



april meeting

Keeping Maria Piscopo Coming Back

By Brent Brotine



photo by Cindy McEwen

Maria (r.) chuckles as she autographs Claudia's door prize book with "will work for food."

Her first presentation delighted C3 members, so it was terrific to have creative services consultant Maria Piscopo back for an encore. In a presentation on April 18 at Helix, co-hosted by C3 and the Chicago chapter of ASMP, Maria told a packed audience all about the secrets of Keeping Clients Coming Back.

Maria feels that as creative professionals, today's economy is forcing us into different ways of marketing. Rather than discount ideas by wondering "what would my clients think!" we should be dropping preconceived notions of the way to do business.

What matters most to creatives, says Maria, is to have a script memorized on how to communicate with clients: the client says A, you say B. This is especially important when it comes to pricing questions. Creatives should always be vague in the beginning, using ranges to narrow down "what planet you're on." To improve the client's perception of you, use language such as "No, but (give an option)" or "Yes, and (name a cost)."

Maria presented five key ways to keep in touch with clients throughout the year. The first is to add editorial content to your web site that gives clients a reason to seek you out online.

Maria recommended links to complementary sites, announcing upcoming conferences, providing the "back story" on selected imageries and including surveys or contests. She also is an advocate of starting your own blog.

The second idea is to build more referral business by getting involved with your professional associations. Maria has long been a proponent of using groups like C3 and ASMP to network and to learn valuable organizational skills. In addition, when you make follow-up calls to clients, don't just ask "are you happy?", ask "who else should we contact?"

Thirdly, Maria counsels to use call-to-action statements throughout your direct marketing materials. Ask the recipient to visit your web site, call for a personal consultation, update their contact information or e-mail a request for a mini-portfolio.

Fourth, Maria recommends getting clients into conversations. Offer them invitations to meetings. Begin conversations with "last year at this time" to get past clients thinking of good things you've done. Or consider her personal

favorite strategem: first pitch a trade magazine editor for an article where you'd seek quotes from industry leaders, then with your go-ahead in hand call the client with a quote request. It's a way to get past receptionists and assistants and speak to the actual people you otherwise might not be able to reach.

Lastly, don't be put off by the comment "we're happy with someone we're already using." Dig for details. Ask the client how often they evaluate their relationships, and when the next review of services might be. To keep the conversation going, don't ask questions that clients can simply respond "yes" or "no" to.

More information from Maria is on her web site, www.mpiscopo.com. After questions from the audience, two lucky attendees won copies of Maria's books in our door prize drawing. College student Daniel Olah won a copy of Graphic Designer's and Illustrator's Guide to Marketing and Self-Promotion, and in keeping with C3's tradition of always having members of the Hine household win prizes, Claudia won a copy of The Photographer's Guide. ●



President's Letter

History and the Future

By *Cindy McEwen*

I recently spent a few weeks in Italy. While I have traveled extensively in this hemisphere, I had not been “across the pond” before. I was fascinated by how old everything is—the history.

I never liked studying history in school. It was boring—memorizing names, dates, places. As a child, I just couldn't relate. I don't know if it was uninspired teachers or just the way they taught back then. But history wasn't alive. I must admit I've gotten more of my historical knowledge (accurate or not) from movies and TV.

We have lots of history in this country. I've visited Boston—the old North Church and Freedom Trail; seen the Civil War battlefields in the south; viewed the Declaration of Independence in Washington—the foundation of our country; and traveled west to Mesa Verde to see how Native Americans lived. But we don't even come close on history.

In Italy, we started on the island of Murano off of Venice. The glassblowers were sent there in the 1200s. They say the Venetians were afraid that they would burn down the city so they were sent away. The families there have been handing down their glassblowing knowledge for generations—hundreds of years.

We ate at a restaurant in Siena—in the middle of the Tuscany/Chianti region—the Antica Osteria Da Diva (yes, the diva was there). It had been chatted up as one of the best fine dining places in Siena. There was a much-requested sunken room in

the back. It had been a cave, found in 100 BC. BC! We're not talking centuries, we're talking millennia. You could see layers in the raw brick walls—the level where the road had been 1000 years before. People walked here. People made wine here! People lived and died here.

We visited the ancient ruins in Rome—had a wonderful guided walking tour (the only way to do it). We saw the remains of castles of Nero, Augustus and Caesar as well as the Forum, plus the Colosseum where the gladiators fought. Gladiators! You see them in the movies but you somehow think that's fiction—that it's just special effects and costumes. Just Russell Crowe. But seeing the place where it actually happened makes it a whole lot more real.

