



Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ■ IWOCFEST PREVIEW | 1 |
| ■ NEWS OF IWOCERS | 1 |
| ■ PRESIDENT'S COLUMN | 2 |
| ■ BEE CAREFUL WHAT YOU RIGHT | 4 |
| ■ HOMOPHONIC FACE-SAVERS | 4 |
| ■ JULY MEETING RECAP | 5 |
| ■ WELCOME NEW MEMBER | 6 |
| ■ DID YOU KNOW? | 7 |
| ■ THANKS, BUT NO THANKS | 7 |
| ■ NEXT ISSUE /CALENDAR/QUOTE | 8 |

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL SUMMER SOIREE

It's Party Time Again! It's IWOCFest!

Forget your troubles and get happy. Laugh off the erratic weather. Stop worrying about the client who hasn't paid you since the last Ice Age. It's time for IWOCFest! Our annual midsummer frolic is scheduled for next Tuesday, August 13, on the always spectacular rooftop at Pegasus in Greektown. Come on down (up, actually), kick back, and sip a frosty libation. Ain't it great watching the sun set over our majestic city, a soft breeze ruffling your hair, as you trade witticisms with old and new friends? (That would be a yes.) Bring your friends and family, a writer friend who's considering joining IWOC, and/or your most-treasured client.

There will be a cash bar to whet your whistle, and there'll be food, glorious food, served family style so you won't go home hungry. You can pig out on your favorites! Non-carnivores need not worry: there'll be succulent veggie choices to savor.

Here's some more good news: we've managed to keep the cost the same as last year's despite rising prices on almost everything. The price is \$30 with **online registration** and payment by PayPal or credit card (through PayPal or \$40 at the door with cash or check.

Regardless of how you pay, you must pre-register, so we can give the restaurant a head count. Please register by Sunday, August 11.



The restaurant is at 130 S. Halsted, and there's **free** valet parking and a for-pay parking lot across the street. Public transportation is nearby too, via the Blue Line or the Halsted bus. The festivities kick off at 5:30. If it rains, not to worry, we'll move the party indoors. So click the link and count yourself in. Nonmembers are cordially invited. See you there! ■

— Joen Kinnan

News of IWOCers

We have mixed feelings as we report that board member Jim Hodl is leaving our fair city for a PR job with the Department of Interior. He'll probably be headquartered in Phoenix, though he has the option of Vegas. We're delighted that he's scored this gig, particularly since the timing is perfect: Jim has just sold his house and was looking for new digs anyway. But we're sad to see him go. He has many friends in IWOC, and he's worked tirelessly for the organization. Before his current stint on the board, he was IWOC's program chair. *Bon voyage*, Jim, and keep in touch.

Other news: IWOC co-founder (along with Catherine Rategan) Beth Bradfish has earned her credential as a Professional Certified Coach from the International Coaching Federation. The process was rigorous: 140 hours of classes and 20 hours of direct supervision with clients.

In the spring, Publish America released a new novel, *Surviving 26th Street*, by long-time IWOCer, Carol June Stover. Carol's previous award-winning novel, *Current River Redemption*, was published in 2004. She is also an expert on dolls and has authored or co-authored three books on that subject. All her books are available on Amazon. ■

*Editor's note: We'd love to put **your** accomplishments in Stet. Send them to stet@iwoc.org.*

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O, Brave New Words



It is a truth universally acknowledged that "Travel Is Broadening." Or, in more modern parlance, "mind-expanding." My recent trip to the Pacific Northwest both broadened and expanded my sense of how fast the Internet and social media are coining new words or adding new definitions for old ones.

Hydration, anyone?

While standing in a long, shuffling line with other passengers waiting to perform the TSA ritual purification (i.e., security semi-strip search), I overheard a man telling his wife, "I'm going to have to hydrate myself after this." I had, of course, heard this use of the word "hydrate" before, usually in exercise classes, but I thought it was merely a synonym for drinking water or "slaking thirst." To me, as Wikipedia explains, "Hydrate is a term used in inorganic chemistry and organic chemistry to indicate that a substance contains water." So I wondered why he didn't just say, "I'll need to drink some water?"

Silly me! I know that hydration is a serious matter for athletes, in the sense of supplying water to restore or maintain fluid balance." But, although the TSA lines are stressful and irritating, this man was hardly running a marathon or even a 5K. But when I checked on the term, I found it means far more than just drinking water, and there are right ways and wrong ways to do it, as attested by numerous fitness experts, including the authors of "How to Hydrate" and "Six Ways to Hydrate Better"—which runs 8 pages!

