



Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

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SEPTEMBER MEETING PREVIEW

All About Us Is Wonder

A letter to IWOC from Josh Fisher:

Dear fellow writers,

The wonders of the world aren't just landmarks on a map but tangible moments.

Wonder is a powerful force in creativity. It shapes and informs our perspective in a magical way: time slows down, the sky becomes refulgent, and for a moment we lose our breath in sheer awe. As a poet, inventor, and entrepreneur, I seek out wonder in my daily life, and I plan on sharing with you on September 9 what I've learned in my endeavors.

My name is Joshua A. Fisher. I am the CEO of a company called Appoet, a graduate assistant at DePaul University, and an inveterate traveler. My research, and, by extension, my business, is focused on combining the humanities with mobile technology to create engaging moments of beauty. The first application I built was called What We Mean. It was constructed using love letters my grandfather wrote to my grandmother during World War II.

Acting as romantic war censor, I blacked out sections of each letter to create love poems. Readers could use the mobile app to switch between my grandfather's original letter, a blackout poem, and a traditional lineated poem; readers could also create their own blackouts. What We Mean ended up getting chosen by *The Guardian* as a "Top 10 Download" in January 2013 and went on to win other awards and accolades. I was pleasantly shocked and began producing more apps that challenged traditional views of poetry.

Our latest application, Infused, allows writers to place digital copies of their stories anywhere in the world. As people walk by your story, they'll receive a push notification and begin to read what you have written. Infused allows writers to post their digital stories in the physical places in which the stories take place, thereby making nar-



ratives immediate, relatable, and contextual — a combination that encourages wonder.

Wonder is defined as a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration that is caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable. As writers we're propagators of wonder through our words. Margaret Samedi, a lawyer from Carbondale, Illinois, said this about reading Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*, "In the time of Power Rangers, R.L. Stine, and Be-

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That Was the Week That Was



Some of you may recall Daniel Seddiqui from when he was in town a couple of years ago flogging his book, *50 Jobs In 50 States: One Man's Journey of Discovery Across America*. The book has done well, but Daniel's done even better.

Daniel graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in economics at just about the same time the bottom fell out of the economy. His father, reassuringly, told him he'd never find a job. But he found far more than just a job: He found 50 . . . in 50 states . . . in 50 weeks . . . a different job every week for a fantastic, once-in-a-lifetime, yearlong experience.

Now the enterprising Daniel has turned his odyssey into a learning experience for students at the State University of New York. He called a while back to tell me about his new job and to invite us (Adams Press) to take part in an internship program he has designed based upon the adventures he chronicled in his book. SUNY's 5X5X5X Program is a full-credit, tuition-based internship that places students in a different job in a different city for five consecutive weeks. We were pleased to be asked and quickly agreed to participate. Daniel then introduced us to Chelsea, a third-year student at SUNY-Potsdam.

Chelsea is a communications major who had expressed interest in publishing. We told her not to expect to find Adams Press in a mirrored tow-

er in the heart of Chicago's Loop. Ours is a mom-and-pop, home-based business, and it's been that way since 1942. There are just three of us: my wife Ann, our son Tom, and me. She and Daniel were okay with that. We decided to make her time with us a tutorial. This is how our week went:

Monday: We gave Chelsea an over-

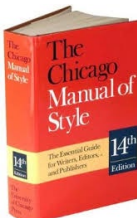
view of historical and current-day book publishing and talked about some of the challenges facing the industry: print vs. electronic, mar-

keting, distribution, the elephant in the room called Amazon, authors and agents, self-publishing — you know, all the stuff you read about writing and publishing books. In the late afternoon we asked her to write promo blurbs about some of our titles; she turned out some surprisingly insightful copy.

