



Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

▪ NEW MEETING-SITE UPDATE	1
▪ PRESIDENT'S COLUMN	2
▪ DID YOU KNOW?	4
▪ TIME-TRACKING APPS	4
▪ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS	4
▪ JANUARY MEETING RECAP	5
▪ MISUSED WORDS	6
▪ NEXT ISSUE & CALENDAR	7
▪ QUOTE	7

Update on New Meeting Site Possibilities for This Year

First of all, remember that there is no IWOC program on Tuesday, February 12. Our next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, March 12. We do not yet know our new meeting location, but we are close to deciding that and will know by mid-February.

As you'll recall, National Louis does not have extra classrooms to rent anymore. The search team has been busy since New Year, checking out potential new meeting locations for IWOC. In looking for a new meeting place, the main requirements

we have kept in mind are: convenient access by public transportation (especially the Red, Brown, and Green Lines), reasonable or free parking, space for 30-50 people, computer connections, A/V, and wi-fi in the meeting room, flexible seating, ability to serve refreshments (and bring in our own or get moderately priced catering), ability to charge admission to nonmembers, and handicapped accessibility. Our budget required us

to keep total expense to \$300-400 per month for room and refreshments combined.

These are fairly challenging criteria in Chicago, but we got a lot of helpful suggestions from the search team



and other IWOC members. We actively checked out about 20 places, and eliminated many, most because of high rent or other fees (e.g., for A/V), but some because they have no space available, at least on our dates, and some because of inconvenient public transportation.

That leaves four sites that meet all of our criteria and fit our budget. They are (alphabetically):

Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra-rehearsal hall—410 South Michigan Avenue #833

DePaul University Student Center in Lincoln Park—2320 North Kenmore Avenue

Fourth Presbyterian Church—126 East Chestnut Street

La Quinta Inn Downtown—1 S. Franklin

These have already been visited by small groups of search team members, and these options will be reviewed by the board at our meeting on February 12, and we will then negotiate and complete a contract with the approved choice and notify all members.

I appreciate the helpful suggestions from numerous members in planning the search criteria and ideas for possible locations. I especially want to thank everyone who worked with me on the search team: Brent Brotine, Laurel Johnson, Ann Kepler, Joen Kinnan, Byron Leonard, Jennifer Lyng, Jennifer Oatfield, Diana Schneidman, Karen Schwartz, Jeff Steele, David Steinkraus, and Laura Stigler. ■

— David Epstein

Officers

President

David Epstein 708/567-9705
president@iwoc.org

Executive Vice President

Betsy Storm 312/421-1510

Treasurer

Nancy Solomon 773/262-8070

Secretary

Jennifer Lyng 773/769-5291

Parliamentarian

Roger Rueff 773/769-5291

Board of Directors

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Ann Kepler 773/761-1858

Joel Kinnan 708/366-8573

Catherine Rategan 312/266-8146

Laura Stigler 773/248-0158

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Karen Schwartz 708/386-3044

Jim Kepler 773-761-1858

Social Media

Roger Rueff 773/769-5291 chair

Jim Kepler 773/761-1858

Writers' Line

chair open

Karleen McAllester 847/644-2524

Web Site: www.iwoc.org

Roger Rueff, webmaster

webmaster@iwoc.org

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Stet Editor

Joel Kinnan

stet@iwoc.org

Contributors: David Epstein, Joel Kinnan, Anson Poe

Let's Meet Up at IWOC Online



Our acronym "IWOC" stands for Independent Writers of Chicago, but it can also stand for Independent Writers' Online Community. Until a few years ago, we just had e-mail and the IWOC website. We still have those, but now our website has secure member-only forums where members can find job opportunities, ask for advice, and exchange information and ideas about writing.

We also have an IWOC LinkedIn group, moderated by Jim Kepler, which was recently opened up to the public and now has more than 300 followers, over 200 of whom are not members — yet.