Playing favorites

The hydration incident reminded me of an experience with modern web-inspired vocabulary that began some weeks before my trip, when I received

this e-mail: "SMCChicago favorited a tweet from ..." (SMCC being the Social Media Club of Chicago). I found several definitions and usage examples of "favorited," including this one from urbandictionary.com: "The act of adding someone's tweet to your favorites on Twitter. This is used as a form of appreciation when someone makes a good tweet. Also known as 'starring' due to the icon used to add something as a favorite. There are websites that catalogue and rank tweets based on amount of stars given."

Is it selfish to take a selfie?

My explorations into web words went further when my daughter sent her mother and me a "selfie" a few days before our trip. It was a snapshot of her taken with her camera phone, so the meaning was clear and was further confirmed later on our trip when my daughter and other relatives were all taking and sharing "selfies" at a gala family dinner.



According to webopedia.com, "selfie" is "A slang term used to describe a photo that is taken of oneself for the purpose of uploading it to social networking sites and image sharing websites, such as Facebook, Instagram or Imgur. To take a selfie, the right or left arm is extended with the camera held backwards. The selfie shows the person's arm extended in front holding the camera or smartphone device." Long arms are a big advantage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.



President's Column

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Selfies have been around since at least 2005. There are questions of selfie etiquette, such as whether it's permissible for your arm or hand to show up in a selfie. Selfies have a role in space exploration: on December 27, 2012, Andrew Prince did a piece on the picture show on National Public Radio titled "The Mars Rover Takes A Selfie."

Selfies have attracted learned academic commentary on fine points of psychology. For example, Pamela Rutledge, director of the Media Psychology Research Center at Fielding Graduate University writes, "A selfie is not so much a case of narcissism, a cry to 'Look at me!,' as it is a fleeting squeak of self-expression.... The 'ie' at the end makes selfie a diminutive, which generally implies some affection and familiarity" (<http://pandodaily.com/2013/08/01/the-subversive-selfie/>).

Answers.yahoo.com offers sage advice on "How to take a good selfie" The "Best Answer – Chosen by Voters" originally came from girlsguideto.com/articles/9-tips-to-take-the-perfect-selfie and starts by explaining how to choose the best shooting angle:

"Angles: For the most flattering photo, hold your phone slightly above eye level and away from you at a 45-degree angle. If you don't feel like you're doing yoga, then you're doing it wrong. Experiment with different face angles to find the best one for you. Which side is your best? Also, did you know that using your reverse camera lowers the quality of your photo? Looks like you better start practicing your yoga."

Although most of the advice on make-up, fashion choices, and photographic technique for taking selfies is aimed at

young women, the most newsworthy (and notorious) selfies are the self-portraits done by Anthony "Carlos Danger" Weiner (also directed at young women).

Where do you keep your stache?

A popular subject for selfies is the "stache," which refers to the luxuriant and often elaborately styled moustaches that have again become fashionable for young (or young-ish) men. Urbandictionary.com defines a stache as "Something that is wicked cool, beyond uber sweetness. Something that is so cool that there is nothing to describe it except the word 'stache.'" For example, "That man is so stache!"

Staches have grown from humble roots into a worthy international cause. As you can learn at <http://us.movember.com/?home>, Movember (the month formerly known as November) is a moustache-growing charity event held during November each year that raises funds and awareness to help with men's health issues and related charities.

"During November each year, Movember is responsible for the sprouting of moustaches on thousands of men's faces, in the US and around the world. With their Mo's, these men raise vital awareness and funds for men's health issues, specifically prostate and testicular cancer initiatives.

"Supported by the women in their lives, Mo Sistas, Movember Mo Bros raise funds by seeking out sponsorship for their Mο-growing efforts."

