

Stet

APRIL 2004
VOLUME 23 NUMBER 4

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

1/April Program

2/President's Message

3/Recap March Program

4/FYI

Calendar

APRIL PROGRAM

Advertising, design, and marketing agencies— Who are they and what do they want from us?

BY GEORGE BECHT

Learn what an advertising agency, a design house, and a strategic communications firm want from independent writers at the April IWOC meeting, when three panelists will discuss their fields—and answer *your* questions to boot.



WHO ARE THEY?

Michael Hush, from the ad agency Draft Worldwide, the #1 direct marketing agency in the United States and #2 worldwide. He's been in the business for 15 years and has had major experience at Leo Burnett, BBDO, and others before his current connection.

Wendy Pressley, of Pressley Jacobs Design, a nationally recognized firm in the field of design communication and strategic brand consulting with a client list that includes Northern Trust, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Tellabs, and the University of Chicago.

Kelley Smith, Director of Human Resources at Closerlook Communications, a strategic communications firm dedicated to helping clients create programs to connect with their best customers and develop long-term relationships between those customers and the client brands.

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Each panelist will discuss topics including:

- When and how they use independent writers
- Do's and don'ts for those who would work with them
- What areas of specialization they expect
- How ad agencies, design firms, and strategic communications firms relate to each other
- Whether these relationships to each other and to clients have changed and, if so, how
- What they see as potential changes in the future
- What that means to writers
- Other points and issues they find important

Bring your notebook and your questions to the Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Tuesday, April 13. Networking begins at 5 PM and the presentation is at 6 PM. And plan to join the speakers and other IWOCers for buy-your-own treats and lively discussion at a local restaurant after the meeting. ✍

WHAT ADVERTISING AND MARKETING AGENCIES WANT FROM THE INDEPENDENT WRITER

Tuesday, April 13

The Feltre School
22 West Erie

Networking 5:00 PM

Program 6:00 PM

Professional members

FREE

Associate members \$5

Nonmembers \$15

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

iwoc

Independent Writers of Chicago

Officers

President:

Jim Leman 847/543-1090
jleman@newsletterbureau.com

Executive VP:

Harry Karabel 219/921-0877

Treasurer:

Alan Laduzinsky 773/296-4349

Secretary:

Ellen Krupp 815/578-0365

Parliamentarian:

Jennifer Oatfield 773/763-7948

Board of Directors

Jim Ardito 312/332-4161
Marilyn Hopkins 773/871-0432
Karen Schwartz 708/386-3044
Dixie Watterson 847/491-0725

Committees

Directory:

Open

Marketing:

Esther Manewith 773/274-6215

Public Relations:

Pat Terry, Cliff Terry 773/871-0087

Membership:

Jennifer Oatfield 773/763-7948
Jeff Steele 773/481-0010

Programs:

Jim Ardito 312/332-4161

Seminars:

Jenny Hamby 815/254-4939

Web site: www.iwoc.org

Joan Kinnan 708/366-8573

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 ©2004 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

Editor:

Elaine Fiedler
708/386-3796; map133@aol.com

Contributors: George Becht, Ellen Krupp, Jim Leman, Lisa Mayer

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On writing for a living

BY JIM LEMAN

Ever since it occurred to me that because I liked to write I wasn't doomed to becoming an English teacher or a librarian (not that there's anything wrong with that), I have earned my living as a writer. I wrote first for daily newspapers, then trade magazines, and then worked as a corporate marketing and public relations writer.

Along the way I filled a few file drawers with short story and novel manuscripts. In 1991 I made the conscious choice to take my talent freelance.

Occasionally, in moments of retrospection, I wonder if choosing writing as a career was a sound decision. In the newspaper's business section, I notice the articles about men and women, many younger than I, with prestigious titles attached to their name . . . and I certainly notice the salaries. . .

NOT THE EASIEST PATH

Freelance writing is a hard business. Done right, it requires me to be salesperson, marketer, production department, office administrator, bookkeeper, customer service, chief technology officer and purchasing department. A monthly paycheck is not guaranteed.

