

Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- NOVEMBER MEETING PREVIEW 1
- JEFF WINS AGAIN 1
- WELCOME NEW MEMBERS 1
- PRESIDENT'S COLUMN 2
- SMART WHAT? 3
- BLOGGING CAVEATS & MORE 4
- LINKEDIN RECEPTION RECAP 5
- DID YOU KNOW? & THE IPAD AIR 6
- QUIZ & SMARTPHONE HACKERS 7
- NEXT ISSUE /CALENDAR/QUOTE 8

NOVEMBER MEETING PREVIEW

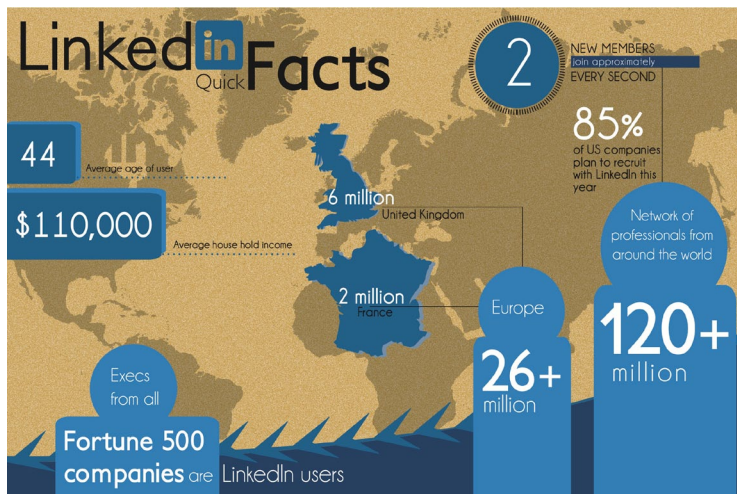
LinkedIn As You've Never Known It Before

Most IWOC members have listings on LinkedIn, which, with more than 225 million members, is the world's largest network of professionals from nearly any occupation you can imagine. But how many IWOCers know much more than the rudiments of using this extremely helpful business tool? We'll learn from an expert to do just that at our November program, titled LinkedIn to Profitability:

Advanced Tactics. Think of it as graduate-level LinkedIn.

Brandon Lewin leads workshops outlining the many advanced components of LinkedIn and describing how users can realize maximum benefits both from the free and fee-based features of the service. He is the vice president of business development for Image Perspective, an integrated

marketing agency that specializes in elevating independent businesses by using a customized mixture of strategy and branding in order to increase consulting assignments.



In addition to his frequent speaking engagements about marketing small professional services, Lewin has started three businesses over the past seven years. During that time, he used a healthy mix of inbound and outbound tools to strategically grow his businesses.

According to Lewin, "People have more

Continued on page 8.

Our Jeff Wins Again

For the third time in the last three years, Jeff Steele has won a Best of the Month award for a September column — "The Best Foods to Eat While Driving" — written for custom publisher QuinStreet. For this fulfilling task, Steele personally sampled 15 of the foods most commonly eaten while driving, then humorously rated them for their disaster potential.

Here's a sample: "Carrying a to-go slice of Sbarro pizza just slightly smaller than a tabletop, I hit the road. The only possible way to consume this huge triangle of crust, cheese and spinach was to place most of my head inside its three-sided container. That limited my eating to stops at red lights." To read the whole column, click [HERE](#). ■

— JPK

IWOC Welcomes
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Lee Ann Meredith
And Returning Member
Diane Krstulovich

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Help Us Help You



A comment those of us who have been around IWOC for awhile hear frequently is, "I joined IWOC six months ago, but I haven't found a job, and so I guess I'll drop my membership." Why would someone do that? It's as if becoming a member automatically carries with it a guarantee of being handed an assignment.

Tell me how, if that were to be the case, it would work. I don't get it. Why would anyone award me—or anybody else—with a writing assignment just because I paid some dues? How would they know whether I could do the job? After all, it's not like placing your order at the Starbucks cash register and then moving down the line to pick up your latte.

Writing is very subjective. It's nuanced, and it requires skill — real skill. It requires understanding and creativity and determination and some measure of experience. It's not "whole milk or skim?"

For me to suggest your name to a potential client, I'd kind of like to have some idea of who you are, you know? I'd like to think you can actually do the work and that you won't embarrass me, my client, or IWOC. I'd like to know that you're really a professional writer and not just someone who would like

to "try" writing.

