

GO AHEAD, HAVE SOME FUN!

It's ok to get a little creative with press releases. As long as you never lose sight of the basics, communicating the salient facts quickly, clearly, concisely. Written by Laura Stigler of *Shebang! Writing-2-Consulting* (www.laurastiglerwriter.com), the following are five examples of releases that got results. Feel free to be inspired.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[date]

CONTACT: [name, email, phone]

A HALLOWEEN SONG THAT HAS YOUR KID'S NAME ON IT: WHAT A TREAT!

LOS ANGELES, CA – Could there be anything sweeter than the sound of one's own name? Not according to millions of kids across the planet. In fact, over 40,000,000 children to date have cheered at every mention of their name on "Captain Zoom's Birthday Adventure," the most popular personalized song *ever!* And now "Zoom's" creators, Stew & Donny, have reached into their bag of tricks and pulled out what has all the makings of yet another monster hit: "The Halloween Machine Song," the first and only personalized children's song centering around every kid's frightfully favorite holiday. And for just \$9.99, it's ready for downloading at www.halloweenmachinesong.com.

Guided by friendly "Pumpkin," this magical tune takes kids on a kooky, spooky romp chockfull of weird characters and sound effects while weaving the little listener's name throughout. Ah, but have no fear: there are lots of brave, ghost-busting lessons to be learned here, too – the kinds of things that parents will really appreciate. A scary song? Not so much. But fun? You bet your Tootsie Roll!

Thousands of versions of HMS are already "in the can", to put it in music biz lingo.

"It's a lot of work creating all the different names," says Stew, who spends hours on end recording in the studio. "And Moms and Dads are even inventing names that have never existed before! But we're aiming to accommodate them all."

And if you don't see the name you're looking for? No problem, goblin. "We want to make every kid happy," adds Donny. "Simply ask, and we'll custom record it." Because when all is sung and done, "There's just something wonderful that happens when a young boy or girl hears their own name in one of our songs – not just mentioned, but rather as an integral part of the action," notes Stew. It's a boo-tiful thing.

"The Halloween Machine Song" is available for \$9.99. To hear a sample, order and download, visit www.halloweenmachinesong.com.

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Independent Writers of Chicago

The Premier Resource for Professional Writers

332 S. Michigan Ave., Ste. 1032 #W686, Chicago, IL 60604

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[date]

CONTACT: [name, email, phone]

**ARE YOU “BOOK” SMART?
FROM WRITING TO MARKETING YOUR BOOK,
INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO (IWOC)
LEARN THE A-B-C’S OF GETTING PUBLISHED**

CHICAGO, IL – [date] You just know you’ve got a book in you. Novel. Cook book. Self-help. Doesn’t matter. But once you’ve gotten the initial brainstorm – where do you go from there? Easy to find out if you come to the next IWOC meeting on Tuesday, January 12th, when Jim Kepler and Kim Bookless dynamically present their acclaimed Jim and Kim Show, or “How to Write, Publish and Market Your Book.” As two IWOC veterans and publishing success stories in their own right, they’ll equip you with their “one-two-three” approach to getting your book written, produced, published and marketed. All time-tested advice that actually works in the real world, whether your aim is to self-publish or go the traditional royalty route.

Jim is the hands-on owner of Adams Press, a 74-year-old specialty book production company catering to small publishers. Consultant, editor and founder of the Chicago Self-Publishing Group, Kim gently but expertly guides indie and self-publishing authors along the path from concept and development to finished books. Together in this info-packed presentation, they will cover the steps that will take your book from incipient idea to selling it in today’s competitive marketplace. They’ll also clearly lay out the pros and cons of self and traditional publishing, how to find a publisher, how to publish your own e-book and much more.

So clear your calendars and come to the meeting. Bring questions, share experiences. Get ready...get set ...get book smart!

The IWOC meeting will take place Tuesday, **January 12th** in **Room 4F** (4th fl.) at the Gratz Center, 126 E. Chestnut St. / 115 E. Delaware, Chicago, just west of Michigan Ave., adjacent to Fourth Presbyterian Church. Discounted parking (after 5 pm, with validation) is located at the 900 N. Michigan Ave. garage. Networking at 5 p.m. Main program, 6 p.m. IWOC members admitted free and do not need to register. Nonmembers, \$15. (\$10 if pre-registered at <http://www.iwoc.org/calendar>. Click on “January 12th IWOC Meeting.”) Following the meeting, attendees are invited to a nearby restaurant for a buy-your-own dinner to further discuss writing-related topics or to continue networking. For more information, call 800-804-IWOC (800-804-4962) or visit www.iwoc.org.

