An Inundation Of Inspiration

by Brent Brotine  
photos by T. J. Hine

All C3ers face a daily need for inspiration—to get our creative juices flowing and the big ideas appearing. And all of us likely have different ways to find it. On February 28th, over three dozen members and guests—including a dozen first-timers—met at WeWork Fulton Market for a panel presentation, Where Do You Get Your Inspiration? featuring seven creative professionals ready to share their go-to sources.

Our panelists included artist Michelle Gustin of Fig Media. Photographer and filmmaker Brian Schilling of Schilling Film. Cabaret singer and parody lyricist Pam Peterson. CPG illustrator Michael Bast of Michael Bast Illustration. Photographer and director Jason Lindsey. Director Daniel Grambow, founder of the Floating Opera Company. And metal sculptor Todd Willing.

When asked about their very first inspiration to follow an artist’s path, the answers were surprising. Todd became fascinated with surrealism at a young age from seeing a Max Ernst collage. Daniel became hooked after playing the role of Tevye in his school’s production of Fiddler On The Roof. And Michael’s epiphany was his introduction to the works of landscape artist Frederick Church.

To stay inspired, panelists have a variety of remedies when they’re stuck. Brian turns 180° to another discipline, finding inspiration in cross-pollination. Michelle works on all three parts of the mind-body-spirit trifecta. Pam watches out for a physical trigger that asks her to pay attention. And Jason finds new inspiration in the solace of rural life.

When asked by an audience member “what trait do you think you all have in common,” our panel immediately had a group answer that drew resounding applause: ADHD. Yet on the flip side, they also acknowledged that their powers of observation set them apart. Asked who some of their present-day influences are, their responses ranged from Japanese samurai movies to Anthony Bourdain.

Our panelists websites are: 
Michelle Gustin: figgy.net  
Brian Schilling: schillingfilm.com  
Pam Peterson: youtu.be/sc3BkcSN0lo  
Michael Bast: michaelbastillustration.com  
Jason Lindsey: jasonlindsey.com  
Daniel Grambow: thefloatingoperacompany.com  
Todd Willing: facebook.com/toddwillingart
Seeing Things New

The first program in our Business for Life series poses the question: What Inspires You? According to Aaron Force, in his article Where Does Inspiration Come From?, “by definition, inspiration comes from outside ourselves. As the original Latin form, inspirare, suggests, something breathes life into us. In centuries past, this source was considered to be divine.”

Inspiration comes in many forms, and there is no one right way to get it. It is personal and derives from what matters to you and what drives you. It is often an integral part of what keeps you going when times get tough, to create, or see something in a new way. I like the notion that something can breathe life into me. Something unexplainable takes over and breathes life into the known life.

I am often inspired, daily even, I’m fortunate to be around people who are trying to live their best lives and evolve mentally and physically, and they inspire me to be better. People who dedicate themselves to a cause or a mission and live by their values. I’m continually inspired by my daughter Kaitlyn, her courage and unique way of looking at the world, despite several medical traumas. My immigrant grandparents who ventured to this country with a little money in their pockets and a considerable amount of faith that things would be better here. My friend Kirsten, a Stage 4 cancer survivor, who has unstoppable energy and is now helping others facing the challenges of cancer to transform them into hope and proactive action.

Being exposed to art and culture rejuvenates my creative juices. A trip to Paris a few years ago helped put the world and things into perspective, and I gained clarity on ways to sustain myself beyond work. Architecture inspires me. The Monadnock Building is across the street from my office building. I love looking at it, curious about the process of planning, designing, and constructing it to become an art form within itself.

I remember driving through New Mexico and feeling in awe of the beauty and the power of nature. The mountains were mesmerizing. The diversity of the terrain from green to desert to colorful rock formations all speak to the divine.

When I look back at all the people and moments that inspired me, I realize the role inspiration has and the major effect on important life outcomes. Inspiration introduced me to new possibilities by allowing me to transcend my ordinary experiences and limitations to transform the way I perceive my capabilities. Inspiration allowed me to see things new.

I encourage you to set yourself up for your version of breathes life into. To become personally inspired, set up the optimal circumstances for inspiration. Go out for a walk in nature, surround yourself with people doing things differently, learn a new skill and engage with others. Recognize the potency of inspiration, and its potential impact on everything you do. Interestingly, a secondary bonus feeling arose when recalling all the inspirational moments in my life—it was gratitude.

