the world gathered in one place to find common ground between disparate systems of thought—to celebrate their beliefs and traditions and, at the same time, to expose themselves to the beliefs and traditions of others. Imagine leaders

of the major world religions convening to create and adopt a document called, "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic," the introductory words of which are, "The world is in agony... so pervasive and urgent that we are compelled to name its manifestations so that the depth of this pain may be made clear"—and the final appeal of which includes the caveat, "Without a willingness to take risks and a readiness to sacrifice, there can be no fundamental change in our situation."

Imagine two huge ballrooms packed to the symbolic rafters with attendees adorned in colorful native garb listening to plenary sessions on subjects such as: "What Shall We Do?" (about the threat of overpopulation), "Visions of Paradise and Possibility," and "The Inner Life." Imagine a spiritual buffet table of seminars and lectures with titles like: "The Operation of Zarathustra's Moral Imperative in the World Today," "Ethereic Purification of the Psychosphere," "Spiritometry—the Scientific Step Towards God," and "The Spirituality of Menopause."

Imagine a performance series dedicated to the non-verbal expression of religious beliefs, including: "The Declaration of Innocence," "The Accidental Mystic," and "Isis of 10,000 Names." And an exhibition hall filled not with the latest high-tech paraphernalia but with reading material and courteous advocates from a cornucopia of



major "isms"—Humanism, Judaism, Islam, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism—as well as a lot of smaller and/or lesser-known groups, such as: Baha'i International Community, Anthroposophical Society, Theosophical Society, City of God, Earthspirit Community, ECKANKAR, Federation of Zoroastrians, Federation of Readers of the Urantia Book, Institute of Jainology, Sikh Religious Society, Sri Aurobindo Association, Swedenborgian Church, Temple of Understanding,... and Boy Scouts of America.

Now imagine all this coming together in an age without email—an era in which most people still communicated on paper or over the phone. Astounding.

It should come as no surprise that my strongest memory from the 1993 Parliament comes not from any one performance or session—or even the experiential sum—but from something unplanned that reminded me that we are, in some ways, merely vessels for our ideas... their standard bearers and defenders.

What happened was this...

The second day of the Parliament opened with a plenary session titled "Voices of the Dispossessed" the purpose of which was to attempt to give voice to the world's refugees, which at that time numbered almost 20 million according to U.N. estimates. After a moving slide show illustrating the plight of those who are separated from their homeland, speakers representing different

Continued on page 6.

Working Networking on the 'Net

BY MARTHA TURNER

Chris Benevich gave IWOCers a whirlwind tour of the dizzying world of professional networking internet-style at the March meeting.

Professional networking on the net is like professional networking anywhere. You listen to people, talk about what you do, help others with contacts or information or advice when the opportunity arises, and let your expertise be known in mostly low-key ways. Thus you create a situation in which you can ask for an introduction or a favor, and in which others will readily refer work to you.

The old internet—a place where information was posted for viewing—has been replaced by a more interactive iteration, complete with the technology to support casual exchanges (“web 2.0”). As a result, professional networking has entered the cyber world in a pervasive way. A lot of Benevich’s presentation was devoted to how and where basic networking practices transfer to this new realm.

First, there is the information that you put up about yourself: websites, blogs, profiles. The unrelentingly public nature of postings on the web has changed some basic assumptions. Remember when resumes tailored to specific jobs stayed private—as if it were harmful for a potential employer to see that you had competencies or experience other than the package desired? Think again. Especially for a freelancer,

different websites tuned to the needs of different markets is now evidence that you have what it takes to present a client appropriately to multiple markets, too! Successful business blogging needs a well-thought-out plan—certainly not private or unorganized material—but it can be a way to show a competent yet human face to complete strangers, perhaps hundreds of miles away, and win them as clients. Search engine optimization—making sure your site comes up early in a search (rather than number 5,311) leverages such postings.

Websites are relatively static, however; blogs are more interesting if they are updated frequently, and most can accept comments from readers, which sometimes develop into interactions. But Benevich showed us some far more interactive web venues.

Some of these might be called conversations. Bulletin boards, listservs, Yahoo groups, and the like are means by which people can post a question, a problem, a discovery, or an event—and get responses. IWOCers might wish to review several of these virtual communities, then maintain a long-term presence on a few

that match their professional interests closely: ones where they could get a quick question answered (how would you handle this contract change? what would you do with this editing problem?), and where they could give useful advice to others.