The meme's the theme

Staches and Movember are examples

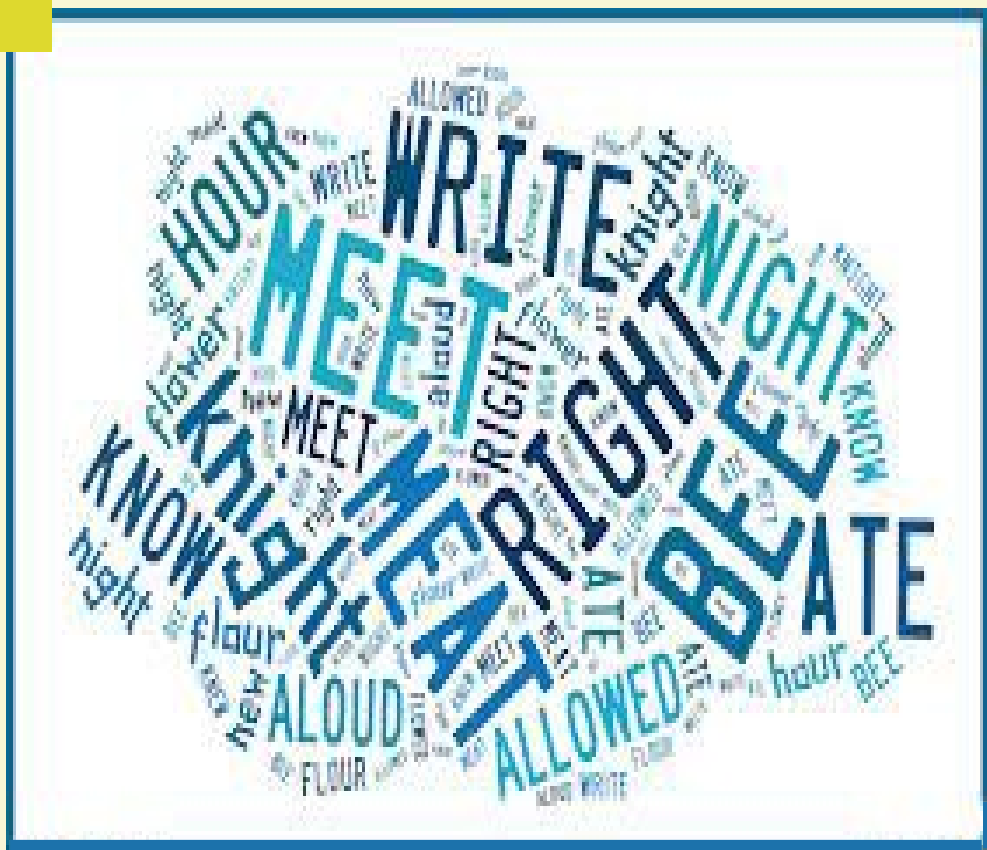
of the web phenomenon called the "meme." As explained in Wikipedia, "An Internet meme (MEEM) is an idea, style, or action which spreads, often as mimicry, from person to person via the Internet, as with imitating the concept." The term is not new, but was coined by the British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene* (1976) as a way to use evolutionary principles in explaining the spread of ideas and cultural phenomena.

The cat-lovers among us will be



pleased to know that one famous and popular meme is "Grumpy Cat," whose grumpy image and feline-sophical reflections are always "trending" around the Internet. (More to come about trending.) Although I thought Grumpy Cat was an imaginary being, like her Cheshire cousin from Alice in Wonderland (also now a meme), at least according to Wikipedia (and Google—and therefore solidly documented), she is a real female cat and Internet celebrity known for her grumpy fa-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6.



Homophonic Face-Savers

Being highly literate — we are, aren't we? — most of us writers wouldn't make the mistakes listed below, but it's really mortifying to absentmindedly slip up and put in the wrong spelling of a familiar word. So it behooves us to *really* look at our spelling when proofing our work. Occasionally, though, we honestly *don't know* the proper homophone. (I've gotten more than one e-mail from IWOCers who “poured” over a piece of writing.) Here are two sources for avoiding homophonic gaffes. *An English Homophone Dictionary* seems to be a pretty complete online listing. (Google the title to find it; a link here won't work.) The other is a paperback, *The Wrong Word Dictionary*, by Dave Dowling. It's available from Amazon. The latter isn't confined to homophones. It lists 2000 commonly confused words, e.g., you'll find the difference between “farther” and “further.” It's quite useful and some entries are fun to read. ■

— The editor

Bee careful what you right; mistakes are not aloud

Homophone mistakes can be hideously embarrassing, especially when they leap like a pole vaulter from the pages of our work, but red faces aside, sometimes they're pretty hilarious. If you think a “homophone” is what Italians use to chat people up when they're not on their cells, you *really* need to read this.