I'm not going to learn much about you from a two- or three-minute conversation before a program or even after sitting across from you at dinner. And handing me a card or—heaven forbid—a resume at a meeting along with a "Call me when you have a job for me" seems a little presumptuous and inadequate, don't you think?

I'll be happy to talk with you about writing assignments or the writing business in general anytime you like. So will other IWOC members. That's what we're here for. It's not a formal mentoring system or some kind of mutual aid society or numbers-game power networking; rather, it's a process of getting

to know one another, of hearing about your interests and experience, of building —yes, here comes that fateful and faddy word —*relationships*.

I want to help. I really do. We all do. But give us something to work with. Tell us about yourself, and ask what you might have in common with other members or how your talents could enhance or complement those of other members. Ask questions, but don't ask for a job. You don't want to come off as disingenuous or calculating. Other than provide you with work, what is it that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.





President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

you believe IWOC can do to help you and other writers? Why do you think the writers around you joined in the first place, and what keeps them here?

What can you do to help your colleagues? It's always surprising how much you learn by working with someone to solve a problem or suggest a new direction he or she might try. You generally find that you know a great deal more than you thought you did, and that knowledge can be of use to others. Give us some ideas and suggestions about how we can help you. We'll be glad to offer some insights you may not have considered.

For Pete's sake, don't just walk away. When you do that, you waste the price of dues that you've already paid—thrown that money right down a rat hole. Shouldn't you get something in return?

I heard last week about a member who decided not to rejoin IWOC during our

renewal period because, supposedly, she had not gotten from IWOC what she thought she should have. And then what did she do? She turned right



around and e-mailed several members to ask for some guidance in pricing a job she was bidding on. And they helped her out. Now, what's wrong with that picture?

There's so much more to belonging to a

professional organization than simply adding a name to your credentials or finding a lead. Sure, some of our programs may speak directly to your needs, others maybe not so much. We serve a fairly broad range of writers, and not everything we do will appeal to you. That's understandable. If it did, IWOC would be a tutorial just for you alone and not a professional association for a diverse group of creative people. It's that diversity that works for you.

There is so, so much that I don't have a clue about doing, but I know that I can find someone in IWOC who does or who will point me toward somebody else who can help me out. I've never been disappointed, but I have been genuinely surprised by the tremendous breadth of knowledge represented by our members. Again, it's that trendy word relationships that will bring you closer to the success you're after than it is a single job. ■

Smart What? You Read About It Years Ago

Lordy, lordy, there's apparently no end to the ways electronics manufacturers can think of to part us from our money. The latest is the "smartwatch," which is getting a big push for the holidays.

What does a smartwatch do? Well, it actually does tell time, but in addition, it displays e-mail messages and text alerts. Some models also allow you make phone calls and answer them without having to pull your smart — what else? — phone out of your pocket or purse. This saves valuable nanoseconds during which you would otherwise have wasted your time breathing or blinking a couple of times.

Samsung's \$300 Galaxy Gear works with selected Samsung smartphones. There's a low resolution camera on the strap: much better than having to flex your wrist to pull out the phone with a better one, eh wot? It also has a speaker to make calls while your phone stays cosily hidden.



Sony's \$200 Smartwatch 2 works with a variety of Android phones, but you — gasp! — **have to pull out your phone to make a call**, though you can answer one if you have Bluetooth.

Apple's smartwatch likely won't hit the stores until early next year. Look for it to be pricey but probably featuring something unexpected. We suggest a snap-out switchblade to fend off the mugger who'll be trying to relieve you of that Dick Tracy thing on your wrist.

There is a newcomer in the bunch right now, though. The Pebble — priced at 150 bucks and featuring a choice of basic black or flashy red — comes from a startup outfit that raised \$10 million plus through the fundraising site Kickstarter, which may or may not prove P.T. Barnum's remark that there's a sucker born every minute. Time — on your smartwatch of course — will tell. ■ — JPK



More Blogging Thoughts

The information below came from a blog, “[Make a Living Writing](#),” hosted by Carol Tice. She has a lot of good ideas, and I was particularly taken by items 1 and 2 in the article below. So I checked the websites of those members who have their websites linked to IWOC’s. (If you have a website and haven’t linked it, contact the [webmaster](#) to get it done.) Not many have blogs, but almost all who do, list only the word “blog” on the menu. Some do have names for their blogs when you get there, but most don’t.

