



*** Chicagowrites CLARION***

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Chicago Writers Association (CWA) Newsletter
Newsletter for Chicagoland (and beyond) writers

Chicagowrites · Chicago Writers Association
CWA Members a/o September 30, 2008, 270

Dear Chicago Writers Association Members and Friends,
Welcome from CWA CLARION Staff to our October 2008 CLARION—our last issue of the Newsletter. However, I believe that from July 2005 through October 2008, the CLARION served its purpose as an interim voice between CWA's unofficial leadership (now our official board of directors) and its steadily growing writing membership from across the country.

Our previous issues will soon be (if they are not currently) available at the Archives section of the Chicago Writers Association updated website at

www.chicagowrites.org.

Other helpful resources available at the CWA web site include a list of literary agents, publishers, and public relations companies; information for first-time visitors; coming events; CWA shopper's window for books, shirts, mugs, etc.

Chicago Writers Association's Write City e-zine publication will replace the CLARION Newsletter. You can read the premier issue of Write City e-zine at:

www.chicagowrites.org.

The Chicago Writers Association is a creative writing community of dedicated writers from Chicagoland (and beyond) founded in 2003! CWA members are both professional, published authors, and those committed to joining their ranks. We focus our efforts on necessary aspects of the professional writer

1. Perfecting our craft and
2. Getting our work into the stream of commerce

We span many genres and styles. Our purpose is to share information, experience and encouragement. We are a welcoming community of those for whom written expression is an integral part of our lives.

E-mail: <chicagowrites at yahoogroups.com>

Edited by Walt X. McElligott

We invite ALL members (and guests) to submit articles for the new CWA Write City e-zine to editor, Randy Richardson <RandmansWorld (at) gmail.com>, or Walt McElligott, assistant editor, <wmcauth07 (at) yahoo.com>

+++Topic list for this Issue+++
(See copyright information regarding use of published articles)

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See disclaimer and at end of issue

President's Announcement

A monumental day for the CWA

Randy Richardson <RandmansWorld (at) gmail.com>

Hi, all,

I come bearing terrific news. It's finally official: the Chicago Writers Association is designated as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Reaching this point is something we've invested a lot of time and energy into over the course of the last year and a half, beginning with organizing as a nonprofit group, establishing a committed board of directors and bylaws for the group, and then filing for tax-exempt status.

It's been a long wait. We filed with the IRS back in February and provided additional information to them last month. But we now have what we'd sought. What this means is that the CWA can continue to grow and be all that we think it can and should be. Really, the possibilities stretch as far as our creative minds take us.

Having tax-exempt status gives us legitimacy. It enables us to do the things we strive to accomplish, including: fostering a visible, supportive writing community; provide genuine, constructive feedback and access to resources; assisting writers at all levels achieve their writing goals; building a bridge to unite all facets of Chicago's diverse literary culture; and promoting Chicago as a place of literary distinction. For the past year and a half, we've been in sort of a holding pattern as we sought to build a steady foundation from which we could build upon. That foundation is now set and now we can start building upwards.

We've just recently added four new members to our board of directors and we'll be expanding even more with time. We've got some great ideas on the table that you'll be hearing more about in the near future. I want to personally thank Paul Neilan, CWA's Secretary and VP, who worked hard with me to make this happen. I doubt very much that we would have ever reached this stage without Paul's invaluable assistance. I'd also like to thank Diana Zwinak, CWA's Treasurer, who came on late but who also played a very integral role in this process.

This has been such a long, arduous process, I honestly wondered whether we'd ever see this day. We have now seen it and I'm confident that all of the hard work will pay huge dividends down the road. This is not the end of the process. Rather, it's just the start. The good news is that it's the fun stuff that lies ahead. I'm hoping that you'll all stay on for the ride. Please visit our website and register as a member at www.chicagowrites.org. We had some early kinks with the new site, as you do with most any new website, but our web guru Kevin Koperski now has it working (crossing fingers) the way we all envisioned. It's a beautiful site and Kevin deserves all the credit in the world for the work he's put into it, all on a volunteer basis. And be sure to check out our new blog at www.windycitywriters.com (many thanks to new board member Jennifer Brown Banks for her assistance in that project).