On the other hand, freelance writing provides me with terrific time flexibility, project variety, continuous opportunity to gain knowledge about many and diverse subjects, the opportunity to sell myself, which I thoroughly enjoy, and at the end of each month a pretty good living.

We all face challenges to our solvency from health care costs, economic conditions, the whims of our clients, and our own lapses

into laziness. Each morning brings a fresh opportunity to evaluate whether to continue as a freelance writer or seek a job on the inside.

KEEPING YOUR FOCUS

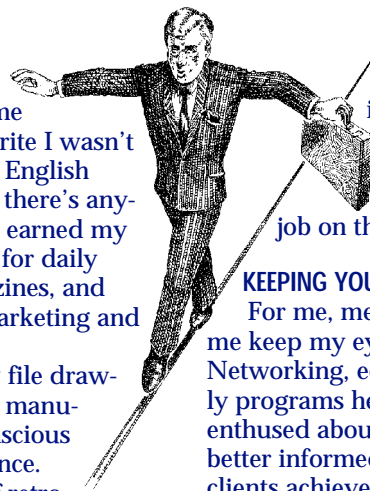
For me, membership in IWOC has helped me keep my eye on the correct ball. Networking, education seminars and monthly programs help me feel connected, enthused about being a freelance writer, and better informed about new ways to help my clients achieve success.

Likewise, IWOC helps us individually attain success. The new IWOC Web site under development will be one important tool to help every member achieve all-important goals. The marketing committee is focusing on how best to market the site so it attracts more clients to IWOC—and to you; both the new site and these marketing initiatives will be previewed for you at our May meeting.

At this month's meeting, a special panel discussion will help us identify opportunities to work with area advertising and marketing agencies.

LOVING WHAT YOU DO

All in all, my choice those many years ago to focus my enthusiasm for writing into a writing career paid off. I enjoy this life immensely. It's afforded me and my family a good living. And through IWOC I've found a resource of like-minded men and women with whom I can share this passion. Thanks for being here for me! ✍



MARCH PROGRAM A HIT!

Last month's IWOC program cosponsored with Chicago Women in Publishing was a great success. Approximately 115 people came to hear novelist Audrey Niffenegger speak.

Bravo to President Jim Leman, Program Chair Jim Ardito, and everyone involved in putting together the special event.

Novelist describes path to publishing success

BY ELLEN KRUPP

Forget Cinderella. Most IWOCers would rather hear the story of Audrey Niffenegger, a novelist whose first book got published with a six-figure advance, was chosen as a book club selection by Scott Turow on NBC's *Today* show, and had movie rights sold to a film development company that includes Brad Pitt and Jennifer Anniston.

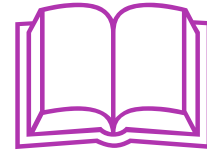
This true fairy tale was the topic for the March meeting, co-sponsored by Chicago Women in Publishing and IWOC, and held at the Chicago Athletic Association. Niffenegger described how she wrote *The Time Traveler's Wife*, the story of a couple whose male half takes unplanned and uncontrolled trips through the past and future.

Her process for writing the book was unconventional—she wrote the title, the last two scenes, and then jumped around—and getting this first novel

published followed a long and arduous process. Ms. Niffenegger first tried to get an agent, submitting her idea and sample chapters to several potential representatives at a time, gradually working her way through a list of likely agents.

Then she began submitting the book directly to publishers. Simon & Schuster expressed interest, but only if she cut the novel by 200 pages, a task Niffenegger said she “didn't know how to do.”

An article in *Poets & Writers* about independent publishers led the writer to MacAdam/Cage, a small company that expressed interest about the same time she got an agent. A bidding war with several major publishers followed, with Niffenegger finally deciding on MacAdam/Cage because they promised to “part the Red Sea” for the book.



GOOD PUBLICITY GENERATES HEAT

As word spread about *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Niffenegger learned what it meant to have good publicity surrounding her work. As she put it, “Once the book was perceived as ‘hot,’ it became ‘radioactive.’”