IWOC also has Facebook and Twitter pages set up and maintained by Roger Rueff, and both are open to the public. The Facebook page has a variety of posts and queries from members. On both Facebook and Twitter Roger provides links to job postings that show how IWOC can help writers find job leads. These links lead to the IWOC website, **but only members can get to the postings**, because you have to log in to www.iwoc.org with your member password.

Our LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter pages can spread awareness of IWOC among professional writers, enhance our reputation, and potentially help recruit more members. For example, most of the 200-plus nonmembers who follow our LinkedIn are freelance writers and editors, but there's also a sprinkling of people who might at some time need writing talent, such as a restaurant publicist, an investment manager, an HR manager, as well as marketing communications, education coordinators, and editors at various companies and non-profit organizations.

But for that to happen, more of us need to participate to help make IWOC's web presence a richer resource where people come looking for writing ideas, advice, and leads, and where others look to hire writing talent. If they find value and realize there are more benefits for IWOC members, some may join. *But we need to use these web pages more actively and fill them with content that attracts writers and potential hirers.*

It seems many IWOCers are not really aware of these web resources or don't realize how easy it is to access and use them. So let's review how to join in the online conversations.

Members-only forums at iwoc.org

Regular e-mail may be easier when you want to write to just one or a few members, but the forums are great for reaching a larger group. Roger created eight forums on our new website. When nonmembers visit www.iwoc.org they don't see any of them, and you won't either, until you go to the top right of the home page and log in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.

President's Column

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using the e-mail address in your member profile and the password you set up for IWOC. If you need help logging in, e-mail Roger at webmaster@iwoc.org.

Once you log in, you'll see links in the dark blue navigation bar at left of every web page to the three forums that are open to all IWOC members:

In the **Member Forum** any IWOC member — professional, senior, or associate — can create a new topic, ask a question, and comment on any existing topic or reply to a post. This is a great place to ask a question when you want to get answers from multiple members.

Member Resources contains useful resources available only to IWOCers, including handouts and presentations from many IWOC programs.

The **Writers' Line Job Board** (open to all members except associates) is where paid writing and editing jobs are posted. New opportunities appear often, so it pays to select immediate e-mail notification of new postings (see subscribing below).

There are eight other forums, but when you log on to iwoc.org, you won't see them unless you are a member of the IWOC board and/or one of IWOC's committees. These forum links (also in the left-hand blue navigation bar) include the Board Forum and a link titled Committee Members, which opens up seven other forums, one for each of our standing committees.

Subscribing to the IWOC forums
To follow a forum, you must first subscribe to it, and then choose how often you want to receive alerts in your e-mail about new posts: daily, weekly, or immediately as they occur.

Each forum page begins with a description of that forum. Just below that is a link at the right of the screen that says "Subscribe to forum." Click that link, and it will change to "Subscribed" ("Unsubscribe"), and then select "Subscribe." If you later want to leave a forum just go here and select "Unsubscribe."

After subscribing, go to your Profile by clicking on the "View profile" link at the very top right of the IWOC screen, below your name. Above your Profile, there are three links, and the middle one is "E-mail subscriptions." Click on this to see a list of all your forum subscriptions. Choose "Edit profile" at top left of the screen and you can then select for each subscribed forum whether you want to receive e-mail alerts about new posts daily, weekly, or immediately. Daily alerts come to your e-mail the morning *after* a new item is posted, so as mentioned, you probably want to choose immediate alerts for Writer's Line Job Board.

Tune in to IWOC LinkedIn discussions
Log in to your LinkedIn account, select "Groups" from the top menu, and select "Groups Directory" from the dropdown menu. Enter "independent writers of Chicago" or just "independent writers" in the search box at top left (IWOC won't work) and click the search icon. When you see IWOC, click the blue "Join" button to the right. You'll get a notice that "your membership is pending approval" and within a day or so an e-mail that you're now in the group.

After that, you'll get an e-mail whenever new discussion topics or comments appear on our LinkedIn page. Click on the link in the e-mail and log in to LinkedIn to read the new posts. Whenever you log in to LinkedIn, you can go

to Groups and select IWOC to read the latest topics and add your comments if you wish.