Homophones are words that sound alike or very nearly alike but have different meanings. Though we all grind our teeth when we see “its” when it should have been “it's” or groan when “their,” “they're,” and “there” are misused, we hope you'll find the gaffes here more entertaining.

That's going to reek havoc with my menu. (Apparently, this means “Hold the garlic and onions!”)

It's a waist of time. (A nostalgic look back at one's former figure?)

The company was profitable in this physical year. (Fighting among themselves, were they?)

I'll take care of it without further adieu. (Presumably said by a Frenchman who's cleverly backing out of his commitments.)

This dessert will wet your appetite. (And your shirt.)

Our products are taylor-made for an upscale market. (Would that be Elizabeth or James?)

I poured over the proposal all night, but I still don't understand it. (Not surprising. The pages are stuck together with maple syrup.)

The CEO should hand over the reigns. (I guess so! The guy thinks he's a damn king!)

Declining sales are a tell-tail sign. (Another glitch in the illicit raccoon trafficking market.)

This photo doesn't bare any resemblance to the man. (“Course not. It's not Anthony Weiner.)

Our proposal should fair well with the board. (Sure. On a nice sunny day.)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7.

Pros Tell How to Help Clients Find & Keep You

Writing may be satisfying, but satisfaction doesn't pay bills. We need clients to buy our golden — or a least bronze — words. At the July meeting, speaker Lynn Hazan and IWOC members and panelists Jeff Steele and Sally Chapralis had plenty of advice about how to find and retain clients.

Hazan, who owns her own recruiting firm marketing and communications specialists (lhazan.com), said she no longer tries to find clients. Her strategy is to inspire people to come to her, and to create such a strong connection that there is no competition because the client has already decided no one else will do.

Achieving this connection begins with how you define yourself, she said. Are you a freelance writer? And what do your potential clients think of when they hear the term? Do they imagine you working in slippers and old jeans, sipping coffee while perusing a magazine, not taking work very seriously? Or are you a business owner, a consulting writer, a skilled professional who should be taken seriously?

To better define yourself, Hazan said, write a six-word description of what you do. She took this from a tale about Ernest Hemingway who was once reportedly challenged to write a six-word story. He wrote: "For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn."



Hazan's description of herself is: "passionate recruiter loves placing superb talent."

Here are a couple of others from the audience: "The insatiably curious loves imparting insights," and "business writer gets results you want."

What you do not want is a list of descriptive terms. Like a shopping list, the information is there, but you can't remember it because no associations connect the items, Hazan said. Look at your self-presentation the same way. Ask: What makes you unique, what makes you special, and why should someone hire you?

Clients are looking for writers now because the new marketing tool is creating content specific to a product or service, Hazan said. Content is also creating the Internet. The combination creates a place writers can exploit to market themselves because it is rare to find people online who are creating original content. "The person who creates the con-

tent owns the space," Hazan said.

How do you put yourself in that space? Speak to groups, maybe host a webinar, post slideshows from your presentation using resources such as SlideShare (slideshare.net), and quietly infiltrate groups. When you are known as someone who has something to say and says it well, people will call and ask you to work for them.

"The more we share, the more we get in return," Hazan said.

There is a balance to strike with all this giving. You don't want to provide all of your services for free and fuel the devaluation of what we do. Instead you provide appetizers, she said; if someone wants more, he must pay.

This method of self-marketing requires time and dedication, but there is opportunity because, Hazan said, "The people coming into business today, their writing sucks."



Another way to find clients is by calling them, Steele and Chapralis said during the panel discussion, which was

ably moderated by IWOC's program chair, Stu Truelsen.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6.

Pros Tell How to Help Clients Find & Keep You

Steele suggested that, if your contact is OK with the approach, you could even do a bit of schmoozing over the phone.

Chapralis makes cold calls, not many but regularly, and it is a technique that still works. Instead of doing a pushy sales call, she asks questions: Who is the person to talk to about this, or are you the person to talk to about this? She may make a list of what the potential client uses and say she writes what they need. If no work is forthcoming, she may ask when to call back. Receptionists can be great sources of information, too, if you're friendly with them.

Because so much communication is now done electronically, you may find it easy to get someone on the phone. "They're sort of startled, usually pleasantly," Chapralis said.

"No one calls anymore," Hazan said. Young people don't. Everyone e-mails, and because of that younger people are no longer phone literate and have no telephone etiquette

— another opportunity for more experienced people to make an impression.

