

Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

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FEBRUARY MEETING PREVIEW

Bloggging: Spiff up Your Skills to Pay Off the Bills

The digital world of today has revolutionized the way savvy writers search for clients. Take social media, for example (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc.). These media have caught fire as sources for hiring freelancers. Accordingly, IWOC has featured top-notch speakers, as well as online and *Stet* materials to help members boost their visibility and desirability to potential hirers using such tools. But we don't dare overlook blogging as a terrific means of adding new-client notches to our belts. Many IWOCers have blogs, but are they as effective as they could be in establishing the blogger as someone to contact for freelance work?

Here's what a successful blog can do for you: establish yourself as an expert in a particular field; dramatically expand your network to attract potential clients and put money in your pocket; provide an opportunity to advertise

your unique skills; and in the bargain, actually help to improve your writing skills through the exercise of frequent posting.

Obtaining information and business from blogs is definitely on the rise.



Consider this: In 2013, 81 percent of U.S. online consumers trusted information and advice from blogs (Source: BlogHer.) Sixty-one percent of U.S. consumers made a purchase — could be a press release or an article — based on blog recommendations. (Source:

BlogHer.) Seventy-one percent of Internet users read blogs. (Source: The West Program.) And 57 percent of companies with blogs acquired a customer from having a blog. (Source: HubSpot). (This could be you snatching up a client.)

So, blogging as an income-booster is definitely not a stone you want to leave unturned. And for our February 11 IWOC meeting, we've got just the speaker to give you the nitty-gritty on how to become a successful blogger and substantially increase your current income. Among other topics, IWOC member and blogger extraordinaire Barbara Barnett will discuss:

- The specific elements of a successful blog
- Ways that blogging on a regular basis can dramatically increase your business income
- Tips for improving your SEO

How to choose a topic about which to blog; i.e., what topic will regularly attract others to your site?

Barnett knows whereof she speaks. She is the executive editor of *Blogcritics*

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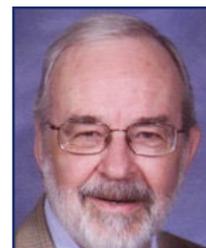
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Bygone Days



I'm not a journalist.

I have, however, been excited by journalism for as long as I can remember. Watching a pro, working from scribbled notes, craft a 10-column-inch piece in 20 minutes is, to me, a total wonder. The closest I ever came to the doing so was a two-year

journalism course in high school and a column in the *Wilbur Wright Pilot*; I'm from Dayton, the home of Wilbur and Orville. A couple of years later I was assigned a job as a copyboy (I don't think there were any copygirls

back then) at the *Dayton Daily News* for my co-op placement from Antioch College. We debated, and my friend Joan Kinzer, also an anthropology major, took the other job possibility we were offered, interning under Margaret Mead at the New York Museum of History. At that time I was more interested in exploring reporting than in fetching coffee for the Great One. Joan told me later that Mead was the most disagreeable person she had ever met. I dodged that one, eventually moved back to anthropology at The Ohio State University, and lost track of Joan.

Life at the *News* wasn't all that thrilling, I suppose, but I loved being in the City Room with its endless racket of loud voices, ringing telephones, clacking typewriters, and the ding-ding-ding

of the wire service teletypewriters. I got to meet people whose bylines I had read all my life. My family received three newspapers every day, one in the morning and two in the evening. The *News* was an evening paper whose deadline was 11:00, and so all copy had

to be in to Composing by then, or it was bumped to the later edition that hit the street at 5:00.

The early edition came out at 1:00. I marveled that I could deliver raw copy from a stringer at the police department to Rewrite, watch reporters

flesh it out and bang out a story on a giant manual Underwood—anyone who favored

an electric typewriter was a wuss, a poseur to be shunned—in no more than 10 minutes, and then jump

when I heard the reporter rip the sheet from the carriage and yell, "Copy!" My job, in addition to picking up copy from newsrooms around town and delivering it to Rewrite, was to make certain it got to Composing immediately. No dawdling.

