

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

1/July Meeting

2/June Recap

3/Profiles of Success

4/Upcoming Seminars

6/President's Message

7/FYI: Upcoming Events
Calendar

JULY MEETING

Networking to fame and fortune in troubled times

BY JENNIFER OATFIELD

You've heard it said by IWOC presenters, colleagues, and motivational speakers. By this time even your mother is telling you—if you want to survive in today's economy, you must learn to sell yourself and networking is the best way to do that. July's IWOC program features two of Chicagoland's networking queens to give you the low-down on how to network successfully.

Experienced, highly successful IWOC member Jane Ranshaw and training development professional extraordinaire Nina Adams will divulge their secrets to you in a lively presentation full of details and tips that you can convert into action right away. In a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session, you will learn:

- ✍ How to define networking
- ✍ The kinds of networks available
- ✍ Reasonable networking goals
- ✍ Details of a successful networking process
- ✍ Tips and Tricks of successful networking

EVEN INTROVERTS CAN DO IT, SAY THE PROS

Jane Ranshaw is a long-time IWOC member and past president who has been networking in the Chicagoland area, and the world, for over 24 years. An experienced writer and trainer, Ranshaw has developed networking into a fine art to successfully promote her seminars and workshops across the nation.

Nina Adams has been a performance technology consultant operating independently since 1989. As president of Adams Consulting Group, she designed and developed 3-D simulations for marketing and training. She was the first outside vendor to be awarded a "Risk-Taking" award at Motorola. Networking is an instinctive part of her life.

Adams and Ranshaw can provide you with attitudes, tips, and information that you can use to change yourself from an introverted writer, stuck in your home office, to an outgoing, successfully networking businessperson.

Come to IWOC's July 8th meeting at the Feltre School, 22 West Erie. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6. Street parking is readily available starting around 5:30, or you can park at the Oriental building for \$8. ✍

"Networking"

Tuesday, July 8

Feltre School

22 West Erie (at State)

Networking 5 PM

Program 6 PM

Professional members FREE

Associate members \$5

Nonmembers \$15

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

Preceding each meeting, the IWOC Board gathers at 3 PM at Barnelli's at Ontario and Clark. All members are welcome to board meetings.

For more information, call the IWOC office at 847/855-6670.

iwoc

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JUNE RECAP

Expanding business with newsletters

BY KAREN SCHWARZ

At June's IWOC meeting, "Expanding Business with Newsletters," four speakers gave IWOC members and guests excellent tips on how to grow your businesses through the use of newsletters.

Kicking off the evening was Jennifer Oatfield, filling in for Jim Leman, who had to cancel because of family obligations. Leman heads his own firm, Associates Newsletter Bureau, which provides one-stop editorial, design, and production services to clients of all sizes. Quoting from Leman's notes, Oatfield remarked that because of the current tough economic climate, newsletters are being eliminated from some corporate budgets. Nonetheless, according to Leman, it is possible to obtain business, whether one wants to write articles for a newsletter or handle writing, printing, and mailing responsibilities for a client.

For Leman, aggressive cold calling yields the best results. He recommends first researching companies on the Internet, and then cold calling company marketing executives, doing follow-up calls within a week of the first call, and then sending out follow-up letters and/or postcards. With these methods, Leman closes on about 1 in 20 proposals that he submits. He also highly recommends that writers ask potential clients numerous questions about their needs, including what they like and dislike about their current newsletters.

"GETTING INTO THE LOOP"

Marsha Portnoy shared her expertise about the specific skills required to obtain stories for corporate newsletters. Currently writing a monthly newsletter for a company in Des Plaines, Portnoy told the audience about "getting into the loop" and reaching those persons she needed to interview. She attended regular staff meetings, dressed like everyone else dressed, and found that e-mail was the best way to contact people she needed to interview.

She also noted that newsletter writers must be sensitive to certain issues within a company such as corporate restructuring. They need to accentuate the positive things that

are happening with a company when writing newsletter articles. Portnoy also stressed that it is important to meet deadlines, always be available for an interview even after business hours, and be a team player even though you're not a company employee.