Tuesday: Ann spent the day explaining different style manuals (Chicago — CMS, Modern Language Association — MLA, American Medical Association — AMA, Associated Press — AP, Oxford, and a few others for good measure),

and then she showed Chelsea how to construct a style sheet for various kinds of editing projects (general trade, scholarly, educational,

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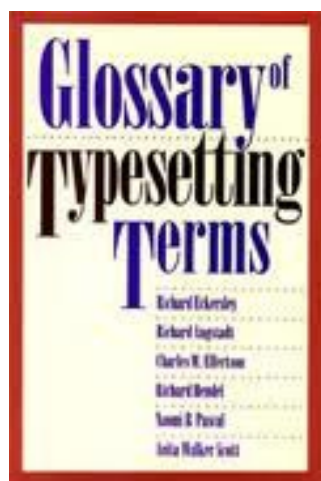


President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

technical, and reference books; articles; corporate materials). They moved on to techniques for editing nonfiction, fiction, poetry, religious, reference, and children's books and discussed substantive (developmental) editing, copyediting, and proof reading. Ann gave Chelsea a short piece of about 30–35 pages to edit as a “book.”

Wednesday: Tom ran through an

abbreviated description of typography, composition, and art usage (graphs, tables, charts, maps, and other art). Then he worked



with Chelsea as she designed pages, including front and back matter (typeface selection, heads and subheads, art placement), typeset the short “book” she had edited the day before, and created an attractive cover. Then he demonstrated electronic conversions and had her reformat her book into an e-book suitable for several mobi and e-pub platforms.

Thursday: This was field trip day, and we visited a friend's downtown studio where Chelsea saw still more of what goes into creating professional, eye-catching book covers. We then talked to a couple of edi-



tors and the e-book guy at a small publisher of sports books. For lunch we introduced Chelsea to Greek food at Pegasus, where we talked with our printer's rep about book materials, offset and digital printing, and paperback and hard cover bindings. He then took her along on a couple of sales calls to specialty indy publishers, one of African-American books and the other a Spanish-language press.

Friday: We started out with a visit to Barnes & Noble where we talked



about what goes into bookstore design and layout; why departments are placed where they are; why some books are face out on shelves, others spine out, and why some are

stacked on tables (coop advertising dollars, or absence thereof, at work in each instance). We looked at copyright pages and discussed each element on the page, what it means, and why it's there. After that we went to Women and Children First in Andersonville to see how small, independent bookstores differ from the big-box guys and how they're coping with changes in the industry. Then on to lunch at Reza's (Persian this time), during which we talked about Chelsea's putting together a portfolio, establishing a LinkedIn presence, and moving on toward finding a job after graduation next June.

We sent Chelsea on to her next week's job assignment with handouts, a crammed notebook, and a head exploding with information. We gave her a new *Chicago Manual* and warned her that dire things would happen (*We will know!*) if she violates its rules. She understands that it's all right to adopt a particular, nontraditional style as long as it's appropriate, but god help her if she's inconsistent (*We will know!*).

It was a great week, and we had a good time. As for Chelsea, she'll do wonderfully well whatever she decides upon. She's bright, more eager than I ever was, curious, and asks good questions.

And so I say, if the occasion ever presents itself to host an intern, grab it. You'll be amazed by how much you'll learn about what you know. ■

MS Word Shortcuts

The topic of page 4 this month is speed, so here are some tips for moving around more quickly in Microsoft Word. (I don't know whether they're applicable to the Mac or not.) Say you want to move to the end of a line (not a sentence) to add something to it. Just press End and you're there. Want to go back to the beginning of the line? Press Home. Use Ctrl+Home or Ctrl+End, respectively, to go to the beginning or end of the entire document. (Ctrl+Up or Down Arrow also works.)

Press Ctrl+Left or Right Arrow to go the word to the left or right respectively. To justify left, highlight text and press Ctrl+L; to center, Ctrl+E; justify right, Ctrl+R; and for full justification, Ctrl+J. ■

— The editor

FASTER, FASTER, YOU INFERNAL MACHINE

So you've had your computer for a while, and lately it seems to be getting tired, sort of as if you'd poured molasses into its once zippy hard drive. Assuming you didn't actually do that, here's a quick and easy picker-upper that won't cost you a dime. It's called Glary Utilities, and it's a *PC Magazine* Editor's Choice.

The software — alas, for PCs only — is an all-purpose system cleaner and performance booster. The top-notch tools provide 1-click maintenance or you can pick and choose the functions you want the clever little devil to perform. You'll like the interface: it's streamlined and easy to understand.

