

JUNE MEETING

Freelance Healthcare-Writing Opportunities Remain Robust Despite the Sick Economy

BY KAREN SCHWARTZ

The Chicago area is home to numerous healthcare publications and associations, and there are plenty of opportunities for freelance writers. Find out how freelance writers can write for two of these organizations at the June 14 IWOC meeting about healthcare writing.

Speaker Matthew Weinstock is senior editor of *Hospitals & Health Networks*, a 65,000-circulation business magazine and website for healthcare executives that is the flagship publication of the American Hospital Association. Weinstock will discuss opportunities at this publication and at *Hospitals & Health Networks Daily*, an online AHA newsletter.

Also speaking at the June 14 IWOC meeting will be Judy Jakush, editor of *ADA News*, a tabloid newspaper published 22 times a year for 156,000 members of the American Dental Association. Both print and online versions provide information about upcoming meetings and events of the

ADA as well as news stories pertinent to the dental profession, relevant happenings in governmental bodies, and other articles of interest to professionals in the field.



These two editors will give specific information to freelance writers about their publications, including what their publications pay freelancers and what they're looking for when they hire freelance writers.

Weinstock has more than 20 years of journalism experience covering a variety of topics including healthcare, workplace safety, the environment, and economic development. He spent 13 years in Washington, D.C., covering the U.S. Congress and federal regulatory agencies. He's been honored with a number of national and regional journalism awards. Weinstock earned a bachelor's degree in English and political science from the University of Wisconsin.

Jakush started at the *ADA News* in 1981 and has been editor since 1990. She

worked for the twice-weekly south suburban *Star* and two dailies: the Macon, Georgia *Telegraph* and the Elgin, Illinois *Courier News*. As a newspaper reporter, she covered local courts, county and municipal government and a military base as well as general assignments. Jakush has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

This is a not-to-be missed meeting for IWOC's many healthcare and medical writers as well as those writers wanting to enter the field. Visitors are cordially invited. The meeting will take place in Room 4020 at National-Louis University, 122 S. Michigan Avenue (across from the Art Institute) in Chicago. Networking with snacks and beverages begins at 5 p.m., followed by the program at 6 p.m. The meeting is free for all IWOC members. Nonmembers pay \$15 or \$10 with online pre-registration.

Plan to stay for a buy-your-own dinner at the Exchequer restaurant on South Wabash Avenue afterwards, where we'll continue networking over dinner. For more information, call 800-804-IWOC (800-804-4962) or visit www.iwoc.org.



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Stet is published 11 times per year by the **Independent Writers of Chicago**, 28 East Jackson Building, Suite 1020 #W686, Chicago, IL 60604, 800/804-4962. Internet address: www.iwoc.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 ©2011 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN/JOEN KINNAN

Horror Stories of the Web: Can a Phish Pick Your Pocket?

Remember those halcyon days when a computer was little more than a typewriter you could correct without using the messy white stuff? Today you'd probably miss your right arm less — hell, let's face it — it *is* your right arm. You shop on it, pay bills on it, play games on it, and more. So far, it doesn't cook your food, but it probably will some day. Which brings me to the problem: master criminals (apparently, mostly 14-year-old kids) have learned how to finesse you out of everything but your teeth, and they can get those too if they're unattached.

I refer, of course, to "phishing." For the unenlightened (otherwise known as dead people), phishing occurs when someone pretends to be someone else, say Your Bank. You get an e-mail ostensibly from Your Bank asking you to click on a link to provide some reasonable-sounding information. If it's not *really* from your bank, there goes your underwear!

But how can you tell what's legit, and what isn't? Look at the URL (Uniform Resource Locator), which is a fancy name for a web address. Take this address: <http://google.com/maps>. The http (called the "scheme") is short for Hypertext Transfer Protocol. "Google.com" is the name of the website host. (It's important to know that nobody else can use that but Google.) The "/maps" is a "path" to another page on the Google site. Instead of the "/maps" path, sometimes that path

is moved to the front of the host name as a subdomain, e.g., "maps.google.com." (Bear with me; this is really going to be helpful. Honestly.)