DO IT YOURSELF—AND WIN CLIENTS

Next on the agenda was Esther Manewith, who uses her own newsletter, "Elm Leaf," to promote her own work and to give clients and potential clients helpful information about a variety of topics. She mails the two-page quarterly newsletter to about 350 clients and potential clients and always gets phone calls after each issue.

The point of a newsletter, Manewith says, is to make you look terrific and to say to clients and potential clients what you can do for them. Among her costs is \$50 for graphics and layout, and she says of her newsletter, "I love doing it."

GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT

Joen Kinnan talked about doing graphics and layout for newsletters. She pointed out that if you have little experience in this area, you should probably stick to small, non-profit firms. You should have samples to show prospective clients, and if you don't, you can mock up a prototype, she added. Kinnan's first newsletter experience, in fact, was as editor of *Stet*, the IWOC newsletter. She later used *Stet* as a sample to get her first paying client.

If you do decide to provide graphics and layout services, she said, you should know your limitations and don't do more than you know how to do. Furthermore, your clients should know about your limitations...for example, if you're not a graphic designer, tell them so.

Learn how to write good headlines, Kinnan added, and make creative use of the white space in your newsletter. Be "excruciatingly neat," she stressed. Your newsletter should look crisp and professional like a nicely tailored suit. You can experiment with different fonts to jazz up your newsletter, but don't go overboard, she noted.

continued on page 3

Profiles of success

BY LYNN SANDERS

Meet Susan G. Baird Writer, Editor, Researcher

NEWSLETTERS RECAP continued

When it comes to software, you can use a text program like Word or Wordperfect, but a layout program like Pagemaker, Quark, or Microsoft Publisher makes designing much easier. And they're not hard to learn, she added.

A final tip was to look at other newsletters and magazines to see how other people do graphic design and layout. ✍️

(Note from Joen Kinnan: During my presentation, I remarked that I probably take more time when working with graphics than a trained designer would. Some in the audience apparently assumed that I charge my clients for this "learning curve." I do not. I work on a fixed fee, so the time I spend is irrelevant to the client. I apologize for the misunderstanding.)

New Rate Survey for You!

It's time for the \$64,000 question.
Or, the \$10,000, \$1200, or \$85 question.
What do you charge?

We're gearing up one of IWOC's greatest member benefits once again! A terrific ongoing resource, the IWOC Rate Survey provides a valuable multi-angle snapshot of what Chicago-area professional freelancers, and fellow IWOC members, are charging for their services. It was last published in mid-2000, examining fees for calendar 1999. This time, we'll be asking you to review calendar 2002.

The survey will be e-mailed to all members in July, and we need your full participation to make this project a success. Here's what we'd like you to do:

1. Download the survey (it will be delivered as a PDF file).
2. Provide your honest feedback about how you charge for the different types of projects listed.
3. Mail, fax or e-mail the survey back to the IWOC office by the deadline listed on the survey form.

As always, all responses will be kept absolutely confidential, and every member will receive a copy of the compiled results. Watch for more information in your e-mail box soon!

from Christina Foster

Length of IWOC Membership: "I just joined last fall."

Why Are You An IWOC Member? "Most of my writing has been related to my job as a librarian, and I've done lots of writing as a volunteer. I wanted to change to freelance writing, and a friend suggested I join IWOC. She was impressed with the organization, so I checked out the Web site, and I thought it looked good."

Why Freelance? "I'm leaving the librarian profession. Part of what I want to do is what I absolutely love—and that's to write."

Expertise: "I wrote a book, *Audiobook Collections and Services*, (Highsmith Press, 2001). It's about how to begin an audiobook collection in a school, library, or store. It covers selecting the right books, marketing, and becoming familiar with the narrators. I write a chapter in a biannual reference book, *Magazines for Librarians* (Bowker Press). I review for *AudioFile Magazine*. I'm adept at researching most subjects, and I'm skilled at "translating" concepts into layperson's terms. I've done human interest-type pieces for my village's newspaper. Finally, I do quite a bit of editing, which I really enjoy."

