



# Stet

## Independent Writers of Chicago

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A STIMULATING JUNE NETWORKING EVENT TO KICK OFF THE SUMMER

## Come on Down and Mix It Up With Other Professionals

**W**e IWOCers have a treat in store for us next Tuesday, June 11. In place of a regular monthly meeting, we're having a mixer with members of the Midwest Publishing Association (MPA), which you may remember as the Chicago Book Clinic. The Illinois Women's Press Association (IWPA) will be represented too. We're gathering in a posh place with a decidedly unposh name: The Dog's Bollox. (Lest you fear the name shouldn't be uttered in polite society, you can relax. The name is a canine version of "the cat's meow," so it refers to a top-notch place, and it is.) The IWOC kitty and MPA are footing the bill for the appetizers, but you'll have to ante up for your libations. The food there is terrific, and the atmosphere lends itself to chatting and schmoozing.

Those of you who attended the April meeting on networkling learned that we all need an "inner circle," and here's your chance to broaden yours by getting to know folks in MPA, who are professionals in book and media publishing—including printing, editorial, and design.

So you'll have some chatting points with the people — they're not all women despite the name — from IWPA: they're a local affiliate of the National



Federation of Press Women, and the local organization was established in 1885. They're mass communications professionals dedicated to maintaining and improving professional standards and the sharing of ideas and information. (Right there is an evening's conversation, what with the current state of journalism.)

You'll learn something about what other people do in the broad area of

communications, meet some interesting people, chow down on a few delectables, and sample the offerings from the well-stocked bar. What's not to like?

Here are the particulars: The Dog's Bollox (formerly Beckett's Pub) is at 3210 North Lincoln Avenue in Chicago. The mingling begins at 5 p.m. and runs until 7:30. Admission costs nothing for members of IWOC and MPA; nonmembers of either pay \$10 online, but everyone is welcome, and the appetizers are free for all.

Carry your lucky charm because you might get street parking, but if not, there's a convenient public lot just around the corner to the north (on Melrose Street off Lincoln). If you're driving and need directions, there's a map on the website. Or take the El; it appears that you can get there from the Green (with a transfer to the Brown), Red, Brown, and Purple lines, but check with the CTA to get the exact routes. This writer does not want to be responsible for landing someone in Minsk instead of The Dog's Bollox.

All comers *must* register online whether they have to pay or not so we can get a food count. [Register HERE](#). See you there! ■

— Joen Kinnan

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# Have I Got a Story for You!



Jimmy Olsen bursts into the *Daily Planet* newsroom, dashes up to Perry White's desk, and gasps out, "Boss, have I got a story for you!!!"



Clark Kent saunters over, throws his arm around the cub reporter's shoulder, and says soothingly, "Now, Jimmy, let's hang on to our objectivity. Just lay out the lead for Mr. White in a calm and balanced manner."

"Well, boss, it's like this, see? The *Gotham Sunset-Times* across the river has gone and canned all their photogs. Seems they bought a buncha these new-fangled wrist camera-radio-TV-phone gizmos that Diet Smith invented for Dick Tracy. It's a stripped-down civilian model. It don't have the tommy-gun with a 30-round ammo clip like the G-men and the gumshoes got, but it's got a speech synthesizer plus a movie camera and a built-in teletype that punches tape back at the news desk. So Darth Evader, their big cheese editor, is gonna have just two reporters cover all the beats, one guy for the police beat, politics, and hard news, and this cute redhead, Brenda What's-her-name, for fashion and ... recipes and ... and ..."

As Jimmy runs out of breath, Perry waves his cigar angrily at Clark, who saunters (as always) over to the telephone booth by the ticker tape, muttering "This sounds like a job for ..."

You think I'm making this up? Well, then, how about this?

On Thursday morning, May 30 at 1:43 am (CDT), a staff reporter at the *Gotham* (oops! *Chicago*) *Sun-Times*, posted this obit: "Bob Kotalik, former chief photographer for *Chicago Sun-Times*, dies at 87."