Randy Richardson

President, Chicago Writers Association

[9/08]

1. The Editor's Inbox for October 1, 2008 Write City

The Write City is accepting contributions for future editions. Although we regretfully lack a budget to pay you for your work, this is an opportunity to see your writing published online (and, hopefully, in print at some point in the future). Please direct your poetry, shorts, essays, articles, reviews and interviews to randmansworld (at) gmail.com

We are open to all genres and styles though our preference is for Chicago-centric prose and material that educates and enlightens about writing and publishing. We strongly suggest that you take a look at the writings we've previously published to get the best idea of what we like. All submissions will be seriously considered. The criterion is quality.

We accept simultaneous submissions and previously published work though our preference is for new and original work. By submitting a piece to us, you acknowledge that the piece has been created by and/or is fully owned by you. Submitting works owned by others without first obtaining their written permission violates U.S. copyright law. By submitting a piece to us, you are also consenting to grant us a non-exclusive right to edit, modify and reprint your submission. You still retain full rights to your work under U.S. copyright law and it remains your own copyrighted property.

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Marlys Write Your Life!

From the Author of *Reinventing Myself*, *Seniorwriting*, *Elder Expectations*, and "Never too Late!": Write to Discover, to Heal, to Reinvent, to Share, and to Enjoy. I'm here to help you. Marlys Marshall Styne (Seniorwriter)

An Interview about "Seniorwriting" (2007)

This interview was posted by Paul Lam of The Elders Tribune back in 2007. Since The Elders Tribune site no longer exists, I have decided to post the interview here. It may be of interest to seniors just discovering my book *Seniorwriting: A Brief Guide for Seniors Who Want to Write* or to teachers considering using it for a continuing education class or workshop. Besides, it provides a good reminder of the main purpose of this blog: to encourage writing.

1. Why a book encouraging seniors to write about their lives?

I believe that everyone has a story, or many stories, to tell, and that seniors need to make sure that their experiences and the lessons they have learned are preserved for their families. As an example, my father was a very quiet man who rarely talked, let alone wrote, and I really never got to know him. However, my brother recently shared a story that our father told him about the difficulties of driving an older Model-T Ford on unimproved roads from our home in southern Wisconsin to St. Olaf College in Minnesota in the late 1920's. Of course, my brother remembered few details, and I never heard the story. How I wish our father had written about his life! Our mother did write her life story at age 86, and we are very grateful for that. She died this year at age 95, and we feel that we know her quite well. Also, seniors are likely to have some spare time, and the positive, therapeutic effects of writing, even in a private journal, have been well-documented. We need to write to discover, to heal, to reinvent, and to share.

2. How does your book differ from other writing guides for seniors?

There are many such guides on the market, and I have not seen them all. However, I favor a more creative approach than I've found in other guides I've seen or read about. Some of them seem to present extremely structured approaches. For example, one advertises "a structured template containing over 250 step-by-step life story questions (with ample space to write in answers)." I would find 250 questions intimidating, like a school workbook to fill in with mindless answers, but perhaps that's just me. In one online-course I examined, the first assignment was to label the pages of a lined notebook, one for each year from birth to the present. Since I was over 70 at the time, that seemed like a daunting task, and it reminded me that there are many years, even periods in my life, that I do not remember at all. These approaches probably work for some, but I favor a more relaxed approach that involves brainstorming and free writing and organizing it all later. I offer guidance and examples, but no rigid rules.

3. What would you say is your personal goal for this book?

I would like my book to encourage and help senior non-writers develop the courage to write their stories for their families. I'm sure the structured methods work for many, but I think my approach is worth a try. I hope it proves useful, especially for individuals at home and in informal senior center writing classes. The book is small, inexpensive, and non-intimidating. I'm not expecting to gain personal fame or fortune from it. I would enjoy getting a few letters or emails recounting individual successes in writing life stories.