Composing was fascinating. Gigantic Linotype machines filled the room and cranked out slugs of type from molten lead poured into the tops of the two-ton machines. The keyboards were baffling because in addition to the standard keys arranged as on a typewriter, there were other font levers that could change the output to italics or bold face. The operators were like cathedral organists with hands flying in a blur of speed. Somehow, I still don't know

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President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

how they did it, they would correct spelling and typos in the copy I gave them, capitalize some words and take others down according to their memorized style manual, and break words to right justify the lines they set. All this seemingly without thinking but letter perfect in the end.

The display type guys were true artists who set all the type the Linotype crew didn't have on their machines. They worked by hand, lining up individual pieces of different faced type upside down and backward on what was called a stick they held in one hand while the other hand flew from type case to type case, both upper and lower cases, picking up and placing each lead letter tightly and evenly in the stick.

Once all the type was slid off the stick and the Linotype slugs were complete, everything was arranged in a galley case along with whatever illustrations (cuts) were included within the text. Then a printer would pull a galley proof, which meant hammering down all the type so that it would print evenly and then rolling ink across the galley, placing a long galley sheet of paper over it, and running it through a small press. Those printed galleys then went to Proofing for a final check; if errors appeared in the text, the galley was sent back, broken apart, and the offending inverted or broken letter or misspelled word was replaced. When that happened, the typesetter, on his own, would sometimes have to recast a sentence or two to make room for the correction. True craftsmen.

When the galleys were approved, they were locked into what was called furniture and sent to the pressmen, who would arrange them into pages on

their presses; arranging meant that some pages were upside down so that when the printed sheet was folded, gathered, and trimmed, the newspaper would "read" properly from beginning to end with all the pages right side up and in proper sequence.

As the papers flew off the presses and were automatically assembled, they traveled on long conveyer systems up and over the presses with their huge rolls of paper—you've seen it in mov-

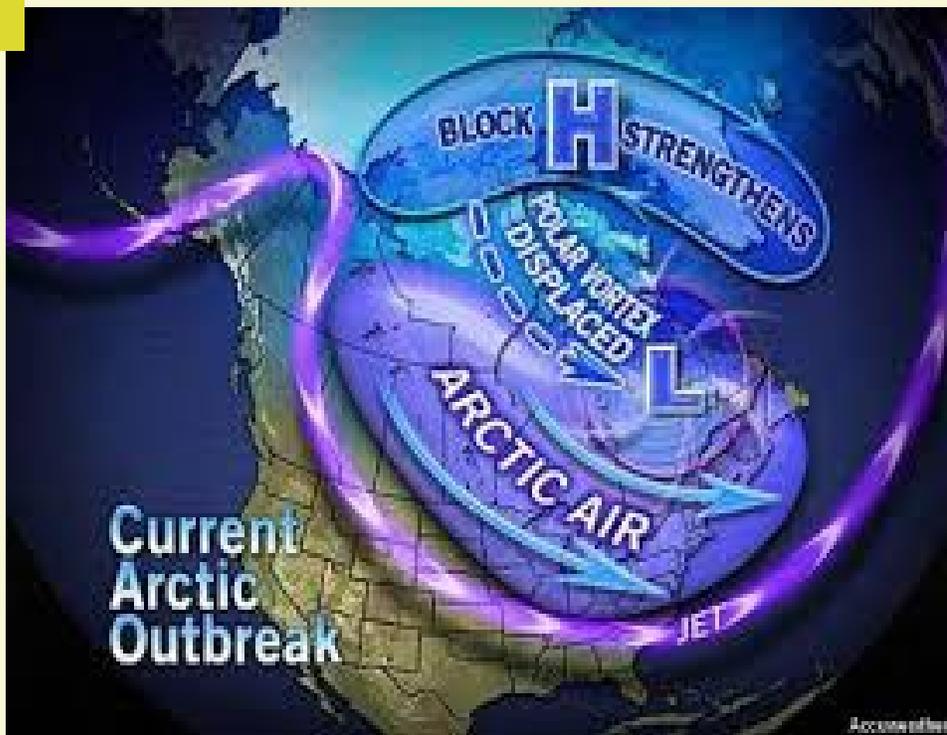


ies and on television—to the bundling stations, where they were counted and wired into bundles of 50 copies each and thrown into the backs of waiting trucks. Off they'd go to branches all over the city where paperboys—and paper-girls; there was rare equality among kids who delivered the paper that was never found in the City Room—would get their allotted papers, often a hundred or more; fold them into tucked in and tightly locked rolls; and stuff them into canvas bags with long looped handles, which they would then wrap around their bicycle handlebars. Then they teetered off to fling their papers onto porches (usually) for customers who were eagerly waiting to fetch the paper and pore over it until dinner time. People really read newspapers then. Everybody. Radio and TV news was all right, but nothing ever truly happened unless it appeared in the paper.