Barely hours later on that same Thursday morning, the very same newspaper informed all of its 28 photographers at a last-minute meeting that they were terminated effective immediately. Reportedly, it took about 30 seconds to convey this "difficult decision." Managing Editor Craig Newman sent a memo to surviving staffers: "In the coming days and weeks, we'll be working with all editorial employees to train and equip you as much as possible to produce the content we need."

What a coincidence! The distinguished former chief photographer at the *Sun-Times* dies, and almost simultaneously management kills off their photo department. You can't make this stuff up!

And my fantasy of two reporters covering a whole city with their "wrist camera-radio-TV-phone gizmos" is no more outlandish than the *Sun-Times* executives' dream



can take notes, record live sound and video, interview people, and write copy online, all while dashing from City Council meetings to crime scenes to expressway smash-ups to inter-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3.



# President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

views with politicos and show-biz celebrities visiting our not-so-fair city.

A small smartphone that can shoot pretty good stills and short videos—e.g., an iPhone—is a handy tool for reporters and interviewers. I do not yearn for the technology of 1942, when Mr. Kotalik started working for the then *Chicago Sun* by sweeping out the newspaper's pigeon loft. They kept carrier pigeons to courier film from sporting events to the newspaper's photo lab. Not even the piteous sight of unemployed pigeons scrounging



for scraps outside the *Sun-Times* Building moves me to prefer a Steno-pad to an iPad.

Still, Jackie Jones makes a good point in the *Atlanta Black Star*: "I can go out and shoot a halfway-decent photo, but if I am also reporting, audio- and videotaping and shooting still images, something is going to get lost in the shuffle."

But there is no point in lamenting the technological and commercial changes that were already sweeping away our familiar world of journalism. By the same logic, 30 years ago we should have raged (and some did) against the replacement of the Selectric typewriter and the Linotype by computers with word processing and desktop publish-

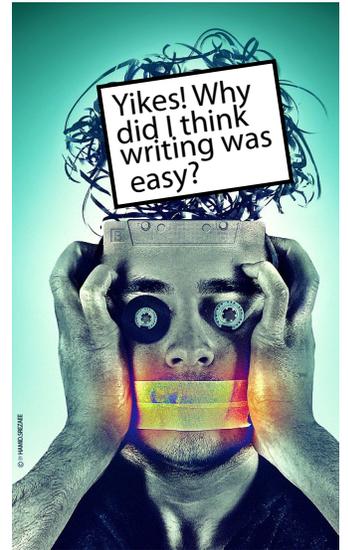
ing. And before that, we should have resisted the encroachment of electric correcting typewriters on sturdy steel manuals and white-out. And earlier still, opposed ballpoints and tape recorders displacing fountain pens and short-hand. And so on, through steel-nib pens to goose quills to styluses scratching clay tablets.

Only a cynic can doubt that the *Sun-Times* is "focused on bolstering our reporting capabilities with video and other multimedia elements. The *Chicago Sun-Times* continues to evolve with our digitally savvy customers, and as a result, we have had to restructure the way we manage multimedia, including photography, across the network."

The same cynic might suspect they're just trying to bolster the bottom-line of newspapers with shrinking circulation and ad rates, whose problems are compounded by poor management and predatory owners like Conrad Black and Sam Zell. Harried news reporters with iPhones and unpaid "citizen journalists" are not likely to produce photos to match those sometimes captured by the best photojournalists—but they cost much less.

A blog called cultofmac.com, which reveals its bias in its name, posted that "The [*Sun-Times*] move is part of a growing trend towards publications using the iPhone as a replacement for fancy, expensive DSLRs. It's also a sign of how traditional journalism is being changed by technology like the iPhone and the advent of digital publishing .... When Hurricane Sandy hit New York City, reporters for *Time* used the iPhone to take photos on the field and

upload to the publication's Instagram account." Now that so many people have phones with a pretty good camera, many people—including some publishers—think that everyone is a photographer. We writers suffer from clients and publishers under the delusion that anyone using a computer and Google is a "writer."



So we have to work harder to distinguish the professional quality of our work and our business practices from those of amateurs. And we have to find and educate clients to appreciate the value that professional writers deliver.

