

*Daring you to spread your wings and soar to new heights*

from the editor

**This issue – our first – will spark your imagination and dare you to spread your wings!**

Sand boxes, popular with children in the U.S., are found on playgrounds and in backyards. Like children who meet and frolic with friends in their sand box, AWAI students did much the same. A virtual sand box was created in our “playground”, the AWAI Forum threads. Friends gathered at the Sand Box to joke, to tease, to cajole, to brainstorm. The interaction, conversation and exchange of ideas in the virtual Sand Box spawned creativity among AWAI students exactly as it does with children.

Suddenly ideas born in the “box” began to take on a life of their own. The virtual Sand Box, in two short weeks evolved into an e-zine. A huge thank-you to Phyl and Trease who blazed the trail. If you haven't read their March 19, 2004 e-zine, click the link below.

[The sandbox](#)

As we continue with our co-venture beyond the virtual sandbox, we're now ready to spread our wings and take flight. Freebird's goal is to allow AWAI students to soar, to seek freedom...the freedom to work virtually anywhere, the freedom to earn a better living, the freedom to enjoy more time with our families, the freedom to expand our knowledge, our skills and life's experiences.

Maria Thompson

## ***The (Sometimes Rocky) Road to Success***

### **How to avoid bumps along the way**

Maybe you've recently ordered your AWAI course materials. Or you might be delving into your first lessons. In either case, you've begun a journey on a well-traveled road. Along the way, there are students who trot along without stumbling, others trip on a rock or two and skin their knees. Lucky for you, I've got hints and tips to help you leap over the rocks and jog to the finish line. Before you know it, you'll be raking in the money, working on the beach, at a cabin in the mountains or anywhere equally as pleasing. You can spend more time with your family and enjoy life like never before.

Don't sit around waiting for your course materials to arrive. As soon as you sign up for the course, to kick-start your success, take these four steps:

- Go to [www.awaionline.com](http://www.awaionline.com)
- Read “What to Expect”
- Sign up for the Golden Thread
- Register for the Student Forum

If you order the entire course at once, a word of caution. Pace yourself. Don't rush from one lesson to the next. Allow yourself time to digest the material from one lesson before moving to the next. If you decide to browse ahead, don't start worrying about things you haven't learned yet. If you do, you could find yourself overwhelmed. We've heard stories in the Forums about students ordering the entire course and never getting as far as sending in the first assignment. By all means, work at your own pace, but don't hurry. The

courses are divided in to simple steps, but don't be deceived by the simplicity. Each step is important. And each step takes time to absorb. You may find at times that you don't totally grasp the heart of a lesson until you have applied it to your work.

If you chose to receive the course in installments, you'll find yourself moving in a regulated pattern, from lesson to lesson one month at a time. You can call the AWAI office and request lessons be sent more frequently, if once a month is too slow for you. When you are ready to submit your assignments, carefully read "**A Note About Sending in Assignments**" which should be included with your lesson materials or follow this link, <http://www.awaionline.com/about/expectations.php>. You'll find the basic guidelines you need.

You must put your name, address, telephone number and email address on your assignment before you submit it. Here is a tip that can very well avert a major pitfall. On your top page, state the number of pages for the assignment, i.e. Assignment #1 (5 pages). If there is a printer incompatibility or some glitch in email transmission, a page or maybe more could be missing. Any missing pages will be readily noticeable, if you've noted the number of pages submitted in the assignment.

Always double-space your assignments. Double spacing makes it easier for the evaluator to read your work. And not only that, the extra spacing allows plenty of room for remarks and comments

AWAI tells us to expect four to six weeks turn around time for assignments. Four weeks is likely, if you submit assignments via email. If

you use snail mail, you can expect six weeks for the round trip.

To expedite the process of sending your assignment to evaluators and having an assignment returned to you, submit assignments via email, if possible. Send the assignments to [assignments@awaionline.com](mailto:assignments@awaionline.com). Here is a very important tip: use the Request Receipt tool in Outlook Express. If you use snail mail, send the assignment Priority mail or Certified with a return receipt. An email Read Receipt or a Certified return receipt will do the same job. Your receipt will verify the date your assignment reached the AWAI office. One student tells us what happened to her.