Beyond these, there are hybrid sites—my term for sites that offer multiple blogs, job postings, bulletin boards, freelancers’ profiles, calendars of events, and more, all on one site: for example, www.gapersblock.com is a Chicago-oriented general-interest version of this; www.mediabistro.com is a journalism-oriented national version. Then there’s www.linkedin.com, which works according to a degrees-of-relationship basis, that might be good for getting someone you know to introduce you to a potential client you don’t know—if people in your field are typically linked in, that is.

Benevich’s own approach

is an integrated one, using a little of several of these technologies: two websites (www.chrisbenevich.com and www.writingforweb20.com), a blog (which includes case-studies from her work), a twice-a-year e-newsletter, and assorted profiles. She also regularly scans sites where she can be helpful, replying or posting information as the opportunity presents itself.

Good deeds done on the web are anything but private. But reflect that any answer you give to someone’s question may well be read by a dozen others searching for just that information. The hyper-linked web world is a little different. But the networking premise is familiar: when people who are potential referrers or potential clients see you repeatedly as someone who is both competent and generous, business is likely to come your way because of it. At the bottom of it is Benevich’s professional philosophy: the more you give, the more you will receive. She says she tries to give twice as much as she gets. 🐿



It's Happening on the Web!

Check Out Writers' Line

Browse Resources

See What's Doing in IWOC Events

WWW.IWOC.ORG

April Question of the Month

In What Way(s) Has IWOC Helped You the Most?

BY KAREN SCHWARTZ

Ellen Krupp: I consider IWOC my “lifeline” (remember “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?”) I know there are always people I can call when I don’t know the answer. I’ve asked other IWOCers for advice when faced with a rather strange Request for Proposal, when I was in over my head on a project, when I accepted a project but didn’t have a clue how to do it and when trying to figure out how to structure a long-term agreement with a client. I know I can count on my fellow IWOCers for answers, help, and support.

IWOC has also been important in getting business, and I know that’s what many people hope for and/or expect when they become members. When you join IWOC, nearly everyone tells you, “You’ll get more out of IWOC the more involved you become.” It’s true! Being involved in IWOC gives you a chance to know other writers and have them know you and your capabilities. I can honestly say the time I spent on the Board has paid my dues many times over. Even just being listed on the IWOC website has produced a few (not many, but some) calls and a little business. I’ve also had a chance to refer a project to another IWOCer when I was too busy to take it on. I’d much rather give the busi-

ness to someone I know than have the client go out and find another writer— a (gasp!) stranger who wouldn’t be in a position to return the favor of a referral.

Susan Baird: Mostly, I find the directory to be very, very helpful. Also, it has continued to improve, which helps all of us. I don’t look at the “want ads” as often as I should, but when I do, I find them informative and helpful as well. It is to the benefit of writers and those seeking writers that Chicagoland has this splendid organization.

Jennifer Lyng: My membership in IWOC has helped me in two major ways. First is that my three largest clients have found me through the IWOC website. One is a company in Finland for whom I cover stories about their local affiliates. My income from this one client after just a handful of assignments has covered my IWOC dues for the next few decades.

The second major benefit has been the mentoring relationships and friendships that I’ve formed. This is a talented group of individuals who write on diverse topics in many formats. Everyone seems happy to help with advice, an encouraging word, and even referrals. ♡

If you have a question you’d like answered in Question of the Month, please send your suggestions either to Karen Schwartz at writers@sbcglobal.net or Joen Kinnan at jkinnan@comcast.net. We welcome all suggestions whether work-related or not.

Notes from the Board

Your IWOC board is really working hard for you this year. We’re constantly searching for new benefits we can offer and new ways to market our services. Check out the items below that we’ve recently added.



You can win! Starting this month, anyone who comes to an IWOC meeting is eligible to win a gift card or other prize—value \$20-25—that will be useful to your business. You must be present to win.



IWOC has purchased a year’s subscription to an internet service called Constant Contact, through which we can conduct surveys, such as the Rate Survey, online—much easier and faster—and also market IWOC to potential clients. Other uses might include distributing an online-style newsletter both to our members and to former members and meeting guests to ramp up membership. We can send out thousands of pieces at once, so the sky’s the limit on making contacts. Unfortunately, individual members won’t be able to use this subscription—a limited number of people can have access—but the rates are fairly modest, so you might want to check it out for your personal use in building your business. They have all sorts of tools to build mailing lists, conduct surveys and polls, and much more. The address is constantcontact.com.