As some of us already do, we develop new skills and/or partnerships with other professionals that enable us to provide clients with all options for "content generation," including quality

**Partnering with other professionals enables us to provide clients with all options for quality content generation.**

photos and video as well as text. One avenue for doing that is the mixers IWOC has been sponsoring with other groups of creative profes-

sionals, including graphic and web designers, photographers, videographers, art directors, and publishers. We had two mixers last year and another one with the Midwest Publishers Association is coming up on June 11. A fourth is being planned for this fall. IWOC, C3, MPA, and other organiza-

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.*



## About The Freelancery

There are tons of other useful articles on The Freelancery site, and there's something for everyone, from novices to seasoned pros. The site has lots of contributors too, so you get different perspectives. I never thought of adding to my fee based on the number of people who have to sign off on the project (4 below), but it sure makes sense. We all know that each signer-off generally has something to say, and that adds to time and effort, so it behooves us to find out how many there are before we bid.

Walt Kania, the guy who runs the Freelancery show, is incredibly generous too. He offers a 178-page PDF book with 50 tips that include how to find clients, what to charge, and even how to stay happy in this freelance life. And it's a free download! I got mine; click [HERE](#) to get yours. You'll be glad you did. ■

— The editor

# Ten Freelancing Rules of Thumb

The article below is reprinted verbatim — with permission — from Walt Kania, the host of a terrific website called *The Freelancery* ([thefreelancery.com](http://thefreelancery.com)). I'm indebted to Ann Kepler for finding the article and suggesting we reprint it. You may not agree with everything, but you'll find plenty that's useful, and it's entertaining. — Joen Kinnan

**1** You should lose at least one out of four assignments because you're too expensive. If you land every job, you're not charging enough, or, you are irresistibly charming. Either way, you should charge more.

**2** Time from first contact with a client to seeing any money from them: minimum 30 days. Yes, even if you get money up front. It will take them that long to decide. There is no fast money. Especially when you need it.

**3** To accurately figure out how long a job will take, give it your best estimate, then add 10%. Then double it. Then ditch that number and recalculate. You will still be wrong. If it takes less time than you figured, you forgot something. Or the client will hate it.

**4** For every person on the client side who must approve your work, add 12% to the fee. (20% for any spouse or brother-in-law.)

**5** For every ten new people you talk to, five will call you back. Three will try you on an assignment. One will turn out to be a long-term client with a decent budget. Somewhere in there will also be a lunatic. Just hope it's not the one with the money.

**6** To determine your hourly rate, start with the annual income you need. Divide by 2,000. Take

your monthly expenses, divide by 160. Add. Or just pick \$150 per hour and see what happens.

**7** The day after you receive a huge check, your productivity will drop an average of 82%.

**8** Technically, there are always two days of leeway in any deadline. If you're running behind, it's three days.

**9** On a \$1000 project, you will need to endure \$1000 worth of pain and effort. For a \$300 project, it's about the same.

**10** When discussing your fee, every time you say 'Um. . .' you give away 15%. If you clear your throat, you're working for minimum wage. ■

— Walt Kania

# Making Sure Your Connections Are Valuable: An Innovative New Approach to Networking

If you have been yearning to amass more and more LinkedIn connections, Facebook friends, and Twitter followers, so you can feel like you have an adequate network to help you reach your professional goals, maybe it is time you rethought your approach. May 14th's IWOC meeting featured author, publisher, and social media expert, Melissa G. Wilson who has some new ideas on networking. She has come to believe that a strong network must have quality relationships, not just quantity.



Wilson gave a talk that focused on her theory of networking which she calls "networking." She believes that the way people network needs a new breath of life, a belief that is evident in her book, co-authored with Larry Mohl, titled *Networking is Dead: Making Connections That Matter*. Wilson says, in her *Networkling Guidebook*, that networking is "superficial," because relationships are only created when "one person needs another to do a deal or create a sale." Instead, with networkling, a person communicates his/her values and goals, and someone resonates with those values

and goals. A strong bond is created between people in networkling wherein new opportunities for both parties are created.