4. Between your books and blogs, the number of insights you produce is staggering. How do you do it?
Thanks for the compliment! Such insights as I share are generally based on my reading, my observations, and my experiences, and I shamelessly borrow ideas from others, properly attributed, of course. How do I find time? Unlike many seniors, I have no close family nearby and no regular paid job any more. Being a retired loner has a few advantages. I once wrote a blog post entitled "Living Large on Line," and I guess that's what I do. One piece of advice: always read a daily newspaper.

5. What do you love about writing the most?

I guess I enjoy the independent, solitary aspects of writing. I've never enjoyed interacting with groups of people very much, so writing is my way of communicating with the world. Of course I wrote my first book, *Reinventing Myself: Memoirs of a Retired Professor*, to deal with retirement and loss and to get my life in order. I can write anywhere and everywhere, using a pen and a scrap of paper if no computer is available. I discovered that writing is my passion, and I advise all seniors to find theirs, whether it be writing or something else.

6. Is there a fundamental difference between writing personal history and fiction?

I think so. Some people seem to have a knack for writing fiction, but while I've written a few short stories, I seem to lack the imagination to write an entire novel. To me, writing personal history seems much easier, but I doubt that everyone would agree. Actually, I'd like to have the talent to write a novel, but it's not going to happen.

7. Is there any difference between senior writers and younger writers?

I'm not sure. I suspect that seniors may lack confidence in their writing ability, as opposed to having the exuberant "I can do anything!" attitude of youth, and yet few of my young college students embraced writing with enthusiasm. I fear that we English teachers equipped with our red pens discouraged too many in the past. I wouldn't do that to seniors, although I might suggest some copy editing by a family member or friend (or even a professional editor) if it's necessary. I really believe that most seniors write better than they think they do. Writing errors aren't likely to matter to a loving family anyway.

8. What's the biggest challenge for a senior starting to write his or her life story?

Assuming an alert mind, I believe that the biggest challenge might be simply the logistics of getting started. I advocate plunging in with a notebook and a pen or pencil, but computer users may have an advantage. More and more seniors are learning to use computers these days, although a few are afraid of these new-fangled machines, as my late mother was. Younger people grew up with computers, and a few of us oldsters learned to use them at our jobs, but for my mother's generation and some people in my own, computers are scary. Anyway, a willingness to write is the main requirement, along with a pen or pencil and paper, or even a tape recorder. I see no insurmountable challenges.

9. Any suggestions to overcome reluctance?

Talk to people who have already written their life stories. Join a relaxed memoir writing group at a senior center or community college, or even on line. Jot down your story ideas. Read my new book, *Seniorwriting*, and record your writing ideas as you read.

10. Writing sounds like hard work. Is it really worth it?

Yes! Once a person gets started, especially by keeping an informal journal, the process gets easier and easier. Most seniors will become enthusiastic about their life stories, and so will their families. For me, there's great satisfaction in seeing my work in print or on a computer screen, whether it's a letter to the editor, a blog post, a short story, an article, or a book. I guess writing can be hard work, but to me, it's just doing what comes naturally. One warning: if a person's main goal is to make money by personal writing,

it's probably wasted effort. However, for self-satisfaction and for discovering, healing, reinventing, and sharing, writing can't be beat!

Note: This book is available on line at buybooksontheweb.com, amazon.com, and barnesandnoble.com. See links in the sidebar of this blog.

Marlys Marshall Styne (Seniorwriter)

See my IWPA and NFPW award-winning blog "Never too Late!" at <http://www.seniorwriter.blogspot.com/>

About Me

I live in the Old Town neighborhood of Chicago. I retired in 1999 after 40 years in the English Department of Wilbur Wright College, on Chicago's Northwest Side, where I was department chair for 7 years and Wright's Distinguished Service Professor for 1995-96.

In late 2005, I found myself retired, widowed, 73, and depressed, so I set out to find contentment through reflection and writing. My first published book, *Reinventing Myself: Memoirs of a Retired Professor* (2006), is a series of personal essays recounting that quest and some of the experiences that came before it. My second is *Seniorwriting: A Brief Guide for Seniors Who Want to Write* (2007). My third is poetry, *Elder Expectations: My Life in Rictameters* (2008). My writing also includes a column for eGenerations.com.

