

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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APRIL MEETING

“And the award goes to . . .” IWOC to share the stage with the American Society of Business Publication Editors

Admit it. There's something special about people who win awards. Just think about the recent Academy Award ceremony. The minute nominees get the Oscar, we're told, their professional lives are changed forever, sometimes to the tune of millions. The award gives them cachet—and cash. Whether we watch with admiration or jade green jealousy, the winners are front and center in every way.

Have you ever wondered what it takes to be an award-winning writer or designer? At IWOC's April 8 program, you'll have a chance to meet colleagues who have done it. They will tell you how to enter competitions, share techniques for winning awards, and give you tips on how to market your awards to grow your business and attract clients.



In a special joint program, IWOC will present a panel of award-winning writers and editors as well as representatives from the American Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE). You'll learn about the prestigious ASBPE Annual Awards Competition. It is the largest and toughest editorial-related contest for business magazines and their associated Web sites.

There are four categories—magazine of the year, editorial, design, and Web sites—and they are judged by the editors of ASBPE. An ASBPE award means recognition from your peers and an acknowledgement that your work is of the highest quality. And it's another tool to use in marketing yourself.

So, for a great opportunity to meet other successful editors and writers—and to learn new ways to market your talents and services, join us for “Awards and You” on Tuesday, April 8, at the Feltre School, 22 West Erie. As usual, networking starts at 5 PM and the program at 6 PM. ✍

“Awards and You”
A joint program with
the American Society of
Business Publication Editors
Tuesday, April 8
Feltre School
22 West Erie (at State)
Networking 5 PM
Program 6 PM
Professional members FREE
Associate members \$5
Nonmembers \$15

IWOC meets for a program
and networking the second
Tuesday of every month.

Preceding each meeting, the
IWOC Board gathers at 3 PM
at Barnelli's at Ontario and
Clark. All members are wel-
come to board meetings.

For more information,
call the IWOC office at
847/855-6670.

iWOC

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An IWOC Gratitude Journal

I am certain it's an enormous understatement—I forgive me—but I suspect you'll get my point when I say it's a very strange time. World politics is shadowing everything, breaking repeatedly, inescapably, into our days and nights. Crowds are teaching civics at the top of Michigan Avenue.

Hollywood's dancing Oscar uneasily around the edges.

For so many people I've spoken with lately, the effect seems to be a sense of queasy anticipation, nervous distraction. It's an increasing challenge to concentrate, to get things done. One friend in New York, a production editor for Random House, wrote me today to say finding the simplest words to describe what she's feeling, what life is like, is like swimming through oatmeal.

In the face of everything, when it seems so easy for our minds to be half here and half there, when other things could so easily, and understandably, take precedence, I want to take a moment now and thank all the folks who are giving time and energy to IWOC.

NEW SOURCEBOOK ARRIVES

The 2003 SourceBook should have arrived in your mailbox by now, and is on its way to nearly 1700 end-users in the business community. I hope you'll agree with me: it looks fabulous. I'll echo Jane Jerrard's thanks to everyone involved in making it happen: many thanks to Eve Bradshaw, Ellen Krupp, Becky Maginn

and Phil Perry for their proofreading prowess; to Ed Bouchard, for his dedication to setting up the online version; to Bob Hashioka, of Ganymede Graphics, for yet another creative, eye-catching, and memorable cover; and to Rick Quatro of Carmen Publishing, for his ease with all things layout. Thanks to you, too, Jane!—for your commitment, and for putting your master juggling skills to work again this year. You guys did a terrific job.

Next up, thanks to Marilyn Hopkins, Pat Terry, and Cindy Mehalow, our inventive and resourceful PR team, scouring the globe for new ways to get the word out. (Welcome back, Pat! And Cliff!) My thanks, too, to Esther Manewith and Rob Sullivan, and to Barb Silverman, IWOC's Marketing gurus. They've got some interesting and promising plans for new ways to increase our collective visibility; watch for more information soon.

