

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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IWOCFest

Come and enjoy an Olympian feast!

The Greeks will be in the news this August and the bets are on. Will they complete the venues in time? Will the games unfold without incident? Will the athletes show up? After their soccer team went from underdog to World Cup winner and emerged as the "new Greek gods," will any Greeks show up?



Well, you won't have to worry about any of that (unless you're going to Greece, you lucky devil). You can have your baklava and eat it too at IWOCFest, Tuesday evening, August 10. Come to the rooftop of Pegasus Taverna in Greektown at 130 S. Halsted, get together with old friends and new, and enjoy a truly Olympian feast. Your host Yanni promises another whopping multi-course meal for IWOC members and their guests.

Dinner includes appetizers, salads, shrimp and chicken kebobs, vegetarian dishes, and more. With each dish, try to keep in mind that more—much more—will be coming to the table as dinner proceeds. Believe me, you'll want to save room, because each one is better than the last.

Cost to each participant is \$27 for reservations sent to the office before August 5 and \$30 at the door. For reservations, send your checks to the IWOC office at PMB 119, 5465 W. Grand Ave., Gurnee, IL 60031. Or, if you wish, you can go to www.iwoc.org to use PayPal.

Festivities begin at 6 PM. We'll toast the sunset with the libations from a cash bar.

Wine, writers, and song! And, of course, a sumptuous banquet fit for the gods. It's an IWOC summer tradition.

It's time to do those extra laps and sit-ups to get ready for when Yanni says, "On your mark. Get set. EAT!" 

IWOCFest

A feast for IWOC members
and their guests
Tuesday, August 10
Pegasus Taverna
130 South Halsted
6:00 PM

RESERVATIONS:

\$27 per person
if you use PayPal
at www.iwoc.org
until August 10

Or send a check for \$27
before August 5 to
IWOC
PMB 119
5465 W. Grand Ave.
Gurnee, IL 60031

OR

\$30 at the door

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

iwoc

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Manage your business for cash

BY JIM LEMAN

Last spring I put up another Web site, www.morewriting-profit.com, in an attempt to market freelance writing consulting services. The other day, a site visitor, an out-of-state free-

lancer, called to talk about improving cash flow from his freelance writing business. His questions reminded me how much all of us share the same concerns. Our conversation wandered from setting a 15-day pay policy to withholding non-credit card accounts payables until second notices or later to the need to fish for new business.

PART-TIME WORK

I suggested that when the writing income is slow, perhaps a second, part-time job can be a profitable solution. During my slow times, I have sold cars and worked retail, both second jobs which have returned substantial writing income—results I hadn't expected from taking these "side" jobs just to keep my writing business alive. The car-selling gig taught me a lot about the retail side of the new and used car business, insight I was later able to leverage into a gig as managing editor for a monthly car dealer business magazine. Through the retail job I met an author needing a publicist, a bookseller who refers business to me, and several people who have become good friends.

COLD CALLING CAN WORK MAGIC

At a recent IWOC board meeting, several of us talked about cold calling, the act of picking up the phone and calling potential clients. Few said they liked the idea, but



admitted cold calling has a sort of magic to it that most of us would find beneficial if we'd get over our fear of cold calling and do it. Here's the magic: the act of calling on

prospective clients creates energy around yourself and your business that generates activity and action.

Over my many years of cold calling, one fact is clear—the more I call the better my business gets. And often that improvement results not necessarily from direct hits my calling generates, but from a seemingly unrelated increase in activity from formerly quiet clients, new referrals, or request for my services out of the blue.

I believe it was Clement Stone who, years ago, described this magic as ether in the air that is excited by activity and which, by being excited, generates activity that is returned to that which excites the ether. Anyway, like the old saying goes, when in trouble pray, but row like hell for the shore!

Because these basic business issues concern most of us, IWOC is planning events for later this year and early 2005 to help you better understand and capitalize on how to develop your writing business for more writing profit. We'll have more details in coming months.

In the meantime, plan to be with us at IWOCFest August 10 at Chicago's Pegasus Restaurant, in Greektown, to share a little wine, eat some delicious food, and talk about how you're building your freelance writing business. I hope to talk with you there. ✍

More Panda-monium

BY RICHARD L. EASTLINE

Eats, Shoots & Leaves is a sleeper hit and has heightened interest in, of all things, punctuation.

The surprising flurry of interest in a book about punctuation has not yet subsided. Although the now-famous “Panda” no longer gazes down from atop the bestseller lists in both the U.S. and Britain, his audience of admirers continues a competitive search for blunders in usage of commas, apostrophes, and those many other symbols that decorate our common words. The results are gleefully posted on Internet chat rooms as well as in ubiquitous “Letters to the Editor” in newspapers here, there, and everywhere.

HABITS OF PANDAS

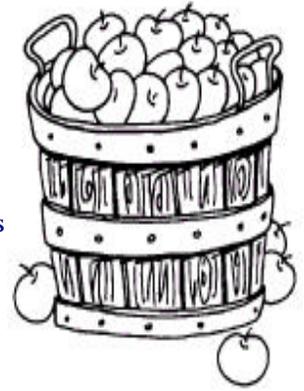
For those still in the dark about this disciplinarian panda, check out the slim volume by Lynne Truss that uses the title, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, to disguise a

witty discourse on common punctuation and the abuses it suffers. A panda is part of the cover illustration and the black-eyed creature becomes an innocent victim in the word play. (See *Stet*, May 2004 issue, if you can't wait to skim the book.) You, too, should then declare yourself to be a follower of this contemporary standard-bearer for the preservation of sanity in the distribution of commas and other “thingees” in our writings.

