

## JUNE MEETING

*Adjunct College Teaching: Get Satisfaction and Earn Some Walking-Around Money*

BY SHERREE GEYER

**K**urt Wise, assistant professor of public relations at DePaul University, Chicago, will talk about freelance writing careers in academia when he delivers, "So, You're Thinking About College-Level Teaching" at the next IWOC meeting.

Wise, who specializes in healthcare public relations, worked for a medical device manufacturer before making the leap to college teaching. He earned his Ph.D. in public relations from the University of Maryland, College Park, Md., in 2002 and taught at numerous colleges and universities before joining DePaul's staff four years ago.

Wise cites personal satisfaction; confirmation of teaching objectives and

skills; and training tomorrow's communicators as reasons to pursue a college teaching career. Guest lecturing and observing a class mark the first steps in the decision-making process says Wise who promises that two semesters of teaching will give writers "a pretty good idea if this is for you." Though not always a prerequisite for undergraduate classes, "a master's degree is almost always required to teach a graduate-level course," he says.

Wise, who says "If you like being on your own, you'll love adjunct teaching," advises writers "to teach what you know." He says that adjunct teaching requires a time commitment of six to 12-hour a week and pays \$2,500 and \$3,500 per

class. While college teaching provides an income source during lean economic times, Wise discourages freelance writers from pursuing college teaching "just to earn money," noting that, "you can probably earn more money elsewhere."

"So, You're Thinking about College-Level Teaching" will be held on Tuesday, June 13 at the Chicago Athletic Association located at 12 South Michigan Avenue. Networking begins at 5 p.m. and the program at 6 p.m. Admission is free to professional members; \$5 for associate members; and \$15 for nonmembers. Program attendees are welcome to continue this academic discussion at a nearby restaurant for a buy-your-own-dinner after the program. ♦♦

*IWOCers on the Move*

If you caught the Printers' Row Book Fair last weekend, you probably spotted **Jane Ranshaw** busily signing copies of her two award-winning books: *101 Tips for Marketing your Services* and *Consultant's Quick Guide to Grammar and Style*.

Also with pen in hand at the Book Fair: **Conrad ("Connie") Lawrence** autographing *Amazons: Sexy Tales of Strong Women*.

Still on the book beat: **Jim Kepler** reports that his Adams Press has produced *Times of Crisis*, a new book by former State Superintendent of Schools Michael Bakalis and *Finding My Irish*, by Sharon Shea Bossard.

*Continued on page 3.*

**Medical Writing Workshops**

Interested in medical writing but don't have the credentials? The Chicago chapter of AMWA is offering three core and one advanced workshop (certificate possible) on August 4, but you must register by June 19. Find details on our website or by contacting Caryn Kim at 847-582-5882 or caryn.kim@tap.com. There are fees involved. ♦♦

## Officers

### President:

Harry Karabel 219/921-0877  
ironyrules@comcast.net

### Executive Vice President:

Ed Bouchard 773/728-3235

### Treasurer:

Dixie Watterson 847-491-0752

### Secretary:

Ellen Krupp 815/578-0365

### Parliamentarian:

Jim Leman 847/231-5682

### Board of Directors

Joan Kinman 708/366-8573

Marla Kruglik 312/427-3624

Roger Rueff 630/428-3857

Diana Schneidman 630/771-9605

Paula Shevick 773/871-2766

## Committees

### Directory:

Ed Bouchard 773/728-3235

### Marketing:

Open

### Publicity:

Noreen Kelly 312/988-7562

Katherine Mikkelsen 847/253-3681

Laura Stigler 773/248-0158

Kathy Vyn 773/764-9954

### Membership:

Jeff Steele 773-481-0010

### Programs:

Richard Eastline 773/477-2375

Sherree Geyer 708/403-2863

Jim Hodl 773/777-5710

### Seminars:

Jim Leman 847/543-1090

### Writers' Line:

Dianne Rowland 630/834-0209

Karleen McAllester 847/644-2524

### Web Site: [www.iwvoc.org](http://www.iwvoc.org)

Joan Kinman, webmaster

webmaster@iwvoc.org

*Stet* is published 11 times per year by the **Independent Writers of Chicago**, PMB 119, 1800 Nations Drive, Suite 117, Gurnee, IL 60031, 847/855-6670. Internet address: [www.iwvoc.org](http://www.iwvoc.org). Copy submissions and advertising materials are due by the 15th of the month preceding publication. All submissions and ideas will be considered. The subscription rate of \$1 per year is included in the annual membership dues. Copyright ©2006 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