A fair amount of panel time was



devoted to the perennial question of how to price services.

Steele said he never goes for the top dollar. He would rather have a client be comfortable. He does try to induce a client to reveal his price or budget. At times this has worked to his advantage. When quoting one job he told the client he had never done that sort of work and

asked what the client would feel comfortable paying. The client's suggestion was twice what Steele had thought of.

There is another disadvantage to attempting to extract the maximum money, he said: You may have that job only once, and a series of one-off jobs is a tough way to do business. He would rather take a lower rate and have work for a decade.

Pricing is fluid, and what you can charge depends on the sophistication of the job and whether you are a specialist, Hazan said. Experts command higher pay because there are fewer people who can do that work. Echoing Steele, Hazan stressed the link between price, quality, and repeat business. "If you do good work, they're going to ask for more — hands down," she said. ■

— David Steinkraus

IWOC
Welcomes
New Member
Chris Johnson

President's Column

cial expression. Her "true true name," as T. S. Eliot would say, is Tardar Sauce, and she was born April 4, 2012 in Morristown, Arizona. Her owner Tabatha Bundesen says that her permanently grumpy-looking face is due to feline dwarfism.

You can learn more about memes, discover more memes, and even try your hand at creating memes at meme

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databases, such as knowyourmeme.com/, memebase.cheezburger.com/, and memegenerator.co/.

Are your memes trending yet?

Urbandictionary.com bluntly and savagely defines "trending" as "a mutilation of the English language that means 'currently popular.' It derives

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.

Did you know...



How about these writing-related records, courtesy of *Guinness Book of World Records*?

Most Authors Reading Consecutively — 111 authors read their works over 28 hours consecutively in 15-minute time slots on June 15 and 16, 2012, in Dublin, Ireland. The event was also streamed live on the internet without interruption. Online viewers had the advantage of being able to run to the fridge for a snack during the boring parts.

First Author to Sell Over a Million E-books — James Patterson sold 1.14 million units on July 6, 2010, according to the Hachette Book Group. Later that month, Amazon claimed to have sold over a million units of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy. Trees would clap if they had arms.

Fastest Text Message — Mark Encarnación wrote the fastest text message using a touchscreen mobile phone in 20.53 seconds, outside the Microsoft Studios in Redmond, Washington, on April 24, 2013. His mom always knew those quick thumbs would come in handy.

Most Stairs Climbed in One Minute While Balancing Some Books on the Head — Ashrita Furman climbed 122 stairs in the New York City subway on October 25, 2009, balancing about seven pounds of books. The real talent was dodging the bums and street musicians. ■

— Katherine Mikkelson

Thanks, but no thanks . . .

There's rejection, and then there's rejection accompanied by panache.

This is a squib that I saved from the spring 1992 newsletter of the Humanist Association of Canada:

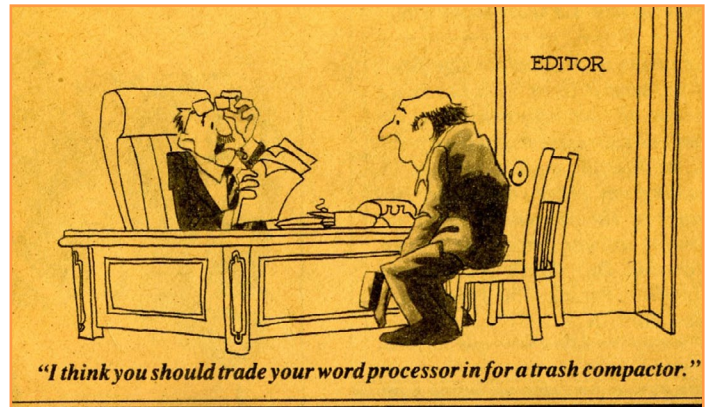
For writers only—Every writer has received rejection slips; too many of them for most. The "Financial Times" has quoted the "mother of all rejection slips," translated from a Chinese Economic journal. It goes like this:

"We have read your manuscript with boundless delight. If we were to publish your paper, it would be impossible for us to publish any work of lower standard. And as it is unthinkable that in the next thousand years we shall see its equal, we are, to our regret, compelled to return your divine composition and to beg you a thousand times to overlook our short sight and timidity."

