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WHO'S WHO

Jane Byron: SWAN's "Friday"

"When there are more things to do than we have hands for, we call Jane," is how one board member explains *Jane Byron's* contribution to SWAN. "She doesn't mind doing the mundane kinds of things that must be done to keep the organization humming."

A writer, Jane is in her seventh year as a freelancer. Having worked for the University of Medicine and Dentistry, she built her business writing annual reports, newsletters, marketing pieces, and capabilities brochures for clients in the medical and pharmaceutical fields. But in recent years she has expanded her range to include finance and other industries. Her clients include Fortune 200 companies, emerging businesses, and non-profits. "I enjoy the variety in type of client and industry," she said. "It gives me the opportunity to stretch myself professionally."

In describing her work, Jane

said she tries to make each piece reflect the client. "My writing can be very 'corporate,'" she said, "but where possible I'll inject a sense of humor. My preferred style is conversational and feature-like. I enjoy taking a 'nothing' story and making something fresh and interesting out of it. Most of the annual reports I've done don't read like the typical annual report."

Dealing with Clients

Like most freelancers, Jane has had to learn to deal with different personalities. She spoke of having to "fire" a client who insisted on dictating every aspect of the project, telling Jane in so many words that "We're not paying you to be creative." Jane walked away from that project. "My integrity is worth more than money," she said.

At the other end of the spectrum is the occasional client who goes out of his or her way to call and say "Wow!" about the job Jane did.

"Unfortunately," she added, "most of our clients pay us and feel that's enough expression of thanks. We have to learn to live with that."

Marketing the Business

On the marketing side, Jane has overcome an essentially retiring personality to people in conversation at parties and wedding receptions who have become clients or have referred me to clients. And at SWAN, just sitting back wasn't doing me any good. So I began volunteering and got to know people. The result has been some good leads as well as very good friends and colleagues."

Besides the contributions of time and talent to SWAN, Jane is raising a family and works regularly at a homeless shelter. "The excuse, 'I just don't have the time,' doesn't wash with me," she added.

"Whatever you give to SWAN—or to most organizations—you get back."

—Cos Ferrara

.2.

WEBWORKS

- Welcome New Members
- VP Canzani resigns
- The Pricing Game
- Portfolio review task force

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What You Missed SWANOTES

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SWANSONG

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

Thursday, May 21
"Perform at your Peak"

Diane M. Eade, President of Advanced Leadership Group, will lead a workshop to help you define and develop goals, communicate with clients, and get and keep yourself motivated.

Wednesday, June 24
"The Pricing Game"

SWAN's most popular event of the year returns. Come see your fellow members' work, and try to guess how much they earned for it. An eye-opening event not to be missed.

SWAN meets at the Bergen Museum of Art & Science, 327 E. Ridgewood Avenue, Paramus, NJ Call the SWAN Hotline @ 201 967-1313 for information, or visit our web site at www.swan-net.com. Programs are free to SWAN Members. The cost for non-members is \$8.00 at the door.

WEBWORKS

The SWAN web site has landed me two nice clients with repeat assignments. The first time I got a call after being "up" I was asked to submit writing samples for consideration against two other competitors. I referred the caller to my web page and because of the speed at which this person could evaluate my work, I got the assignment the next day —

presumably before the other writers' work had been received via the mail. The second job I got was after Barbara Ross referred me to someone she was working with (we both actually got the job based on the strength of our web pages). The same day that I referred this woman to my web page she hired me for some very plum assignments for a major pharmaceutical company.

—Jane Byron



...to get your samples up on the SWAN web site. As you can see from the testimonial above, some members are reporting great success using the web site as a marketing tool.

In addition to members' samples,

the SWAN sourcebook, Cygnature, and SWAN press releases are all available for viewing and downloading on-line.

Isn't it time to wake up and smell the JAVA?
:)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS...

The following individuals were accepted for membership since the last issue of Cygnature. Let's give them a warm SWAN howdy do.

Designers

Smita Aggarwal
Theresa DellaCerra
Jovita Wallace

Multimedia

Donna Meyer

Writers

Joanne Beaubien
Nick Casale
Ellen Ray
Lois Seeligsohn

Illustrators

Mari Goering
Alice Goldsmith
Irwin Kuperberg

Photographers

Peter Byron
David Derex
Bruce Goldsmith

Lynn Canzani Resigns

Citing time and schedule conflicts, Lynn Canzani has resigned her position as Vice President of the SWAN Board of Directors effective April 1st. Lynn is a dedicated and hard-working SWAN member and has served on the Board for many years. Prior to her election as Vice President, she served as Membership Director.