PROGRAMS AND SEMINARS

Over at Programs, Viktorija Todorovska's been working hard to bring us all informative monthly offerings (and then often complements them with exquisitely yummy homemade treats. Don't miss the butterscotch fudge!). Jennifer Oatfield's recently lent her incredible energy, and together they're developing a long-awaited long-term calendar. Thanks so much, you two.

Applause, please, too, for

the generosity of both Barbara Rozgonyi and Rob Sullivan, members who've brought their expertise to the IWOC program stage so far this year—another reminder that that new SourceBook is filled with some pretty special folks!

Speaking of public events, my gratitude to Jenny Hamby and Harry Karabel, our expert and indefatigable (and extraordinarily patient!) leaders at Seminars. Jenny's outlined several pages of exciting topic ideas, and you'll be seeing much, much more about all of them very soon. The calendar's filling up here, too!

NEW RATE SURVEY COMING

Also upcoming, watch for an all-new Rate Survey to be e-mailed your way in the coming weeks. Brent Brotine and Alan Laduzinsky are heading the project, along with Jennifer Oatfield and Becky Maginn. With so much change in the economy since the last Survey was published in 2000, with your input and participation, the work they're doing will result in a major resource for us all. Thanks, everybody! ('Cause you ARE going to respond, right?)

When it comes to jobs, my thanks go to Dianne Rowland as well, for all her hard work transitioning Writers' Line to its new online format. Keep an eye on new opportunities at iwoc.org!—you'll never know what you may find.

President's column continued

(And, thanks to Jim Hodl for the object reminder that IWOC members are always welcome to post jobs, too!)

Widening the online scope a bit: sincere and long-standing thanks to former Associate member Tom Kepler, for his hours and hours of work as our more-than-capable, creative Webmaster. With work and family keeping him busier than ever, Tom's stepped back from this role recently, and he'll be missed.

My appreciation to Sue Tague for her energy and commitment to continuing to develop the site, and to those of you who've expressed interest in getting more involved. (And if you're not yet part of that group, but would like to be, I can promise you we'll continue to need assistance as the site grows. If you're considering volunteering in this area, please don't hesitate to contact me!)

NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

That brings me to another generous new volunteer, Jeff Steele, who's stepping into the leadership role at Membership. We've got some plans on deck, and lots of work to do to both maintain existing membership benefits and reach out to prospective members, and I'm looking forward to Jeff's energetic involvement. (That's some smooth table patter already, JS!) Thank you, sir. Again, thanks, too, to those who have indicated interest in helping here, but if you haven't yet, and

would like to, please do e-mail or call. And much appreciation as well to Sally Chapralis, who, as our resident new-application reviewer, so very kindly continues to open her mail box.

Before I sign off, I also want to thank IWOC's "extended family"—Shirley Friedlander and her staff at Office Center of Gurnee, who take care of all the little, and not so little, behind-the-scenes operational details for us, and Larry Lenza and everyone at the Feltre School, who have made it so incredibly easy to feel immediately at home in a warm, cozy new space.

I'm grateful, too, to the Board team, and to Jim Kepler, Joen Kinnan, Karen Schwartz, and Maija Rothenberg—in all cases, for their great ideas, and their willingness to share them (not to mention pitch in and make them happen).

Finally, I want to give special thanks to Elaine Fiedler and Mary Ann Porucznik, who patiently ensure that *Stet* follows us, no matter what changes our plots and plans bring about—each month chronicling what's always at the heart of IWOC: a very special group of very talented and giving people. And thanks to the regular contributors Lynn Sanders and Richard Eastline as well as others who add so much to *Stet*.

With gratitude for all of you, and especially for the ongoing efforts of all our volunteers these days, I wish us all peace. ✍

Attitude counts—even when you do taxes

BY ANNE BASYE

On April 15, you won't be filing your taxes. You'll be making your first offer. That's what CPA Gary Bradley told IWOCers in February. "Filing taxes is a game with two objects," he said. "Do not go to jail, and do not give them all your money."