The newspaper I worked for was nationally important even though it was published in Dayton, Ohio. The *Dayton Daily News* was then the flagship paper of Cox Newspapers, which included the *Atlanta Constitution* and a number of lesser lights across the country as well as several radio stations that gave the company a voice from Maine to the Mexican border. James Cox himself, whom I accidentally met one day when he was an old, old man, had been a congressman, governor, and, with his running mate Franklin Roosevelt, candidate for United States president. He lost that year to another Ohio newspaperman, Warren G. Harding, who died in office, and the country drifted into difficult times with Coolidge and then Hoover. Cox, when I met him, seemed ancient to me, but he was still patient and gracious to a teenaged kid, a lowly copyboy. I talked about that meeting for months.

People like Cox were the stars of the day; so were his reporters and columnists, who were like members of the family, much more so than are today's entertainment and sports celebrities. One reporter comes to mind: Blanche Goufaut wrote an advice to the love-lorn column under the name Betty Fairfax. Blanche had been an ambulance driver in France during The Great War. Every day she showed up at 10:00 on the dot, uncovered her Underwood and hung a cigarette out of the corner of her mouth, from which ashes poured down her front. By the time the cigarette was done—she never removed it until it was a quarter inch from her lip—Blanche was also done with her column. She was old and cranky, and she attacked her typewriter as if it were the Hun, banging the keys and throwing the carriage so hard I thought it would surely sail across the room. Everyone loved her. I loved

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7.



The Times They are Achangin'

Though most probably do, some IWOCers still don't have smartphones. That's a shame because there's so much you can do with a smartphone besides incessantly yak — or text — on it.

If you've shied away from a smartphone because you don't want to be locked into a costly two-year contract, think again. More and more carriers now offer no-contract, fixed-rate monthly plans. T-Mobile is a large carrier that has good coverage. Cricket is smaller, but cheaper, and there are many others. Be aware, though, that you'll have to pay full price for the phone if you don't opt for a contract. You can buy a used phone — Craig's List or eBay — that you can convert to your use, but be sure it's compatible with the carrier before you buy. ■ — *The editor*

Polar Vortex Be Damned! We've Got Apps for That

We seem doomed to endure the icy clutches of the snow god for the better part of our natural lives, so we thought we'd tell you about some smart-phone apps that could make our lives a little easier and safer.

Put **ParkNav** (formerly FasPark) on your phone to find street parking spots within 1-4 blocks of your destination. The app ranks likelihood of open spaces from low to high, and it shows whether the space is free, permit only, or metered. Choose map view or satellite if you want to see the actual streets and buildings. Cost: \$4.95/month for 50 searches; \$9.95 for 150 if you happen to live in your car. Android and iOS.

Stranded in an unfamiliar location? Not to worry. **AroundMe** will show you the location of the nearest restaurant, bar, bank/ATM, gas station, hotel, hospital, and more. (You'll also find it handy to check out interesting places even when the weather is balmy.) Free. Android, iOS, and Windows phones.

The **Winter Survival Kit** app can be a lifesaver if you've skidded off the road into a ditch and no one's around. This app helps you find your location, call 911, notify your friends and family, and calculate how long you can run your engine to keep warm without keeling over from carbon monoxide fumes. It's gas calculator will also help you determine how much time you have to keep the motor running before you run out of fuel. Plus it reminds you every 30 minutes to turn off your engine and check your tail pipe for snow buildup (the CO thing again). Free. Android and iOS. (No direct link. Download from [Google Play](#) or the iTunes app store.)