### Editor:

TBA (Joan Kinnan this month)

### Production Editor:

TBA

### Copy Editor:

TBA

### Proofreader:

TBA

### Contributors:

Sherree Geyer, Joan Kinnan, Diana Schneidman

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN/HARRY KARABEL

# Do You Do It Yourself?

**M**y father was of that generation of men who could fix anything. No maintenance, repair, or home improvement task was too big or small for him to tackle. He could re-grout the bathtub, tear down an engine, fix the toaster, lay tile, hang gutters, replace a sink, and even breathe new life into a dead television.

There were a couple old televisions sitting on tables in our basement. These were boxy, black-and-white sets with those pale green screens in brown cabinets. Alongside them on the tables were boxes of television tubes. I have no idea where they came from, but it was certainly not the appliance store. These were loose tubes with prongs and numbers that I can only imagine he picked up at rummage sales and second-hand stores. He spent hours trying this tube or that one in this slot or another, trying to coax a picture out of the dead set.

Occasionally, I pulled "picture watch" duty. "Sit there," he'd say, pointing to the wooden stool that he found in the alley and spray-painted pink (my mother's favorite color). "Tell me what you see." Then he'd survey his table of tubes, make a selection, set down his cigarette, and reach into the back of the television set. "Okay, turn it on."

I'd turn the on/off/volume knob until I heard that soft, satisfying, mechanical click and report: "There's a white dot in the middle of the screen."

"How big is it?"

"It's tiny. Like a pin head."

"You're a pin head. Okay, turn it off."

He'd survey his tube farm and try again.

"Now the whole screen is wavy lines," I'd report.

"Is there a picture?"

"No. It's wavy lines. Like they're doing the hula." But it was progress, and so he had to see for himself. He'd stand beside me, smoking, staring at the screen like he was John Wayne waiting for the other guy to draw his pistol first.

Tube experimentation went on for months. But eventually, he put the right tubes in the right slots and real, recognizable images appeared. You see, even though there were only six channels available, our family had serious program conflict. Not any more. Now dad could watch baseball while we blissfully watched something else. He may have spent hours of his life searching for the right combination of tubes and squinting at fuzzy screens, but he got what he wanted: White Sox baseball uninterrupted by family complaints. He would have gladly spent twice as much time.

The Do-It-Yourself Generation was no doubt an outgrowth of the Great Depression, when there was simply no other option. But I become mired in my own great depression if I have to fix anything. I'm terrible at it. Just ask my wife. I'm a good writer and a fair guitar player, a good dad and husband, a good friend, and a good driver. After that, the skill sets start to fall off. I can explain and market and sell just about any product or service for any client I encounter. But I am befuddled by most things mechanical and almost all things electronic. I do not worship at the altar of Bob Villa. I do not drool in the aisles at Menard's or Home Depot. No one gives me power tools as presents.

My ineptitude at do-it-yourselfing was brought to mind recently when I talked myself into fixing the built-in Lazy Susan in one of our kitchen cabinets. The doors were rubbing on the bottom of the cabinet, and it was hard to turn. I had to take the whole thing apart to discover that there was a very handy adjustment knob (I don't even know what to call it) inside the center rod that the tray spun around. Three separate days I worked on it, for a total of ten hours. That's how long it took me to find the ten-minute adjustment I needed to make. My father may have been willing to spend his leisure hours exploring the mysteries of modern mechanics. But I'd rather read a book, write fiction, learn a new song, make some cold calls or have my teeth drilled.

