

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

IWOCFEST

It's Time for Rousing Rooftop Revelry!

BY JOEN KINNAN

Got the blues because the deer ate your hosta down to the nubbins? You say you left the keys in your new Prius, and the cops found the pieces in a chop shop? Your best client phoned to tell you he's become a Trappist monk?

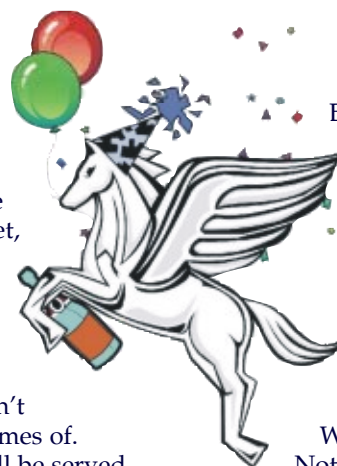
Not to worry, Bunky, we're set to party on the rooftop at Pegasus Restaurant, and everything's gonna be all right. Get in that clunker you're now driving and chug on down to 130 South Halsted in Greektown on August 11 at about 5:30 p.m.

Valet parking at the door, a loaded bar at the top of the stairs, good friends waiting to give you the high sign, and you'll soon forget the unfortunate meeting between the 413 bus and your pet rabbit.

While you're taking the edge off and admiring the golden sunset, waiters will be busy piling platters high with great stuff you don't know the names of.

Dinner will be served family style, which is good 'cause you'd feel bad if you had to kick the chair out from under that kinda frail person next to you to get at his saganaki.

You don't eat anything that once had a face? Hey, neither do some of the board members, and they get really cranky if they don't get what they want. Vegetarians will do all right.



Everybody's BFF, IWOC, will spring for the dinner wine, and there'll be a pretty nifty door prize. (Alas, not the Maltese falcon, but who needs a dead bird on the shelf?)

What's not to like?

Not even the price, which is the same as last year: 30 bucks if you reserve ahead, 35 at the door. Everybody's invited, whether or not you belong to IWOC. If it rains, we'll whoop it up inside. So sign up on the attached FLYER and send a check or do the PayPal thing right now before you blow your loot on something really silly like a headstone for the rabbit. 🐰

NEW BOARD AND OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED IN SEPTEMBER

As many members know, IWOC's fiscal year begins in September, so we elect new officers and board members at the same time. The nominating committee is pleased to present the following slate for consideration by the membership.

Roger Rueff has agreed to serve another term as president, and Catherine Rategan has likewise agreed to stay

on as vice president.

Jennifer Lyng will repeat as secretary, Barb Dillard will again serve as treasurer, and Harry Karabel as parliamentarian.

The board will consist of Chuck Coffin, Jim Hodl, Joen Kinnan (as webmaster), and two other board members to be named as soon as we get their official okay. Watch your e-mail.

It is any member's right to nominate a member for any office or the board from the floor at the September. However, if you want to nominate someone not on the slate, you must have 10 members sign a petition for your nominee, and you must present this petition to the board (send it to any member) two weeks before the election. 🐰

Officers

President:

Roger Rueff 630/428-3857
president@iwvoc.org

Executive Vice President:

Catherine Rategan 312/266-8146

Treasurer:

Barbara Dillard 312/642-3065

Secretary:

Jennifer Lyng 773/769-5291

Parliamentarian:

Harry Karabel 219/921-0877

Board of Directors

Charles Coffin 847/674-2906

Jim Hodl 773/777-5710

Noreen Kelly 312/988-7562

Joen Kinnan 708/366-8573

Martha Turner 773/509-0435

Committees

Directory:

Chair open.

Marketing:

Cathy Dusberger 312/382-1808 chair

Tom McCauley 224/636-7713

Jay Rodriguez 312-515-9459

Publicity:

Chair open.

Michelle Beuscher 773/478-6778

Katherine Mikkelsen 847/253-3681

Laura Stigler 773/248-0158

Membership:

Chair open.

Jeff Steele 773/481-0010

Katie Valentino 630/946-9500

Programs:

Dave Epstein 708/567-9705 chair

Becky Maginn 773/935-8410

Seminars:

Chair open.

Benefits:

Chair open.

Writers' Line:

Dianne Rowland 630/834-0209 chair

Ellen Krupp 815/578-0295

Web Site: www.iwvoc.org

Joen Kinnan, webmaster
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Roger Rueff

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN/ROGER RUEFF

To Schmooze or Not to Schmooze

For some reason, the other day I started thinking about "schmoozing"—the practice of cozying up to someone, usually at a social function, for the purpose of advancing a personal agenda. That's not exactly the dictionary definition, but it's not far off. One source I checked offered a value-neutral definition: "To chat idly; gossip." But the American Heritage Dictionary provides a definition closer to my meaning: "To converse casually, especially in order to gain an advantage or make a social connection." That's what I'm talking about here.