React is a safety app for the whole family, regardless of the weather. React turns your phone into a powerful security device. With a touch of a button, React will send a silent SOS with your GPS location to select emergency contacts and/or authorities. You can also use it to report suspicious activity. But here's the best part: There's a "follow me" feature that allows you to have

a friend or family member track you in real-time. For example, if you're walking home from a bus stop late at night, your "tracker" can follow your movements along the route, and when you get there, you can send an "I'm safe" message. You can also send out a notification if you're approached by a suspicious person, possibly that guy wearing a ski mask and carrying a lead pipe. (This app is terrific for making sure kids get where they're going safely too.) Free. Android and iOS phones.

Gas Buddy isn't a safety app, but it's a money-saver. If you're just cruisin' around looking for gas, this app will tell you the prices of gas at stations near you. Or you can check out the cheapest price in a given area. Report what you find to Gas Buddy and you earn points for a prize giveaway. Free. Works on any mobile device.

Many of the foregoing apps work on other mobile devices as well as smartphones. Stay safe! This weather too shall pass. My guess is around May 15. ■

— *Joen Kinnan*

IWOCers Honor Founding Members at Festive Annual Holiday Party

Start with a basic holiday soiree, then mix in a little surprise party and a heaping helping of nostalgia. Sprinkle liberally with pad thai, crab rangoon and other perennial Thai favorites, and you have assembled all the ingredients necessary to cook up an extremely memorable IWOC get together.

The scene was the cozy lower level at River North's Star of Siam restaurant on the evening of Tuesday, December 10. Holly jolly red- and

green-clad IWOCers and guests hustled from the windswept, ice-encrusted Illinois Street sidewalks outside the eatery, dashed down the long staircase and prepared to make merrry at the annual IWOC Holiday Party. The festive party room was adorned in seasonally appropriate bright crimson poinsettias and lush splashes of greenery, and even the candy-apple-red exposed plumbing overhead seemed to imbue a festive air.

Having shed their outerwear, party goers mingled in clusters along the perimeters of Star of Siam's black-tablecloth-topped groaning boards set with white china and napkins, dissing on deadlines and clucking about clients.

Then came the star attraction: the holiday meal itself. Tantalizing appetizers of crab rangoon and spring rolls were quickly followed by steaming plates of beef and broccoli and



cashew chicken, pad thai, Chinese broccoli with peanut sauce and more – and were almost as quickly devoured by the ravenous writers.

Servers were busily removing plates when IWOC president Jim Kepler rose and with a clearing of throat announced a surprise recognition of the group's "founding mothers," Catherine Rategan and Beth Bradfish, both of whom were in attendance and appeared flabbergasted by the honor.

"This organization came together 32, 33 years ago, when Catherine and Beth founded IWOC with the idea of obtaining group health insurance coverage for Chicago-area freelance writers," Kepler told the rapt revelers.

"We ended up losing the insurance, but we had each other."

Presented with framed plaques conferring honorary lifetime IWOC membership, Rategan and Bradfish heeded calls to saunter down memory lane and reminisce a bit about IWOC's genesis in the late stages of the "Me Decade." In their quest for health insurance, Catherine and Beth realized they needed just a handful of writers to venture out to an introductory meeting of their new organization. Still, Rategan called no fewer than 130 area freelancers, exhorting each to attend.

"We thought three people would show up on the first meeting, and 35 showed," Bradfish recalled. "At the end, they didn't want to leave."

A third of a century later, on a chill December eve, Catherine and Beth appeared delighted to wax eloquent about how they had first established the Chicago area's preeminent coalition of freelance writers.

Satiated revelers, gradually drifting out of the holiday party clutching grab bag gifts, appeared equally happy they had. ■

— Jeff Steele

**IWOC WELCOMES
NEW MEMBER
JOSEPH TURKOS**

Social-media marketing means cultivating relationships, not selling

Social media marketing is a big topic, so when Sue Koch spoke at the Jan. 14 IWOC meeting she had many suggestions about what people should do, yet one of her points was about what not to do. If you don't feel comfortable on Facebook or Twitter, don't use them, Koch said. That, too, is part of having a social-media strategy.



After 16 years in the corporate world, Koch started Soaring Solutions (soaringsolutions.net) about four years ago to expand the awareness of social market-

ing while eliminating what she calls "unsuccessful random acts of online marketing." And who hasn't suffered with disjointed messages that clutter e-mail boxes and websites? It makes one doubt whether social media can be effective at all. It can be, Koch said. But it requires thought and planning. Social media are good for expanding your brand, increasing awareness, and creating a community with the people you contact. It allows you to sell goods or services, but the foundation is in the relationships you build with the people who connect to you, she said.

