

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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IWOC'S APRIL MEETING

Sharpen your resume to sell your skills

BY JAMES J. HODL

Freelance writers like to let their work speak for itself. But there are times when writers must also sell themselves. So what can writers do to stand out amid the competition for existing writing assignments?

"Creating a resume specifically targeting the freelance writing market should be one of the major tools in the writer's arsenal," says Cathleen M. Hunt. And she will explain the strategies that make for a good resume to sell one's skills at the next IWOC meeting on Tuesday, April 12.

In her program, "Resumes That Sell Your Writing," Hunt will explain what information about one's experience and life's work to include in such promotional resumes and—and just as important—what should be left out.

According to Hunt, many writers include too much information in promoting themselves, making it harder for prospective work providers to find what they need to know to determine a writer's fit for the job. During her presentation, Hunt will share her criteria for selecting the most pertinent data and explain how to arrange it in an enticing and easy-to-read format so that the resume works like a magnet in attracting paying assignments.

Hunt, who regularly conducts seminars at schools and job fairs, is a professional career consultant and owner of Write Works, a professional resume-writing firm based in Chicago's Portage Park neighborhood.

"Resumes That Sell Your Writing" will be the centerpiece of the IWOC meeting on Tuesday, April 12 at the Feltre School, 22 W. Erie St. Those who arrive at 5 PM can network with other professional freelance writers over coffee and cookies, while the program begins at 6 PM. Admission is free for IWOC professional members, \$5 for associate members and \$15 for non-members. Following the meeting, attendees are invited to join in further discussion and continue networking during a buy-your-own dinner at a nearby restaurant. ☞

Resumes that Sell Your Writing

Tuesday
April 12

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.

A note of thanks

We would like to thank members of the Public Relations committee, Laura Stigler, Kathleen Vyn, and Kristin Monkman, for their ongoing help in promoting IWOC. We appreciate their assistance in writing and distributing news releases for the monthly meetings, their work on special projects, such as pitching feature stories on IWOC members, and their ideas and energy!

Great job, team!

Noreen Kelly
Katherine Mikkelson
IWOC Public Relations Committee, Co-Chairs

iWOC

Independent Writers of Chicago

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A vision comes into focus

BY HARRY J. KARABEL

Vision has always been an issue with me. To show you what I mean, let me tell you a little story.

When I was six, my mother watched me step off the curb into the path of an oncoming car and decided a trip to the optometrist was in order. "Industrial blindness," Dr. Kapustiak said, "compounded by a lazy eye." This meant that I could have been denied employment, or a driver's license, had I been old enough for either one. My right eye was the lazy one, preferring the change of perspective it achieved once it wandered closer to my nose.

So for several years I walked around in those horrible black plastic glasses. As though the glasses were not enough to stigmatize me among my clear-eyed peers, I also had a lovely, flesh-colored plastic patch that clipped onto my left lens. The theory was that "we" would let the good eye rest and toughen up the lazy right eye by forcing it to work harder. Eventually, its lazy days of wanderlust ended.

I never did find out if the adults abandoned the torturous experiment because I did not buckle under the pressure or because more drastic measures became available. After an operation, the right eye's lazy days of wanderlust were over.

Meanwhile, I had found comfort in the company of other half blind, fashion-comatose, bookworms. What we shared—along with our inability to fit in elsewhere—was the glorious perspective, a different vision, only available to outsiders. We were observers, critics, scribes and reporters. We discovered sarcasm and satire long before our classmates. Some call it self-preservation but, again, I call it vision. We were carving a niche for our own perspective because they wouldn't make room for us in theirs.

A VISION OF THE FUTURE ON TV

At the same time, I saw the vision of my future on television. It was called *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. Every day Dick/Rob went to work, sat behind a keyboard and typed. This

was something I had started to do, writing comic books and thinly veiled parables of playground life with my friends on the geek squad. I felt comfortable there, making a new world out of sentences. If this could be a job, it certainly was enticing. Sometimes Dick had fun with Buddy and Sally. Sometimes they made fun of Mel Cooley, who was my vision of the future for my insider classmates. Sometimes they had to stay up all night rewriting when Alan Brady didn't like a particular sketch, or the entire show. It was a tough job, but they were professionals and they always got it done, on time. Dick always came home to pratfall for Laura. This was something, I told myself, I could do.

I think all writers share a vision similar to mine. One day we all realized that we developed some innate ability—because we read too much, or didn't play well with others, or were too shy, or were just hopeless voyeurs—to stand on the outside and look in and make sense and sentences about what we saw. This is why people come to us and ask us to help them tell their stories. We have all learned to dress better, to either flaunt or disguise our need for eyewear, and to revel in our bookishness. They see in us the unique value that we first saw in ourselves and are willing to pay us for it. Some of them may have had little use for us on the playground. But they need us now.

"FREELANCE WRITER'S LIFE" SEMINAR'S VISION

On April 2, at The Freelance Writer's Life seminar, we re-stated our vision for IWOC as "the place to be if you want to be a freelance writer." We took careful notes when Jane Ranshaw told us how to charge more and make more. We were inspired by Jim Leman's upbeat challenge to increase our cold calls, by Barb Rozgonyi's innovative marketing tactics, by Conrad Lawrence's strategies for nurturing our creativity, and by

continued on page 2, bottom



Editors share their “trade” secrets

BY KAREN SCHWARTZ

At March’s IWOC meeting, three trade magazine professionals talked about the requirements and benefits of writing for the trades, and the ways it’s different than writing for consumer publications.