Wilson has proven herself to be one of the pre-eminent experts on networking, which has caused the business community to seek out her services. She wrote her first book (under the name of Melissa Giovagnoli) on networking in 1993 called *Make Your Connections Count: The Six-Step System to Build Your Meganetwork*. Her knowledge of networking has brought corporate America to her doorstep. She was asked to teach networking by Larry Mohl while he was an executive at Motorola and American Express. She has seen networking become a household word since she began writing about it. She spoke of this phenomenon during her talk when she said, "I went from no one knowing what I did to everyone knowing."

Wilson has broken networkling down into seven steps:

**Step 1 — Establish a Values-Rich Foundation.** This step tells you to ask yourself what principles guide your actions on a daily basis. Becoming aware of what you value is an integral step in achieving success.

**Step 2 — Make Connections for Your Primary Circle.** In this step, you find no more than five people who share complementary values with you and are willing and able to "network" with you. You will call this group your Primary Circle.

**Step 3 — Expand Your Primary Circle.** Make more connections that will help you achieve your business goals.

**Step 4 — Initiate Exchanging Relationships.** Exchanging relationships requires that you find out what the other person is currently interested in and that you steer the conversation toward what you and the other person mutually care about.

**Step 5 — Grow and Nurture New Relationships and Maintain and Deepen Existing Relationships.** Have regular conversations with your Primary Circle, wherein you discuss goals that are aligned with your values and that include your valuable experience, skills, and talents.

**Step 6 — Co-Create Opportunities.** Get together with your Primary Circle and create opportunities that will benefit you, your organization, and the world. You can create opportunities you didn't know existed with the help of your Primary Circle.

**Step 7 — Re-Create Your Network.** In this last step, you will be constantly reassessing and improving your network.

The book *Networking is Dead* has been very successful. It is number 5 on the Wall Street Journal's Best-Selling Books list, and currently is number 1 on Barnes and Noble's Bestseller list.

Wilson said that she has made giving a way of life. She talked about the importance of giving when participating in the exchange of networkling, but she also plans to demonstrate this belief in another way. She has decided that she will give away 2013 copies of her new book in the year 2013, and so the attendees of IWOC's May meeting were lucky enough to receive free copies of *Networking Is Dead*. ■

— Patrick Garrett.

# Did you know...



Check out these easy and effective shortcuts when working with Windows:

**Reader-cheater specs not doing it for you anymore?** If the type is too tiny to read when working on a document or browsing a webpage, use the zoom feature. In MS Word, find this under the “View” tab. Click on the magnifying glass to make text larger. In MS Word 2010, go to the lower right corner and slide the button between the minus and plus signs to the right to increase text size. For webpages opened with MS Explorer, use the “Page” dropdown on the right hand side to find the zoom tool.

**Doh! Wrote a whole paragraph in all caps?** If you need to change case, highlight the desired text and then hit Shift+F3 to toggle between all caps, all lower case or capitalization of the first letter of each word.

**Your client opts to change the product’s name, which is mentioned 385 times in your document?** To search for a word or term in a document, PDF, or webpage, use Ctrl+F to open the search function in most apps including MS Office apps, Internet browsers, and Adobe Acrobat.

**Going nuts juggling six programs, all of which you need to write a report?** To quickly switch among open programs in Windows, hold down the Alt key and repeatedly press the Tab key to cycle through open programs. Release both keys when you get to the program you want. ■

— Katherine Mikkelson

## DID YOU KNOW PART II

# Halcyon Days: From Storm to Calm

Unusual, archaic, or seldom-used words sometimes pop up in my prose. This stylistic tic may be an effort to preserve old words, as some linguists try to preserve disappearing languages; or perhaps it’s a vague rebellion against too-rapid change, especially the conquest of modern English by techno-biz-babble; or perhaps I’m just showing off—or maybe trying to force readers to buy dictionaries so I can make a killing in Merriam-Webster stock.

But when it happens, I often find myself wondering, just where did that word come from and what did it originally, literally mean?

Yesterday, for instance, the phrase “halcyon days” tripped off my keyboard into an e-mail. Words often trip my fingers as I type, because I learned to type on manual devices in the Grand Academy of Hunt and Peck.