I advocate writing for everyone, and hope to encourage my fellow senior citizens to write. I am a member of the Illinois Woman's Press Association, The Story Circle Network, The Authors Marketing Group, and the Chicago Writers Association and a volunteer at the Chicago Cultural Center. Please comment on my posts!

Marlys Marshall Styne (Seniorwriter)

1st place winner, IWPA Communications Contest, 2007, Nonfiction: Biography/ Autobiography

3rd place winner, National Federation of Press Women Communications Contest, 2007, Nonfiction: Biography/Autobiography

1st place winner, IWPA Communications Contest, 2008 Non-fiction: Instructional

<http://seniormemoirs.blogspot.com/2008/09/interview-about-seniorwriting-2007.html>

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2. Writerly News October 2008

Tech Bytes column

Make Amazon work for you by Helen Gallagher

Work your Amazon page! Authors with a book on Amazon get a free blog space at Amazon Connect, and can exercise a great deal of control over where and how books get listed. Register your titles at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/arms/role>>. Then, get busy using Amazon Connect if you're not already blogging there. Note: You'll see reference to a "plog," which is Amazon's name for a blog – short for product blog).

Here are five more tricks to create impact at Amazon.com:

1. Get people to write an Amazon review. Once your book has six reviews, and sees a corresponding sales bump, it is considered for further promotion or a price drop.

2. Review other books, specific to your genre or in other categories. Write a good, honest review, and use your name and "author of:" as your closing line. You can also embed a link back to your own book by pasting Amazon's link into your closing line. Need an example? Check this book I reviewed for a fellow author. Note my own book is mentioned in my signature:

http://www.amazon.com/review/product/1582972850/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?_encoding=UTF8&coliid=&showViewpoints=1&colid=&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending

3. Use Amazon tags. They act like labels, so when someone searches for a phrase, they see relevant results, like in a search engine. Tags are very important to your books. Here's how to start: Look at competing books, see what tags they have, and add those tags to your book. People searching by topic are as likely to buy your book or see your book as a recommended option when they view other books.

You as a customer, and as an author, can tag your own book and others. The result is if a person clicks a tag, they link to other books on the topic. Don't overthink this trick; just start doing it to help people find your books even when browsing for other books.

4. Use Amazon's "Search Inside the Book" feature. While you don't want to give content away for free, you know that shoppers prefer a peek before deciding to purchase a book, whether in a book store or online. Sign up here <http://www.amazon.com/gp/sitb/publish> and Amazon's staff takes care of the rest.

5. Sell an excerpt from your book as an Amazon Short. It's not the 49 cents you're after, but the cross-exposure by having a story or chapter listed as an Amazon Short. Visit www.amazon.com/shorts. Look at the range of books, and then click on the Shorts FAQ to get started.

NOTE: Submissions are currently closed, which means they're up to something over at Amazon. Check back soon if you're interested in this publishing option. They may be merging it with their CreateSpace program. With Amazon's CreateSpace, you can self-publish your works, long or short, at no upfront cost, just paying a commission on sales. It's similar to Lulu.com and full details are posted here: wwwcreatespace.com/Amazon.jsp?ref=115576

Helen Gallagher is the author of *Release Your Writing: Book Publishing Your Way*, and of *Computer Ease*. If you have questions or comments, contact Helen at Helen (at) cclarity.com and through www.releaseyourwriting.com.

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3. FEATURE ARTICLE, What Every Author Should Know About Literary Agents by Bobbi Linkemer

Many publishers will no longer accept a proposal unless it comes from an agent. While agents don't guarantee your book will be published, they can ensure that it gets a reading and advocate for you all along the process. You can find the right agent for you if you know where to look.

WHY USE AN AGENT?

An agent...

- *will critique your book proposal before it is submitted and make suggestions or edits to help you improve it.

- *knows which publishers are likely to be interested in your proposal

- *can garner attention for your proposal and sell it faster than you can

- *is your business representative and, as such, protects your best interests, secures advances, settles contract disputes, collects money, reviews royalty statements, ensures that publishers meet their contractual obligations, and host of other activities.