On first use of 1-click maintenance, you can choose from options that include Registry Cleaner, Shortcuts Fixer, Spyware Remover, and Start-

up Manager. Next time you use it, just click, and presto! It does everything you told it to, but of course, you can change the options any time you like.

A nice feature is the Windows Boot-Time Monitor that appears in the middle of the screen. Want to speed it up? You can access the list of programs on the Startup menu and schedule some for delayed start to help improve performance.

Want even more powerful features? For a reasonable \$39.95 a year (for up to three computers), the Pro version has tools like Automatic Maintenance and Deep Clean and Fix.

We didn't want to neglect Mac users in this review, but we were rather surprised to find that Apple — rather arrogantly in our opinion — avows that the Mac never needs

a tonic to boost its performance. Developers offer some maintenance apps anyway. Try OnyX — it's free — to verify the startup disk and the structure of system files. OnyX also runs other system maintenance tasks, and it configures some hidden parameters of Finder, Dock, Quick Time, Safari, Mail, iTunes, the login window, and Spotlight. It also deletes unnecessary caches, removes overly cumbersome files and folders, and performs other tasks that are equally incomprehensible to this PC user.

Maintenance is just what it sounds like: a systems maintenance and cleaning system utility. You can repair permissions, reset Spotlight's index, rebuild the Launch Services database, delete various caches, and check the status of the hard drive. ■

— Joen Kinnan

IWOCFesters Partied Hearty at Annual Summer Bash

It didn't rain on our parade, but there was a definite nip in the air, so party planners opted for the comforts of the indoors, where we were cosily ensconced in our own little niche. Great service, plenty of delish food, lots of laughs, and conversation that just wouldn't quit. Intrepid photogs Dave Steinkraus and Laurel Johnson captured the moments in the pics below. (If you don't know who everybody is, you should come to more meetings.) ■



Did you know...



Whether you are a corporate communications guru or an aspiring novelist, your writing can only improve if you keep the creative juices flowing. Sometimes a change of scenery is in order. After all, anyone would get bored looking at the same four walls day after day. Here are four free spots in Chicago where you can write, read, or meditate.

Harold Washington Library — Yes, we know a library is kind of obvious but when's the last time you visited this gem? This postmodern behemoth in the South Loop is open until 9 pm Monday through Thursday and offers free wi-fi. With over 700,000 square feet and nine floors of public space, there's plenty of room to spread out.

Editor's note: While you're there, you might even try something really old-school. You could look something up in a print book — you know, one of those things with a cover and paper pages. This library has quite a few of those things.

Lurie Garden — This award-winning public garden on the

southern end of Millennium Park changes dramatically throughout the year depending on the season. While it's still warm, stake out a park bench and let nature focus your thoughts.

Lincoln Park Zoo — It's not just for the kids. If sea lions make you smile or you find the apes fascinating, take a trip to the zoo which is open 365 days a year. For contemplative walking, check out the half mile nature boardwalk.

Chicago Cultural Center — with the largest stained glass Tiffany dome in the world, the center was home to the city's first public library but now hosts over 700 programs a year including art exhibits and concerts. Students and tourists alike use the center as an oasis in the middle of the loop for its free wi-fi, clean restrooms, and plugs to recharge electronic devices. If music inspires you, visit during lunchtime on Mondays and Wednesdays for chamber and classical concerts. ■

— Katherine Mikkelsen

Testimonial

"Marketing skills are essential for all writers today, and especially independent writers. Thank you, IWOC, for the informative and very useful lectures on how to use the Internet and social media to market my books! In a very short time, IWOC has become an integral component of my marketing strategy, as I've discovered that their lectures keep me up to date on the latest marketing tools and in touch with the people who are making things happen." ■

Kathryn Occhipinti

**IWOC Welcomes
New Member
Brendan Tripp**





**REJOIN/JOIN IWOC NOW
DISCOUNT
UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15**

One-Time Offer! Not Available in Any Store!