"I wanted to give you a heads up about a mistake I made that resulted in a 2 month wait! I sent in my restaurant assignment for critique, but didn't follow up to make sure it was received. I was eagerly awaiting AWAI's critique, checking the mail daily. After 3 weeks, and still no response, I contacted AWAI to see if I'd be receiving the critique soon. Lo and behold—they had never even received the restaurant letter submission!! So I had to resubmit my restaurant assignment. However, due to travel complications, I wasn't able to resubmit it for another week. All in all, with a week delay and Christmas mail, the whole cycle of getting back their critique, took 2 months. Word to the wise.... make sure you e-mail or call after sending in a submission, so you know it was received at the other end."

*Lyn B. AWAI Six Figure Copy Writing*

A note about Graphic Design assignments. Those assignments are often prepared with special software. A wide variety of programs are used for graphics work. If you're not certain that the software you use will

allow the assignment to be printed in the exact format that you used for your layout design and graphics, don't risk disaster. Print your assignment and send it via Priority Mail.

Here is advice from a graduate of the AWAI Graphic Design course. "One of the most frustrating things I could advise new students in the Graphics Design for Success course about is assignments. Word has nice auto-correct features (except when you don't want it to do an auto-fix) ... a few of my assignments were graded with errors that did not show up on my copy, on my PC. Here's a tip: Assignments should be sent via PDF (and viewed on your PC as a PDF for obvious errors in layout) or printed and mailed so there is NO chance of a layout snafu in MS Word on the recipient end (the person that will grade your assignment). (One more tip) Another area ... Print the AWAI recommended reading list and buy or borrow as many of the books as you can (and read them) to round out your library in graphics design. They can be useful as idea sources later on when you are doing 'real world' work, and they will give you a different view on the same subjects that are taught in the Graphics Design course ... books by Roger Parker, Bob Bly, Peter Bowerman".  
*D.M.*

For Travel course students, Mike S. offers this suggestion to recall trip details.

Here's a way to help you recall sensory details. On separate pages of a pocket-sized notebook (index cards work, too) list each of the five senses, plus an additional page for Impressions/Emotions. During the day when you may not have time to make a lengthy entry in your journal, jot down brief sensory reminders.

Here's an abbreviated example from a trip to Rome.

**Sight:** ...a temple being excavated next to a modern-day office building—Rome juxtaposes old and new...

**Sound:** ...wasp-buzz of Vespas...

**Smell:** ...aroma of strong coffee and cigarette smoke permeating small trattoria on narrow alleyway off Campo di Fiori...

**Taste:** ...coldness on tongue of gelato limoni on hot afternoon while sitting on Spanish Steps next to Keats House...

**Touch:** ...smooth polished marble floors in St. Peter's contrast to weather-worn rough columns of Forum...

**Impression:** ...St. Peter's—stark contrast/ conflict between deep pious feeling it emotes versus the secular exorbitant wealth and power of the Catholic Church throughout the centuries...

Later you can work these sensory reminders into your journal and ultimately use them to add life to your travel articles. *Mike S.*

*(msdharma), AWAI Travel course student*

As you continue your studies, don't forget the Student Forum threads. You are likely to find other students there 24-7. You'll have a chance to meet and share ideas with students from around the world. Whether you need immediate help with a problem, are looking for a critique, want to brainstorm or collaborate on projects, you're bound to find a friend to lend a hand in the Forum. And as always, the AWAI Student Services team is focused on your success and ready to provide assistance. If you have questions or concerns about your course, send an email to: [studentservices@awaionline.com](mailto:studentservices@awaionline.com) or call the office at 561-278-5557 or 866-879-2924.

## ***How To Get Money Rolling in Now: Five Successful Ideas***

Often students wonder, "How can I practice my copywriting skills and earn money at the same time?" Below are illustrations that range from a simple newspaper ad make-over to one consisting of a three pronged marketing strategy. Use these ideas as a springboard for a project of your own. Even if projects like these are done on spec, you will acquire material for your portfolio, plant seeds for future business and perhaps, obtain a testimonial.

Click on each header to see an example.

### **Idea # 1: Catalogue letter**

Reading over the poorly written and weak introductory letter in last year's catalogue, this student asked to write the letter for the 2004 catalogue. By using word pictures filled with details and highlighting benefits, she turned the letter into a strong presentation of new products. The owner loved it.

### **Idea #2: Contractor sales letter**

If you've worked in an industry, no doubt you've gained product knowledge and expertise in that field. Why not look for companies that could benefit from a combination of your copywriting talents and product knowledge? Here's a great example.