If something is wrong with the car, it goes to the shop. If a light fixture implodes, I call the electrician. If my son puts both of his large feet through the attic drywall, I call the handyman. If the pool needs new decking, I call a carpenter. I would no more try to fix my garage door opener than I would try to do my own taxes. Ten years ago when I was terrified at the prospect of starting my own freelance business, a good friend soothed my anxiety with one

*Continued on page 3.*

## Freelancers' Websites Rock!

BY DIANA SCHNEIDMAN

The cost of developing a website to promote your freelance writing practice is decreasing, while the technical side keeps getting easier, advised the speakers at IWOC's May 9 monthly meeting.

Lisa Holton ([www.the-lisaco.com](http://www.the-lisaco.com)) and Amy Lillard ([www.amylillard.com](http://www.amylillard.com)) presented their business websites and talked about the development process in a panel discussion led by Sherree Geyer.

Holton introduced her website several years ago and has since instituted major overhauls along with smaller changes. She has been freelancing since 1998 following stints at the Chicago Sun-Times and Thomson Media.

Holton is now looking ahead to her next site. The new site will be simpler to update so she can continue its development with no further expenditures and on her own timetable. She notes that her present site was created when animation and other eye-catching devices were cutting edge, but she plans to avoid such gimmicks in the future because she feels they are no longer appropriate for professional services.

Holton, along with other session participants, is exploring ways to engage site visitors more comprehensively and track their clicks to capture leads and evaluate site effectiveness. Electronic marketing's new frontier is in building a contact list and knowing how to profit from it. "Professional and "non-freaky" are two attributes of the ideal application.

Lillard created her site last year when embarking on a freelancing career following staff employment at Northwestern Center for Clinical Research and elsewhere. She had long owned her site name before even considering freelancing, and a graphic-artist friend helped with the implementation. (Editorial note here: The cost to reserve a website domain is minimal. Even if you are not planning your first – or additional – sites at this time, consider reserving your name and any other potential business names just in case.)

Lillard's website is part of a comprehensive marketing program. She developed a sharp, clean-looking pencil-container graphic that she uses on all her marketing materials for consistent branding. Then each quarter she introduces a different way to contact prospects and past customers to demonstrate her talents with different media. For instance, she recently mailed color postcards that incorporated the pencil theme from her website.

Both Holton and Lillard were intensely involved in all phases of site development. They pondered their messages and their implementation for months, but design and installation proceeded more quickly. They observe that the designer's work is simplified when developed from polished prose. While both speakers have start-from-scratch sites created by professional designers, low-cost, effective templates are also available.

*Continued on page 4.*

## IWOCers on the Move *Continued from page 1.*

From our mailbag: "Kudos to IWOC from **Pat and Cliff Terry**, who have been landing some fun – and decently paid – magazine gigs in the U.S. and overseas, the most recent with a Finnish publication (Cliff) and a Midwest home magazine (Pat). Editors have found [terrywriters.com](http://terrywriters.com) through IWOC.org."

And from fellow journalist **Jeff Steele**: "Membership in IWOC has brought me so many jobs that in just one recent month, I've paid for my entire 14 years of membership and then some."

Happy birthday to **Lynn Sanders** and **Karen Schwartz** who share a June 8 natal day. ♦

## Do You Do It Yourself? *Continued from page 2.*

simple sentence: "Hire a good accountant."

I am happy to report that some of my other skill sets are improving. These days, it is much easier for me to call a new client, or stay in touch with an old one. My business pitch is better than it ever was. I've gotten better at networking. If a client asks me to do something I don't exactly know how to do, I call a colleague who has the expertise and ask for help. And I just made a deal – a trading of services – with a friend who is going to help me with an electronic self-promotion tool (I won't call it a newsletter, because it's not) and a website! (Ooo-rah!)

For this pattern of self-improvement, I have my father and IWOC to thank. My dad did not exactly embrace do-it-yourselfing with a warm and cheerful heart. You did not want to be put in the position of having to hold a flashlight for him or hand him tools. The light beam would never be exactly where he wanted it and, even if by some miracle you were able to give him the tool he asked for, you could never hand it to him properly. I managed to turn those unpleasant childhood moments into a personal philosophy: Build on your strengths. And if you can't do all the building yourself, get help!