Koch had five key tips for marketing through social media.

1 Create a plan. Sixty percent of businesses admit to throwing material onto social media platforms without any forethought. You can set up a calendar. Outline what you will talk about in

week one, week two, and so on. It saves time and creates a consistent message for your audience.

2 Do competitive research. See what people are doing in other industries. See what is successful and copy it.

3 Distribute consistent content. You cannot write a blog post once every three months and expect to grow an audience. People won't revisit your site if they see you are not committed.

4 Choose what you use. People believe they must be everywhere online, then feel overwhelmed, and end up doing nothing. Instead, pick what you like. Use Facebook for a while, then look at your analytics and see what it has done for your traffic.

5 Collaborate. Keep in touch with your friends about what you and they are doing, and then cross-promote each other's work. All the traffic and cross links will help bring your work and IWOC to the attention of search engines.

Koch's model for using social media begins with a content hub. This is where your creations are, and it could be your website or a site such as YouTube where you post videos. Through Facebook, Google Plus, and others you distribute this content with links. Amplification happens when people like your content and spread it around. Many people skip the next step, Koch said. Look at your analytics and focus your efforts on the activities that bring traffic to you.

Blogs are a critical component in rais-

ing awareness of you, and writers can do this better than most, Koch said. A blog entry can be as simple as posting a picture and adding a few sentences of comment; visual items are driving web traffic at the moment. If you're a fiction writer, a blog could contain thoughts about popular characters of yours, or if you write public relations consider publishing tips about how to improve PR. Blog at least once a week. You need consistent posts in order to be found.

Pinterest epitomizes the advice to know your audience. If you want to reach women who are over 35 and affluent, this is the place to be, Koch said. To reach younger women who use hashtags constantly, Instagram is the place. Are you writing for magazines? They're all over Twitter. Do your business clients look down on the melee of social media? Focus on LinkedIn.

Facebook is a great place to get feedback. Koch's example is author Scott Stratten, who let his Facebook fans help pick the cover for his book *QR Codes Kill Kittens*. He calls his strategy "unmarketing" because he does not overtly sell but uses Facebook to remind people of his presence. The advice to post regularly really applies to Facebook, which won't notice you if you post only a couple of times per week. Post at least once a day six days per week, and remember you can write and schedule posts in advance.

Newsletters are an important way to stay visible to your community and are useful for people not active on social media. One client of Koch's clients sends a monthly e-mail newslet-

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Did you know...



Bookmark these handy, (and free!) useful websites.

Reduce Large PDF Files: This is a site that quickly compresses your large PDF files in the cloud. Just drag your file to the site and wait till it's compressed, then save it. The cloud compression is permanently deleted after one hour, so no security worries. I compressed a 300-page PDF down from 11.85MB to 9.76 MB. Now if the site could only compress other things, say waistlines ...

Check for Data Breaches: Seems that data breaches are in the news every week. Looking at you, Target. Besides using a password manager, different and stronger — combo of letters, numbers, and symbols — passwords for different accounts (you are doing all of these thing, right?), use **Have I Been Pwned?** and **Should I Change My Password** to see if your accounts have been exposed. Still looking at you, Target, but with a little more peace of mind.

Manage Unwieldy Projects: Say you've been hired to write a book or long corporate report with lots of moving parts. **Trello** can help manage that project and keep you on task. Think of it as an electronic whiteboard. You create cards that can be customized to include checklists, due dates, and even attachments. Share the board with a team, and you can collaborate in real time. Works with iOS, Android and your web browser. Kiss your sticky notes goodbye.

Not Helvetica: Cats on the internet? Entertaining. **Cats as a font?** Hilarious.

Katherine Mikkelsen

Social media marketing means relationships, not selling

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6.

ter with links to a couple of blog posts, to her social media pages, to a favorite book that is not necessarily hers, and to a video message from her. Images lead each item because they attract the eye, and the number of links back to her website helps her draw the notice of search engines, Koch said.

When you have your focus and get into the rhythm of feeding your social media presence, you may find you're

spending less time on these activities than you did initially, which means it's time to look for the next option.

