

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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OCTOBER MEETING

Know your (copy) rights!

While surfing the Web, you visit a client's site. Lo and behold—there's the copy you wrote for their corporate brochure last year. But what can you do?

That's just the kind of situation attorney Pat Felch of Lawyers for the Creative Arts will address at IWOC's October meeting.

Felch worked on the landmark Tasini case. Last year, in *The New York Times vs. Tasini*, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of writers, saying that the *Times* could

no longer take articles written by freelancers and sell them to online database companies without the writers' permission (and, presumably, without separate compensation).

Attorney Pat Felch will discuss the ramifications of the Tasini decision and other cases involving copyright infringement. These cases affect every writer whose work might appear on the Internet.

It pays—literally—to understand your print and electronic rights. ✍

Know your (copy)rights!

with Pat Felch, attorney

October 8, 2002

NEW LOCATION—

Feltre School

22 W. Erie (at State), Chicago

(For information on Feltre, see their site at www.feltre.org)

Networking 5 PM

Program 6 PM

Professional members FREE

Associate members \$5

Nonmembers \$15

New information on membership renewals— Check your directory categories!

BY JANE JERRARD

If you received a renewal form with your current directory information printed on it, please check the category listings carefully—ideally, against your copy of the current directory. You may find one or more “general” subcategory listings missing.

The general subcategory does still exist in all categories, and it is included on the two-page list of all category and subcategory options. The mysterious disappearing subcategory on personalized printouts is simply due to a glitch in our database.

A temporary solution for this problem is simple. Please write in any general

subcategories on your form, or circle all categories and subcategories you'd like for 2003 on the list provided. Then, please double-check your total payment to make sure you've included your “write-ins.”

If you've already sent in your renewal—first of all, thank you! But if you need a copy of your completed form in order to review it, or if you'd like to make any other changes this glitch brings to mind, please contact the IWOC office at 847/855-6670 and they'll send copies out right away. And of course, please feel free to reply to this note with any other questions or concerns. (For anyone who wants to make changes, we'll deal with financial matters individually.)

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Because of this snafu, we will extend the Earlybird deadline for returning your renewal and getting a fourth category free (and that includes any General subcategory). That deadline is now October 15. The closing date for all renewals—and appearance in the print directory—remains November 15. ✍

Directory Deadlines

October 15

If your renewal is post-marked by this date, you receive one additional free listing.

November 15

2003 directory closes.

iwoc

Independent Writers of Chicago

Officers

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To be selected from new board

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE/CHRISTINA FOSTER

Just one thing, before we get started

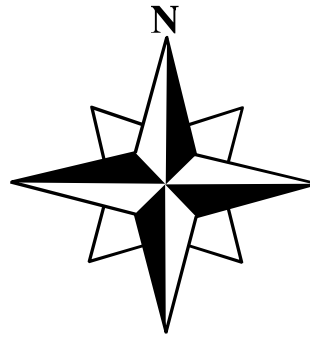
Sitting down to write this column for the first time, I had an array of possible topics from which to choose. Among other things, we're moving to a new venue for monthly programs. We're rolling out a new membership category designed to appeal to independents in fields affiliated with writing. A new Board is beginning what looks like a busy and, I'm sure, productive year. All of that is important....

And then I heard about Judah Graubart's passing, and Matthew Ignoffo's, and Sylvia McNair's. I didn't know Matt or Sylvia really at all. Matt lived in New Jersey, and Sylvia was no longer a member by the time I discovered IWOC. But I had volunteered with Judah for a while.

I attended his funeral to pay my respects, and I left with, among a lot of other feelings, a greatly heightened sense of just how much more there had been to learn about this man I had known only as a "good acquaintance." It may not be surprising, as these things go, but it was humbling. That feeling has stayed with me, and I suspect it will, in specific and global ways, for a long time to come.

My acquaintance with IWOC

When I first joined IWOC, in 1998, I knew no one. I was just beginning to get serious about life as an independent writer, and, although I'd never really been a "joiner," when I stumbled somewhat serendipitously on an ad in the *Chicago Tribune* Sunday Books section, IWOC seemed like a good place to



begin. Seeing a request for volunteers for the Directory Committee, I decided that would be an intelligent, even tactical, place to put my energy. I could get my volunteering feet wet slowly, learn about other members' specialties, and figure out just where I might fit in.