SWAN members past, present, and future owe Lynn a great debt of gratitude for the time and effort she has invested in our group, and we send a heartfelt "THANK YOU" her way.

The Board is considering options for filling the vacancy.



Are Your Prices Right?

One of the toughest parts of freelancing is pricing a proposed job for a client. The best way to build expertise and confidence is to compare your own experiences with those of other professionals in your field.

At the Pricing Game, SWAN's most popular and exciting meeting of the year, you'll see dozens of actual projects and guess what the SWAN member was paid. The truth may surprise you!

We'll feature illustration, graphic design, photography, computer graphics, and writing projects of all kinds. Whatever your discipline, send one or two samples and participate. This educational meeting provides a splendid forum for exposing your work to fellow members.

Artists and computer people, we need slides or printed samples of your work (we can make the slide), which will be returned. Photographers must send slides. **DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL ART** and preferably not photocopies. Send to: Deb Hoeffner, 538 Cherry Tree Lane, Kinnelon, NJ 07405.

Writers, originals are great but photocopies are OK. Cover up anything you don't want to show (e.g., client's name). Send to: Marcia Ringel, 250 Ferris Place, Ridgewood, NJ 07450.

Simple entry forms will be mailed to you. Final deadline for entries: The May 27 meeting.

Then join us on Wed., June 24, at 7:30 P.M. sharp for a memorable and useful evening.

Questions? Call Deb at 973-838-5490 or Marcia at 201-445-4023;
e@mail: wdsatwork@aol.com.

—Marcia Ringel

Portfolio Review Task Force

A record number of new applicants has prompted the Board to appoint a task force to streamline the portfolio review process.

The existing procedure requires 2 members in the applicant's discipline to review his/her portfolio and file a report to the Membership Director.

Unfortunately, too many SWAN members have been unwilling to volunteer as reviewers, creating delays in processing new member applications.

This has caused hardship for the Membership Director, spending an excessive amount of time trying to find qualified reviewers, and made SWAN appear very disorganized and unprofessional to prospective members.

The task force, which consists of Board Members David Val Schlink and Carl Jablonski, Designer Referral Chairperson Wally Littman, Steve Traiman, and Drew Degrado, will be revamping the entire review process, including member qualifications. The task force welcomes any and all volunteers to participate in this project.

WHAT YOU MISSED

We began the new year by sharing our strategies for developing new business, and planning for the inevitable (death & taxes).

*Turning Contacts into Contracts,
January 22*

At the January meeting we split off into groups by discipline to discuss Turning Connections into Contracts. Judging by the notes that were submitted to me, all the groups had some trouble staying on topic. I suppose that since our colleagues are also our competitors, it's hard to ignore the opportunity to run those mental checklists and wonder "How am I doing compared to him/her?"

As always, the best thing about SWANees was a willingness to share the tried-and-true methods for procuring lucrative projects. Here are some tips:

- Never leave the house without business cards
- Never miss an opportunity to hand someone your business card
- When bidding on a project, ask if you are competing with others
- Ask if there is a budget – sometimes it is much higher than you would have asked for
- Get letters of agreement to confirm assignment, including number of revisions, and outline terms of payment
- Stay current with changing styles
- Buy good equipment and maintain it
- Periodic promo pieces (weekly, monthly, bi-monthly) with phone follow-up seems to work for photographers but other groups reported little success
- Industry directories by discipline are a good venue and well worth the investment
- Define reproduction rights - price for one time use; another price for all rights

- Many of us must accept the price our client's budget dictates, but we can't stop working after hours are used up unless we're satisfied
- When showing your portfolio, be prepared for requests to use an existing piece by knowing what you would charge under a variety of usage situations – stammering is unprofessional.

—Jane Byron

Tax Strategies, February 18

Judging from February's low turnout, taxes aren't the most popular subject. But as the single largest expense that anyone in business must pay, failing to keep up to date on regulations, strategies to minimize tax obligations, and retirement planning can cripple your ability to function effectively, or even stay in business long-term.

Earl Coppock of Malkin, Coppock and Company

was on hand to explain just a few of the 300(!) new provisions in the IRS code that went into effect in 1997, with an emphasis on saving for retirement and your child's education.