And all the excitement of selling the novel, having it turned into a screenplay, and going on a 20-city book tour, made it “seem as if these things are happening on a distant planet.”

This literary Cinderella has already begun work on her second novel. ✍

When good words go bad—do you use them?

What's considered the most annoying cliché in the English language? It's the phrase “at the end of the day,” says The Plain English Campaign, which surveyed its 5,000 supporters in more than 70 countries in a recent poll.

Runner up was “at this moment in time,” and third place went to the ubiquitous use of the word “like” as a form of punctuation. (“That is, like, so wrong!”)

“With all due respect,” came in fourth.

But, wait, there's more! Other terms include:

24/7
absolutely
address the issue
around (in place of about)
awesome
ballpark figure
basically
basis (“on a weekly basis” in place of weekly, etc.)
bear with me
between a rock and a hard place
bottom line
crack troops
glass half full/half empty

I hear what you're saying
in terms of
it's not rocket science
literally
move the goal-posts
ongoing
prioritize
pushing the envelope
singing from the same hymn sheet
the fact of the matter is
thinking outside the box
to be honest
to be honest with you
to be perfectly honest
touch base

“When readers or listeners come across these tired expressions, they start tuning out and completely miss the message—assuming there is one,” said Plain English Campaign spokesman John Lister. “Using these terms in daily business is about as professional as wearing a novelty tie or having a wacky ring-tone on your phone.” ✍

based on an AP report in the Chicago Sun-Times

FYI

PROGRAM ON DEVELOPING A WRITING SPECIALTY

The Illinois Woman's Press Association (www.iwpa.org) invites you to have lunch and hear speaker Kelly James Enger, successful freelance author, at their April 17 meeting. Enger will tell how to set yourself apart as a writer and command higher fees by developing a writing specialty.

"I quadrupled my income when I started specializing," Enger says, "while working the same number of hours." Learn what the hottest specialties are today and how you can break into them.

Find out how to make more money by developing a niche, April 17 at the Chicago Athletic Association, 12 S. Michigan, in the Bali Room, 6th Floor.

Networking and registration starts at 11 AM, lunch at 11:45 AM, with the program starting at 12:45 PM. Vegetarian plates are available if requested in advance.

Cost is \$30 for IWPA members, guests, and full-time students; \$40 for all others. Check or cash at the door. You can reserve by e-mail to Cecilia Green at cgreen@turnaround.org or by calling 312/458-9151.

CONTENT AND HIGH SEARCH ENGINE RANKINGS

The Association for Multi-Media Communications hosts a program in April on "Content and Search Engines: Why What You Say and How You Say It Determines Your Ultimate Success."

Randy Pickard, a leader in the field of optimizing Web sites to achieve high rankings on search engines, and Jonathan Ashton, Vice President of Business Development, Mir Internet Marketing, will be the presenters.

The discussion will include basic technical specifications; how providing usable, informative content can lead to a site's success; tips, tools, and techniques; and the impact of granularity—how your Web site can win searches for "apples" if it is all about "apples and oranges?" Learn how careful organization of content elements helps search engines understand the details of your site.

The Association for Multi-Media Communications hosts the program on Wednesday, April 14 at 6:00-8:00 PM. Harold Washington Library, 400 South State Street. (Doors open at 5:30.) Come to the Lower Level, and please enter at the Plymouth side entrance. FREE for AMC members and \$10 for nonmembers.

For more information, see www.amcomm.org.

Thanks to Lisa Mayer

Calendar

April 13 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: What Advertising and Marketing Agencies Want from the Independent Writer, with guest panelists Michael Hush from Draft Worldwide, the #1 direct marketing agency in the United States; Wendy Pressley, of Pressley Jacobs Design, and Kelley Smith, Director of Human Resources at Closerlook Communications. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

May 11 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: Preview the new IWOC Web site and marketing plans. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

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.

April 1 / May 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.

April 22 (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
user id: iwoc
password: chgowtr**