Rita Negrete, currently senior editor at *Technomic Information Services*, noted that some writers believe that writing for trade magazines is less glamorous than writing for consumer publications. In reality, writing for the trades is different than writing for consumer magazines. Trade magazines, Negrete pointed out, are often more clear-cut in their purpose as they teach readers how to make money in a particular business, and there’s a specific community of readers that writers are writing for. Frequently, Negrete added, freelancers who are accustomed to writing for consumer publications and receive an assignment from a trade magazine, are surprised to learn they must interview many more sources for a trade magazine article.

Trade magazine editors, Negrete stated, are interested in “someone who knows the industry and can hit the ground running.” Editors are also looking for people who have good clips, are reliable and accurate, get their work in on time and can follow directions. Editors also appreciate writers who supply photos and artwork. From time to time, writers may also be expected to attend trade conventions.

IWOCer **Jim Hodl**, formerly the senior editor of *Appliance Service News* for nearly 25 years, has written for various trade magazines. He currently writes for *Casino Journal*, which is published by the Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers. Hodl’s biggest source of income comes from *Marcone World*, which covers the appliance service industry. Hodl currently works on editing assignments and writes feature articles for *Marcone World*.

Vision *continued from page 2*

all the wisdom, experience, and insight that other IWOCers and guests had to impart.

If we knew anything about what went on behind the scenes, we were in awe of all that Jenny Hamby and Kim McGregor did to pull such a day together.

We even spent some time with the people who attended Jim Leman’s Bootcamp, designed “for newcomers to writing or those who have not yet committed to a writing career.” For many of them, a vision of the future was just beginning to

Hodl noted that not many freelancers are aware of all the trade publications that use freelancers, and that trade magazines are always looking for good freelance writers. It’s

important to find out exactly what specific trade magazines are looking for and what you can contribute to each publication, he added.

Russ Gager, currently senior editor of *Security Distributing & Marketing*, pointed out that a trade magazine editor wants to work with a writer who can solve a problem and can provide information about a particular industry. Writers should look at their interests, past writing experiences and their knowledge of an industry before targeting a publication. Association trade magazines can be investigated in association directories.

Gager stated that in Chicago there are many opportunities for freelancers to write for trade magazines. Writers should make certain to look at smaller publications

because they may be around longer than the larger ones. Furthermore, Gager noted, because of computerization, they have less need for staff people and more work for freelancers, including good researchers. To break through, writers need to tailor their approach to a specific editor and industry. Unlike the majority of consumer publications that require a query letter, many trade magazine editors will instead give freelance writers specific assignments.

Payment varies. Negrete stated that often freelancers get under \$1,000 per article. IWOC member and trade magazine writer Jeff Steele added that most trade magazines pay 40-50 cents a word, but, Steele noted, writers may be able to re-sell the same article to a non-competing publication. ☞

come into focus. They were there because they decided that this is the part of the playground where they belong.

If vision is an issue for you, this is no time to close your eyes, retreat, and say “maybe I’ll get more involved, or renew my membership, next year.” Inaction rarely leads to success. Go to the Web site, look at the job line, and renew your membership using PayPal if you have not already.

Remember your vision. Remember what it’s worth. And remember who your friends are. ☞



FYI

TAP INTO THE EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING MARKET



Writers who are interested in learning how to tap into the educational publishing market will want to attend the Midwest Writers Association's panel discussion on Wednesday, April 20, at Hackney's, 1514 East Lake in Glenview. The session, which begins

with a networking period at 6 p.m., is one of four each year to which nonmembers are invited.

The panel consists of an experienced educational book contributor and executives of an educational textbook development company and a publishing network. The panel members are:

- Linda Wolf, president of Network Publishing Partners Inc., a company that provides editorial services (writing, copyediting, proofreading) for the educational textbook industry.
- Seva Johnson, editorial director of Anthology Inc., an educational development house that hires freelance writers and editors.
- Cynthia Clampitt, a writer and editor who has worked for more than 20 years in educational publishing, both on staff and as a freelancer.

The meeting cost, which includes dinner, is \$16 for members, \$21 for nonmembers. Reservations are required; the deadline is April 17. Contact Raeann Berman at raeannberman@aol.com.

MWA is composed of Chicago-area independent nonfiction writers whose work is published in books, magazines, newspapers and other formats. For more information, visit MWA's Web site, www.midwestwriters.com.

IWOC CO-FOUNDER AT CHIC WIT CONFERENCE

On Friday, March 4, IWOC member and co-founder Catherine Rategan served as one of several moderators for a series of panel discussions at a conference to celebrate International Women's Day. The day-long event was staged by ChicWIT (Chicago. Women. Insights. Technology.) and took place at the Holiday Inn in Hillside.

ChicWIT is a chapter of WorldWIT, which describes itself as "the leading global online and offline networking group for professional women in business and technology." You can learn more about the group at <http://www.worldwit.org>.

AND DON'T FORGET . . .

IWOC's Web site at <http://www.iwoc.org> has great links and resources for the writer to explore—and the Members Only Jobline to boot. Have you visited lately? It's definitely worth a look while you're out there surfing.

Calendar

April 12 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: "Resumes That Sell Your Writing." Cathleen M. Hunt, professional career consultant and owner of Write Works, a professional resume writing firm, will explain the strategies that sell your skills in a successful resume. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

April 15

You know what day this is.

May 10 (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.

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.

April 28 (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