The C3 Mission
Chicago Creative Coalition enriches, educates and inspires creative lives.
We provide the framework for creative collaboration through insightful, educational programming and unique opportunities for networking and creative expression.

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We have several open positions and can always use volunteers for programs and special events. If you are interested in joining the board or getting involved, please contact Kathleen Kearns at k.kearns@kearnsdesign.com.

C3 Board meetings are open to all. They’re held the first Tuesday of the month from September–May at 6 p.m. Join us.

C3 Newsletter
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We welcome editorial submissions (including opinion pieces) that may be of interest to our readers. E-mail your articles or ideas to Brent Brotine 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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FROM THE BOARD

Challenges—and Solutions—Abound
by Michael Tanimura

Every board of every non-profit, NGO, cultural institution, nonsecular organization, community association—indeed, every entity that has relied on the concept of membership—has been bemoaning the fact that numbers, and participation, are down. Pretty much everyone understands the why of it; what’s still being discussed ad nauseam in board meetings is what to do about it. Chicago Creative Coalition has not been immune; and we do see a way forward.

President Kathleen Kearns will lead the C3 Board in a strategic planning retreat in 2018. The board believes that C3 can continue to play an important role in the creative life of members and the greater Chicago community. For the organization to continue to be vital, its mission and vision must resonate with members. We welcome your input as we search for the best path ahead.

On an operational level, the C3 Board hopes to continue to meet the needs of our members with each program and special event. So please let us know about any topics, programs, events, and/or special projects in which you would like to participate. The C3 Board has a good track record as producers. We need your input to ensure that what is produced has relevance and interest to you.

We also believe in supporting the creative community at large. C3 was the first to allow members of other creative groups to attend our programs at our member rate. This may seem counter-intuitive to expanding membership—since one benefit of membership is a reduced rate for attending programs. But it is exactly in line with C3’s reason for being: to enrich, educate and inspire creative lives. It also extends from our belief in noncompetitive, open collaboration—that’s how we run the organization, and how we try to interact with other creative organizations and institutions.

Increased collaboration with other organizations is also on the horizon. Thanks to board member Linda Levy, a very productive meeting with the leaders of American Photographic Artists (APA) and the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) should lead to some interesting collaborative themed projects and events. This will be a great opportunity not only for networking more closely with other creatives, but a chance to develop a real synergism, where a project comes together specifically because diverse hands, minds, entities are involved.

No matter our relatively small size, C3 can be a catalyst for such collaborative efforts. Within our membership we cover an incredibly wide range of knowledge, skills, experience and creative pursuits. In choosing to collaborate instead of compete with other organizations, we hope to extend the creative opportunities open to members of C3 and positively impact the community at large.

Solutions—just like challenges—abound. The trick is in matching one to the other. You in?

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Program-a-palooza!
by George Berlin

After a rough winter, the cold is departing and the sun is finally coming back! Time to look at the cool stuff we’re up to this spring and into the summer.

We’re continuing our Business for Life series with more amazing ways to give your work life a little kick in the pants with a few programs on conquering fear and your worst enemy … well, yourself, of course!

Two speakers will lead the way to help get your head more in the game this year and take control of your business. Stay tuned and sign up early, our program on copyright in January was so popular that we SOLD OUT!!

In June we’ll have another exceptional annual meeting. How can we top encaustic painting and trampolines from years past? Keep a lookout for the email soon. And then join us in the summer for BBQ and, well, planning next year’s programming. Your ideas are what make this thing work, so come full of ideas and leave full of chow!
‘Til next time …

Meet Glenda and Fil
by Brent Brotine

That’s Glenda Yasin and Filadelfo Roman, our new C3 interns. We are very happy to have them on board, and help them both progress from retail managers (Glenda at Costco, Fil at Home Depot) to full-fledged independent creatives. You’ll see them at our meetings, and they’re both eager to dialog with C3 professionals.

Glenda is particularly proud of receiving a 2018 Udacity/Google Developer Challenge Scholarship. You can reach Glenda at gyasin2@yahoo.com, and Fil at filroman7701@gmail.com.

Wauk This Way

Eight artists from C3 will be showing their works on Saturday evening, April 21st at the ArtWauk event in downtown Waukegan. This free monthly party in Waukegan’s downtown arts and entertainment district blends gallery showings with live music, food, performances and more.