— Joen Kinnan

IWOC Welcomes New Members

Cynthia Mikal

Ric Hess

And Returning Member

Eve Bradshaw

How Far Back? Uncovering the Beginnings of Words

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

BY RICHARD EASTLINE

The First Word / Christine Kenneally / 357 pp. (incl. bibliography, notes, and index) plus a prelude and an introduction / Viking, a division of Penguin, 2007 / \$19.00 (hard cover) / ISBN 978-0-670-03490-1

Speech preceded writing, according to researchers. But what was the first word? Might it have been a sound that meant “go” or “me” or “you” or, perhaps, “ouch” (the earliest expletive)? Later came the cave hieroglyphs, the painted or incised runic symbols of Scandinavia, and the subsequent bark and papyrus writings. Somewhere, somehow the origins of communication developed and, by expansion, defined the means for civilizations to exist. It is language, after all, that measures our growth as cognitive primates. All the more reason, then, to be tantalized by the newest theories as to the beginnings of our capability for expressing actions, feelings, and inquiry.

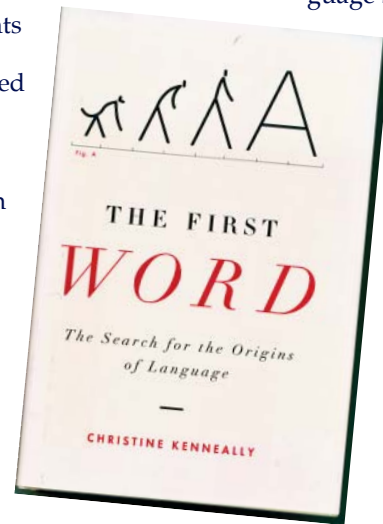
This much-praised book by Christine Kenneally presents a narrative-based account of the recent explorations into this polarized topic of the evolution of communication skills. It is not at all a treatise or a compilation of research papers, but rather a plain-English summation of what has been recently proposed as the vindication of evolutionary growth as opposed to a more strongly supported view that language creation is a genetic phenomenon uniquely human. Such a discourse may suggest an ivy halls debate topic, but Kenneally rescues the sub-

ject from potential reader fatigue by her intertwining of relevant findings with essential fundamentals, such as those that touch on the connections when expressing something, whether physical or symbolic.

On the other hand, don't assume that this excursion through word development is treated in the style of a Sunday magazine science feature. There are references galore throughout this investigative study, and the reader will need to pay attention as the credits roll by. Stick with it, though, as this probing author shakes, rattles, and otherwise makes ancient theories and modern analyses stand up for inspection.

By all means, don't take a pass on the prelude and introduction to the book, in which Kenneally entices you to continue, using some impressive reasoning as well as setting forth the outline that identifies the characters as well as incidents. One of the most startling is the sea change in approval, the acceptance of pursuing the origins of language. She writes that as recently as a few decades ago, the subject was ignored—ostracized—from study by linguists because the prevailing philosophy was that there was no definitive way to prove how it came about. There were no fossils, no frozen sounds to be unearthed.

Now, it seems, this view is changing, with both pro and con arguments being introduced as the result of computer-driven analyses of skeletal mouth and brain forma-



tions, for example, along with “biological” studies of language via artificial intelligence. Taken together, the vast level of investigation continues to yield more and more fundamental data.

The author has organized her findings into four distinct sections; these constitute both an overview and an inquisitive evaluation. Part One is devoted to the history of language study, ranging from ancient Egypt through Darwin to contemporary scholars and scientists. Among them is Noam Chomsky, who has espoused the humans-only genetic theory, as contrasted with Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, the researcher who taught an ape to produce and understand aspects of language. In

Part Two, Kenneally examines what she calls the “language suite,” abilities you

possess if you have human language—the sounds, the gestures, the interaction.

Then, evolution comes forth in Part Three, giving attention to that virus-like characteristic of language to adapt itself so that it may survive and develop. An expected, “What's Next”

fills out Part Four,

followed by an epilogue that ponders what would happen if a shipwreck were to deposit a collection of pre-linguistic babies on a near-pristine Galapagos island.