Now we know that google.com is a legitimate host name, so google.com/maps is okay too because the host name is legit. But how about this? google.xyz.com? No way! That makes Google a subdomain of the website "xyz.com." Clearly, a phisher is trolling for something you don't want to give him. The same is true of this configuration: "xyz.com/google." Now "/google" designates a path within the

xyz website. So check to see what's actually the domain name (website) and don't be distracted by subdomains or paths when viewing an e-mail that wants you to click on a link to provide information. Many phonies are complete with logos and look really authentic.

Now that you know how to spot phishing, I've got something special for you. This is your lucky day! Mr. Horatio Boomeroboo has just died in South Africa, and as his only living relative, he's left you 20 billion kruggerands. Click [HERE](#) so we can forward the money to your bank account. ☛

Meet IWOC's New Writers' Line Chair: Kim MacGregor



We're very pleased to announce Kim MacGregor as IWOC's new Writers' Line chair. As her LinkedIn summary says, Kim is "a writer/editor/communicator with more than 20 years' experience helping businesses and nonprofits forge relationships with key audiences." We're looking forward to Kim's bringing more

key audiences, i.e., clients, to WL. It's a tough job, but we can all help. How? (1) When a legitimate prospect contacts you, but you don't do the kind of work required or don't have time, always refer him/her to another IWOCer or to Kim for posting on WL. It speaks well for IWOC, and it could be good for you too. Someday that client might have something you would like, and he/she will remember your helpfulness. (2) Visit WL yourself. We all want WL, but it's surprising how few members actually visit it. If WL jobs go begging, those clients likely won't list again. (3) If you know of a potential client who uses freelancers, tell Kim about it so she can make a contact and give a pitch for Writers' Line. The more we help IWOC attract business, the more we help ourselves get business, so let's give Kim a hand. You can contact her at kim@kimmacgregor.com or at jobs@iwoc.org.

The Long and Short of Research Writing

BY BARBARA MORIARTY

One of the key lessons I've learned," said Barbara Ray to IWOC's audience, "is that you have to have a niche."



Ray found hers in the 1990s while writing for the public policy

and research communities. It was a move that launched her writing career and later became the backbone of her business, Hired Pen, inc., an editorial development service. This little-known market taps a writer's intellectual side to explain the world of foundations, government, education, and employment to today's policymakers. And, it's a field ripe for freelance talent.

Ray's start in this field began as she learned the language of academicians and their research methods while working in the Journals Division at the University of Chicago Press. Later, she would expand on her knowledge, but not before first working as a travel writer in Guam for two years. When she returned to Chicago, Ray's passion for social issues and child welfare, in particular, resurfaced.

A senior writing position at the Joint Center for Poverty Research brought different challenges and rewards. As part of a staff of five, the information Ray garnered from research was fed directly to government policy makers. "They wrote in a dense, complicated

way," she said. For instance, she might take 40 to 60 pages of research and "boil it down" into something that decision-makers could comprehend and use. In short, Ray did for research writing what Julia Child did for French cooking—she made it more palatable. When the JCPR relocated to Michigan, Ray seized the opportunity to break out on her own.

As a contractor, Ray knew, rightly, that she had a unique business offering that wasn't yet being addressed by others. Her expanding client list confirmed it. Ray served as communications director for the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood and today manages their online publication, *Spotlight on Digital Media and Learning*. She is also the author of *Not Quite Adults: Why 20-Somethings Are Choosing a*

Slower Path to Adulthood and Why it's Good for All of Us. (Random House 2010).

Since Hired Pen's founding in 2004, Ray has subcontracted the services of writers, editors, graphic and web designers, and now, social media. She shared her wisdom about this unique writer's market, citing both places to find work and the type of projects available.

BREAKING IN

There are opportunities aplenty for writers who enjoy finding the gems hidden in research data and bringing them to light in a concise way. To write social welfare research you need to have some background knowledge and a genuine interest in your topic, however. "Pick an area you like because you have to go deep," Ray advised. If you can devote an hour a day to

reading background material you can be up to speed fairly quickly. Try to break in with a big company like the Brookings Institute or the San Francisco Federal Reserve.