As for the necessity for enthusiasm to meet the constant requirements for fresh copy, I can vouch for that, though I have to do it only once a month for *Stet*. Fortunately, it’s my favorite thing to do, and I plan for it all during the month. I think that feeling is what’s required for blogging too if one is to avoid quick burnout. ■

— The editor

Your Killer Blog: Why It Could Wind Up Dead Instead

Many freelance writers are hopping on the blogging bandwagon to establish an Internet presence, which — they hope — will lead to increased business. But, according to experts, most writers’ startup blogs go nowhere because almost no one sees them. Below are three basic ways your writer’s blog might be set up to fail:

Your Blog is Nameless

Most writers use a tab on their website to set up their blogs. Fine, but when one clicks on the “blog” tab, there’s no header or name in 90 percent of cases. The blogger just plunges in, and the reader must try to define the focus or theme from headlines or content.

Name your blog! Whether it’s straightforward or clever, people want to know what you’re blogging about. Put the name on both the blog tab and the blog itself. Just the word “blog” on the tab isn’t much of an incentive to go further.

Your Blog Has No Consistent Theme

To get paying work, you need a blog similar to the one clients would want you to write. In other words, a blog that focuses on useful information for a particular audience. Show your expertise in the area in which you hope to be hired.

Don’t make the mistake of venting about your pet peeves. A client-catching blog is not about **you**; it’s about being of service to your readers.

By the same token, stick to a particular specialty niche. Don’t try to cast a wide net by writing about winning PR techniques one time and outlining what makes a good technical manual the next. Or, perish the thought, doing both in the same posting. You’ll just confuse your readers unless you can find a common theme that applies to different types of clients.

You Don’t Really Want to Blog

Blogging involves a lot of unpaid — at

least at first — hard work, and the necessity to post is relentless. Plus, you need lots of good ideas to post something new and fresh time after time. So if it’s an agony to begin, but you do it anyway because you have visions of big bucks rolling in or you think everybody’s doing it so you should too, don’t start. It isn’t going to work, and you’ll end up hating it. Plus, prospective clients will sense your lack of enthusiasm, and they won’t be impressed anyway.

Another problem: a big bonus of a successful blog is the opportunity to be a guest poster on other people’s blogs, but those chances won’t come along if your blog is forced and lackluster. Nor will top bloggers want to post on yours.

We’re not trying to be discouraging. Just think about these three caveats, and know what you’re getting into. ■

— Joen Kinnan

A Merry Time: Linking Up With LinkedIn

What do freelance writers like to do almost as much as landing new clients? They enjoy getting together to eat and drink as they share the joys and challenges of the independent writing life.



That's just what a whole bunch of us did on Tuesday, October 8, when IWOC members greeted a host of our new-found friends who've been following us on LinkedIn. Several dozen of us assembled on the mezzanine level of one of Mariano's newest and most deluxe food emporia at the corner of Madison Street and Halsted Street in Greektown.



Mariano's slogan is "Shop well, eat well, live well." To that, we'd like to add "... and network to a fare-thee-well." Our LinkedIn friends savored the best that Mariano's offers: Wine, crudité's with dip, several varieties of cheese, two kinds of pizza, gourmet sandwiches, and cookies to die for! Meanwhile, we enjoyed being fussed over by Kimberly, Mariano's very best bartender-cum-



waiter, who just couldn't seem to do enough for us.

All the while, IWOC members were helping the newcomers feel welcome, listening while our guests told us about their business challenges and answering their questions about IWOC and the Chicago freelance market.



If you missed this stellar event, we trust you won't feel bad. In any case, we hope to see your good-looking face at future IWOC meetings.

And with IWOC, we're proud to say that



there's always a next time, even after 32 years of serving freelance writers throughout the Midwest. Join us on Tuesday, November 12 at the Gratz Center at Chestnut near Michigan Avenue for more about how to use LinkedIn to stay in touch with clients and find new ones. ■



LinkedIn to stay in touch with clients and find new ones. ■



— Catherine Rategan

Did you know...



The following words are very similar, and people tend to mix them up. Not us IWOCers though.

Gambit/gamut (noun)

Gambit – A maneuver, a strategy or opening remark.

Gamut – A complete range or extent. *As Suzanne's risky gambit of playing all her aces at once became clear, Mark's expression ran the gamut from resigned to forlorn.*

Restless/restive (adj.)

Restless – Unable to relax or be still.

Restive – Uneasily impatient under restrictions, opposition, criticism or delay. *Passengers on the delayed flight to Boston were restive as the gate agent's restless fingers flew across the keyboard attempting to rebook them.*

Energize/enervate (verb)

Energize – To invigorate or activate.