- *is your support system, guide, and cheerleader, which every author needs

- *can bring a new editor up to date on you and your book if that becomes necessary

*only earns money when he or she sells your book proposal, which is a great motivator

*is your closest ally in the publishing process

HOW TO FIND AN AGENT

*Start online by looking up The Association of Authors' Representatives (AAR), a not-for-profit organization of qualified literary agents. AAR provides resources to its members and protects the best interests of their clients. AAR agents are obligated to uphold integrity and the highest professional standards in all of their business dealings. Do not consider an agent who does not meet the rigorous standards of the AAR and the National Writers Union (NWU).

*Check out online and print directories. Jeff Herman's book, *Writer's Guide to Book Editors, Publishers, and Literary Agents*, is invaluable. His online directory also lists agents' e-mail addresses and websites. *Writer's Digest Books Guide to Literary Agents and Literary Market Place (LMP)*: The Directory of the American Book Publishing Industry are excellent sources and may be all you need.

*Hardcover and trade paperback publishers produce catalogs to send to booksellers, libraries, and sales reps, which often include agents' names and contact information. Browse bookstores shelves in the sections where your book might be. Check the dedication and acknowledgment pages of competitive books to see if the authors have thanked their editors and agents.

*Let agents find you by getting your book published or publishing it yourself, then making sure the media knows about it.

*And, of course, network, network, network. Go where writers and agents are likely to be, such as writing classes, readings, lectures, seminars, book signings, conferences, and book festivals.

*Join writers' organizations, and attend meetings. Talk to people who have been published. Ask if they have used an agent, and don't hesitate to request referrals. In my experience, writers are generous folks who are more than willing to share such information and support each other.

WHAT DO AGENTS WANT FROM YOU?

Agents have different policies about what they want from potential authors. Most agents prefer the initial contact be made in writing.

They may want anything from a one-page query letter to an entire manuscript. Check the agent's policy before making any submission.

Obviously, whatever you send should be neat, organized, accurate, and well written. This is your first impression; make it a positive one.

A query letter is a one-page document that must entice the recipient to want to know more about your book. It is by definition concise, so every word must count. Its job, like that of a good resume, is to get you in the door. To do that, it must be informative and inviting -- both steak and sizzle. In essence, a query letter is a mini-proposal, an encapsulation of your most salient points on a single piece of paper.

A solid query letter is not something you dash off. It takes a great deal of thought and often many revisions. The agent not only wants to know what your book is about and why you are qualified as the author, but also how well you write. This letter may be the single most important piece of marketing you will do.

HOW TO DEAL WITH AN AGENT, ONCE YOU HAVE ONE

According to Lori Perkins, author of *The Insider's Guide to Getting an Agent* (Writers' Digest Books), there are ways to treat an agent and ways not to. On the plus side of the ledger are simple courtesies like saying thank you; keeping them posted on developments as they occur; educating yourself about the publishing industry; and, though it should seem obvious, always being completely honest.

On the other hand...

*Don't expect miracles or the impossible. It's in everyone's best interest to sell your book

*Don't second-guess their decisions. Agents will do everything possible to make you feel special and to get you a good deal

*When the deal doesn't meet your expectations, don't shoot the messenger.

*Don't be pushy about money or contracts. Pressure doesn't speed up the process

*Don't expect your agent to teach you to write, advance you money, or act as your attorney, therapist, or publicist.

*Finally, if your agent thinks you need to do more work on your book or proposal, don't be a prima donna. Ridley Pearson, the best-selling mystery writer, tells a story about a writer he referred to his agent. When the agent suggested some changes, the writer took offense and said no. He never got his book published, by the way.