How to "Like" IWOC on Facebook
To follow IWOC on Facebook you need to "Like" our page, which has 116 "likes" so far. Log in to Facebook and go to your Profile page (not your Home or "news-feed" page). In the "Search for people, places and things" box at top type IWOC (or iwoc) and click on the link to go to our page. At top right you'll see the "Like" button. After you



"Like" IWOC, click the button again and check "Get Notifications" to get e-mail updates. You may or may not want to let IWOC posts "Show in News Feed" (i.e., appear on your Home page), or be added to your "Interest Lists," an optional feature which allows you to organize your personal interests and share them with other Facebook users.

Tweeting with IWOC's Writers' Line
Our Twitter hashtag is @IWOCWriter. You just need to log into your Twitter account and type iwoc (or IWOC) in the search field at top. Click on our icon, and you'll get a list of job openings with links to Writer's Line job postings, but you can only access them if you can log in to our website as a member.

Hope you'll join in the IWOC "buzz." I look forward to seeing you @IWOC online. ■

Did you know...



Humans are characterized by sex and age, e.g., man, woman, boy, girl, but what about animals? Below are some interesting appellations for the male and female of the animal kind.

A female ass is nicely called a jenny, but alas, the male is just a jackass. On the other hand, a female dog is a bitch, while the male is our best friend, a dog.

Possoms are either jills or jacks, as are also hares and weasels. A female ferret is a jill too unless she's been spayed, when she's known as a sprite. A male ferret is a hob until he's neutered, when he becomes just a hoblet.

A female hawk is a hen; no surprise there, but the male is more grandly named a tiercel.

Lady foxes are vixens or bitches, while the gentlemen can be stags or reynards.

Chickens are hens and cocks, but did you know lobsters are too? Oddly, the beautiful mink is either a not-so-pretty-sounding sow or boar, and both the tiny mouse and the rat share doe and buck with much larger creatures, including the kangaroo. Squirrels are does and bucks too.

Female swans are pens and males are cobs, but the best we can do for woodchucks is to call them either he-chucks or she-chucks.

Female ants, bees, and cats (yes, cats) are queens, while their male counterparts are drones or toms respectively. Only the termite can lay claim to both king and queen. Go figure. ■

— Joen Kinnan

Time flies: keep track of it

Freelancers bill in all sorts of ways: by the project or by the day, by word count, or even by the phases of the moon, for all I know. But most of us basically strive for a certain hourly rate. So we need to keep track of time spent on projects. Scribbling hours on scraps of paper or even tidily noting time in a ledger is unreliable. Did you remember to knock off that half hour you spent chatting with your college roommate? Maybe not. Computerized time-tracking software solves your problem and gives you a record you can use to estimate future projects.

1DayLater is free, web-based software that focuses on professional invoicing and collaborative working. It is aimed at companies of any size, from freelancers to large corporations.

Use 1DayLater to track time and other expenses, estimate projects and build quotes, work against budgets, and create invoices. Multiple users can simultaneously work on the same projects together too.

Though 1DayLater is free, for £5 per month or £40 per year — it's a British product — 1DayLater will also generate your invoices, track your business mileage, and give you exportable spreadsheets.

Fanurio is a desktop app that combines time-tracking and billing. Fanurio runs on multiple platforms including Windows, Mac, and Linux, so you can switch computer systems and keep using Fanurio.

When you first load Fanurio, the app will open its tutorial for you in a web browser. The tutorial contains 11 lessons beginning with entering your business information and working through adding clients, projects and service items (tasks). The key lessons take about 10 minutes to do.

The interface has four main views: Projects, Timesheet, Invoices and Payments. The other main feature is the time clock, which you can run from within Fanurio or keep it in the system tray from which you can turn it on and off. Freelancers like Fanurio because it doesn't have "extras" people like us don't need. Download Fanurio to try it free for 30 days. A per-person license — you can put it on more than one device — costs \$59.