Sure you're a wordsmith, but for projects like data books or those requiring statistical analysis, numbers matter. A self-described poor math student, Ray said she overcame her fears by asking herself what the story was behind the figure. Once she understood why it was important to the story, adding it in became an interesting part of the job.

THINK BIG

Issue labs, think tanks, non-profits, foundations and universities publish annual reports, newsletters, policy briefs, and alumni magazines. Here's a tip: Search *Continued on page 4.*

Barbara Ray's Lessons Learned

1. Clients are always right. Never complain to them about why you can't do something. Instead, figure it out and do it.
2. Send only the most polished version to the client. Sure you can call it a draft—but perfect it first. Don't make the client your editor.
3. Prepare to rewrite. Committees have different viewpoints and often clients don't know exactly what they want—until they see what they don't want. Sound familiar?
4. You have to be half writer and half diplomat. Your client may think he can write, but...
5. Generational wisdom from Ray's father, who was a small business owner: "Just say yes, and then figure out how to do it."
6. Don't be afraid to charge the full amount. Figure you'll always underestimate your time. With that in mind, add 30% to your project estimate.
7. Balancing projects pays dividends. Make it a weekly practice to troll new clients and complete your billing.
8. Hire an accountant. You'll sleep better knowing all the numbers add up. The IRS always looks at small businesses for infractions.
9. You don't need an office to be a contractor.
10. Pay well. Charge more. You'll be helping other writers.

May Recap, Continued from Page 3.

Wikipedia, and you'll find 100 think tanks. Then, follow the news to see which projects Congress is funding. A call to the lead researcher may just land you an assignment. Your journalistic style will find wings here if you remember to keep your own biases in check.

Advocacy groups are another great resource. They publish white papers and executive summaries supporting their positions on programs or policies. Here, your writing style will match that of the issue being advocated. Executive summaries are easy to do, and the payoff is great. You'll take a volume of information and cull it down to a couple pages featuring key messages and points. Ray charges \$1,000 for a two-page summary including reading time; double that for four pages.

To locate a non-profit group go to www.issuelab.org. They generally have small staffs and often use freelancers. News of good writers travels fast in these small communities.

ME, WORK FOR UNCLE SAM?

Oh, yes you can. Even in reports to funders are Hired Pen completed a Illinois Department of Security using IWOC Sarah Klose. An report, trend analy-instruction book-program participants of the assignment. "I heartened by people the government," said continuity; they think things through." Writers win trust by keeping the message straightforward and true. This approach works well in academic circles too. ♪



times of budget cuts, always necessary. big project for the Employment member, annual sis, and lets for were part am really who work for Ray. "They have through." Writers win trust by keeping the message straightforward and true. This approach works well in academic circles too. ♪

Calendar

June 14

IWOC Monthly Meeting. Speakers Matthew Weinstock and Judy Jakush will discuss healthcare writing for their respective publications. The meeting will be held at National-Louis University, Room 4020, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Program at 6 p.m. Networking at 5 p.m. IWOC members free. Nonmembers, \$15 at the door, \$10 with online preregistration. Buy-your-own dinner follows. Nonmembers welcome. For more information, call 800/804-4962 or visit www.iwoc.org.

July 12

IWOC Monthly Meeting. Save the date. Topic and program details will appear on the website soon.

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

June 28 (4th Tuesday)

IWOOP Monthly Lunch. Join near-west suburbanites for a noon lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park. For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065. Check before you come. This lunch is monthly only if there are enough people who can attend. Note: The lunch is now on the 4th Tuesday, not the 4th Thursday as it had been in the past.

July 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 info, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

B.Z. Toons

by Brian Zaikowski



I got you a bunch of stuff. This is just the tip of the iceberg

It's Happening on the Web!

Check Out Writers' Line

Browse Resources

See What's Doing in Coming Events

WWW.IWOC.ORG