In this age of specialization, literary agents are no exception. Like doctors, they have specific niches. When you do research, begin with your particular genre. There's no sense sending a query letter or proposal to someone who is not an expert in that area of nonfiction. Narrowing your search will increase your odds of success.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bobbi Linkemer is a ghostwriter, book-writing coach, and editor. She is also the author of 14 books. Bobbi has been a professional writer for 40 years, a magazine editor and journalist, and a book-writing teacher. Her clients range from Fortune 100 companies to entrepreneurs who want to enhance their credibility and build their businesses. Visit her Website at

<http://www.WriteANonfictionBook.com>

ID:im080922

For many more articles check out Writing 101

<http://www.worldwidefreelance.com/writing.htm>

4. Freelance and Paying Jobs for Writers (Listings current as of publication date):

5. Personal Writing Essays and Success Stories:

We offer two submissions from author and CWA member Peter E. Abresch <Peter (at) elderhostelmysteries.com>

The first is a poem from Peter's *Burnt Offering* newsletter

The Password
Shhhhhh.
I have found the code
woven through the bible
from early times,
the secret combination,
the key to open
heaven's gates.
And I am amazed that
I have been given

to decipher it.
How many pass over
and never see--
seven times seven?
Though given to all
it is found by only
an exclusive few,
the humble, who already know
the password is—shhhh—love.
Write it on your heart.
©Peter E. Abresch

Peter's second submission:

WRITING IS LIKE?

Writing is like playing the banjo.

If you want to learn how to play the banjo, you need to get a book of instructions, learn about cords and timing, and then you actually have to start practicing, building callouses on your fingers.

But most people think writing is like singing.

You open your mouth and out it comes. Something we've been doing since we gurgled in our cribs. Why do we need lessons to sing? Because there are such things as notes on a paper, when to reach for a crescendo and when to barely whisper, when to breathe. Singing sounds easy only because a professional has worked hard to make it so.

But really, isn't writing like walking?

We've been walking since we climbed out of that same crib where we started singing. And we've been writing since the first grade. Surely we should have mastered it by now.

But writing is also like mountain climbing.

Just because we can walk eight miles on the flat, does that mean we're ready for Mount Everest? When we see someone clinging to a sheer cliff face, do we doubt they have specialized knowledge, or honed their bodies into superb physical condition? Fiction writing takes specialized knowledge and a lot of conditioning in the seat of our pants.

Writing is like pottery.

Anybody can roll clay ropes, stack them into a vessel, and fire it into a pot that holds water. If you want something that is not only utilitarian, but is pleasing to the eye, then you must sit down at a wheel and work the clay under your fingers, shape it, reshape it, perhaps punching it down to start again. The more you do it doesn't make it easier, but practice will more perfectly transform the image of the mind into the mud in the hands until, one day, it passes from clay pot into the realm of fine art.

Fine writing is like breath.

It is capturing an elusive apparition before it fades into thin air, and with only black symbols on a white surface, through the use of words that trigger memories and life experiences--smells and sounds, taste and touch and place--create a world around it that rolls out like real life. And if it's easy to read, you know it's because--to quote from the first line of Easy Reading Writing--easy reading is damn hard writing.

Writing is like whacking yourself on the head with a skillet.

If you learn to play the banjo, you can always ply your art even if it's only playing on a street corner. If you paint landscapes and portraits you can always have a one man show on the sidewalk. But you can't paste up sheets of paper in the hope someone will go from one to another and down the avenue for three hundred plus pages.

So, writing is also like running for President.

For a writer to be fulfilled he needs a reader, someone on the other side of the words, but to have a reader he needs a publisher, and when he seeks a publisher he is not competing with Johnny in the next block, he is competing with the whole damn country. Good enough is never good enough.

Writing is like a narcotic.

Once you start building worlds out of words, that siren wail will always be out there, whissssperrring how big your next book will be. And if you're really a writer, you'll keep answering the call simply because you cannot not write.

Writing is like being manic-depressive.

It is lonely, full of mind numbing lows, but sometimes when a phrase or an idea slips out of the ether so startling we wonder where it came from, it's like being touched by God.

Writing is persistence.

You need to keep reading the songbooks of writing, plunking the keyboard banjo strings, and molding your clay pots until the mud in the hands matches the image in the mind.

Writing is story telling.

We are the inheritors of those bards of old who stood out under the stars by some lonely campfire, spinning tales out of desert sand.

May we be so lucky. Or cursed.