IWOC is a nonprofit professional association of freelance writers living in the Chicago metropolitan area whose clients range from local to global. Together, IWOC members represent a broad spectrum of writing talents, consultation services, and specialties serving large corporations, small businesses, and not-for-profit organizations.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: [Name, email, phone]

SUFFERING FROM ALLERGIES? ASTHMA ATTACKS? CREEPY, CRAWLY CRITTERS COULD BE THE TRIGGERS

READING, PA — Tra-la, it's May! Unfortunately, along with glorious Spring Fever can come a resurgence of allergies and asthma attacks. Just don't blame it all on the pollen. It could be the pests. May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and what's being revealed is the little-known fact that insects and rodents can also emit allergens – miniscule pesky substances that can produce allergy symptoms from mild to severe. So what's the best defense? The Rentokil Companies ([Ehrlich Pest Control](#), [Western Exterminator](#) and [Presto-X Pest Control](#)) offer simple, strategic advice that can help keep your home or office pest-free. Safely.

First, the facts

- Roaches. Rats. Mice. And more. Those unwanted critters can creep into your space, leave allergen particles in their wake, and when these are inhaled – boom! your immune system can overreact, leading to the sneezing, the wheezing – all those reactions symptomatic of allergies and asthma.
- Insects and rodents not only can help set off an asthma attack. They can even *introduce* the disease. As it is, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), over 25 million people (including more than 7 million children) suffer from asthma, a chronic, often life-threatening illness. Eliminating allergen-carrying pests in your vicinity can keep those numbers at bay. And may even help prevent them from increasing.
- After spring comes summer and with it, the stingers: Bees, wasps, fire ants – venom-producing buggers that can leave you with itching, hives and shortness of breath.

IPM: Common-sense defense

The Rentokil Companies strongly urge using Integrated Pest Management (IPM), the approach recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), particularly where asthma and allergies are concerned. Makes sense. Because IPM is highly effective *and* eco-friendly. The method combines a common-sense combo of practices, from prevention and the application of environmentally sensitive pesticides, to mechanical trapping devices. Some Rentokil pointers:

- **Keeping them out.** “The best approach to pest control,” advises (NAME/TITLE), “is to always focus on eliminating the root cause of the pest problems.” In other words, get to the pests before they get to you. Part of IPM involves doing a detailed check of your home or facility, scouting out any areas that could be a “Welcome” sign for pests:
 - Where are the holes, the gaps, the cracks? Check window and door screens, entryways, openings around pipes, drains, HVAC devices, etc. Then seal, repair or replace. Whatever's appropriate.
 - Pests are like anyone else. They like food. And sweets. Remember to wipe up spills, tightly wrap up and store anything edible. Leave it out or on the floor, and you might as well invite them to dinner.
 - Pests thrive in unsanitary conditions. Waste – human or animal – is their manna from heaven. Actually, any kind of dirt, grime or trash attracts. So please, keep it clean. Seal and dispose of dirty diapers. Close garbage bags and garbage cans tightly. Clean litter boxes often. Pick up after the dog – even if it's “outside” in your own back or front yard. Or the neighbor's.

- **Getting them out.** If the pests have found a way in, it's time to kick it up a notch while still using IPM. Says (NAME/TITLE). "No two situations are going to be the same. IPM takes that into consideration and provides an alternative to traditional pest-control methods that is extremely effective and poses fewer risks for anyone afflicted with asthma or allergies." A few for-instances:
 - There are numerous products on the market that can be spread or sprayed that are EPA approved and safe to use around kids or pets. But remember to always read labels. When in doubt, consult a pest control specialist.
 - Strategically laying mechanical traps will do just that: trap 'em. Or catch and kill. Admittedly, not fun. For you or the pest. But you do what you have to do. Or call a pest control specialist to do it.

Insects and rodents have always given us the willies. Now we learn of their connection to allergies and asthma? Nothing to sneeze at. And we won't. Not if the right steps are taken to prevent and control.

