

Stet

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

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IWOC OCTOBER MEETING

More business is a phone call away

BY JIM HODL

Ask professional freelance writers what their greatest need is, and they will answer unequivocally, "Securing more paying writing assignments." More assignments can translate into more income. And one of the best ways to increase your writing jobs is to grow your base of regular customers. But where are such customers?

Jim Leman, a freelance writer for the past 12 years who currently operates his own writing business, the Newsletter Bureau, has some ideas on how to accomplish this goal and he will be sharing them at the next IWOC meeting on Tuesday, October 12.

In the program, "Getting More Freelance Business," Leman will discuss topics like the following:

- ◆ the intricacies of identifying potential customers
- ◆ what tools are available to build a list of customers
- ◆ managing a customer list to get regular writing jobs
- ◆ ways writers can introduce themselves to customers e.g., direct mail and skilled use of Web technology

COLD CALLS ARE GOOD FOR YOU

But Leman will place his greatest emphasis on using the telephone to "cold call" potential sources of writing work.

"Cold calling can be the key to your success as a writer," says Leman, who just finished a term as president of IWOC and currently serves the group as parliamentarian. "I've done a lot of cold calling in the past and have found nothing is more effective in building a base of regular customers and writing assignments."

Leman will explain the techniques for effective cold calling, how to set call objectives, and how to measure the effectiveness of your cold calls in securing paying assignments.

"Getting More Freelance Business" will be the centerpiece of the IWOC meeting on Tuesday, October 12 at the Feltre School, 22 W. Erie St. Networking begins at 5 PM and the program at 6 PM. Admission is free to professional members and costs \$5 for associate members and \$15 for nonmembers.

After the meeting, attendees are invited to retire to a nearby restaurant for a buy-your-own dinner to further discuss the information presented during the meeting, or to simply continue networking. ✍

*Getting More
Freelance Business
with Jim Leman*

**Tuesday
October 12
The Feltre School
22 West Erie
Networking 5:00 PM
Program 6:00 PM**

**FREE for
Professional members
Associate members \$5
Nonmembers \$15**

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

iwoc

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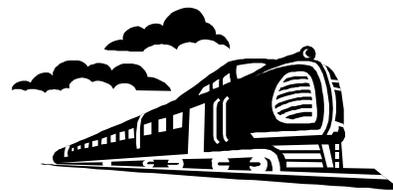
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Are you on board?

BY HARRY KARABEL



You have seen it a hundred times in the movies—a train is leaving a station and at the last possible second someone grabs hold and jumps on.

That's kind of what it feels like being the new IWOC president. This last year my predecessor, Jim Leman, did everything he could to get our train moving. (Now allow me to extend the metaphor). He made sure the tracks ahead were fixed and clear. He pushed the throttle forward and blew the whistle to let everybody know IWOC was on the move. Jim would say that the most important thing he did was to be sure he had the right crew. But the crew knows that when he wasn't driving, he was shoveling coal into the engine.

These were all good lessons for me: drive when you need to, shovel when you have to, keep debris off the track, and keep moving. I needed some lessons. This is only my fourth year with IWOC and, trust me, I did NOT join simply to get on the fast track to the presidency. But all the things I hoped for from my membership are coming to fruition.

KEEPING A WRITER ON TRACK

Once a month, for a couple of hours, I am in a room full of writers. Although we have different writing styles and different areas of expertise, we all face the same business issues. We all have experiences to share with one another and we are all eager to share them. I recently received a great referral from an IWOC member that is leading to new business. This made me realize how valuable the time we spend networking at each meeting really is.

The monthly meeting topics are another valuable resource for my business. At our October meeting, Jim Leman will be sharing his tips for improving your "cold calling" skills. Cold calling is an integral part of the way Jim approaches his business. He does it faithfully and he gets results. If you want to learn how to make cold calling work better for your business, be sure to join us on October 12.

FULL THROTTLE: GREAT SITE, EXPANDING JOB LINE

But the best news for freelance writers in Chicago in the last 12 months is the new and dramatically improved IWOC Web site. Our site-developing team have worked tirelessly to deliver a site that is informative, easy to navigate, and a worthwhile destination for writers and the people who hire them.

If you are an IWOC member and, for some reason, you haven't visited the site, stop reading *Stet* right now and take a look. If you're a freelance writer and not an IWOC member, try this: go to the site (www.iwoc.org), conduct a search, and type in one of your writing specialties. For the tax-deductible price of membership, your name could come up on that list when a potential client makes that same search.

Speaking of potential clients, have you seen the jobs listed on the Web site's Writers' Line? A bona fide job line where I could go to find new clients was my number one reason for joining and that, too, has come to pass. This tells us all that the site is easy for clients to use and that they perceive IWOC members to be of value to their businesses.