Other Interests? "I adore traveling. I was in Asia for more than four months and kept a diary. Later I transferred that into travelogues and I've given talks about this trip. Besides traveling, I love cats, shell collecting, walking, reading, and volunteering. I'm now volunteering at the Feltre School, helping catalogue their library (floor to ceiling books!), which happens to be the room of our IWOC meeting. I'm also working behind the scenes at the Field Museum."

Best Advice? "Persistence. Sometimes the most amazing things happen if you keep working at what you want."

Greatest Satisfaction? "Giving back is very important to me. I feel I've been pretty lucky. I look around and see other people who didn't land at the top of the heap. To give back, I began collecting cancelled stamps for Oxford Famine Relief (OXFAM). I send the cancelled stamps over to England, where there are stores that re-sell packages of stamps to collectors. They sell the valuable stamps at Sotheby's. The money helps famine sufferers around the world. If you (anyone reading this!) send your cancelled stamps to me, I'll get them to England."

Your Heroes? "To me, those who go against the mainstream and help those who truly can't help themselves."

How Would You Like To Be Remembered? "As one who enjoyed helping others, whether it was materially, by giving a laugh, or by something I wrote. I've been told I do my best writing about things that I care most about. I would love to write something that would have a great, positive impact, such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*."

How to increase your writing profits

If you're ready to increase your writing revenue and start earning what you're really worth, grab your calendar and get ready to save some dates.

IWOC is putting the final touches on a series of events and programs that will help you to determine the true value of your services, how to estab-

lish yourself as an expert (and increase your fees), and, finally, how to get and keep more money from every project. Here's a look at what's planned.

How to Price Your Services and Negotiate Fair Fees **Saturday, July 12, 9 a.m. to noon** **Chicago Athletic Club** **12 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago**

Many writers struggle when figuring out how much to charge for their services. Are you asking too much and pricing yourself out of the market? Or are you pricing your services too cheaply and inadvertently telling clients that you're a less-than-average writer?

IWOC member Jane Ranshaw, MBA, will answer these questions and more when she presents "How to Price Your Services and Negotiate Fair Fees." Ranshaw has been providing communications consulting and training services to the Fortune 500 and other organizations since 1976.

During this practical half-day workshop, she'll teach you:

- ☛ Three different strategies for pricing your services
- ☛ How to determine which pricing strategy is best for you, based on your experience, type of writing, and market
- ☛ A quick and dirty guide to estimating how long a project will take
- ☛ The three deadliest pricing mistakes

- ☛ Why competing on price can backfire
- ☛ Why being the lowest bidder is usually a mistake
- ☛ How to help clients recognize the real value of your work
- ☛ How to respond if clients gasp at your quoted price
- ☛ How to raise your rates—and easily justify the increase
- ☛ The ideal time to cite your fee (do it too soon, and you could lose hundreds—even thousands—of dollars)
- ☛ The right way to present your proposal, and the critical elements to include
- ☛ Which writing specialties pay the most
- ☛ How your client relationships can affect the profit you make
- ☛ What to do if a client backs out of a project
- ☛ How to respond when clients ask you to do extra work
- ☛ The only time you should lower your fees, and how to do it without losing face
- ☛ And much more

The fee for this half-day workshop is just \$79 for IWOC members. It's a smart investment that can help you confidently ask for—and get—more money on your very next writing job.

Writer's Bootcamp **Date TBA (targeted for late September)** **Location TBA**

Plans are in the works to revive this IWOC classic. We're putting together a full day crammed with information-packed sessions designed to help you build a thriving professional writing business.

Tentative topics include:

- ☛ The legal, financial, and administrative business basics that every writer should know
- ☛ Low-cost and highly effective marketing techniques to create a flood of new business
- ☛ A practical look at the different types of writing—and which niche is best for you

Watch your email and upcoming issues of *Stet* to learn more about this event.