And I was right. Six months later, I did know a little bit more about everyone's specialties. Eventually, a longer stint as Membership chair and regular meeting attendance helped me put names and specialties together with faces and personalities. I began to understand more about the group than just the "tactical" statistics, and I began to feel I'd found a place I could belong.

Ultimately, this organization's led me to more supportive colleagues than I ever imagined four years ago—and I don't think you could find a less internally competitive, or more openly welcoming, professional group. IWOC members are generous with time and wise with counsel, and it seems impossible to walk away from any gathering without having learned something new. I've met some truly wonderful and amazing people, and made friends I hope to keep for

the rest of my life.

What about the rest of life?

And yet, I'm sitting here thinking about the "non-IWOC" sides of our lives, all the facets of ourselves that go beyond being an IWOC member. As well as we might know each other, there's always so much more to learn and to share. We each have talents, histories, and points of view others among us would find surprising and fascinating. (Keep an eye on the "Profiles of Success" column, and you'll see what I mean). It's too easy to lose sight of the whole person sometimes.

I do recognize we come together through IWOC for many different reasons. Our work as independents pays our bills, but otherwise plays a different role in each of our lives. And that means IWOC has many roles to play as well. Membership fits each of us differently—and that's appropriate. Still, there is such genuine opportunity to find community here, and it goes far beyond trading business cards.

So, I'd like to begin this new year just by saying thank you. Whatever role IWOC plays for you, I'm privileged and grateful to have the chance to know all of you. I'm looking forward to getting to know each of you better, and to working to keep IWOC a strong organization that meaningfully supports this part of your life. We have lots of exciting ideas for new ways to do that, and a wonderful team of energetic volunteers. More about them, and some of our plans, next month. ✍

Feasting at IWOC's round table event

BY MARILYN HOPKINS

IWOC's annual Round Table meeting brought together old hands, novices and everyone in between to share experiences, best practices, and tips related to the art and business of independent writing.

This year, rather than divide tables by writing specialty, each table was devoted to a common problem faced by writers. For example, writer, life coach, and IWOC member Lisa Kemp led a discussion about the roadblocks that get in the way of writing. She identified nine common ones, including procrastination, perfectionism and self-doubt. Several participants confessed to innovative variations on the basic roadblock themes and tablemates jumped in to help them get "unstuck."

Copyrights and contracts were featured at attorney Mike McCready's table. McCready's practice is devoted to people in creative fields, including writers, journalists and musicians. Did you know, for example, that you have some rights in an original name or title, even without registering it, as long as you used it first?

IWOC member and technical writer Jane Jerrard facilitated the tips and tricks table



where participants shared helpful information learned on the rocky road to

independent writing. Their conclusions? "Never leave home without your business cards. Let everyone know what business you're in; referrals come from the strangest sources."

Finally, IWOC co-founder Cathie Rategan, who specializes in scriptwriting, interactive media and speeches, moderated her table in debates on what to do about slow-pay and no-pay clients, including strategies for ensuring payment within 30 days of invoice. Although most participants have not yet made a practice of it, many agreed that a formal letter of agreement between writers and clients prior to the start of a project was a prudent approach.

Lively discussions ensued during each round with the presiding Brent Brotine sounding the gong every 15 minutes to signal the time for a table change.

For some, the conversation and idea-sharing continued during the Dutch-treat dinner that followed the meeting. But when it came to helpful tips and good advice, no one went away hungry from this meeting! ✍️

Profiles of Success

BY LYNN SANDERS

Meet Clifford Terry— Business and Feature Writer

Length of IWOC membership: "Since December, 1994."

Why are you an IWOC member? "When I became a freelance writer, my wife Pat recommended joining IWOC as a good way to meet people and network. She was already a member."

Expertise: "In the past, I was an arts & entertainment writer and critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. It's hard to sell those kinds of pieces to papers that use their own staffers. So now I do both business writing and travel writing—for magazines and newspapers—as well as projects like speeches and press kits. Feature writing is more fun, but business writing pays better."

Why freelance? "Being able to be my own boss and set my own hours and work schedules. I had been thinking about freelancing for awhile."

Projects I'm most proud of: "I wrote a press kit for the Shedd Aquarium, *Creature Feature*. It was a take-off on the old 'B' movies, and I had a lot of fun with it, using puns and whatever. The Shedd and their public relations person really liked it. I also wrote a piece for *The Rotarian*, the magazine of the Rotary Club, about plants in the rain forest that are used in modern medicine. As it happens, Pat and I have been in the Peruvian rain forest ourselves, as well as other places in South and Central America."