Enervate – To weaken or destroy the strength of something or someone. *Patrick lagged behind, enervated from his night of carousing, but Betsy took the stairs two at a time, energized by her double espresso and glazed donut.*

Peremptory/preemptive (adj.)

Peremptory – Subject to no further debate or dispute, final.

Preemptive – Undertaken to prevent an anticipated, usually unpleasant, situation or occurrence.

The students' lively discussion of the poem was preemptive: they were hoping to postpone the quiz, but Ms. Janson's decision to give it was peremptory.

Cache/cachet (noun)

Cache – An amount of goods or valuables, especially when kept in a concealed place.

Cachet – A mark of quality, distinction, or authenticity.

The Rolex watch held an added cachet for Jerome with his modest upbringing; he liked to keep it with his cache of vintage cuff links in the wall safe. ■

— Katherine Mikkelsen

The iPad Air: Will It Float Your Boat?



Apple has been busy as a bee this month, announcing the release of two new iPads and a Mac OS upgrade. Since Apple-product users generally get short shrift in these pages, we thought we'd throw them a bone and take a look at the iPad Air. (The somewhat smaller and marginally cheaper – 100 bucks less per model – iPad Mini 2 has similar features.)

First, take note that tiny is definitely *in*. Analysts predict that tablet computer sales will shortly outstrip the combined sales of desktops and laptops. Never mind that you can hardly see the cat from across the room, if you want to be with it, you'll soon be toting a tablet (and probably wearing stronger specs).

Apple's 9.7-inch iPad Air is thinner and lighter – it weighs just a pound – and it has a more-powerful processor. However, CNET reviewers were disappointed that it doesn't have a larger screen with higher resolution, a higher-megapixel camera, or laptop-like accessories, such as a keyboard. On the plus side, it has a 10-hour battery life, and for fashionistas, it comes in silver, white, space gray (a tip of the hat to Chicago's weather?), and the always reliable black. (CNET lamented there's no gold-hued version. Who knew CNET reviewers cared about such stuff? Next they'll be telling us not to carry the white one in winter.)



The iPad Air also doesn't have the Touch ID fingerprint sensor to unlock the device or approve purchases as does the latest iPhone, but it does have Retina display, which means, according to Apple, that one doesn't see the pixels at "normal viewing range," whatever that is. My guess: far enough so one's eyelashes don't hit the screen.

Though taking pictures with a tablet looks dorky, it might be the best camera you have, so you'll be glad to know the iPad Air has a 5-megapixel camera in the rear that takes improved low-light shots. If you like to video chat, the front has a refreshed Face Time HD camera that gives you larger pixels to make images look clearer and dual microphones to better capture sound. As for software, redesigned versions of Apple's staple apps like iPhoto, iMovie, Keynote, and GarageBand are free.

I don't want your eyes to glaze over, so I'll spare you the wonkier details about processor speed, Wi-Fi configurations, and such. You can find those details on the Internet if you're in a fever to buy the iPad Air.

Before you whip out your credit card, though, take your blood-pressure meds and get ready for the price: Wi-Fi models come in 16GB, 32 GB, 64 GB, and 128 GB versions, costing respectively, \$499, \$599, \$699, and \$799. Want a Wi-Fi plus *cellular* model? For the same GB configurations, add 200 bucks to each model. So, for the very top of the cellular line, you'll have to shell out \$929! **Now**, we see why it doesn't come in gold: they'll have all of yours, and you won't have anything left that matches. ■

— Joen Kinnan

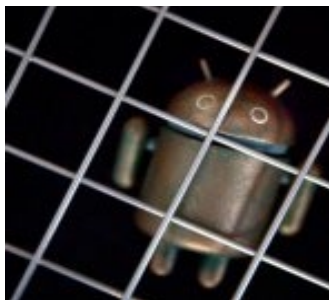
QUIZ

TRY YOUR HAND AT THE QUIZ BELOW. NO HINTS. THE ANSWERS ARE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, BUT NO PEEKING UNTIL YOU'RE FINISHED.