To Bradley, taxes are more a matter of attitude than rules. Deciding how to interpret the gray areas of IRS regulations is the creative aspect of his work.

But "creative" doesn't mean foolish. "You need to feel comfortable with your tax position," he counseled. Here are his recommendations:

S Choose an accountant on the IRS's "good" list, whose clients are rarely, if ever, audited.

S Accurately report all your income. "Auditors look for unreported income. The place to be aggressive is with deductions."

S Estimates for mileage are fine, but receipts, logs, and documentation are a good insurance policy. For travel and entertainment, make constructive notes on where you went and what you did, in case you need to explain years later. And if you're not sure whether an expense is travel or research, choose the latter—"less of a red flag."

S You can write off a new computer in one year instead of five, but counting it as capital expense and depreciating it over several years looks better to the IRS.

S This year, we self-employed can deduct 70 percent of our health insurance premiums and make very generous contributions to retirement plans.

RED FLAGS

Several factors can trigger an audit, Bradley explained: high income, sloppy tax forms (never fill yours out by hand), forms that list 47 lines of deductions under "Other," and returns with math mistakes.

If you are not audited within a year after filing your taxes, you're 90 % clear. But if you are audited, your returns will be compared year to year. "Precedent is important," he noted. "Before you file, compare your return to previous returns. Are you doing something different that might attract attention?"

The IRS recommends keeping records for 7-10 years, but in an audit, "they can go back infinitely. Keep your records as long as you can, but at least three years," Bradley said.

If you are notified that you will be audited, read the letter carefully to understand what the IRS is looking for, and answer carefully. But there's good news for IWOC writers: "Great letters to the IRS can help." ✍

Profiles of success

BY LYNN SANDERS

Meet Jill Shtulman

Award-winning direct marketing & print advertising writer

Why Are You An IWOC Member? “The networking has been great! I’ve attained jobs through the IWOC Writer Sourcebook that I wouldn’t have otherwise gotten. I don’t know of any other association that is so proactive in supporting its members in their quest for assignments.”

Background: “I served for eight years as a V.P., Creative Director at Rapp Collins Marcoa in Chicago. In 1989, I got vested, quit two days later, and started my own business: JSA Creative Services, LLC. Although I focus on financial, insurance and publishing, I’ve worked on every kind of project in 14 years— from theodolites (construction equipment) to Porta-Potties!”

Why Freelance? “I love it! My time is my own. I can write as I’d like without agency politics. I can work on a number of different

accounts and in a number of different styles—sometimes, all in one day! And, I get to work directly with the client, without many layers of account execs in between. That’s very rewarding.”

Expertise: “Very strong financial. I’ve done everything from services and retention to loyalty programs. My major focus is direct marketing: brochures, to solo mailings, inserts, catalogs, you name it! I’ve won over a dozen awards for my work—ECHO (Direct Marketing Association national award), the Folio (Magazine award), TEMPO (Chicago Association of Direct Marketing), including four awards for Motorola. At that time, it was the most awards by TEMPO for one company in one year.”

Most Proud Of: “One project that instantly comes to mind is for Kemper’s retirement market. I gave them brand

identity by using a catchy egg theme. For instance, ‘Keep your investment sunny side up.’ Or, ‘Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.’ The series got a huge response rate of about 25% and rolled out for a second year. I also was featured in the *Wall Street Journal* in October of 1994 in an article on successful home-based businesses—‘The Way It Works.’”

Other Interests? “Working out, skiing, playing with my Maltese (a big dog trapped in a small dog’s body), the theatre, opera, all the arts. I’m also a voracious reader of fiction—Charles Baxter, Margaret Atwood, Barbara Kingsolver, and Ann Tyler.”