President's message continued

At the September meeting I talked to three members who have been away for a while and are now renewing their memberships. None of them knew about the revamped Web site and were excited to hear about it. The Board is working on a plan to reach out to others whose memberships have lapsed and to let them know about our renewed efforts to build business for our members.

WHAT'S AROUND THE BEND?

Coasting, at this point, will not do.

You can expect more improvements to come on an already great site.

The Board is in the planning stages of an all-day seminar for first quarter of 2005 that we're calling "The Freelance Life." The idea is to conduct a series of workshops aimed at people in all stages of their freelance careers.

We want beginners and seasoned pros to understand that if you are a freelance writer in Chicago, IWOC is the place to be. We are interested in hearing your thoughts and getting your help with selecting workshop topics, contacting

guest speakers, and obtaining corporate sponsors to underwrite the costs. Feel free to contact any Board member with input and information.

I couldn't stop this train if I wanted to. Too many people are working too hard to keep it going, and one of them just handed me the shovel. So I'm going to end this column (and yes, thankfully, this metaphor) with one last thought:

Are you on board?

See you October 12!

Harry J. Karabel

It's time for membership renewals, but . . .

This year, you'll be able to complete an online form to renew your IWOC membership. The form, which will allow you to use PayPal, is currently under construction. You'll be notified by e-mail when it's ready. Members who are not online will also be sent notifications for renewal.

We want to use our Web site to its full advantage, and a complete online renewal process is another step in that direction: to save costs for IWOC and give better service to you.

Speaking of Web sites . . .

One of the better sites for professional writers is www.writersweekly.com. This informative and timely e-zine is published by Angela Adair-Hoy, who includes a homespun personal note in each issue. Hoy and her husband own Booklocker.com, by the way.

Writersweekly.com is a composite of features on the writing life and profession—how-to basics, specialized topics such as travel writing, an "Ask the Expert" section, and writing markets and freelance jobs lists. (Payment range is wide, so you'll want to keep that in mind.)

One of its best features is the "Whispers and Warnings" section. I saw a warning about a Chicago client there who'd quietly stopped sending me projects. The whisper was that they were not paying on time. Later a warning said they were being bought and downsized. Sure enough, when I called the client, I heard about the downsizing and virtual shut-down from the horse's mouth.

You can click on old issues and see informative discussion of different professional writing topics there, too. It's friendly to beginners and a good resource for professionals.

You can subscribe to the weekly e-zine for free.

Visit <http://www.writersweekly.com>.

Your Stet editor

Check out your IWOC Writers' Line for jobs

There are nearly 30 jobs on the Writers' Line at this writing, and we have about 10 more to post. There are jobs in journalism, travel writing, education, radio/TV, and a whole lot more—even a couple full time. Check them out! You asked for a viable Writers' Line. Now it's there, let's use it!

Your profiles on the Web site are generating queries too. One member was just hired by the

American office of a Swiss-based company as a result of her listing on the IWOC Web site. So the new site is beginning to pay off in hard cash in our members' pockets. Keep that in mind when you consider IWOC renewal. You pay once for your membership and online listing and get a year's worth of advertising—worldwide—for the price. Is there a better deal out there than that?

FYI

MEMBER JILL SHTULMAN PROFILED IN NEW BOOK

IWOC member Jill Shtulman, JSA Creative Services, LLC, was one of 12 national freelance writers who was profiled in *The Well-Fed Writer: Back For Seconds* by Peter Bowerman (Appendix B). The book, a sequel to his award-winning Book-of-the-Month Selection, is a valuable “how-to” blueprint for earning a handsome living freelancing for corporations and creative agencies. Jill was cited as a success story based on her 15 years of profitable freelancing in direct marketing and print advertising. Copies of the book may be ordered from www.wellfedwriter.com.

CHICAGO BOOK FESTIVAL

Attention, book worms!

Celebrate reading and writing throughout the month of October at various events taking place in Chicago. The festival will feature Isabel Allende, Alex Kotlowitz, Audrey Niffenegger, and other writers working in a wide range of genres.

You can also attend one of the free events featuring Julia Alvarez and her book *In the Time of the Butterflies* (One Book, One Chicago’s reading selection for Fall 2004). And see a performance by the Rock Bottom Remainders.

For details, visit www.chicagopubliclibrary.org.



Calendar

October 12 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: “Getting More Freelance Business” with Jim Leman. At The Feltre School, 22 West Erie, Chicago. Networking at 5 PM; program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

November 9 (2nd Tuesday)

IWOC monthly meeting: Topic 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.

October 7 (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.

October 28 (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**