

## AUGUST IWOCFEST

*Put on Your Party Clothes and Hit the Roof to Celebrate Summer! It's IWOCFest!*

BY JOEN KINNAN



**I**s this a beautiful view or what? And it's all yours next Tuesday, August 9, when IWOCers and friends gather on the rooftop at Pegasus Restaurant and Taverna in Greektown for IWOCFest, our annual summer bash and pig-out.

Who cares that June and July were bummers: weather hot enough to roast an ox; a congress so embarrassing it would make Bozo the Clown blush; murder, mayhem, and natural disasters all over the globe. Forget all that. It's golden August, Tuesday evening's temp promises to be mid-70s, and we're ready to party!

Put on your kick-back shoes and sprint on down —

sprinting is optional; there's free valet parking — to this very rooftop, grab a libation from the cash bar, and plunk yourself into one of these very chairs. Ah, that's nice, isn't it?

Before you know it, you'll be swapping stories with a longtime friend or maybe someone you just met. That's what it's all about: relaxing, sharing delicious family-style food with compatriots, and having lots of fun. What's not to like?

The price is right too. Though the restaurant has upped the ante, we've kept it the same as last year (\$30 per person with online registration; \$40 if you must pay at the door; no checks except

at the door), but you'll have to pay for your own dinner wine or share a bottle with others.

Given your busy schedule, you won't want to read back through this cleverly worded piece to find the details, so here's the recap: Tuesday, August 9, 5:30 p.m., rain (indoors) or shine (rooftop); Pegasus Restaurant, 130 S. Halsted; \$30/per and cash bar; free valet parking; accessible by public transportation too. Click [HERE](#) to register and pay with PayPal. You don't need a PayPal account; they take credit cards. Please do it ASAP. We need a head count, but we'd prefer the rest of you too, so we'll see you there!☘

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN/ROGER RUEFF

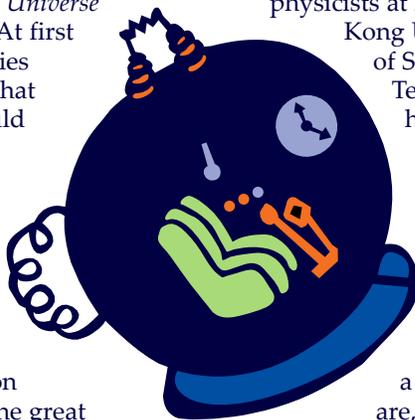
# Time Travel

Yesterday evening, after a pleasant summer repast of micro-waved punjab choli, toaster-ovened garlic nan, and refrigerated cottage cheese, my wife and I reclined in the manner of ancient Roman nobles and watched an episode of *The Universe* on television. At first glance, the series title suggests that the show should be found on the Discovery Channel, because, well... it focuses largely on explanation and speculation surrounding the great Out There and the latest scientific discoveries regarding the same. But the show hails, instead, from the History Channel—which I guess makes sense if one stretches one's concept of "history" like a piece of well-chewed bubble gum and sticks the far end on the moment of the Big Bang, when time itself began.

(The term "Big Bang," by the way, is commonly thought to have been originally meant as a pejorative—coined by the late astrophysicist Sir Fred Hoyle in 1949 as a derisive indictment of a theory that rivaled his own "Steady State" theory. Evidence appears to suggest, however, that his original reference was simply a shorthand description designed to help radio listeners understand the differences between the two

theories.)

Last night's rerun episode of *The Universe* focused on time travel—whether or not it is possible and, if so, how it could be accomplished. The short answers seem to be "yes/no/maybe" and "here's how." Although physicists at Hong



Kong University of Science and Technology have recently confirmed that photons traveling in a vacuum are, in fact, limited to the speed of light—making faster-than-light time travel impossible—other mechanisms might exist that would allow it by other means. One such mechanism involves warping space-time around the traveler and thereby creating a ripple in the space-time fabric that he/she could ride like a surfer catching an epic wave and kicking out at the final destination. Another involves finding or generating "worm holes," stretchy theoretical tunnels that connect parts of space that are, by conventional measurement, millions of light years apart. And if research at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Geneva, Switzerland demonstrates the existence of unseen dimensions, one of those dimensions might provide a sneaky, unseen pas-



sage through the universe, where the traveler could slip out one space-time door and into a back alley, like a politico in a 1930s Chicago speakeasy avoiding a surprise raid, then pop through another door elsewhere-time.