TimeSlice comes in both Windows and Mac versions. Click a button to start recording time, and click again to stop. There's also a pause button, so you can take a break and eat your lunch. Each time record contains start/stop date and time values, as well as client, category, project, hourly rate and other related information. All major functions are accessible via a tool bar, and the main window can be reduced to a very small size. The time-tracking data can be sorted and exported to other software applications. You can also add expenses, notes, etc For either version, TimeSlice costs \$30. This is the program I use, and I love it.

There are loads of other time-tracking programs out there, but these seem well-suited to freelance work. ■

— Joen Kinnan

IWOC WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Allison Boggs
Jolinda Capello
Jennifer Komorowski
Sandra Lee

All about your writer's legal rights

At January's IWOC meeting, members and newcomers were treated to a presentation by Thomas Leavens of Leavens, Strand, Glover & Adler, LLC. In addition to being an entertainment and copyright lawyer, Leavens is himself an author and publisher. He recently submitted for publication a book on music law for the general practitioner.



Having previously solicited questions from IWOCers, Leavens presented his case on the rights of freelancers when it comes to copyright law. The verdict: we don't have many, so we need to understand and safeguard those we have.

Don't raise objections just yet. We can take action to protect our rights. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but when you create an original work in tangible form, you own the copyright on that form of expression for the duration of your life plus 70 years. Copyright means you own the exclusive rights to use, reproduce, and distribute that work. You can deter potential plagiarizers by putting a copyright notice on any work you do. This notice may be in various locations, including the title page, following page, or bottom of the first text page.

You own the copyright even if you don't register a work, but registration is proof of your ownership and date of the copyright. If your copyright is in-

fringed before you register the work, you may have difficulty proving your copyright. You must prove the value you have lost by the infringement, and you can collect only the actual damages the court decides. However, if you register your work with the copyright office before an infringement occurs, you can collect statutory damages, which range from \$75,000–\$150,000, and you can also collect the cost of attorney fees.

If you release a version of your work with a difference in content and/or format, such as an audiobook, you must register each version separately. Each registration costs \$35, and Leavens recommends registering online to avoid long waits.

Much of the discussion was devoted to the legality of using samples from previous freelance work on your website as a means of promotion. Generally, freelancers don't retain the copyright to work done for hire after they have been paid, so they don't retain the rights to distribution. This revelation caused some consternation among those present, and many made personal notes to check their websites later. Leavens recommends getting written permission to use the sample or simply posting a link to the work instead of a copy of it to avoid a legal kerfuffle.

An audience member asked who owns the copyright if you post something on another person's blog. Is it you as the writer of the item, or the blog's owner? Leavens said that you might give up all rights to your material if the blog owner has put that in the blog's terms and conditions. At very least, though,

by posting on someone's blog you give the blog's owner a nonexclusive right to reuse your material elsewhere, for example, on Facebook.

Leavens also defined what constitutes work for hire. Any writing done as part of a regular job is work for hire. For freelance or contract work, there must be a written agreement that specifically defines the project as "work for hire." That contract must be in place before the work begins, and the writer must have signed it. If this does not happen, the writer still owns full copyright on the work, and "the rights do not transfer until you have been paid in full." Freelancers should realize they can use this right to bargain with a client who delays payment. Furthermore, the writer does not have to deliver the work until he or she has been paid.

A freelance writer is a kind of consultant, and your ideas may be the most valuable thing you give to the client, so be sure you get paid for them! For this purpose, Leavens suggested drawing up your contracts to be paid in stages as you deliver components of a longer project. As the client pays for each part, you get some of your fee, while the client also demonstrates acceptance of your work, which makes it difficult or impossible for the client to delay or withhold final payment.

Responding to a question about sample contracts, Leavens said there really aren't any standard contracts. Essential terms that should be in any contract are a clear description of the deliverable(s), criteria for acceptance, when you will deliver the work, how much you'll be paid and when (or at what stages), reimbursement of writer's expenses, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7.