If you want to learn more on this topic, an audio recording of the January 14 meeting and a copy of the slides from Koch's presentation are available in the Members section of the IWOC website. You must be a member to access this resource. ■

— David Steinkraus

President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3.

her. The lovelorn loved her. It amazed me that this crusty old broad, as she referred to herself, could write so tenderly and sensibly.

There was so much more than the City Room to that newspaper. The artists' studio where fashion drawings, food illustrations, and maps took life. The photography studio where dozens of new pictures appeared every day from a staff that was always on the go. They'd race back to the paper, run into the darkroom, and then do their touchups, removing backgrounds, silhouetting famous movie stars who were passing through town, and preparing extra pix for storage in the Morgue. And, oh, the Morgue! It was a magic place where I was allowed to spend afternoon hours when the City Room finally calmed down. I don't know why it was called a morgue because it was so alive with history that was happening right at that moment. I found it fascinating to read obituaries of famous people who were not yet dead. Their stories were written ahead so that their deaths could be covered in detail once they hit the end of the line. Sometimes an

editor would give me a pile of handwritten notes and maybe a clip or two and let me write an obituary. That was the first of my writing that I ever saw in print beyond my column in the Wilbur Wright Pilot. I was thrilled.

The whole experience was beyond belief for a young kid. Even though I had to get up at 4:30 every morning to grab the bus and be at work by 6:00, I was thrilled every day. Just running copy from the courthouse made me feel that I was a part of something big and important. Although I didn't get to go to Manhattan, I managed to escape the formidable Margaret Mead, about whom Joan Kinzer had legions of stories to tell, each more terrifying than the previous. I had Dayton instead and the excitement of working for a very liberal Democratic newspaper in what was certainly the most progressive city in the Midwest at that time. I think I got the better deal.

I never became a reporter, but the thrill and romance of newspapers still fascinates me. ■

Memories of IWOC's Early Days

The long and the short of it was — I needed health insurance. When I'd started my freelance writing business, I left behind the security of a regular paycheck and the reassurance of insurance coverage. Nowadays that's not so unusual, but in 1979, it was relatively rare.

I talked to an insurance broker who told me that if I could get together three other self-employed people, she could get me a plan with group rates. And if I could recruit 35 or 40 people, the group rates would be even better.

So I started calling around — first to my friend Beth Bradfish, who had just gone freelance herself writing training materials. She volunteered the party room in her apartment building as a meeting site where the insurance broker could pitch an insurance plan. Beth gave me the names of some other self-employed writers. I put an ad in *The Reader* and got a dozen more names.

I asked each of those people for names of freelancers, and by the night of the meeting, I'd contacted 135 people about health insurance. Thirty-five of them showed up at the meeting. One of them told me he'd had emergency surgery a year before with no insurance. "I'm gonna be paying that back for the next 20 years," he said.

The broker signed up 25 people that night. And it turns out that health insurance was just the beginning. Two weeks later, on a snowy February Sunday in 1981, a dozen people gathered in my living room to talk about what other things a group of writers could accomplish.

Jim Ardito wanted to be president; we named Beth as vice president, and I volunteered to serve as secretary. We called ourselves the Independent Writers of Chicago — IWOC for short. Beth was traveling a lot on business, and Jim wasn't the right person to handle the details. For the next year, I worked my tail off, applying for tax-exempt status, getting 501(c)3 designation, opening a bank account, and completing articles of incorporation.

A year later, we had our first board of directors retreat on a winter weekend at a meeting site in Spring Green, Wisconsin, where we drafted a mission statement and a vision. By this time, we were having regularly scheduled monthly meetings at a downtown hotel, and I created our first directory on my word processor — which then was still something of a novelty.

Over the years, IWOC attracted a lot of talented, dedicated people as presidents, board members and committee chairs. Once we started matching up our members with clients looking for writers, we made a lot of money for a lot of people.

Beth left to form her own business as a professional coach, and at one point I left to head up an association of video professionals, then returned to serve on the IWOC board.

Nowadays there are freelance writer associations in Washington and New York and Florida and the West Coast. But we were the first, and these days IWOC averages about 115 members a year. We spend a lot of time at meetings learning how to expand our expertise and how to profit from social media.