On display at Dandelion Gallery, 109 S. Genesee St., will be art from Carolyn Aronson, T. J. Hine, Nate Marks, Cindy McEwen, Warren Perlstein, Laura Marie Sanchez, Bob Tolchin and Mary Wagner. The exhibit runs through May 12.
 Putting The Law On Our Side

by Brent Brotine

In today’s digital, share-it-with-one-click world, it’s never been so important for creatives to safeguard their content from inappropriate use. On January 16, C3 was pleased to have attorney Daliah Saper—one of the country’s leading media and entertainment lawyers—walk us through Trademarks And Copyrights In The Social Media Age.

Held at the Saper Law offices, the program set a new C3 attendance record with over 40 attendees.

Daliah held court in her conference area with a whiteboard, explaining terms, answering questions and presenting the dos and don’ts that creatives need to know.

Some key takeaways included:

• The best trademarks from a protection standpoint are fanciful (made-up words like Exxon®). Then in descending order of desirability: arbitrary (Amazon®) ... suggestive (Energizer®) ... descriptive (The Container Store®) ... and generic.

• In the US there is nothing you need to do to get a trademark; ownership goes to first-to-use, not necessarily first-to-file. Registering your trademark gives you nationwide rights of priority.

• Trademarks can last without limit as long as they are being used and the registration is renewed every ten years. Copyrights for individual works have an expiration: 70 years after the author of a work has died, the work goes into public domain.

• Anyone who is not your employee and provides you with content needs to sign a work for hire agreement—such as when a photographer brings a second shooter aboard for a project.

• Facebook®, Instagram®, et. al. have broad non-exclusive licenses to whatever content you upload; it may be your image but you allow them to do whatever they want with it. If you see your content posted on a site but want it off, thanks to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act every platform has an agent to field takedown requests.

• Today, rights-managed images can have invisible digital watermarks so the owner can find the image everywhere on the Internet and sue people who have not paid for use.

Regularly appearing on ABC News, CNBC, Fox News, NPR and WGN, Dahlia was recently named to Crain’s Chicago Business’s 2017 list of 60 Most Influential Women Lawyers. Her website is saperlaw.com.
MEMBER PROGRAM

Jonesing For Holiday Fun

by Brent Brotine
photos T. J. Hine and Cindy McEwen

C3’s annual Holiday Party was really on track this year—a slot car track. On December 17, we met at one of Chicago’s coolest lodging spaces (calling it a hostel/hotel doesn’t do it justice), Fieldhouse Jones at 312 W. Chestnut, This totally unique, eye-popping conversion of a former Borden Dairy features individual room arrangements from communal dorms to luxury private rooms to large-family one and two-bedroom apartments, among sports-themed common areas, memorabilia and curated art—all in the style of a park district fieldhouse. And next to the faux swimming lanes on the lower level, there’s an event area capped by a custom slot car racing track.

Our party began with open racing, followed by a slot car tournament that gave multiple C3ers and guests a chance to shine. Our famous holiday buffet followed, where many C3ers outdid themselves in whipping up delicious main dishes, side dishes, desserts and more. Following our repast, managers Max Harder and Debra

Baum took us on a tour of the facility which is filled with surprises at every turn, including:

…old scoreboard clocks as wall hangings
…trophies, trophies, trophies
…mosaics made of dart boards and basketball goals
…repurposed authentic metal lockers
…vintage sports board games
…a sculpture with 400—count ’em—400 wood tennis rackets

We wrapped up with the return of our White Elephant Gift Exchange, which again managed to simultaneously entertain and frustrate everyone. Although the infamous monkey bookends from past years were not to be seen, there seemed to be universal displeasure with the Cat Training Cards that Linda Levy was stuck with.

The main floor of Fieldhouse Jones features the Dropshot Coffee and Snack Bar, along with a large grandstand-like public area—making it a great place to drop in, use the free wifi and do some work. And certainly, their team invited all C3ers to do just that—so it’s definitely worth the trip.

Like what you see?

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Mary Wagner

Progressions
MaryWagner.com

Drawings from my Progression series concerning movement, space, and time. And maybe imaginary beings and creatures.

When I’m not drawing I’m running my graphic design biz.