The C3 board is undertaking development of a long-range plan for our group—a vision and goal for the future. As I try and write down ideas for this, I don't even know how to think about it. What will the group, and the future, be like in 5–10–25 years? I think how much has changed in the last 25 years, in the last 1000 years. It's kinda mind-boggling.

I do know that I look forward to the next year. We're electing a new board in June at our annual meeting. We have some history and some fresh faces with new ideas in the people nominated. I hope you will join me in voting them in and thank them, and our outgoing board members, for making this group function and grow. ●



Chicago Creative Coalition

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We welcome editorial submissions (including opinion pieces) that may be of interest to our readers. Send your articles or ideas to Brent Brotine at Chicago Creative Coalition, P.O. Box 578477, Chicago, IL 60657-8477 or email them to him at brent@brotine.com. Please note that we reserve the right to edit or reject any articles submitted to C3. Note that this newsletter does not return unsolicited materials. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author(s), not those of Chicago Creative Coalition.

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Upcoming Programs **C3 Tours Millennium Park**

Annual Meeting, Friday, June 23, 2006

Discover the architectural feats and underlying symbolism of the gardens, art, and architecture of Millennium Park in our own private tour on Friday, June 23, at 6:30 p.m. Meet at the Crown Fountain on Michigan Avenue at Monroe Street.

A reception will follow at the China Grill, 230 N. Michigan Ave., at the Hard Rock Hotel. Elections for the C3 board of directors will take place. Join us for a fun event and vote for your directors for the upcoming year. The nominees are as follows:

President	Cindy McEwen
VP/President Elect	Nate Marks
Treasurer	Carolyn Aronson
Secretary	Sundeé Koffarnus
Membership	Mike Tanimura T. J. Hine
Programs	Michelle Crisanti
Internet	Jeff London
Pubs/Resources	Beth Ruark
Education	Nate Marks
PR	Linda Cassady
Newsletter	Brent Brotine

For the latest information on any upcoming event, check the C3 website at www.ChicagoCreative.org or call the C3 Hotline at 312.409.9945. Programs are subject to change.

Classifieds

Help Wanted

Downtown Chicago printer seeking candidates for full-time design/prepress position. Must know InDesign and have some experience with mail merges. 'XM-PIE and Xerox IGEN experience a plus. Email resume in PDF form only to: eclark@midamericanprint.com

Show Clients The Big Picture For Just Small Change

Whenever you'd like to have a video projector for a campaign, PowerPoint or portfolio presentation, remember that C3's projector is available to members for a rental price that your neighborhood AV supplier can't touch — just \$50. It's compatible with both Mac and PC laptops. Just call T. J. Hine at Hine Photography, 312.829.7107 to make arrangements.



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C3 Website

Some Things In Life Are Free

By Cindy McEwen

What would you do if you could have free 24/7 advertising for your business? Yes, FREE! Would you say no, thanks? Would you say you have all the advertising you need? Would you say you don't have 30 minutes to put it together? I don't think so.

We all have time to promote our clients but some of us are bad on making time to promote ourselves. But that's what you can do with a Member Profile Page on the C3 website. It's a mini-portfolio out there for the world to see and it's free to all C3 members. Plus, you can link to your own website for double-duty advertising.

Easy-to-use software lets you choose from 4 layout templates. Whether you're a copywriter who wants more text area or an illustrator who needs more visuals, there is a format ready and waiting for you to insert copy and images. And don't forget that all-important contact information so potential clients know how to get a hold of you. You'll even get an automatic email link so they can contact you directly.

T. J. Hine says he gets requests all the time for recommendations for designers, writers, printers, etc. He refers them to the C3 website. "I give them the URL for the Member Profile Pages, not just the directory. That way they can look at samples and get an idea of individual styles and specialties," says T. J. "I know of at least 3 designers who've gotten jobs in the last month off the site. If you don't have a page there, it's a big missed opportunity."

Check out some of the people who've already discovered the benefit of a free Member Profile Page at www.chicago-creative.org/profiles/. And while you're there, download your C3 Member Profile Kit to get started. You'll want to have your page up when our new redesigned C3 website is unveiled later this year.

Some things in life *are* free. And your Member Profile Page is one of them! ●

C3 Outreach

Taking Us To The Streets

By Sundeé Koffarnus

C3 members often ask what we've done recently to increase our recognition among creative professionals in the Chicagoland business environments. Here's one example, and we're always looking for more.