Best Advice? “People usually go to the most highly visible companies and agencies to find work. There’s a lot of competition there, and an unlikely chance of actually getting the work. I associate with affinity companies—

design studios, list brokers, marketing firms, printers. They get the clients and then farm out the writing. In other words, they do the sales and marketing work for you. It’s a good way to get yourself out there. I give them a 10% to 20% markup, and it’s worth it.”

Personal Heroes? “In my mind, heroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things. Certainly, the firefighters and policeman and those on the flight that went down over Pennsylvania take my breath away. Christopher Reeve also comes to mind. He’s a true superman by turning around a tragedy and shining the spotlight on the need for spinal disorder funding.”

How Would You Like To Be Remembered? “Someone who gave my best in an ethical way. Someone who gave back and made a difference in the life of others.” ✍

*IWOC welcomes
new Associate Member
Beth Boosalis Davis*

HANKERING AFTER YOUR OWN BYLINE OR COLUMN? IT’S EASIER THAN YOU MAY THINK—

Send your article to *Stet*, and you’ll be in like Flynn! You’re invited to try your hand at our monthly Profile of Success column. Lynn Sanders has provided the questions—all you have to do is call an IWOC member and ask them. Or cover the month’s program. Or come up with your own ideas. E-mail us at map133@aol.com or call 708-386-3796.

FYI

Upcoming events

WRITERS & EDITORS/ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCE

The ninth annual Writers & Editors/One-on-One Conference will be held July 11-13, 2003. The conference is billed as “a way for established magazine freelancers to meet in person with editors from *Details*, *Fitness*, *Dwell*, *Redwood Custom Publishing*, *Lifetime*, *Popular Science*, *Saveur*, and *USA Weekend*.”

Writers are invited to hear what these editors want—and actually meet with some of them in private 10-minute sessions. Only the first 60 qualified writers will be accepted.

The conference will be held at Chicago's Doubletree Guest Suites near the Magnificent Mile. The \$450 early bird registration fee includes presentations from all eight editors, one-on-one sessions, the keynote luncheon, roundtable discussions, a welcome reception, and more.

Details, daily schedules, and applications are available at <http://www.magazinewriters.com>.

from Jim Kepler

MAY 10 WORKSHOP—SAVE THE DATE!

IWOC is teaming up with the Midwest Writers Association to co-sponsor “How to Effectively Market Your Writing Services,” a three-hour workshop tentatively scheduled for May 10.

The workshop will be taught by freelance writer and speaker Kathy MacDonald, author of *Creating Your Life Collage: Strategies for Solving the Work/Life Dilemma*.

Participants will learn the ins and outs of preparing a successful personal marketing plan, setting achievable goals, and drafting powerful one-minute commercials and positioning statements.

Watch your e-mail for more details!

from Jenny Hamby

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Do you know of any upcoming events that might be of interest to your fellow IWOCers? If you want information included in next month's *Stet*, please e-mail it to map133@aol.com by April 15 for it to appear in the May issue of *Stet*.

P.S. That goes for news about yourself as well. Go ahead, blow your own horn. It's good for you.

**Need work?
Check out
IWOC's Writer's Line
www.iwoc.org
user id: iwoc
password: chgowtrr**

Calendar

April 8

Board meeting: Barnelli's, at Ontario and Clark, 3 PM. All members are welcome to attend.

IWOC monthly meeting: “Awards and You,” with a panel from the American Society of Business Publication Editors discussing the importance of awards for professionals. At The Feltre School, 22 West 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!

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.

April 3 / May 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 information, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

April 24 (4th Thursday)

IWOOP monthly lunch: The West Suburban group meets at noon at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion, Oak Park. Contact: Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.

February 18 (3rd Tuesday)

Far North monthly breakfast: At 9:00 AM at Egg Harbor, 300 Village Green, Lincolnshire. For more information, call 847/821-1515. Contact: Carrie Suarez, carrie.suarez@worldnet.att.net.

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.