Upcoming IWOC seminars

from Jenny Hamby and the Seminar Committee

The WealthyMind Experience™
Thursday & Friday, September 11 & 12
Location TBA
Limited seating!

Are you working and working to achieve greater writing success—without ever seeming to make any progress? You may have unconscious beliefs about money and wealth that are limiting your success. Your most important asset in achieving wealth is your mind. This incredible program shows you how to create the attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking that deliver wealth.

To achieve wealth, you must want wealth and condition your mind to attract it. That's precisely what IWOC member Barb Rozgoni will help you do during The WealthyMind Experience.

One of only two Illinois trainers certified to teach The WealthyMind Experience, Barb will guide you through the process of identifying and permanently eliminating your limiting beliefs during this intensive, hands-on workshop. She starts from the proven belief that YOU can become wealthy by training your mind to achieve the objective—and then Barb shows you how you can create the

conditions that achieve wealth.

This event is for you if you've ever said or if you believe any of these statements:

- ☞ You have to work hard to make money.
- ☞ Money is for other people. It's not for me.
- ☞ Money is hard to manage.
- ☞ It is difficult to make a lot of money.
- ☞ You need money to make money.
- ☞ Having money isn't spiritual.
- ☞ I'll never be rich!
- ☞ No matter what I do, I will never have enough money.

You will also learn the 9 Key Attractors for Wealth and Success, the keys to achieving your financial success. You will leave The WealthyMind Experience knowing what you have to do to attract wealth NOW!

Because this workshop is designed to deliver personalized attention, participation must be strictly limited to 12 people. (If the class is full when you register, we will place your name on a waiting list.)

You Ought to Write a Book!
Saturday, October 4, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Chicago Athletic Club
12 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

One of the best ways to establish yourself as a recognized authority is to publish a book about your area of expertise.

During this exciting seminar, author and former literary agent Jim Kepler of Adams Press will join public relations veteran Esther Manewith of ELM Enterprises to teach you how to write, sell, and promote your book. You'll learn how to:

- ☞ Evaluate and focus your subject
- ☞ Research and organize your materials

- ☞ Construct a submission proposal
- ☞ Approach agents and editors
- ☞ Understand how publishers handle your book
- ☞ Distribute your book
- ☞ Promote your book
- ☞ Make money from your book
- ☞ Protect your literary property
- ☞ Build a career as a writer
- ☞ Become a self-publisher ..and whether self-publishing is right for you
- ☞ Sell your book, and where

IWOC members pay just \$195 for this event. To register for this or any other IWOC seminar, call 847-855-6670.

“I want to be a writer”

BY CHRISTINA FOSTER

I had an immediate answer, by the time I was 8 or 9, whenever I was asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

I always said, “I want to be a writer.”

In my family of practical-minded, conservative, immigrant Italians, this did not win me points. And truth be told, I didn't have a clear notion of what it was I was asking for then. (How many kids do?) I had deep conviction, though. I wanted to write; I was going to write; nothing would stop me from writing.

Um hmm. Well...I didn't want anything to stop me, anyway.

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW

This past Memorial Day weekend, I was unexpectedly reminded of how easy it is to lose track of passion for and commitment to what we do.

Visiting clients and family in Northern California, I was in a car accident—broad-sided on the freeway by another driver who lost control two lanes away and basically made a right-hand turn into me. My (ahem) rental car was pushed across another two lanes into an overpass wall.

I don't share that to be melodramatic—the car was totaled, but my grandmother and I, amazingly, walked away with pretty much just bumps and bruises, and now the whole thing is mostly down to just the usual post-incident logistics.

That and, not so very surprisingly, a renewed commitment, for me, to building the life I want. That life I was so sure about when I was a kid, even though I didn't know just what it meant. That life that too often I allow to coast by on cruise-control, for lack of energy or effort or (irony alert!) time.

In the few seconds of the accident, I didn't exactly see my life flash before my eyes. I didn't see much of anything, really; it's taken you longer to read about it than it took to happen. But I walked away with a deeper understanding of what I might lose some other day, and what I give up when I don't stay focused on what I'm doing and why I'm doing it.