I'm not opposed to schmoozing, per se. I've done it, as has virtually every person who has ever carried a business card... which is not to imply that the practice is restricted to business—it's clearly not. If humanity could harness the energy from every too-hearty handshake, intense look of bogus concern, and falsely boisterous laugh that issues from the world's schmoozers on any given day, our energy problems would be over. Close down the coal mines, shut off the pipelines, decommission the nuclear plants—just get all the schmoozers to bite down on the ends of two wires while they're smiling and hook up the wires to the power grid. Problem solved.

What I do oppose is "hack schmoozing," by which I mean schmoozing by people

inept at the practice. People who have no sense of subtlety and/or whose ulterior motives are so noxiously pungent—so glaringly transparent—that they cannot be masked by even the brightest smile. This type of schmoozing is an affront to the political gods.

Years ago, when I worked at Amoco Oil Company, I occasionally encountered a politically minded colleague my age who had pegged me as an up-and-comer. Whenever happenstance brought us together in the hallway or cafeteria, he would offer a big false smile and engage me in small talk, and each time he did, I could almost hear the gears whirring in the back of his head. I could see him calculating what to say next rather than really listening. And I could just barely hear the voice in his mind whispering, "Get and stay on his good side. So-and-so likes him, and so does so-and-so's boss, and his. You want to have your hooks in when he moves up."

As it happens, his calculations were way off the mark. And when I left the company to pursue a writing career, I'm guessing he felt betrayed. All that effort expended for naught. But I'm also guessing that he met and allied himself with others more amenable than I to being schmoozed, who took him under their wings and let him clutch their coattails on the way to the top. But I don't know.

The thing is, most people



know when they're being played. And except for the exceedingly vain or psychotic, they resent it. Something about them wants to say, "Y'know what, friend? How about just handing me your business card and walking away. That'll save us both a lot of time."

So I guess what I respect is "unmotivated schmoozing," by which I mean schmoozing unaccompanied by a clear objective. Schmoozing that passes for casual conversation because, at its heart, that's exactly what it is. Unselfish schmoozing. Schmoozing genuinely focused on the schmoozee and not the schmoozer.

But is that really schmoozing? Absolutely. Not only that, it happens to be the most transcendent (and effective) kind.

The great, enlightened masters of schmoozing—those imbued with esoteric knowledge handed down from the dawn of humanity and qualified to run a Himalayan monastery dedicated to the practice (if there were such a thing)—know that the secret of schmoozing is Buddha-like detachment... the ability to sublimate one's own desires and to separate the hoped-for outcome from the moment. To take one's grimy hands off the steering wheel, as it were, and let the conversation move where it will and happen completely on its own... organically, honestly, to the delight and enjoy-

Continued on page 3.

Writing a Book Can Help You Sell your Services, and It Is Easier than You Think

BY MARLA KRUGLIK



How many of you have written a book? How many will write a book?" Jim Kepler asked his fellow IWOCers at the July meeting. When many more of us raised our hands after the second question than after the first, Kepler got down to business: why it's so important to have a book with one's own byline, how to write it, how to use it, why you may already have written or at least half-written that book, and more.

First, you do it for the credentials and to brand yourself, set yourself apart from all the others offering similar services. AND, you do it in five simple steps, many of which you may have already begun:



Start by getting a box and filling it with everything relevant to the future book — your own clippings, articles by others, actual artifacts (or

photos thereof) — whatever.

Next, sort the papers in the box into piles of like materials, filing each pile into its own section of an accordion file.

Third step: start winnowing each folder. But don't throw anything away. Information that's not absolutely necessary to cover your topic might add up to interesting sidebars. Then give each pile or file its own name. View each as a chapter. Briefly, in



one-and-a-half to two pages, write an overview of what will be in each chapter.

Finally, write an overview of the entire book. Send it out with a blurb — the kind of pitch you could envision on the back cover of a paperback or on the inside flaps of a hardback book jacket. The blurb is something an agent can pitch to an editor, an editor to an editorial committee, etc., etc., all the way to the sales force pitching to bookstores. You may also

send a sample chapter with the overview. But sending a whole book is not necessary and may even get in the way. (Fiction is the exception to this rule.)