While “The First Word” focuses on speech rather than writing as the keystone for the primary discussion, keep in mind that words are what's involved. As writers, our prose is both read and spoken. (“I write for my ears” was a familiar aphorism in the heyday of radio.) In that regard, we ought to find stimulation along with curiosity if we let ourselves follow along with Kenneally. She is an extraordinary guide and the path of exploration makes for an informed journey. ♣

nationalities and/or religions were given the opportunity to tell their own tales of dispossession. One of them was a short, well-spoken physicist in his late 40s from Kashmir, a country divided by what is said to be the world's most militarized zone—a line of demarcation between governance by India or Pakistan. The formation of this pseudo-national border in 1947 tore whole families apart—not by ideology or loyalty to either government but by edict—and his was among them. He told of the night his family was awakened, rousted from their house, and split apart. He spoke of how for over 40 years, it had been illegal for him to be found in possession of a letter either to or from his sister, who had been taken to the other side of the border. He spoke of his arrest and imprisonment in a small room with 50 other men and how his jailors peppered his rice with pebbles so that he could not eat it by the handful but had to consume it grain-by-grain. And as he spoke, a sense of passionate agitation swelled in his voice.

When he was almost finished and his passion near its crescendo, a Hindu dignitary seated directly in front of the dais shot up from his chair and raised his finger at the speaker, shouting epithets in Hindi. The speaker had been careful not to mention the Indian government by name, but it the dignitary knew where the accusations were directed—and so did everyone else. The act served as a trigger, and in moments, the Grand Ballroom was filled with men in traditional Indian garb standing and raising their fingers at the speaker, shouting him down in a language I didn't understand.

The Parliament staff moved quickly to restore order but seemed greatly confused. It was an outcome they hadn't expected. After a few minutes, the moderator took to the podium and chided the audience that the outburst was especially inappropriate given the goal of the Parliament... he received hearty but not overwhelming applause. Then the next speaker came to the podium. He was a Sikh.

This man was tall and soft-spoken, erudite and calm. His voice barely varied in tone as he described what amounted to a campaign begun in the early 1980s to eradicate Sikhs—a campaign that the U.N. estimated had cost over 100,000 Sikh lives and destroyed numerous Sikh temples since 1983. Again, he was careful to avoid direct mention of the Indian government... again, it didn't matter.

Once again, the Hindu dignitary jumped to his feet and raised his finger, shouting in Hindi. Once again, the Hindu chorus in the ballroom followed suit. This time, though, the moderator figured he would nip things in the bud. He approached the speaker, put his hand on his shoulder, and asked him to stop. Politely and without even the suggestion of annoyance, the speaker complied... whereupon every Sikh in the room rose to his feet, shouting, "Let him speak! Let him speak! This is why the world does not know about this crime!"

I remember watching the hotel security detail. They seemed flummoxed, caught unawares, as if they were thinking, "This gathering is supposed to be about religion... how can this happen?" To which I was silently replying, "Boys, this is a gathering about religion... how can this NOT happen." They moved in anyway and escorted participants of both persuasions from the room.

Now, the room was abuzz with a weird and powerful energy. The moderator seemed addled, uncertain of whether or not to go on. He made his way from speaker to speaker in an appar-

Calendar

April 8

IWOC Monthly Meeting. An IWOC panel will discuss why an IWOC membership is a real investment in improving your bottom line. You'll learn how others have made it pay off. Tuesday, April 8th at National-Louis University, Room 5008, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Program 6 p.m. Networking 5 p.m. Nonmembers, \$15; IWOC members free. For more information, call 847-855-6670 or visit www.iwoc.org.

The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted, but call ahead in case of cancellation. The groups welcome nonmembers. If there's no group in your area, why not start one? Contact webmaster@iwoc.org.

April 24 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP Monthly Lunch. Near-west suburbanites meet at noon on the 4th Thursday of the month for lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park. For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065. This group doesn't always meet in bad weather in winter, so be sure to check to see if there is to be a lunch meeting this month before you show up.

May 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 info, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

ent attempt to form consensus or simply get counsel. The dignitaries in front of the dais argued among themselves.

Then two people down front—from all appearances nothing more than ordinary attendees like me—rose to their feet and held hands, raising their voices in a harmonious chorus of "We Shall Overcome." In moments, the song swept like wildfire through the ballroom, lifting everyone to their feet and filling them with in an enlivening electricity... the current of good intentions doing good. The song rang out loud and strong through the ballroom for several minutes, then dissolved in a raucous eruption of cheers and applause.

We all sat down, happy and flushed with the sense of real fellowship. The next speaker came to the podium... and the session went on. The conflict had swelled our resolve. We'd committed ourselves to overcoming and, by god, we would.

I've told that story before, and whenever I do, I usually preface it by saying it demonstrates why Peace on Earth will never come to pass... and also why it's remotely possible.

I wonder how many frequent-flyer miles it takes to get to Australia. ♣