Whether humankind will figure out how to travel in time before it destroys itself or gobbles up all its resources and dies a slow, ugly death is impossible to predict, but I can tell you one thing... this year of 2011 is flying by. August? Already? Really? And nearing the end of my four-year tenure as IWOC president? Seriously? It's been that long? Oy.

I'll save the president-tenure recap for my final *Stet* column, next month, but the August-already thing... wow. I know there's nothing new or profound in that exclamation—it drops from the lips of nearly every middle-aged and older adult this time of year, especially when the first of a month rolls around and checks and invoices need to include the new month at the top. Where did the time go? Same place as always—into the trash bin labeled "Past." (Even in this era of green-consciousness, time cannot be recycled.)

The real question, however, is not *where* did the time go, but *what* went into that bin. Was it quality stuff that still glimmers from the depths? Acts of kindness and generosity? Moments that merited holding onto but slipped away, like all

*Continued on page 4.*

# Travel Writing Involves a Lot More than Lying on the Beach and Sipping Cold Margaritas

BY KAREN SCHWARTZ

At the July IWOC meeting, travel writers Jeff Steele and Katie Hammel gave an enthusiastic audience excellent tips about entering the field of travel writing.

Hammel is an editor and travel writer for BootsNAll Travel Network ([www.bootsnall.com](http://www.bootsnall.com)), a site for independent travelers who aren't seeking the typical packaged tours. She was a blogger at Gadling, an AOL website, and has freelanced for a number of other travel websites.

Steele, an IWOC member and co-chair of the IWOC membership committee, has written travel articles for a variety of publications including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Crain's Chicago Business* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Steele estimates that ten to fifteen percent of his income is derived from travel writing.

The speakers began by discussing "press trips," those free junkets set up to showcase places of interest that trip sponsors want to promote. Steele goes on three press trips a year, and since the late 1990s, has taken a total of 30 press trips around the world. "After I took a couple," Steele said, "it dawned on me that the sponsors expected me to write something and get it published." Press trips "are not a vacation," Hammel added. "You're going non-stop from morning until night." She did say, however, that while most press trips are tightly scheduled, i.e., the sponsors show you what they want you to see,

occasionally sponsors let you poke about on your own so you can choose what you find interesting to write about.

How does one get noticed by press-trip sponsors and publications that buy travel articles? Hammel suggested that aspiring travel writers consider blogging about their travels. It's a relatively easy way to build credibility, and it's a good way to get started.

Once you've gotten your feet wet, Hammel suggested, don't confine yourself simply to travel publications and travel websites. Writers can also write travel articles for MSN.com, Slate.com, and for parenting and wedding

magazines that always need travel articles. "Think outside the box," she told the audience.

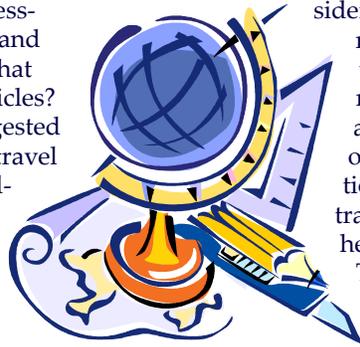
Steele also recommended freelancers consider writing for nontraditional travel-writing markets. "There are so many other publications that seek travel articles," he pointed out. Those publications include mature adult magazines, young adult magazines, golf and business publications, and trade publications. Payment for travel articles varies widely, both Steele and Hammel said. BootsNAll pays \$50 an article, while Steele said that he has made \$450-\$500 for some articles that he has written. Some

travel websites pay \$.50 - \$1.50 a word.

When it comes to pictures, Hammel takes many of her own pics when she travels on press trips, and she noted that a lot of publications pay more if you take your own photos. Steele tends to take pictures, not to accompany any stories that he's written, but only to help him remember the places that he visited.

Can you write about travel without traveling, one audience member inquired?

"Of course," Hammel replied. She noted that you can write an article about "five new hotels," or "how to pack lightly." Steele writes for the National Tour Association and calls convention and tourism boards in various states to get ideas. For example, he might ask someone in North Carolina about things to do in the city of Winston-Salem. ♣



## Jeff Steele's Travel Writing Tips

- Get known by tourism boards such as the Mexico Tourism Board, Tourism Ireland, French Government Tourism Agency, and others. They want to work with writers who can produce. Many of them have lunches, dinners, press conferences and other events to which writers are invited. Getting on the list of writers who are invited to these events can increase your chances for press-trip invitations.
- Network at every opportunity, and carry a bountiful supply of business cards. You will meet writers, editors, hoteliers, restaurateurs, airline representatives, and tourism officials. Make all you meet aware of your interest in traveling and writing travel articles. It's not unusual for participants in an event or trip to include an editor seeking travel articles, or a fellow writer who knows such an editor.
- Be professional and show gratitude. At a Chicago event or on a press trip, be professional and courteous. Take notes and follow up with a thank-you. You will stand out from the crowd and be remembered by your hosts.
- Reslant and resell your articles. Travel stories can be sold again and again slightly rewritten or as is, and this is a great way to get the greatest cash return from your efforts, as well as even more clips to showcase.