At IWOC, I am surrounded by people who help me build on my strengths: people who help me to become a better marketer, a better salesperson, a better businessman, and a better writer. This work can be lonely enough without trying to do it all yourself. It is a blessing to have this wealth of resources and foolish to waste them.

If your business situation isn't perfect and ideal and beyond the dreams of avarice, if you have skill sets that need improving, you don't have to "do-it-yourself." IWOC needs you. And you need your IWOC colleagues. Join a committee. Come to a meeting, even if you're not sure that the topic will do you any good. And by all means, stay for dinner. The peace that you get from the table conversation comes from knowing that you're not alone, that you're doing okay, and that there's always a lot more to learn. Last month, I sat with Jeff Steele and Jennifer Oatfield. We barely talked about business. For the most part, we talked about our shared fascination with Westerns.

It felt like family. It felt like home. ♦



## Freelancers' Websites Rock!

Continued from page 3.

Lillard saved money by trading services with a friend who is a graphic designer.

After building the site, driving traffic to it is the next step. Membership in organizations such as IWOC offers visibility for member websites, and some IWOC members join multiple writing and professional organizations to (in effect) purchase links to their sites. Optimizing sites for search engine rankings—a specialty in itself—can build traffic, and some of our members are testing paid rankings on Google and other search engines.

In addition to pulling in prospective clients, one benefit of a website is its ease and economy for communicating with prospective clients. The more information and portfolio samples disseminated on the web or by email, the easier and faster it is to follow up with those who are interested. It is no longer necessary to spend big bucks printing full-color copies of work or standing in line at the post office to weigh and mail portfolios. Email allows immediate, customized responses to requests for specific responses or samples.

The speakers, along with other attendees, differed as to whether or not to post a photo. While many considerations contribute to the decision: Lillard does not post a photo because she looks so young, while others use their photos to convey that a professional, yet friendly, person is available and eager to serve clients. ❖



### She's Happy! She Hired an IWOC Writer.

You're a marketing whiz, but you're overwhelmed. Let IWOC's professional writers help. We're fast, we're good. You'll save time, so you can do what you do best. Marketing is *your* specialty; writing is ours.

**Independent Writers of Chicago**  
*Midwest's largest freelance writers' organization*  
*25 years of serving clients worldwide*

Creative communications for every concept  
Experienced writers with broad range of skills

Visit "Find a Writer" on our website  
or  
Post a job on our website Writers' Line

[www.iwoc.org](http://www.iwoc.org)  
847-855-6670

IWOC is running the above ad in the Yearbook of the Chicago chapter of the American Marketing Association. Let us know if you get a job because someone saw the ad.

## Calendar

### June 13

"So You're Thinking About College-Level Teaching," IWOC monthly meeting. Speaker is Kurt Wise. Chicago Athletic Association, 12 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Ample parking and the El nearby. Buy-your-own dinner follows at Miller's Pub. Networking at 5 PM, program at 6 PM. Professional members free, associates \$5, nonmembers \$15.

### July 9

IWOC monthly meeting. Program is about children's literature: the editing of, humor in, and the market for. Chicago Athletic Association, 12 S. Michigan Ave., 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 usually meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted, but it's best to call ahead in case of cancellation. The groups welcome nonmembers. If there's no group in your area, why not start one? Contact [webmaster@iwoc.org](mailto:webmaster@iwoc.org) for info.*

### June 22 (4th Thursday)

**IWOOP monthly lunch.** Join near-west suburbanites at noon for an outdoor lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park (summer location). For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065.

### July 6 (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.

### IWOC WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

David M. Epstein  
Amy Lillard

Meg Cox  
Jane Davenport

### It's Happening on the Web!

Check Out Writers' Line

Browse Resources

See What's Doing in IWOC Events

**WWW.IWOC.ORG**