On February 28, I worked a C3 table at the Affiliates Reception sponsored by the National Association of Women Business Owners' (NAWBO). The evening was an opportunity to network and learn about the events and activities of various associations, not necessarily for women only.

After setting up the display of C3 membership brochures and applications, I quickly visited the buffet and cocktail bar. As I nibbled, I perused the other tables — various professional groups and associations such as DePaul University, Dominican University, Midwest Society of Professional Consultants, Center for Women's Business Research, and the Network of Women Entrepreneurs. All of these are likely potential partners for C3 events and sources for prospective members.

I made conversation with passers-by, pointing out if they were not member material, they may still want to look into C3 since our organization could serve as a resource for any of their creative service needs.

I feel this was a good event to promote C3 and its members. At future events, perhaps several members could bring their portfolios and show off our collective talents. ●

Education

New Education Project in Development

By Nate Marks



C3's predecessor, Women in Design/Chicago, developed a very large multi-faceted education program aimed at college-level students. The program included seminars, training, apprenticeships, and an annual scholarship. However, at the time, WID/C had a much larger membership base to draw upon.

Over the last few years C3 has gone thru several phases with regard to establishing a long-term educational component. We established a series of quarterly round-table discussions with both educators and professionals in the creative arts field. This worked well for a while, but interest waned and we abandoned the project in favor of a "shadowing" concept whereby students would attend a Member's office or studio to watch how we, as professionals, worked thru our day. The project was never implemented because our educational resource was unable to commit their students to the schedule.

What we seem to need is a program over which we have more physical control and which can be adapted to suit several audiences. With this idea in mind, the Education Committee is developing a program, which should fulfill our mission over the next few years. We call this new education project "The C3 Communication Arts Presentation."

The Concept. In order to make students and others aware of the communication/creative arts and their impact upon everyone's daily lives we will bring our daily experiences to their places of work and study.

The Development. We will put together a two-part digital presentation showing how (a) the communication arts impact everyone's daily lives, and (b) how C3 professionals go thru the process of obtaining, developing, and delivering communication arts' assignments via sales, research, meetings, concept sketches, writing, design, graphics, illustration, and photography.

The Delivery. C3 will contact various organizations, chambers, schools, etc. and then two or three C3 members will make a one-hour presentation using the digital presentation and other documentation.

The Promotion and the Feedback. The C3 team of presenters will have the audience fill out forms at the beginning and the end of the presentation to derive as much feedback as possible. The presentation team will also promote C3 and leave C3 literature with the group.

The Membership Benefit. From the information gathered the Education Committee will write a quarterly article for our newsletter and website. In addition, the digital presentation itself can be shown on the C3 website and delivered to other audiences via our website.

Our first phase of developing this program is to put together a special committee to deal with the overall concept of what the presentation should encompass. After this phase is completed we will pass the project on to another team for implementation. It is the Education Committee's goal that the presentation be ready for use in 2007.

If you are interested in being part of this project, please contact our Director of Education, Nate Marks at nate@DesignMarks.com. ●



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Portfolio Profile **In The Spotlight: Janet Ocwieja and Associates**



client: personal portfolio
responsibilities: set design, set propping and photo styling

“When you are born, your work is placed in your heart.”
– Kahlil Gibran

How could I know over 14 years ago when I started my business that a 19th century poet would predict my life. From the child with a vivid imagination (a nice way of saying not living in reality), to the painting major in college (a way of getting out of writing papers), to the retail buyer (an excuse for shopping – with another person’s money), it all came together for me in photostyling.

I love, love, love what I do – from interiors to soft good styling, and shop ‘till you drop with wardrobe and hair and makeup. I play well with others and enjoy being part of the team of creatives it takes to pull off a successful photo shoot.

I not only bring my own sense of style to a shoot, I have now expanded to doing full production. So now I can bring the caterers, or anything else that is needed, as well.

I do have one philosophy I bring to each creative challenge: the more personal you make it, the more universal it becomes.

JANET OCWIEJA
&
ASSOCIATES



client: Henredon
responsibilities: set design, set propping and soft goods styling

client: Gargoyle Sunglasses
responsibilities: wardrobe and hair/makeup



Janet Ocwieja • Janet Ocwieja and Associates • 773.549.5553 • www.TheLadyHasStyle.com

Member News

Nate Marks, President of DesignMarks Corporation, was recently quoted in an on-line article "Signage That Gets Noticed" on Lowe's for Pros for Lowe's Commercial Services. The article states Nate's contention that a logo can't sell a product, but if created with care, can generate interest, visually identify a company and provide an essence of what the company offers.