Peter Abresch, member, Independent Mystery Booksellers Association (IMBA) <www.mysterybooksellers.com> best selling author of Bloody Bonsai, Killing Thyme, Tip A Canoe, Painted Lady, the Jim Dandy ELDERHOSTEL Mysteries:

<http://www.elderhostelmysteries.com>

EASY READING WRITING & BookMarc:

<http://www.easyreadingwriting.com>

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6. Chicago Author/Cultural Events/Writer Retreats:

Randy "lostintheivy" <RandmansWorld@aol.com> passes this on concerning the 2008 IWOC Writers Conference to those who might be interested.. .

Take Your Writing Business to the Next Level at the "2008 IWOC Writers Conference"
Sponsored by the Independent Writers of Chicago (IWOC)
September 16, 2008 - Chicago, Ill. – Have you recently launched a freelance writing career or been thinking of starting one? Or are you an established writing veteran who wants to get up-to-date on industry trends and new ways to use the web for expanding your business to the next level?

Whether you are a new or experienced freelance writer, IWOC's full day of seminars "2008 IWOC Writers Conference" is the place to learn almost everything you need to know. The conference will be held on Saturday, October 25, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:20 p.m. at National Louis University, 122 S. Michigan Ave. The cost is \$99 for members of the Independent Writers of Chicago (IWOC); \$109 for members of other writers' associations; \$129 for non-members; and \$40 for students.

The conference will give independent writers of all specialties and levels of experience the opportunity to brush up on their skills, learn new techniques, and reposition themselves in the increasingly competitive marketplace. Speakers include Chicago area professional writers, editors and marketing professionals who will offer tips on building and improving a profitable career as an independent professional writer.

Presentations and panels are being offered to suit the interests of every attendee including empowering yourself to become your best writer and marketing your services. Two popular sessions that will be featured are Catherine Rategan's "The Zen of Writing" and Jim Leman's "Cold Calling Boot Camp."

To register, visit the IWOC Events section of the IWOC website, <http://www.iwoc.org> to download a detailed brochure and registration form. Or use the convenient PayPal link (also located on the IWOC Events page) to register online with your credit card. If you have any questions regarding the conference, please contact Cathy Dusberger, Seminar Chair at 312-382-1808, or cdusberger@sbcglobe.com.

About Independent Writers of Chicago: IWOC is a nonprofit professional association of freelance writers who work primarily throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. IWOC members serve large corporations, small businesses, and not-for-profit organizations; together they represent a broad range of writing talents and specialties. To learn more about IWOC, call 847-855-6670 or visit www.iwoc.org

Conference:

Cathy Dusberger, Seminar Chair
(312) 382-1808

cdusberger@sbcglobal.net

Media:

George Becht
(847) 973-2556
gbecht@sbcglobal.net

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7. Interview of Chicagoland writer:

Randy Richardson <randmansworld@aol.com> submitted this article to Blawg's Blog by Bill Gratsch on 6/9/08 about fellow author and prominent adoption attorney, Randall Hicks's entry into the world of non-fiction.

Blawg Book Highlighter #27: Baby Crimes by Randy Richardson

Prominent adoption attorney Randall Hicks cut his writing chops in the non-fiction realm with his well-received Adopting in America: How to Adopt Within One Year (2004), which Publishers Weekly called “a nuts-and-bolts, practical guide to the entire process of adopting a child.”

The following year Hicks made the jump into fiction with The Baby Game, the first in a mystery series to feature young California adoption attorney Toby Dillon, a character obviously drawn from his real-world experience. The book and its blend of humor with seriousness won a Gumshoe Award and was a finalist the Anthony, Barry and Macavity Awards.

An example of Hicks' self-deprecating wit is found on his website's reviews page, where, at the bottom of a long list of flattering reviews there is this quote, “If there is any justice in the world, The Baby Game will sell more copies than The Da Vinci Code.” It's attributed to “Randall Hicks' Mother.”

Hicks hasn't rested on his laurels. In 2007, he added another non-fiction work to his credits with Adoption: The Essential Guide to Adopting Quickly and Safely.

Baby Crimes, the follow-up to his fiction debut, also came last year. This time his protagonist Dillon is hired by a rich couple to find out who's been blackmailing them about the illegal adoption of their 16-year-old daughter. Toby's search for her leads only to dead bodies and buried secrets.