- 1 What is the definition of the term "hashtag"? Answer: a) a word that is badly misused in writing; b) a number symbol (#) used to label keywords in a tweet; c) a slang reference to the label on a can of corned beef.
- 2 What is an "android"? Answer: a) a robot; b) a character in a sci-fi movie; c) a mobile operating system developed by Google.
- 3 What is an "Internet Service Provider"? Answer: a) any company that sells goods and services through the Internet; b) a company that links computer users to the Internet; c) a porn Internet site that provides sexually explicit images.
- 4 What do files with extensions of .exe and .app do when opened? Answer: a) start programs; b) run scripts; c) nothing; they simply show what type of file it is.
- 5 What is "QWERTY"? Answer: a) a term used to describe a standard keyboard; b) an acronym for Quality Web Encryption Registry Table Yobibyte; c) a term used to describe an easily hackable Internet site.
- 6 What is a "MAC Address"? Answer: a) the location of the nearest MacDonald's as shown on GPS; b) the serial number on a Macintosh computer; c) a hardware ID number that uniquely identifies each device on a network.
- 7 What is "kerning"? Answer: a) the sound made by a hard drive that is failing; b) a method of changing the spacing between letters when typesetting; c) the wailing sound made by mourners at an Irish wake.
- 8 If you had a "UPS," what would you do with it? Answer: a) plug it in; b) call for technical support to get rid of it; c) use it to edit the photos you've taken with your smartphone.
- 9 What does it mean if you have "Bluetooth"? Answer: a) you need to see your dentist; b) you can communicate wirelessly with other Bluetooth-enabled devices; c) your cell phone will run longer without recharging.
- 10 Which of the following terms describe the qualities of "Fiber-Optic Cable"? Answer: a) it is made of glass or other transparent material; b) it carries beams of light at the speed of light; c) it is less susceptible to noise and other interference than other data-transfer methods.

Danger! Cybercrooks Now Hacking Smartphones

What next? Tempted by their growing popularity and functionality, cybercrooks are now hacking smartphones. Recently thousands of Android phones were infected with malware after some users download-



ed a seemingly innocuous app from the Android Marketplace. Google wiped the phones clean — this time — but hackers will persist. And, as with computers, when hackers get in, they can seriously disrupt your life, especially if your smartphone is loaded with personal info.

Signs that your phone is in-

fectured could include decreased battery life and slow performance. Also, check your bill for fishy calls and texts. And don't download apps from unfamiliar sources. Stick with the Apple Store, Amazon, Android Marketplace — they've beefed up security — and others you know to be reliable. For extra coverage, download free mobile security software, such as [Lookout Mobile Security](#) (Android, Windows, and Blackberry phones). ■ — JPK

Answers to quiz: 1. b; 2. c; 3. b.; 4. a and b; 5. a; 6. c; 7. b; 8. a; 9. b; 10. a, b, and c.

LinkedIn As You've Never Known It Before

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

information than ever. They are always 'plugged-in.' The combination of the two has opened opportunities as never before. The game of marketing never looks the same from month to month because new developments are continually being introduced. Marketing now is about relationships and sharing valuable information with your audience. Using those philosophies leads you to an endless amount of results. Businesses can grow in the blink of an eye with just a few clicks; you just have to know how to do it correctly. It starts with a plan, followed by



strategic actions, and progressing as you measure those actions and make adjustments all along the way. LinkedIn is a perfect platform for most businesses and professionals."

"We'll talk about using advanced tactics that will help IWOCers take their business development efforts to new levels," Lewin says. "I'll include some actionable steps that everyone can start trying right away. I also want to hear what's working well already for members and what might need some tweaks."

LinkedIn is constantly adding new bells and whistles to its array of services. Come and learn how to pick and choose which features will work best for you.

As usual, we'll meet on the second Tuesday of the month, this time Nov.

12, in the Page Smith Room of the Gratz Center, 120 East Delaware Place. Conversation and networking (with free snacks) begin at 5:00, the program starts at 6:00. Bring all the questions you've been waiting to ask and bring lots of business cards because no one can hire you if they don't know who you are. Following Lewin's presentation, we'll wrap up with a Q&A period a little after 7:00.

Then it's off to dinner with your new and familiar friends at Frankie's Restaurant, just a few steps down the street in the 900 North Michigan Gallery (Bloomingdale's), for a buy-you-own dinner (great affordable menu!) and much more conversation. There's self-park garage in that building, which is across Delaware from the Gratz Center; enter from Walton or Rush Streets a few minutes after 5:00 for a discounted rate of \$6.00. Be sure to have the Gratz Center receptionist validate your parking ticket for the discount. Several buses stop just a few steps away. ■

— Jim Kepler

"Everywhere I go I'm asked if I think the university stifles writers. My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them."

— Flannery O'Connor

In the next issue. . .



- **December 10, IWOC Holiday Party.** Bring out your holiday finery and get ready for some revelry. Location TBA, but save the date.
- **President's column:** Don't miss reading what's on Jim Kepler's mind. It's always interesting and sometimes provocative.
- Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.