Once your book is published, you can take it with you to every interview, list it prominently on your resume, mention having written it in every cover letter for whatever proposal. Even if its subject has nothing to do with the proposed subject, just your authorship of a book shows you have the perseverance to complete a large assignment.

In fact, Kepler advises, once you have shown your book to someone interviewing you for a project, you should get the book off the table as soon as you can. You don't want prospective editors or whoever to be browsing through the pages when they could be discussing your ideas for the matter at hand.

Kepler, twice president of IWOC, explained that editors and agents hope to put their own stamp on the book, to

be sure it's something they can market. Having to deal with a finished product could prevent them from having any input. That's why your (nonfiction) book proposal contains only an overview, blurb, and perhaps a chapter or two. Then you describe why you are qualified to write the book, based on clippings of other articles you have written.

Finally, add your marketing ideas to your proposal, like where to sell the book and how much you will be ready to help in the marketing efforts. Keep sending out chapters as individual articles. On your own, you can start marketing the book by setting up a website and a blog.

So how do you have any say in the final product? A lot depends on whether you self-publish or go for royalty publishing. Kepler listed pros and cons to each. It may take you time to research the best option for you. Just keep in mind, a book is a book. 📖

President's Column. Continued from page 2.

ment of all.

Michael Jordan used to say he "let the game come" to him. The masters of schmoozing do the same thing with conversation. But unlike NBA basketball, when the best-of-the-best are on their games, everyone wins.

In the final scene of my play *Hospitality Suite* (a.k.a. *The Big Kahuna*), Phil, a seasoned account manager, addresses this issue with Bob, a young engineer who has misplayed a company business opportunity in pursuit of a personal objective. Phil's parting words to

Bob include: "If you want to speak to a person honestly, ask him how his kids are. Tap into his dreams. Just to find out, and for no other reason. Because the minute you lay your hands on a conversation, to steer it, it's not a conversation, anymore; it's a pitch. And

you're not a human being, you're a marketing rep—I don't care for whom."

As for me, I'd rather spend my social time conversing with human beings... which is why I'm looking forward to IWOCFest, where they abound. 📖

A Reliable Route to the Perfect Word (at a Discount)

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 L. Eastline

The Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus / Compiled by Christine Lindberg / 1089 pp. (plus essays and guides) / Oxford University Press, 2004 / Discounted Paperback Edition / ISBN: 0-7394-5631-8

There's something about a book with a lot of heft. Makes you feel it's important (which could be related to its accompanying cost). But a heavy-weight volume at around a penny a page—now, that's impressive! Put pricing aside for the moment, though, and regard what you're getting beyond two pounds of paper. First of all, *The Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus* is not strictly a competitor to the ubiquitous compilation by Mr. Roget. That legendary aid to writers has its own private niche in any reference library (especially Chapman's 1992 Fifth Edition). Second, it offers some tantalizing extras that go beyond the conventional thesaurus parameters.

What makes this thesaurus so easy to use is its dictionary-like format, the strictly a-to-z sequence unencumbered by arbitrary categorization. Within each entry, the selected similes follow one another as in a dictionary. Yet, for some users, who aren't even sure about any appropriate word to fit a certain, broad condition, the absence of Roget's chosen categories will be missed. The basic OAWT format is to identify the part of speech

for the selected word, followed by its use in a simple phrase before listing the editors' choice of complementary words. Where a particular word has multiple meanings or encompasses other speech forms, paragraphing separates the distinctions. Overall, some 300,000 synonyms constitute the heart of this volume, supplemented with 10,000 antonyms. (For comparison, the count is within 10% of the total claimed by the 5th edition of Roget's.)

As so many popular advertisements proclaim—Wait! There's more! And in this instance, the extras truly give the OAWT its special value to writers. Dispersed among the listings are nearly 250 usage notes appended to specific words picked by the nine editors. These brief excursions into word applications are insightful perspectives on meaning or relationship to similar words. For example, the word "border" is compared to "margin," "edge," "brink," and "rim" to establish spe-

cific shadings in meaning. In a different vein, "fulsome" is treated to a concise essay on its perceived misuse.

Altogether, these seemingly random choices add up to a satisfying potpourri of stimulating prejudice, learned exposition, and just plain fun.

And, yet, still more features, beginning with Richard Goodman's "In Search of the Exact Word," an essay which can be considered the foundation for the OAWT. The final 60 pages of this reference book are exactly that—a language guide (Understanding Grammar and Guides to Spelling and Capitalization), plus lists of common clichés and redundant expressions along with a summary of proofreader's marks, followed by a set of basic writing prompts.