Booklist calls Hicks a “nimble writer” and declares his second effort to be “more polished than its predecessor, with more sharply realized characters.” Publishers Weekly is less impressed and finds the book “unremarkable.”

Read excerpts from both of Hicks' fiction works and enter a contest to name the title of his next Toby Dillon mystery at his website (<http://www.randall-hicks.com/home.html>).

Randy Richardson is an author, humorist, former journalist, and a lawyer. His fiction debut, Lost in the Ivy, a murder mystery set against the backdrop of Chicago's storied Wrigley Field, won the Writers Marketing Association's “Fresh Voices” Book Award and the Illinois Woman's Press Association's Mate E. Palmer Communications Contest. He writes the Dad Libs column for SanityCentral.com and is a frequent contributor to Chicago Parent magazine. In his day job, he is an attorney for the Social Security Administration's disability appeals branch. At night and during lunch breaks, he serves as president of the Chicago Writers Association (chicagowrites.org) and works on his second novel while a 4-year-old tugs on his legs. Visit his website at www.lostintheivy.com. You can also see Randy's past Highlighter selections compiled here: <http://astore.amazon.com/blawg-20>

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8. Chicagoland author Friendlies (Calls for writing submissions/Contests/Publications of Interest):

Randy "lostinthey" <RandmansWorld@aol.com> passed this on to those who might be interested...Call for Stories

Attention Writers: We want your stories. Familia Books is buying stories to be collected into an anthology tentatively titled Wisdom of Our Mothers. Fifty percent of the profits from the book will be donated to shelters for mothers and their children escaping from abusive relationships.

Payment: If your work is accepted, you will be paid US \$100 per story upon publication of the book. (Other payment options for more money are available.)

Story guidelines: Stories will be true accounts of life's lessons learned from one's mother, regarding values, ethics, relationships. They should be generally positive, but may explore areas of disagreement or conflict with one's mother. Maximum length is 3,000 words (no minimum).

How to submit your story:

E-mail (preferred ericjbowen (at) comcast. net

S-mail: Familia Books, PMB 326, 1225 E. Sunset Dr. Ste. 145, Bellingham, WA 98226

Include with submission: Contact information: your name, address, phone number, and email address; short (100 words max) biography, resume, and/or self-promotion to publish with your story. Deadline:

November 30, 2008 (tentative). For more information: www.familiabooks.com

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Chicagowrites> Chicago Writers Association (CWA) CLARION Sources:

America's Career InfoNet

Anthologies Online <<http://www.AnthologiesOnline.com>>

CareerSearchZone.com <<http://www.careersearchzone.com>>

Clickfire.com <: <http://www.clickfire.com/viewpoints/articles/>>

Compulsivereader.com <<http://www.compulsivereader.com/html>>

Craigslist

Editor and Publisher Magazine

EzineArticles.com <<http://EzineArticles.com/>>

F+W Publications, Inc. <<http://www.writersdigest.com/>>

Freelance writing jobs CareerBuilder.com

Freelance Writing Organization, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, (416) 466-6943

<<http://www.FreelanceWriting.com>>

Google.com

Guardian Angel Publishing <<http://www.guardianangelpublishing.com>>

History News Network, George Mason University, <<http://HNN.us>>

Duane Newcomb, The Professional Authors Newsletter, P.O. Box 3236, Rocklin, CA 945677,

<dnew@surewest.net>, <www.thebooksite.net>

Publishers Weekly (PW Daily)

Randy Ingermanson ("the Snowflake guy"), <<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com>>,

Santa Cruz Sentinel <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/>

Scriptologist.com, <www.scriptologist.com>

The Writers Network News, <www.writersnetworknews>

University of Chicago Press <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/>]

WeDemocrats.com

Worldwide Freelance.com Markets Plus <<http://www.worldwidefreelance.com/mplus.htm>>

WRITER GAZETTE, <<http://www.writergazette.com/>>

WRITERSBREAK.COM TODAY! <<http://www.WritersBreak.com>>.

Writer's Corner, Plus Papers

Yahogroups.com

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