For more information, advice or assistance in implementing an IPM program, visit www.xxx.com.

About Rentokil North America

Ehrlich (www.jcehrlich.com), Western Exterminator (www.westernexterminator.com) and Presto-X Pest Control (www.prestox.com) are all part of the Rentokil family of companies in North America that provide commercial and residential pest control, bioremediation, bird control, vegetation management, deer repellent services, wild animal trapping, and termite control from over 150 local offices in the US, Canada and Mexico.. Rentokil is the world's largest commercial pest control company, operating in 49 countries worldwide For more information visit www.rentokilna.com.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: [name, email, phone]

**CALL HIM CRAZY:
LOCAL CHICAGO STORE OWNER WANTS TO GIVE AWAY THE STORE!**

**IT'S THE ZONE HONDA KAWASAKI
\$1 MILLION "LET IT SNOW" NEW YEAR'S DAY GIVEAWAY!**

CHICAGO, IL – So is he loony? Or just a flake? The Zone owner Marty Pavilonis is once again, praying for snow this New Year's Day. His Honda Kawasaki dealership is holding its 4th Annual "Let It Snow" Giveaway. If the heavens cooperate, and 6" or more do fall this coming January 1st from 12:01am to 11:59 pm, The Zone customers who purchased Motorcycles, Accessories, jackets, helmets – *anything* during the entire month of December will get a *complete refund*. We're talking *all* customer purchases, up to \$1 million combined, will be *free*. How cool is that!

Or maybe it's just stone cold nuts. After all, the chances of snow on a Chicago New Year's Day are pretty darn good. The Zone's Yearly profits could be gone with the wind. "Chill," says Marty. "I bought a weather-based insurance policy from HCC Specialty Insurance. They pick up the tab for the winners. So for a relatively small investment, I get the chance to make a lot of customers very happy. I really want them to win!"

Sounds crazy alright – like a fox! During last December's "Let It Snow" event, motorcycle, scooter and ATV buffs stormed The Zone, increasing sales by 20% Ever hopeful, Marty sent his customers home with foot-long rulers so they can take part in doing the measuring should the white stuff fall on January 1st. Turned out the snow was a no-show. "A flake fluke," quips Pavilonis. "But hey, in the Windy City, the odds for snow are usually with us, so we're shovel ready!"

Located just two blocks from Midway. Airport, Chicago's Only Honda Kawasaki dealership.
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

A few "Let it Snow" cold facts:

- Winners are paid on item price only. Not on taxes, government or service fees.
- For this event, exchanges only. No refunds.
- Snow is officially measured from Weather Command at O'Hare International Airport.
- Claims will take from 7 to 14 days.

For complete promotion rules, see The Zone store located at 4520 W. 63rd St. in Chicago or visit www.motorcyclezone.net

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[date]

CONTACT: [name, email, phone]

**DANCING INTO THE SOULS
OF CHILDREN AT RISK**

The story of DanceArt

CHICAGO, IL – “I’m drawn to help children by their eyes and their faces.” These are the words of Maria Gebhard, former professor of undergraduate and adult education at the esteemed University of Chicago and Loyola University. But it wasn’t until after suffering a profound personal loss that her life took a different turn, leading her on a journey that changed not only her own world, but is changing the worlds of children in communities where opportunity is all too scarce. As President / co-founder of DanceArt, and working in tandem with a stellar and deeply committed Artistic Director and faculty of world-class choreographers, Ms. Gebhard is gradually, but surely, lighting up those children’s eyes and faces with hope.

“It’s been said that the way to deal with loss is through creation,” states Ms. Gebhard. “I decided to begin the healing process by revisiting my first love, dance, and enrolled in a tango class. That’s where my path first crossed with master teacher, Jorge Nidas.” Having studied dance extensively while growing up, Gebhard understood firsthand the powerful, inspirational effects it could have on young, impressionable minds and hearts. “In rekindling my enthusiasm for dance, I found myself beginning to formulate a dream. As a widowed single mom, I’ve been reaching out to the community -- as you know, ‘it takes a village.’ I wanted to give back. Why not bring the joy of dance into my own community, but more pointedly, into the lives of children?”