Other interests? "Gardening, because it gets my hands dirty and gets me away from the computer. I play tennis once a week when possible and read quite a bit, especially magazines and novels. Traveling is also a big interest, and Pat and I have been to Honduras two times, volunteering to help build houses for the Hurricane Mitch victims. This spring we took our sons, ages 27 and 30 at the time. They'd never been to a developing country, and their eyes were really opened. I'm writing a piece called something like, *A Different Kind of Family Vacation*."

Best advice? "Have a thick skin. Don't take it personally when you get rejected. I've been writing for years and I still find it difficult getting turned down. If you submit enough queries, sooner or later someone will want the story. Be persistent."

Heroes? "Jimmy Carter for his Habitat for Humanity work, and otherwise being a willing ambassador in the world's trouble spots."

How would you like to be remembered? "For being a good person and a good writer—and for 'having made a difference.' Although at this point in time, I'm not quite sure what the difference IS." ✍️

Publishing seminar

BY DANA WOOD

Publishing consultant and publicist Jodee Blanco will teach courses at the University of Chicago's Graham School of General Studies called "Book Publicity, Public Relations and Promotions" and "Self Publishing."

Blanco has helped guide 15 books onto the *New York Times* bestseller list, and handled campaigns for award-

winning films, actors, producers, and Hall of Fame athletes. She is on the faculties of New York University and the University of Chicago and wrote *The Complete Guide to Publicity* (Allworth Press) and *The Evolving Woman*. Her new book, *Please Stop Laughing*, a memoir on school bullying, will be published by Adams Media in 2003.

Book Publicity, Public Relations, and Promotions for Publishers, Small Presses, Authors, and PR Professionals

Two-day seminar, Gleacher Center, downtown Chicago
Friday-Saturday, October 4-5, 2002, 10 AM - 5 PM \$450
Course Number: PPBPPR 02A1

A Complete Guide to Self Publishing

Two-day seminar, Gleacher Center, downtown Chicago
Friday-Saturday, April 11-12, 2003, 10 AM - 5 PM \$450
Course Number: PPCGSP 03S1

For more information and to register, visit the University of Chicago's Graham School of General Studies Web site at www.grahamschool.uchicago.edu/ or call 800-997-9689. ✍

In Memorium

Judah Graubart, a writer on personal finance, popular psychology and mental health, and religion, died in September. Judah was chair of the IWOC Membership committee. He is remembered for his generosity, wide range of interests, and sense of humor. His passing was a shock and a loss to his friends and colleagues at IWOC. There will be a memorial for Judah Graubart on October 30, at 7:00 PM at Oak Park Temple, 1235 No. Harlem, Oak Park, IL.

Sylvia McNair, of Evanston, passed away this summer. She was a travel writer and a good friend and mentor to many IWOCers. She came to freelance writing in her late 50s, after working for Rand McNally, where she was a travel guide editor. She had a keen curiosity and authored many books, often under challenging circumstances. She was a former national board member of the American Society of Journalists and Authors, a past president of the Travel Journalists Guild, and a board member of the Society of American Travel Writers, as well as an IWOC volunteer. She charmed and inspired all who knew her.

Matthew Ignoffo, an IWOC member who lived in New Jersey, passed away earlier this summer. A writer of books and articles on a variety of topics, Matthew received a doctorate in English literature at Loyola, and a master's degree at Northwestern. He was a writer for 30 years. ✍

Calendar

October 8

IWOC monthly meeting, title and speaker info.

NEW LOCATION! Join us at the Feltre School, State and Erie, Chicago. For information about parking, please call the IWOC office. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15. Come and check it out!

November 12

IWOC monthly meeting. Join us at the Feltre School, State and Erie, Chicago. For information about parking, please call the IWOC office. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted. The groups welcome nonmembers.

October 3 (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.

October 17 (3rd Thursday)

IWOW monthly meal. Join IWOCers in the far western burbs. For time and place, call Barb Rozgonyi at 630/942-9542.

October 24 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP monthly lunch. Join near-west suburbanites for lunch in Oak Park. For time and place, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.

If none of these meet-and-eat groups is in your neck of the woods, start your own group. Be sure to notify *Stet* so your group can be included in the calendar. A Streeterville group is in the works right now. For information, call Christina Foster at 312/274-0597.

*For details about IWOC monthly meetings or seminars, call the IWOC office at 847/855-6670 or check out www.iwoc.org. Need work? Visit the *Writer's Line* at www.iwoc.org.*