Last December at the annual holiday dinner, in recognition of more than three decades of service, IWOC awarded lifetime membership to Beth and me. We were grateful for the recognition, and I was grateful for all the friends I'd made and all the people IWOC has helped.

I think back to when Beth and I were putting together that first meeting. A lot of people said, "No, that'll never work. Freelance writers are just too competitive. They'll never collaborate." Boy, were they wrong! ■

— Catherine Rategan



Groundhogs have been offering weather predictions at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, since 1887. After the movie, *Groundhog Day*, was released, crowds as large as 30,000 from all over the world have gathered to see whether or not the scruffy seer will predict six more weeks of winter by seeing his shadow. Unhappily, this year he did. He doesn't care; he's got snow-plows for teeth. We, however, have grown weary of the polar vortex, so you'll be thrilled to know that good old Phil isn't much of a prognosticator. He's been right about 39 percent of the time. (A coin-toss is a better predictor.) He's been wrong for the last two years, so whaddya say, Phil baby, let's make it three in a row. ■ — JPK

Bloggging: Spiff up Your Skills

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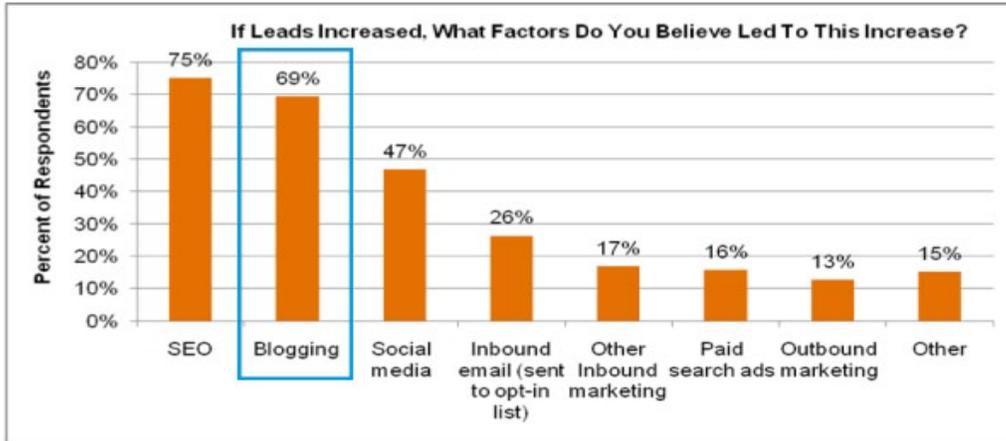
magazine, where she has also served as a writer, with her insightful, thought-provoking and sometimes provocative commentary on genre television, film, and literature. Her coverage of the television scene is legendary, and her single columns have received as many as 135,000 page views from an international fan base.

In 2012, Barnett launched a Blogtalk radio show, "Let's Talk TV Live," where she covers the latest in primetime dramas, punctuated by live interviews with the actors, producers, and writers

responsible for some of Hollywood's hit television series. And she is a mas-

The meeting is free for IWOC members. Nonmembers pay \$10 with online preregistration and payment or pay \$15 at the door.

After the meeting, all attendees are invited to join IWOC members at a buy-your-own dinner at Frankie's Scaloppini, where we'll chat, pick up more tips, and in



ter of social media with more than 4,000 Twitter followers and a Facebook page boasting more than 2100 fans!

You definitely don't want to miss this meeting. Visitors are cordially invited. Networking, with snacks and beverages, begins at 5:00 p.m., followed by the program at 6:00 p.m.

general have a good time.

IWOC monthly meetings are held in the Page Smith Room at the Gratz Center, 126 E. Chestnut Street, adjacent to the historic Fourth Presbyterian Church.

Discounted parking after 5:00 pm is available (with validation coupon from the Gratz Center) at 900 N. Michigan Avenue. See you there! ■

— Karen Schwartz and Joen Kinnan

An obviously demented Robert Frost quote: "You can't get too much winter in the winter."

In the next issue. . .



- **March 11, IWOC Monthly Meeting.** Speaker Nike Whitcomb, the new executive director of the American Writers Museum, will discuss this exciting new Chicago-based entity.
- **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.