Anyway, I meant to say that I hoped people were enjoying the glorious weather, and “halcyon days” popped onto the screen. I recalled that the phrase refers to a blissful, perhaps long-vanished time of never-ending peace and health and joy and sunshine—what we remember as “The Best Years of Our Lives.” The term was also vaguely connected in my mind with birds and sailors or the sea.

All that is true, but the term actually stems from a very gloomy and tragic Greek myth, retold by Ovid in *The Metamorphoses*. What follows is summarized from Thomas Bulfinch’s *The Golden Age of Myths and Legends*, originally dedicated to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Ceyx, King of Thessaly (and son of the god Hesperus, or the Day-Star), felt he

must consult the oracle of Apollo because his brother had been killed, and he thought he had lost the favor of the gods. Although his wife, Alcyone (aha!), begged him not to go or to let her come with him, he and his men embarked on their ship, leaving her to pray for his safe return.

Fair weather turned into a tempest in the Aegean Sea, and they were all lost. Alcyone waited and prayed, but finally one day as she walked by the seashore, she saw the body of a man drifting into the beach. As it came close, she saw it was Ceyx and ran toward him and into the waves. Magically she sprouted wings and began to fly across the sea. It certainly helped that her father Aeolus was god of the winds.



So Alcyone turned into a bird. When she reached the corpse of Ceyx, she enfolded him in her wings, kissing him with her beak, at which he came to life, and the gods turned him also into a bird. They learned to build nests that floated on the sea, and as they had children each year, Aeolus calmed the winds and waves for two weeks around the winter solstice, so that his grandchildren could be born in safety, even though they were nesting in midwinter.

Traditionally, the “halcyon days” are the week before and the week after the winter solstice;

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# Yes, Publishers Can & Do Make Mistakes

Why is one author successful in placing his or her book with a publisher while another is not?

It may be that the writer has approached agents or editors who fail to grasp the true value of a manuscript they're reviewing. Or perhaps the author's timing is off, and the subject is too new, too controversial, too esoteric or obscure, or too outdated—the author has simply taken so much time preparing the manuscript that it is no longer salable; its moment has passed.

Maybe the author is submitting the manuscript to the wrong kind of publisher. Regardless of how compelling and well-crafted a novel might be, for example, there is no point in sending it to a publisher that limits its output to self-help books or military history. Religious book publishers don't sign computer books, and technical publishers don't sign spiritual guides.

There's always the chance, as well, that a publisher, no matter how prestigious or savvy, just doesn't get it. Like everyone else, publishers often make errors in judgment; it happens every day.

Several years ago, when I worked for HarperCollins, I met the company's then very elderly and long-retired president and CEO Cass Canfield, who told a story on himself that might serve as an object lesson for authors trying to place their literary property with a big-time publisher—or any publisher, for that matter. In his memoir *Up & Down & Around: A Publisher Recollects the Time of His Life*, Canfield expanded on his story and described how he hurriedly passed a manuscript on to an editorial assistant, just out of college, and asked her to read

and evaluate it. He was off to Europe and hadn't the time to review it personally.

Canfield was himself still young and fairly inexperienced. This is how he told his tale: "George Orwell was another writer whose early career included service as a kitchen boy in a Ritz hotel — this one, the Paris Ritz. He wrote about it in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, a book which didn't sell at the time of its publication but contributed to the author's reputation.

"Orwell taught me two things: not to put uncritical trust in a reader's (his assistant) report and to hold fast to a writer whose work you admire. After *Down and Out* Orwell wrote *Animal Farm*. The finished manuscript appeared on my desk in New York a couple of days before my departure on vacation and I asked for a quick report.

"The reader damned the book, taking the view that its fantasy was unconvincing, that *Animal Farm* fell between two stools; she felt it was not suited either to children or to adults. So we declined the manuscript — and the book has become a classic.

"The rejection of *Animal Farm* was disastrous, and this goof taught me to read a manuscript myself when there is the slightest question about its merit. However, occasionally a reading is impossible because the editor must make a publishing decision on the basis of an outline, sometimes on the basis of no more than a title and the author's name. As bidding for potential big sellers has become more and more frantic, this kind of situation occurs more and more frequently."