Some other thoughts on rejection:

Chicago author Patrick Dennis, whose *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade* was translated into five languages and topped out at more than 2 million copies sold, moving at the rate of 1,000 to

5,000 copies weekly throughout its 112 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list,



described his book's journey into print: "It circulated for five years, through the halls of fifteen publishers, and finally ended up with Vanguard Press, which, as you can see, is rather deep into the alphabet."

William Targ, former editor-in-chief at G. P. Putnam's Sons publishers, once said, "The trouble with the publishing business is that too many people who have half a mind to write a book do so."

From playwright George Ade: "Posterity—what you write for after being turned down by publishers."

Here's the best rejection letter that I've personally ever received for a proposal:

"An interesting conceit but far too literary for our line of books." ■ — Jim Kepler

Bee careful what you right CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4.

The veto doesn't phase me. (So that's what's been going on in Congress! They're in the infantile stage!)



And finally, a personal favorite:

It's a crap chute. (What an extraterrestrial needs to know about a basic bathroom fixture?)

That's it, fellow scriveners. A cautionary tale of misuse to remind us to watch our p's and q's, or homophonically, our pees and queues. ■

— Joen Kinnan

President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6.

from a sad misunderstanding of the verb “to trend” as meaning “to become a trend.” Twitter’s “Trending Topics” list has probably contributed to this degeneration.” I can’t improve on that — or don’t care to.

The virus you want to catch

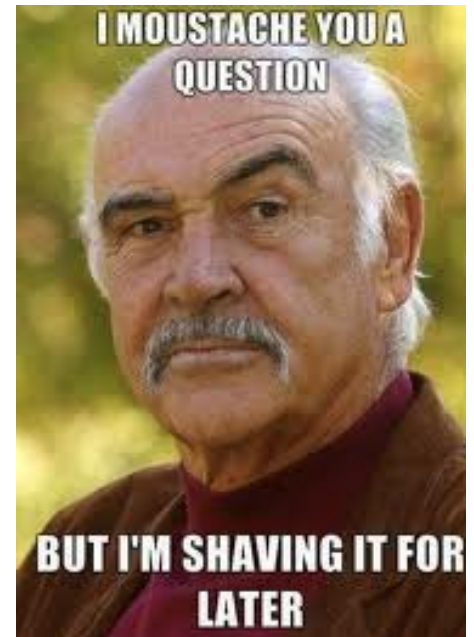
You know you’ve arrived as a social media marketer when your tweets and memes “go viral.” Viral marketing is all about the “buzz.” Wikipedia shows how the phenomenon of going viral mirrors the behavior of real-life viruses: “Viral phenomena are objects or patterns able to replicate themselves or convert other objects into copies of themselves when these objects are exposed to them.” Viruses are all about replication.

I’ve never understood why marketing gurus think it is smart to turn the spread of virulent diseases (note the “virus” root word) into a metaphor for successful marketing. Urban-diction-

ary.com has a way to determine success in becoming a virus: “An idea, concept, product, video or other cultural meme exponentially increases in popularity, meaning its popularity doubles every minute, hour, day, month or other unit of time.” We could call this the VQ, or “virality quotient.”

If you want your ideas and your memes to be on the Twitter trending list, you need to take steps to “go viral.” You could start by taking a dramatic, web-shaking selfie. But wait—that’s too much like the Carlos Danger Strategy—definitely not recommended.

But you might check out this article from wikihow.com: “Improve Your Chances of Going Viral,” which explains eleven steps to help your ideas or content “go viral.” Or you might consult a website called nevercoldcall.com, which asserts “Cold Calling Is Dead.” This site explains that going viral means “that your



content resonates so enormously that it catches on fire, and ends up being the latest big thing across the internet. It is when your content gets liked, retweeted, republished, commented on, blogged about, talked about on the streets of LA to Viti Levu, and it earns you more views than your wildest dreams could ever have imagined.”

Viti Levu? It’s the largest island in the Republic of Fiji, the site of the nation’s capital, Suva, and home to a large majority of Fiji’s population. Now that’s a meme to dream on. ■

DO THE RIGHT THING. IT WILL GRATIFY SOME PEOPLE AND ASTONISH THE REST.
— MARK TWAIN

In the next issue. . .



- **September 10, IWOC Monthly Meeting and Election of Officers:** The meeting itself will feature a panel discussion on self-publishing.
- **President’s column:** What interesting facts and thoughtful insights will our prexy come up with next? This column is always a great read.
- Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.