Included were an explanation of the Roth IRA, the Education IRA, and a lively

discussion about SEP IRAs and Keogh plans initiated by members of the audience.

Later in the evening, Thomas Barkalow and David Pollack of O'Brien Financial Services explained some of the basic tools for investing your money once you've managed to save it. They stressed the importance of beginning your investment program immediately because of the "cost of waiting to invest," and the magic of compound interest.

—Carl Jablonski



Accountants Barkalow, Coppock and Pollack speak to a small but interested group at the Tax & Retirement Planning meeting in the Bergen Museum of Art & Science on February 18.

SWANOTES

Illustrator *Stan Cohen* (Graphic Visions) was recently awarded a contract to design and develop an e-commerce site for the Salesian Missions of New Rochelle, NY. The site will contain more than 200 religious and non-religious items, from Gold Crucifix Necklaces to T-shirts and coffee mugs.

As a 'direct' result of working on her SWAN webpage, *Stan 'WebMonster' Cohen* utilized *Rosemary Dreger's* talents in direct marketing for the monster web art-for-you.com. Rosemary's work appears in the website (the coming soon page) as well as a follow-up letter to all requests for catalogs.

Writer *Cos Ferrara* presented "Build a Winning Resume" at the Hillsdale Public Library in March. The program was sponsored by the Friends of the Library, of which Cos is a member.

Photographer *Ralph J. Greene* (Arjay Photography) has received the Impact Award for interactive multimedia presentations and Best in Show award from the Business Marketing Association of New Jersey. Ralph co-produced the CD-ROM piece "The Path to Increasing Sales" with New Jersey Ad Agency Rochford Inc. SWAN member *Sally Fica* (SJF Studios) designed graphics for the presentation. Ralph has just completed another CD-ROM project for a Caribbean charter yacht.

Illustrator/ animator *Craig Berman* (CB Illustrations) assisted on the design and animation for Walt Disney's "Titey," an animated movie trailer that spoofs the oscar-winning film "Titanic." The spot was created at J.J. Sedelmaker Productions/NY and aired on the April 4th episode of "Saturday Night Live."

Writer *Luisa Frey-Gaynor* has become a quotable "expert" on cruising, which can only help in obtaining future work. Her client, the publisher of the newsletter "Cruise Reports," recently distributed a press release concerning the top rated cruise ships of 1997. She was quoted in the release which was subsequently picked up over the news wires and has been seen by key travel editors and top cruise industry executives. The leading travel trade magazine cited the newsletter as an authoritative source for cruise reviews.

SWANSONG

So who says SWAN is a local organization with regional, low-budget clients? Last week, an agent a mile from the Pacific Ocean in Pacific Palisades called to ask if I would be interested in co-authoring a book with a famous sports motivational psychologist. *Barbara Ross*, the writers referral chair, gave her my name because of my extensive sports and sporting goods writing experience. I already have a book proposal with an agent, but I might be willing to consider her project if the money was better than the one I was looking at. What did she think this project would bring in?

"Well, you never know with books," she replied, couching her response in the cautionary language of people who gamble on big projects, "but I think given my client's background and influence, it would be big."

"How big?" I asked.

"Seven figures."

I tried not to gulp, saying that I'd be very interested at numbers THAT BIG. We fenced about the share I'd get if I were chosen to do the work, and what extent of the writing I might be doing. Then she asked to see some samples, and we hung up.

I don't know if I'll actually get the job, since other writers with more book-writing experience are in contention. But as I said to Barbara when I called her to thank her for the lead, "it feels just a bit thrilling when a stretch limo pulls up in front of your house, even if they're only stopping to ask directions." Stay tuned.

—William Cross

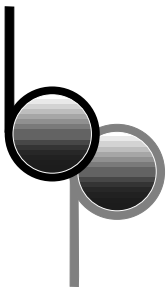
Cygnature is distributed via mail to SWAN members, prospective members, and our business mailing list. In addition, it is available to the world as a downloadable Acrobat PDF file at our web site: www.swan-net.com.

Cygnature invites all SWAN members to submit articles, ideas for articles, letters to the editor and shamelessly self-promoting press releases for inclusion in the newsletter. We also need volunteers to accept assignments for

writing articles, creating illustrations, and photographing SWAN meetings and events. Send all submissions, inquiries, promises to volunteer and chocolate chip cookies to the editor (email is preferred):

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