Betsy Martens, Director of Communications for Lake Forest Open Lands Association, has successfully launched a brand identity system for the non-profit land conservation organization. The new design can be viewed in a PDF of the current newsletter available at www.lfola.org.



Lisa Syverson, Syverson Studios, recently unveiled her first major gallery exhibit in years, "Stories from Afar: My Journey In Colour" running through June 18 at Maple Street Gallery in Evanston. Her paintings use multidimensional layers of acrylic, colored pencil, oil and chalk pastel and iridescent elements to recreate her travels among other peoples and cultures.

Judy Zeddies will be exhibiting her printmaking at the Old Town Art Fair June 10 & 11, and the Hinsdale Art Fair June 17 & 18. Her new web site is online at judyzeddies.com.

How to Join C3

The easiest access to a C3 membership application is through our web site: www.ChicagoCreative.org/app.htm.

Fill out and print a membership application and mail with a check to:

Chicago Creative Coalition
P.O. Box 578477
Chicago, IL 60657-8477
Attn: Membership Director

E-mail questions to:
C3@ChicagoCreative.org
or e-mail the membership director: mike@sicreative.com

C3 Calendar

A Great Way To Promote Yourself . . . Every Month Of 2007

By Nate Marks

C3 is developing another group calendar, and this is the perfect time to get involved in the project. Many of you may remember the calendars we did several years ago. I believe that the last one was in the year 2000. That calendar was an instant hit and it could be seen hanging in offices all around town. The new calendar will be a wonderful way to show off your talents and it will also be in great demand by clients, friends and family. It is the perfect promotional device for members of C3.

Right now we are looking for interested designers, photographers, writers, illustrators, etc. to participate. You will produce the content for a section of the calendar. Teams are

encouraged so that more people can have their work highlighted. At this stage we anticipate the calendar to be 19" wide by 26" tall, full-color, two-sided, (six months to a side) and on a good paper stock. Our preliminary designs have the actual calendar information included, and are allowing for an area of approximately 8" x 8" for each art section.

Please sign up now, as space is limited—but please don't start your actual artwork yet, as the complete rules, details and specs will not be announced until June. Concepts will be needed in July and August and it will go to print in September or October so that it can be distributed before the end of the year. Each participant will get a quantity (to be



decided when we get closer to getting the actual printing count) to distribute as they choose.

Please send in your requests to be part of this exciting project to Cindy

McEwen at macindy@aol.com. It's on a first-come, first-served basis so the sooner you reply, the more likely you are to get in.

This is going to be a spectacular promotion for both you and for the Chicago Creative Coalition. Please sign up now—we are waiting to hear from you. ●

creative's corner

C3 Talks with T. J. Hine



Name: T. J. Hine

Company: T. J. Hine Photography

Occupation: Commercial Photography, specializing in food and drink.

Current Project: Packaging redesign of Food Club brand for Topco & Associates.

Dream Client: One that does the work and just pays me.

Family/Kids/Pets: Wife, no kids, just adopted a little mutt, Banjo, from the Anti-Cruelty Society.

Hobbies/Interests: Skydiving, golf (LOL), art, working on my house (yeah, I crack myself up).

Three Words that Best Describe Me: Tall, Dark, Handsome (okay medium, fair and not bad looking in low light).

Gadget I Can't Live Without: My digital cameras, my rigs.

Favorite Movie: The Wizard of Oz.

Favorite Recording Artists: Springsteen, Etheridge, but I am becoming pretty eclectic.

Book I'm Reading Right Now: I have 3 started, one almost finished and a dozen unopened.

Favorite Web Site: Mine!

My Fantasy Is: Can't write that, my wife works on this newsletter.

Prized Possession: My home.

My Inspiration Comes From: Life, my family, my friends and the weird little woman that begs at the corner.

Favorite Food: Hot or cold.

Favorite Restaurant: Thai Castle.

Favorite TV Show: *24*, *The West Wing*, *Lost*.

Places You've Traveled To: England, Mexico, Venezuela, all over the U.S.

The One Thing Nobody Knows About Me Is: If I tell, then someone will know.

Three Things In My Medicine Cabinet: Advil, Colgate, Band-Aids.

Favorite Way To Chill Out: Sit on the deck of my trailer with my wife and some friends, with a fire burning hot and the beer flowing cold.

The C3 Mission

The Chicago Creative Coalition (C3) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the professional growth of our communication arts members. We provide programs on business and technology plus social and networking opportunities; all in a noncompetitive atmosphere that encourages member involvement.



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