LANGUAGE ABUSE

A recent *New York Times* report on the debut of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary's* 11th edition notes that in today's hyper communications environment, keeping up with new vocabulary entries is not the problem. Rather, it's how people use the words they know. Already, the so-called Panda book has spawned a name for a category of punctuation misuse in England. It's called the “grocer's apos-

Apple's for sale



trophe” and is characterized by such typical examples as “apple's for sale” (you surely can think of others).

And, as if the corruption of symbol placement weren't enough, there is a rise in the confusion level about use of similar-sounding words—“defuse” and “diffuse” being the pair reported most often. The *Guardian of London* instigated a survey of its database and included these among the victims: “reign” / “rein” (26% misuse), “tow” / “toe” (21%), and “pouring” / “poring” (12%). Admittedly, these seem to be distinctly British in character, so why should they place fault on their brethren across the waters? After all, we have our own problems. Let them keep theirs. (Or there's? Or theres'. Or whatever.) ✍

RECAP JULY PROGRAM

What's under the hood of your PC?

BY CONRAD LAWRENCE

If you ever wanted to know what's really inside the shell of your PC, then catching Mark Ertes during the July 13th IWOC meeting would have been just your cup of tea. Ertes is the past president of the Chicago Computer Society (CCS), a user group dedicated to the concept of “users helping users.” Mr. Ertes is the parliamentarian of CCS.

Ertes first explained the benefits of joining the CCS as a computer support option if you own a PC. Sorry, Mac users, the CCS was formed in 1982 as the Northern Illinois PC Users Group and has been oriented around PCs ever since. Many user groups have gone by the wayside since their inception in the 1980s. However, if you prefer human contact at a reasonable price to a web site chat room or FAQ, a user group

might just be for you, especially if you get off on a little tech talk. Membership for the CCS is only \$40/year. The CCS offers a hotline, with volunteers from the organization fielding calls.

Proving the technical veracity of CCS members, Ertes launched into an explanation of the guts of the PC hardware that delved down to the level of the architecture of the motherboard. He explained the types of architecture from the old X86 systems to the present Intel based systems. He explained the evolution from the EISA and ISA architectures to the present PCI and USB architectures, detailing the growth of faster PCs. He diagramed how the motherboard is actually made up of several circuit boards. What does all this mean to us writers?

Speed! The thing that will most increase the speed of your computer in all aspects (online, processing, downloading and communicating with the Internet) is your PC hardware. It is where all the advancements in speed start. If things move too slowly, then your best choice is to either upgrade you present hardware, or buy a new PC. Unless you are as technically adept as Mr. Ertes, then your best bet is to upgrade to a faster PC. According to Mr. Ertes, here is what you should look for in a new PC: 64-bit CPU, DDR2 SDRAM and PCI or USB architecture. Upgrading your version of Windows will not speed up your computer. Increasing your hardware will.

Continued on page 4

FYI

IWOCer Catherine Rategan edits site for Women in Technology

Catherine Rategan, one of IWOC's co-founders and an early Board member, recently served as Web content editor for a team that launched the newly upgraded Web site for WorldWIT, the leading global online and offline network for women in technology.

Midwest members rely on the WorldWIT site and daily listserv messages to get advice, share ideas, find a job and make business contacts. For more information, go to: <http://www.worldwit.org>.

Under the hood of your PC ***continued from page 3***

Finally, Mr. Ertes listed ten ways to boost productivity, reminding us that "wasted time means less productivity." Here is his list:

1. Revitalize your aging PC, or buy a new one.
2. Consider power and heat issues when adding new hardware inside the case. Too much heat can slow down your PC.
3. Don't neglect the ergonomics. If you aren't comfortable or are suffering from strain, your productivity will be down.
4. Implement a robust backup strategy for your entire hard disk(s). Mark Ertes recommended a hard drive backup manufactured by Maxtor.
5. Cultivate independent and trusted sources of computer knowledge and expertise. This is where CSS may be useful.
6. Subscribe to a broadband Internet service, if financially possible and available. This is so much faster than 56k modems or even DSL.
7. Save shared documents in a universal file format such as .html (Web browser); .PDF (Adobe Acrobat); or .rtf (Rich Text Format, which can be opened in any word processor).
8. Become intimate with your favorite online search engine.
9. Hire an assistant or outsource selected business functions.
10. Make online security a top priority.

And his BONUS TIP: Type faster!

Though his humor may be droll, there is no kidding around when it comes to his final message: if your productivity is being hampered by you computer, the best way to increase your productivity is to enhance your hardware.

Mr. Ertes graciously ended his presentation with a raffle of CCS mugs and newsletters. ✍

Calendar

August 10 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOCFest! Celebrate the summer! Join us on the rooftop at Pegasus Taverna, 130 S. Halsted. Cost per participant: \$27 if using PayPal at www.iwoc.org up to the day of the party. Reservation is \$27 if pre-paying by check before August 5. Or \$30 at the door. See page 1.

September 14 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: Election of officers. Program to be announced. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. 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.

August 5 (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.

August 26 (4th Thursday)

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

***Check out
IWOC's Web site at
www.iwoc.org***