I want to be a writer.

More to the point, in my business life, I want to be an independent writer.

In this fast-moving game of pinball we call an economy these days, that's a significant thing for any of us to be certain of. And I'm incredibly grateful to be part of a community of like-minded folks, with similar goals and passions, as a member of IWOC.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

If being an independent writer continues to be part of your long-term game plan, and if it brings you the sort of satisfaction it does me, IWOC's got a full summer ahead, loaded with the kinds of nuts-and-bolts information and opportunities that can help you grow your business in all the ways you still dream about. I hope you'll take an active part in what we have planned.

Start with this month's program, Tuesday, July 8, and learn some new ways to network your way to success. With speakers like Jane Ranshaw and Nina Adams, it can't fail to be a lively and informative evening.

Next up: Jane's doing double-duty for IWOC this month (thank you, ma'am!), by kicking off our growing seminar calendar with her perennially popular session on negotiating rates and increasing profits on Saturday, July 12. A sign-up form's included with this issue of *Stet*.

And if you've never had the opportunity to participate in this one, don't miss it. I promise you, it's worth whatever it takes to get downtown that day.

Watch for the 2003 Rate Survey questionnaire to be delivered to your mailbox later this month. It will be our first update since mid-2000. In keeping with our “back to the basics” approach, completing it is an opportunity to review your progress and success over the last few years, and to contribute important information that will provide a strong resource for you, and for us all, over the next couple of years.

Come August 12, we'll be celebrating success, good friends, and warm weather out on the Pegasus rooftop once again. As anyone who joined us last year can tell you, it is some party, regardless of the weather! And do be sure to join us—rain or shine or both!

Thanks to everyone who's worked so hard to pull all of these events and projects together. And, thanks to everyone who responded to the Board's recent general survey, and to those who participated in our follow-up meeting. You've provided us with some terrific guidelines and the specifics of how you hope to stay connected to what IWOC's passionate about. The projects on deck now are just the beginning of what you'll see in the coming months. Stay tuned for more details soon! ✍️

FYI

Upcoming events

IWOC FEST SET FOR THE ROOFTOPS AGAIN

Tuesday, August 12, happy IWOCers will be viewing the city's panorama from the rooftop of the Pegasus Taverna in Greektown (130 S. Halsted). Once again catering captain Yianni promises to "bombard" us with food—from shrimp and chicken kebobs to lots of salads, yogurt, and vegetarian dishes.

Cost to participants is \$27 for early reservations (before August 5th) and \$30 at the door. Festivities begin at 6. We'll toast the sunset with the libations from a cash bar. You'll find a reservation form (as a pdf file) in your e-mail box. So download the pdf and get your name and checks into the IWOC office today! For more information, call the IWOC office at 847-855-6670.

"Have you ever noticed
that life consists mostly
of interruptions, with
occasional spells of rush
work in between?"

—Buwei Yang Chao
in *Autobiography of a Chinese Woman*

Need work?
Check out
IWOC's Writer's Line
www.iwoc.org
user id: iwoc
password: chgowtr

Calendar

July 8

Board meeting: Barnelli's, at Ontario and Clark, 3 PM. All members are welcome to attend.

IWOC monthly meeting: "Networking," with how-to tips from writer and trainer Jane Ranshaw and Nina Adams, president of Adams Consulting Group. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. For information about parking, please call the IWOC office. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15. Come and check it out!

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.

July 3 / August 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.

July 24 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP monthly lunch: The West Suburban group meets at noon at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion, Oak Park. Contact: Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.

July 15 (3rd Tuesday)

Far North monthly breakfast: At 9:00 AM at Egg Harbor, 300 Village Green, Lincolnshire. For more information, call 847/821-1515. Contact: Carrie Suarez, carrie.suarez@worldnet.att.net.

If none of these meet-and-eat groups is in your neck of the woods, start your own group. Be sure to notify *Stet* so your group can be included in the calendar.

For details about IWOC monthly meetings or seminars, call the IWOC office at 847/855-6670 or check out www.iwoc.org.