She brought up the idea to Mr. Nidas, whose philosophy of dance coincided with her own. “Not television, not movies, nor any other medium or art form,” says Nidas, “can have the same effect on children as dance. They watch it and when gently encouraged, are eager to participate in it...with results that go beyond the art itself, and help them grow in so many different ways.”

After several long discussions with Nidas, the dream started taking form and in September of 2000, the DanceArt School was born, with Gebhard as President, and Nidas, Artistic Director. Located in the Chicago Park District’s newly-renovated South Field House of Lincoln Park, DanceArt’s initial goal was to be a community school focused on children and based in the discipline of ballet, with offerings for the adult members of the community. There would even be free summer outdoor classes in which Nidas would teach his passion, tango. But all this was only the first step towards an even greater dream.

The first student to walk through DanceArt’s doors on that Labor Day in 2000, was a young girl accompanied by her grandmother, a teacher who resided in Rogers Park, but who taught in Cabrini Green. “Seeing that kind of dedication sparked something within me,” says Gebhard, “and that’s when the DanceArt dream started to burgeon exponentially.” Such was the inspiration for the creation of the DanceArt City-Wide Program, an out-reach program unlike any other offered in the city of Chicago.

“If the City-Wide Program had a motto, it would be ‘The best...helping the neediest.’ Assembling the best: that was my first charge.” Setting the tone for excellence had already begun with Nidas. A seriously, impeccably trained ballet dancer and choreographer, Nidas is a former principal dancer in South America’s three premier companies, including Argentina’s Ballet de Teatro Colon and the Teatro Carreno de Caracas in Venezuela, and has performed in some of the most acclaimed venues in the Western Hemisphere, from the Teatro San Marin in Argentina and the Teatro Municipal de Rio de Janeiro...to the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The height of artistry is carried throughout DanceArt's entire faculty, comprised of the cream of professional dancers who are the city's leading freelance dancers or current working members of Chicago's most illustrious dance companies. "I attract the best because I treat them as such, paying them not just for their services, but for the consummate professionalism they bring to this mission -- which could never really be measured in dollars and cents." Still, in addition to being supreme performers, "DanceArt teachers must also be endowed with the talent to engage children. They must genuinely care, and instill a mutual trust. Those are the ones chosen to partake in the City-Wide Program."

That caring and trust is gained not by performing and then leaving the premises. No, this is where City-Wide transcends. DanceArt dedicates itself to Chicago public schools in communities at risk, setting up shop *within* those schools, integrating dance into their curricula through 10-week sessions of classes that range from tap, tango, ballet and jazz to Capoeira, hip hop, samba and salsa...and culminating with a student recital. Says Gebhard, "It's more than opening up the world of dance to these students. Through its performance, its history, but most vitally through the students' own participation, dancing provides a joyful bridge to learning academic skills, respect, teamwork, and acquiring greater self-esteem. That's not just theory; that's empirical fact." And the proof is evident in any one of the 13 schools in which DanceArt currently has a presence.

Says Clarice Barry, Principal of Fiske Elementary, "I've seen dancing make our students better athletes, better connoisseurs of arts...better *students*. They bring confidence into the classroom and do better academically. Based on the fact that discipline problems haven't resurfaced, we welcome DanceArt back with open arms."

"These are kids with heavy baggage," says Gebhard, "Their little bodies house souls that are untouched and neglected. The arts have a magical way of reaching those souls. You can see it in their eyes when the barriers break, and their inner light and energy come shining through. That is everything."

With both the Dance Art Community School and the City-Wide Dance Program firmly in place, Gebhard is already formulating plans to flesh out her dream even further. In the development stage is a "second tier" to the City-Wide Program in which scholarships will be offered to more motivated and gifted students. Transportation would be provided to the DanceArt facility, where they would learn reverence for the school of dance, the mastery of the teacher, and discipline. Also in the works is the creation of a DanceArt troupe of mature dancers. "Like athletes, professional dancers often retire from their company just when they're entering the prime years of self-expression. A dance company comprised purely of professional mature dancers would not only do wonders for their artistic souls -- but for all those souls, old and young, privileged to watch them perform."

DanceArt is part of Dance 21, a nonprofit corporation devoted to dance and art education, which is funded by private, corporate and institutional donations. For information on adult and children's class schedules and fees, and to find out more about the DanceArt City-Wide Dance Program, contact Maria Gebhard at 312-255-1166.

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