Stop what you're doing and listen to this fabulous exclusive offer for IWOC members! You all know that IWOC's yearly membership renewal drive runs from September 1 to October 1. But wait! **Renew by September 15 and lock in early-bird savings!** Pay just \$125 (regular \$140) for professional members, \$80 (regular \$90) for seniors aged 62 and older, and \$60 (regular \$70) for associates!

What a deal! Read on to find out how to take advantage of these one-time savings! This opportunity won't be offered again this year! And it's only available to you savvy early birds, so don't delay!

Renewal is so simple, you'll be itching to get to your computer! Just follow these easy steps: **starting on September 1**, log into the website, view your profile, and click "Renew until 1 Oct 2015." Check out your profile and edit *anything* you want! And, listen to this! You get **six free** areas of expertise/specialties, but you can boost this to **nine if you're on a committee or the board**. What a fantastic opportunity!

But wait! There's even more: Bring in a new member any time during the entire membership drive (September 1 to October 1) and get **three more** free listings! (New members pay either the early-bird rate or the regular rate, depending on whether they join before or after September 15.)

But wait! There's still more! You can choose as many categories as you want for an additional charge! **Wow! Just count your extras and click on the appropriate extra-listings package at the bottom of the form. This step is absolutely necessary to ensure you pay the correct amount. Even if you change nothing, and you choose the same extras as you had last year, you still have to click on the correct package.**

You don't want to miss this exclusive deal! No shipping and han-

dling fee! An entire year's worth of worldwide advertising! Writers' Line! Stet! Informative meetings! Parties! Networking! And more! Early-bird savings are available only until **September 15**, so don't delay for the best deal!

DISCLAIMER: *The IWOC website is not smart like you, and it doesn't know whether you've taken more than your free category allotment unless you tell it by clicking on the correct extra-listings package, so IWOC assumes no responsibility if, in the event you underpay, the Membership Coordinator sends a goon to slap you upside the head for making it necessary to dun you for additional payment. ■*

The Membership Coordinator

ADDENDUM TO THE ABOVE:

Never let it be said that IWOC doesn't practically dress you and feed you. If you want a foolproof method of calculating exactly how much you owe including "extras," use this link to bring up a handy calculator designed by our peerless webmaster: **<http://iwoc.org:80/resources/Documents/IWOC-Extra-Listing-Package-Calculator.xls>**. This will open an Excel file. Plug in your numbers, and the calculator will do the rest. ■

All About Us Is Wonder

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

renstain Bears, this was just different. His words and descriptions were so foreign to me. Astounding. I lost many hours that passed in a blink." It's not just the antiquated language Doyle uses, but the world he created that drove Margaret into a state of wonder.

During the September program, we'll explore more stories of wonder as told by a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, a psych dramatist, a schoolteacher, an automotive plant worker, as well as IWOC's own Jim Kepler. Through these stories we'll define where wonder's place is in the creative process and

how we as writers can use it to help us with our craft.

Leonardo da Vinci found wonder in the world around him and used nature as the source of inspiration for many of his inventions. In today's bustling world it's hard to see a blade of grass as anything other than what it is. However, after the program, it is my hope that you'll walk away seeking wonder in your daily life. Perhaps those same blades of grass will become catapults, ladders, or metronomes for your creativity.

I'll see you at IWOC. — Josh



Share the wonder of it all at the IWOC meeting on Tuesday, July 8, in Room 4G at the Gratz Center, just off Michigan Avenue, between Chestnut and Superior. We meet at 5:00 for snacks and networking; the program runs from 6:00 till 7:15. Stick around for lots more conversation and a buy-your-own dinner at Frankie's Scaloppini at 900 N. Michigan (Bloomingtondale's). Park there (enter from Walton or Rush) after 5:00 and have your ticket validated (only six bucks!) at the Gratz Center reception desk or arrange a steeply discounted advance parking permit through Spothero.com. Several buses run on Michigan Avenue. ■

"You don't write because you want to say something. You write because you have something to say."

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

In the next issue. . .



- **October 14, IWOC-Chicago Creative Coalition Mixer:** IWOCers will meet and mingle with 3Cers at Marcello's. Time TBA. Save the date.
- **President's column:** In October, we'll have a new president, so you'll want to check out his column to see what's on his mind.
- Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.