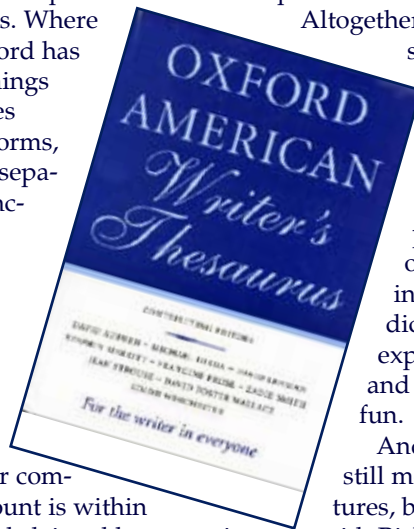
Take away each of these worthwhile bonus offerings and you still have an extraordinary writer's tool, a com-

prehensive thesaurus that provides a user-friendly path to the perfect word. Well, if "perfect" doesn't quite fit, then perhaps "faultless," "unsurpassed," or "ideal" might suit your style.

Note 1: No specific price was shown in the header for this review because of wide variance among the many online book vendors, retail sellers of remainders, and a few mail-order establishments. The lowest cost was \$9.98, not including tax or shipping.

Note 2: At the time of publication of the OAWT, Chicago-based Erin McKean was the editor-in-chief of Oxford USA Dictionaries Staff. She has appeared as an IWOC presenter.

Note 3: Just as this review was being prepared, announcement was made of the completion of a 44-year project by Oxford for what is likely the most comprehensive thesaurus ever undertaken. Scheduled for publication sometime this autumn (in England) is the *Historic Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, said to be twice the size of the most complete Roget's editions. Don't expect to find a discounted paperback version anytime soon. ♣



Heat Up Your Business with Warm Calling

BY TOM MCCAULEY

It costs about five times as much to get a new client as it does to keep an existing client. That's where "warm" calling comes in.

Each IWOC member has a list of current and past clients. So you don't have to develop a list as you would for cold calling. You can use many of the techniques Jim Leman discussed for cold calling – smile on the phone, call early or late, and use a script.

I can just hear you saying, "I can't call Pam to get work because I know she doesn't have any, and I don't want to put her on the spot." Of course, you don't want to make your client uncomfortable, and you won't if you use warm calling techniques. In fact, he or she will probably be glad you called. So, you ask, how would that work?

You call your hot list of current or past clients (these are hot calls because you know and have worked with these people before). When they answer, here's what you say:

"Hi, Pam. This is Chris Brauchwerk."

"Hi, Chris!"

"Did I catch you at a bad time?" (You don't want to impose, and you also want to be sure you have enough time to say what you want to say.)

"No. What's up?" (If you did call at a bad time, find out what would be a better

time or day to call.)

"Pam, I need your advice." (People like to give advice.)

"What about?"

"Pam, you know a lot about the widget industry and you are familiar with my skills. So, I was wondering if you could advise me on who in the widget industry may have a need for my skills now." (You are not asking Pam for work but it is clear that you are looking for work. If she does provide some names, ask for the e-mail addresses.)

Towards the end of the call casually say, "By the way, Pam, I don't know if you know about my policy of paying a \$100.00 finder's fee for any referrals that lead to paying work." (This is a little incentive for Pam to help you.)

End of conversation.

If you get voice mail, do not go into the details. Leave a message such as:

"Hi, Pam. Please call me.

I need your advice. Thank you!" (Use curiosity to get her to call you back.)

When the client calls back, use the answer script above starting at "Pam, I need your advice..."

This script is not the only script that you can use and not necessarily the best script. But it is important that you develop a script for these calls. It will keep you focused. Using your script, call all those on your hot list.

What will happen? One of three things may happen: (1) The clients don't know of anyone who needs you right now but will keep you in mind if they hear of anything. (You now have one or

more people bird-dogging for you.) (2) Your timing was great. They may have some work they need done and you get the work.

Or (3) They give you the names of a number of people who may be able to use your skills. (This was the main purpose of your call.) Add these people to your warm list.

So now you either have more work, somebody bird-dogging for you, or a list of people (your new warm list) who may need your skills. Not a bad outcome for a number of pretty stress-free calls.

So what's the next step?

You call the people on your warm list.

"Hi, Jerome. This is Chris Brauchwerk."

"Hi, Chris!"

"Jerome, Pam Porteuvert over at Acme Widgets suggested I call you." (The "Pam suggested" line gives you an introduction and makes this a warm call, not a cold call.)

"How is Pam?"

"She's great. She sends her regards. I've worked with Pam on a number of copy-writing projects in the widget industry, and she felt that you may be able to use my skills on some of your current projects."