1. *Water Sprite*, 11x14 inches, pigment ink on 100% cotton bristol board

2. *Green Flurry*, 14x17 inches, pigment ink on 100% cotton bristol board

3. *Out of Body Experience*, 22x30 inches, pigment ink on Fabriano Artistico paper

4. *Spectre*, 22x22 inches, pigment ink on Fabriano Artistico paper

5. *Blue Flutter*, 14x17 inches pigment ink on 100% cotton bristol board
C3 members were well-represented in the Women’s March to the Polls on Saturday, January 20th. Making the trek from Grant Park to Federal Plaza were members Claudia Hine, Barbara Counterman, Laura Marie Sanchez, Cindy McEwen, Mary Wagner, Gerta Sorensen, Jeff London, Linda Levy, Carolyn Aronson and Kathleen Kearns; past members Karen Ovington, Nancy Nord and Sherry Trojniar Russo, and friends Madelyn Ryan, Cheryl Anderley, Dana Pownall, Rebecca Sundin and Pam Peterson.

Warren Perlstein showed four photos in Culture Bridge/Kulturbruecke 2018, an art exhibition featuring a broad range of works by international artists, intended to deepen cross-cultural ties. The month-long event took place at the DANK Haus German American Cultural Center and ran through March 10. Laura Maria Sanchez and Claudia Hine were delighted to attend the February opening along with T. J. Hine who’s behind the camera for this photo.

Mary Wagner had two art exhibitions in March, 2018. A solo exhibit, SPIN, at the Bernard Gallery, Calumet College of St. Joseph. Featured in the show were her ink blot painted drawings like Metamorphosis shown here. Three of her drawings were also in the group exhibit Pen & Ink at The Union Street Gallery in Chicago Heights.

In December Maret Thorpe passed the US Chess National Tournament Director test. She has now reached the highest level of certification for officials of competitive chess in the United States.

Warren Perlstein’s daughter Traci participated in the Women’s March in Los Angeles; noteworthy as she has just recovered from breast cancer. Suffice it to say Warren is very proud of Traci’s strength and positive attitude throughout this ordeal, she is a strong woman. Her radiation treatments have ended and she has been pronounced cancer-free.

How to join C3

The easiest access to a C3 membership application is through our website: www.chicagocreative.org/join-c3/. Pay online through PayPal or contact membership@chicagocreative.org for a membership application to fill out and mail with a check to: Chicago Creative Coalition, c/o Carolyn Aronson, 747 W. Brompton, Apt 2, Chicago, IL 60657.

E-mail questions to: C3@ChicagoCreative.org or to the Membership Director: membership@chicagocreative.org
Occupation: Project Manager, Art Director, Graphic Designer

Current Project: Bringing food packaging into compliance with new FDA regs

Family/Kids/Pets: Tony, my wonderful husband, and Bronson our flat coated retriever

Hobbies/Interests: travel, gardening, crafts

Favorite Movies: big classics, like Ben Hur, The Godfather, Gone With the Wind, Wizard of Oz

Favorite CDs/Recording Artists: I recently discovered I like to listen to music from Broadway shows while I work.

Book I’m Reading Right Now: Nine Lives: Mystery, Magic, Death and Life in New Orleans, by Dan Baum. It’s a combination of biographies of nine everyday people and the story of their city. I don’t read much fiction any more.

Favorite Web Site: I don’t have one, but I’m into an app called Trivia Buff, which is an unorganized list of history trivia or odd facts. I just read and read …

My Fantasy Is: I’m living in Paris (or Rome or Barcelona or …) and riding around on my Vespa to my job teaching English, then later get together with my hubby and dog to meet friends and relatives to enjoy the peace and pleasure of a good meal and good conversation and good laughs.

I’d Give Anything to Meet: My ancestors around the time they decided to move to the US in the late 1800s. I’d love to know how they came to the decision and what they thought of things after they arrived.

Prized Possession: My mother’s rings. They made a tiny tinkling sound on her hand, so I always knew she was close by. I like to think she still is.

My Inspiration Comes From: I’m always seeing patterns in shape and color. I like to look for hidden meanings and secret codes. I’m inspired by history, architecture and language.


Places I’ve Traveled: all over the US, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, England, Scotland, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria and Portugal.

The One Thing Nobody Knows About Me: I speak several foreign languages. In college I studied Russian and Spanish (at the same time!) and have taken courses in French as well. I’ve forgotten a lot but it comes back when I brush up.

If I Won the Lottery, I’d: love to become the shark on my own Shark Tank program, listening to people’s dreams and investing in new ideas.