Note that Canfield had a reader assigned to him. Most large publishing houses at that time (early 1940s) employed young people whose job it was to plow through the mountain of manuscripts stacked high in every editor's office; they frequently were brand-new gradu-

ates, more often than not from the Seven Sister colleges (Mt. Holyoke, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, Barnard), who were interested in careers in book publishing. The job was an entrée into what they perceived to be New York's "glamorous world of publishing." From such a position, often unless marriage beckoned (it was a different time!), a reader might advance to copy editor and eventually on to editor. A problem could arise though, as Canfield learned, when a reader was too inexperienced to recognize genius when it presented itself on the page.

Here's an interesting take on one of modern literature's masterpieces as remembered by Cass Canfield in a section headed "Pornography and Censorship" in his memoir *Up & Down & Around*:

"*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by D.H. Lawrence, was another novel which stirred the waters in the post-World War I period. Opinion on this book was sharply divided, and, of the reviews of it I have seen, a British one that appeared in *Field and Stream* in 1959 took a most original viewpoint: 'Although written many years ago, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has just been reissued. This fictional account of the day-to-day life of an English gamekeeper is still of considerable interest to outdoor-minded readers as it contains many passages on pheasant raising, the apprehending of poachers, ways to control vermin, and other chores and duties of the professional gamekeeper. Unfortunately, one is obliged to wade through many pages of extraneous material in order to discover and savor these sidelights on the management of a Midlands shooting estate, and in this reviewer's opinion, this book cannot take the place of J.R. Miller's *Practical Gamekeeping*.'"

Obviously, some reviewers find what they want to find in the books they read. ■

— Jim Kepler



# Halcyon Days

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6.

that is, roughly December 14–31. One week for nesting and one week for hatching. You may think it unlikely that there would be calm seas in December, but remember that this was the Aegean Sea, not the open Mediterranean, nor much less the North Atlantic.

The halcyon bird is generally associated with the European Kingfisher. Medieval sailors apparently believed these birds could bring fair weather and also believed that if the dried

carcass of a kingfisher was hung up, its beak would always point into the direction of the wind. Shakespeare alludes to this superstition in King Lear when the Duke of Kent refers to rogues who “turn their halcyon beaks / With every gale and vary of their masters.” But by Shakespeare’s day the phrase had lost its association with the sea and winter and come to mean a tranquil and happy time, like the endless sun-washed days of youth and summer. ■

— David Epstein

# Dave’s Column

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tions that share our interests are eager to build stronger networks of creative professionals. This can pay off for all of us.

Let me close with some positive visions of how this brave new world of iPhone journalism might reform Chicago and Illinois. Picture, if you will, the end of corruption as Mayor Rahm, aldermen, and city contractors become “citizen journalists” energetically videoing each other and texting back to news editors closed-door discussions of parking deals, school closures, and Midway Airport privatization. Imagine the effect of online videos of legislators in Springfield doing nothing all day. Hearken to the blissful silence that descends over the city as politicians and business and civic leaders stop talking lest their least utterance may be recorded.

There might be an initial increase in traffic fatalities as drivers and pedestrians collide while busily practicing “citizen journalism,” but Springfield would quickly—and unanimously—pass a law to ban reporting while driving, walking, or otherwise utilizing public spaces. ■

## INDEPENDENT WRITERS OF CHICAGO

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ciaran Cooper — Greg Holden — Julia Lobo

**SUBSTITUTE DAMN EVERY TIME YOU’RE INCLINED TO WRITE VERY; YOUR EDITOR WILL DELETE IT AND THE WRITING WILL BE JUST AS IT SHOULD BE.**  
— MARK TWAIN

# In the next issue. . .



- **July 9 IWOC meeting:** Panel discussion on retaining clients featuring IWOCers Sally Chapralis and Jeff Steele, and Lynn Hazan, whose placement firm specializes in marketing and communications.
- **President’s column:** You always learn something interesting in this often surprising column.
- Helpful tips on software, hardware, and/or just plain biz practices, and much more.