A Word That Probably Doesn't Mean What You Think It Does

Here's a surprise, at least for me. I refer to the word *decimate*, which you most likely think means "to utterly destroy," or something similar. The literal meaning of this word, as all you lovers of Latin (not to be confused with Latin lovers) know all too well, is "to reduce by one-tenth," supposedly from the punitive Roman custom of selecting one out of ten captives by lot and killing those so selected. But the meanings of the word for this cruel Roman policy have extended far beyond the original so that now it does mean "drastically reduced" or "destroyed" as well. It also means "tithed," presumably because devout churchgoers sometimes give ten percent of their income to the church. ■

— The editor

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WONDERFUL NUANCES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Frequently misused words: niceties that should be preserved

Everybody occasionally misuses a word, but as writers, we're more or less custodians of the language, and it behooves us to get it right. It doesn't matter that the client may not know the difference. *Somebody*, *some-where* reading your words will either laugh or groan at the mistake. So here are a few pitfalls to watch out for:

Nauseous vs. nauseated: Something that is *nauseous* makes people sick. So if you're feeling ill, you're *nauseated* (unless, of course, you're having a very bad effect on others. Then you may be both).

Preventive vs. preventative: Many grammarians will say there's no such word as *preventative*, so while one sees it frequently, avoid *preventative*, which has a useless extra syllable anyway.

Discrepancy vs. disparity: A *discrepancy* is a variance from or disagreement with something, as in the discrepancy

between inventory figures and actual stock. Though the meanings are similar, *disparity* connotes inequality, e.g., "there's a disparity between the wages of men and women."

Flier vs. flyer: Whether you post a flier or a flyer depends on whether you're assigning a pilot to an air base or tacking a piece of paper to a bulletin board. Though both are often seen interchangeably, Merriam-Webster says pilots and passengers are *fliers*; notices are *flyers*. (One can also take a *flyer* on a stock.)

Turbid vs. turgid: *Turbid* refers to a state of cloudiness or obscurity, as in turbid lake water, while *turgid* means "swollen," or, by extension, "embellished" or "pompous." Thus a self-important politician might give a turgid speech.

Chafe vs. chaff: *Chafe* means to "make sore by rubbing" (also figuratively). *Chaff* is a completely unrelated word that originally referred to the discarded husks of

polished grain. It still means that, but it has also come to mean other things discarded as worthless.

Extraneous vs. superfluous: *Extraneous* refers to something that is irrelevant, unnecessary, or unrelated to the general subject, while *superfluous* "means more than enough." So a boring person's conversation could contain details that were both extraneous and superfluous.

Forgo vs. forego: To *forgo* is to do without, while to *forego* is to precede. There, that's simple.

Customer vs. client: Although there's little real difference in the meanings of these words, there is a subtle one. A *customer* is generally thought of as a person who buys goods, while a *client* purchases professional services, such as from a writer, lawyer, or accountant. Now there's a distinction we won't want to forget! ■

— Joen Kinnan

January recap: All about your freelancer's legal rights

what rights will be transferred to the client and at what point. If the project involves consulting, that should be defined in the agreement along with compensation for it. Leavens suggested joining the Authors Guild, which will review publishing agreements to make sure you don't have to fight for your money.

After the presentation, IWOCers and Leavens adjourned to the Exchequer Pub for food, drinks, and further discussion.

There will be no February meeting, but keep an eye on the IWOC website calendar to learn the new location for March's meeting and future meetings. ■

— Anson Poe



“About the most originality that any writer can hope to achieve honestly is to steal with good judgment.”

— Josh Billings, commenting on plagiarism

In the next issue. . .



- **March meeting:** IWOCer Cliff Terry and former IWOCer Jerry DeMuth will discuss ghostwriting.
- **President's column:** You always learn something interesting in this often surprising column.
- Tips and tricks you can use to work smarter and better.
- And much more.