If Jerome does indeed have current projects find out what he needs. Go on to discuss your areas of expertise and how they may fit with his needs.

If there is no fit, ask for Jerome for advice on whom

to call.

If you get voice mail, do not go into the details. Leave a message such as:

"Hi, Jerome. Pam

Porteuvert at Acme

suggested I call

you. Please call me

when you get a

chance. Thank you!"

(Again, use curiosity to get him to call you back.)

What will happen?

Just as in the first example, they might not have work for you now but they'll keep you in mind – you have another bird dog – or they may have work that you'll get, or they'll give you more names, which is icing on the cake. Add these names to your warm list too.

Clearly, the only limit to this process occurs when you get no more referrals. And look what you have accomplished. You have alerted your current and past clients that you are looking for work without asking them for work, plus they are bird-dogging for you. You may have a vastly expanded hot-to-warm list of potential clients. You can use this list for other marketing methods you use, such as e-mail blasts, quarterly post cards, or newsletters.

Be sure to thank those who helped you. Send each of your hot list current and past clients a little thank-you card by snail mail. Yes, snail mail. It has more impact than e-mail.

Within reason this warm calling process can be used any time you are running low on work. It's almost painless; it's free, and it's fast. 🐣



Ready to Re-Up?

BY JOEN KINNAN

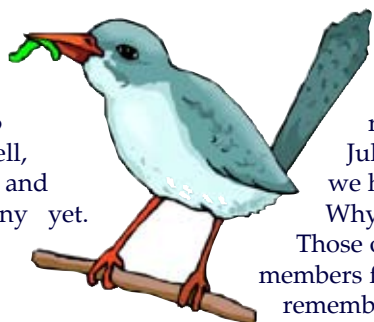
If you recall, last year we the membership drive on July 31. Well, has come and gone, and asked you for a penny yet. here's the story: who have been a long time may our renewals used to be coincide with the beginning of our September. (And it's when we elect new officers.) We got off the track when we transferred most of our operations to the website, and we had a necessary delay while we got things up and running. We've been gradually inching our way back. Now it's time to merge these three happenings again. And you are the beneficiaries. Our membership drive this year will officially end on September 30 — that's two months of free membership — but we hope you won't wait that long.

Beginning on August 15, you can sign up for the early-bird rate of \$135 instead of the regular rate of \$150, a 10 percent discount. So why not do it right away? As usual, you'll get five free listings — eight if you actively work on a committee or serve on the board — and additional listings remain at 10 bucks apiece. We haven't raised the prices in years.

Today, when using social networking is all the rage for finding work, think of IWOC as the ultimate social networking tool. We offer more benefits than LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter combined. With IWOC, you get:

- A greatly improved Writers' Line and getting better all the time. (How about that \$30,000 job posted last week?)
- This newsletter supplied in two forms to suit every taste.
- Exposure to clients anywhere for just the cost of membership. Where else could you get worldwide advertising for a year for this kind of money? One job and you've paid for your yearly membership.
- Terrific monthly meetings that increase skills and help you run your business better. Plus two great parties.
- An active social networking group on LinkedIn.
- Friendship, advice, and sometimes referrals from IWOC colleagues.
- A chance to post samples on the web without the cost of your own website, but a quick link to your site if you have one.
- A print directory distributed to potential clients and a handy phone book and referral tool for you.

In these tough times, you need IWOC more than ever, and IWOC needs you. So please sign up early to get the 10 percent discount. Pretend IWOC is a client whom you're going to make very happy by coming in under deadline. Because you will. We guarantee it. 🐦



Calendar

August 11

IWOC's Annual Summer Party. It's IWOCFest! Tuesday, August 11 at Pegasus Restaurant on the rooftop, 130 South Halsted in Greektown. Valet parking is available at the door. The party starts at 5:30 p.m. There's a cash bar for before-dinner libations, free wine with dinner, and a delicious selection of vegetarian and nonvegetarian food served family style. Cost is \$30 with advanced reservations; \$35 at the door. Reserve either by check or PayPal at www.iwoc.org/iwoc_events.htm. If it rains, we'll move indoors. Nonmembers are cordially invited.

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.

August 27 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP Monthly Lunch. Join near-west suburbanites for a noon lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park. For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065. Check before you come. This lunch is monthly only if there are enough people who can attend.

September 3 (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.

It's Happening on the Web!

[Check Out Writers' Line](#)

[Browse Resources](#)

[See What's Doing in IWOC Events](#)

WWW.IWOC.ORG

IWOC Welcomes New Member

Jay Rodriguez