President's Column, Continued from page 2.

moments must? Did some of the moments stink of selfishness? And does the fetid aroma of pain and regret still waft from the bin despite your best efforts to bury certain moments out of sight and spray the bin with existential Lysol? Were the moments merely cuttings—scraps from the construction of a greater moment that is either yet to come or already gone and, therefore, consigned to depths? Or were they idle, colorless moments that are worth no less now, in the bin, than they were before they tumbled over its rim?

When I was in grammar school, my science teacher, Mr. Johnson (whom my parents disliked for teaching my brothers the Theory of Evolution) told me one day his theory of why time seems to pass more quickly as one grows older. When a person reaches his/her first birthday, so Johnson's Time Theory goes, the year that just passed constitutes the entirety of his/her life; therefore, it seems very long. When that same person reaches his/her second birthday, however, the just-passed year constitutes

only half of his/her life, so each month/day/hour/minute seems shorter—simply because it's a smaller percentage of his/her life in its entirety. And so on. By the time one reaches 50, each year is only 2% of his/her life, and each hour is only 0.00023%. And so on, *ad untilwedieum*.

So, like most things in life, the truth about time is a slippery and fidgety creature that's very hard to wrangle. And each time you think you have it leashed, it wriggles free of its collar and starts rushing about the room, wreaking havoc on the vases and showing no respect at all for your family heirlooms. Science tells us that here in the middle dimensions it is, for all intents and purposes, inflexible—each hour exactly as long as the last. Perception, on the other hand, makes us feel as if is constantly compressing—growing shorter, smaller, more compact.

The truth is not somewhere in the middle; it's a container surrounding them both.

That quality-of-the-moment thing, though... that stands apart. ♡

## Calendar

### August 9

**IWOCFest.** Starting at 5:30 p.m. we'll party on the rooftop of Pegasus Restaurant, 130 S. Halsted in Greektown. Cash bar; free valet parking; public transportation nearby. Register online and pay \$30/per person or \$40 at the door. No checks except at the door. Nonmembers welcome. For more information, call 800/804-4962 or visit [www.iwoc.org](http://www.iwoc.org). Click [HERE](#) to register online.

### September 13

**IWOC Monthly Meeting.** Annual business meeting and election of officers. Program details coming soon. Check the website.

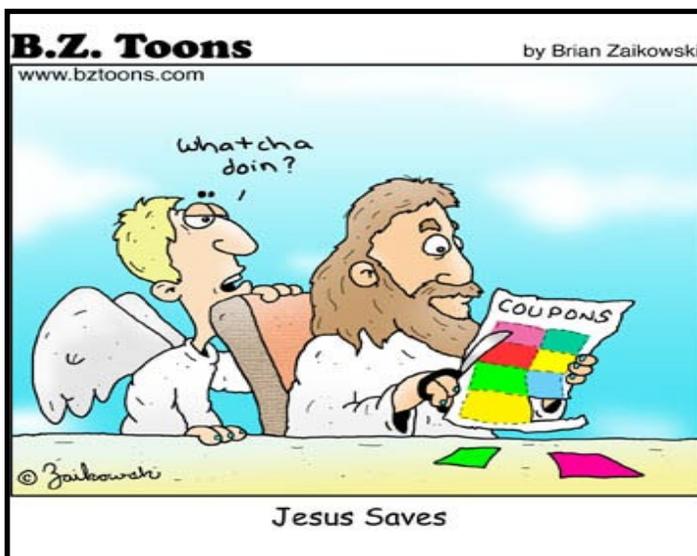
*The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted, but call ahead in case of cancellation. The groups welcome nonmembers. If there's no group in your area, why not start one? Contact [webmaster@iwoc.org](mailto:webmaster@iwoc.org).*

### August 23 (4th Tuesday)

**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. Note: The lunch is now on the 4th Tuesday, not the 4th Thursday as it had been in the past.

### September 1 (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 Coming Events

[WWW.IWOC.ORG](http://WWW.IWOC.ORG)