### **Idea #3: Brain Supercharger**

Perhaps while scrutinizing someone's ad or marketing copy, you've discovered the flaws in their sales techniques. You realize with your newly acquired 6 Figure copywriting skills; you can transform that copy into a powerful sales piece. Here's an example of a sales letter where the student did just that:

### **Idea #4: Catering ad**

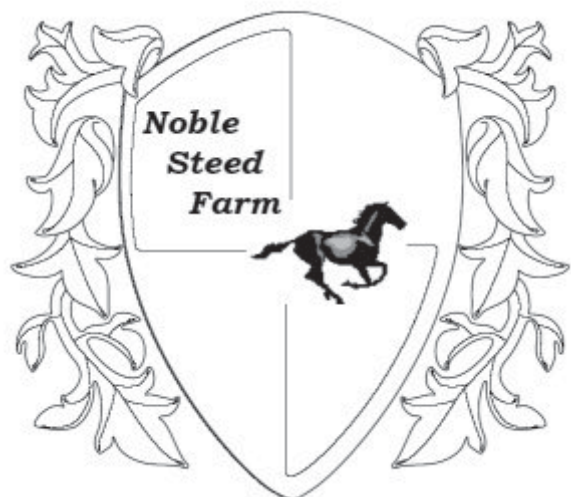
Here is a "before and after" that shows how a boring catering ad became "Cuisine-to-Go", a tantalizing taste-teaser.

### **Idea #5: Easter Bunny Magic**

See how a clever idea about Easter Bunny Magic turned into a marketable product that will bring joy to children and treasured memories for all.

## ***From the World of Graphic Design***

When learning, there's nothing quite as inspirational as seeing a great example. In a continuing effort to showcase work done by Graphic Design students, on the right is a special crest designed by Christine Cavaliero.



## ***Slick Tricks***

"When I finished AWAI Graphic Design I knew I needed some additional training," explains Christine Cavaliero. Here are two of my slick tricks.

#1) Grab a guru buddy. When you are first starting out find an experienced graphic designer who will take you under their wing. Ask them to let you do all the rough work, while they teach you some of the finished techniques. This will

help accelerate your learning curve immediately.

#2) This one is huge. With the advent of electronic technology it's easy for someone to take something and not pay for it. The best way to get around that is to take a screen shot of the website, logo or graphic. You can show them the concept, but they won't have access to your work. The best programs for screen shots are: Snag It or Screen Shot

Can you beat this trick? Send us your Slick Trick for the next e-zine. Details on last page.

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## ***A Professional Web Site – Made Easy***

*By Frauke Nonnenmacher*

### Part 1 – The Structure of an HTML Document

Creating a professional web site does not require a great deal of skill and knowledge. You just need an ability for structured thinking, and a bit of logic and common sense. You won't have to shell out for expensive software, and you won't be at the mercy of the cheap stuff that's out there.

You will be in total control of your web site. And here's how to do it.

First, I'd recommend that you download 1stPage at <http://www.evrsoft.com>. While it's perfectly possible to create HTML pages using nothing but Notepad, 1stPage has a few very nice extras that come in dead handy. And it's free, so go there now.

Start 1stPage and select File->New Web Document. A document will open that should look like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
  <title>Untitled</title>
</head>
<body>

</body>
</html>
```

What you see is the bare bones structure of an HTML page. You should never delete anything you see here, except for the word "Untitled" between the "title" tags. Everything else is vital for a web page to work properly.

You may have noticed that if you click on the “preview” tab in 1stPage, you’ll see nothing at all. That’s because all you’ve got at the moment are invisible control elements known as “tags”. Tags almost always come in pairs, an opening tag, starting with “<”, and a closing tag starting with “</”. Tags must **never** cross over one another – the last to open must be the first to close.

Next let’s have a closer look at these tags. The <html> and </html> tags define the scope of the html page. Anything in between these tags belongs to your web page. Never place anything outside of these tags – it may show up on your browser, but there’s no guarantee that it will work with your client’s set-up.

The <head> and </head> tags define the scope of the HTML header information, such as the title displayed in the browser’s title bar, meta tags or style sheet information. Don’t worry about that for now – we’ll get to it later.

The <title> and </title> tags define what will be displayed in the browser’s title bar, and everything between the <body> and </body> tags will make up the visible portion of the web page.

Before we get to the practical part, you need to learn about one other tag. The <p> and </p> tags define a paragraph of your web page. They are used to break up a web page into readable parts.

Here are some practical exercises:

First, delete the word “Untitled” between the title tags and replace it with a short sentence that describes this web page. Next, insert paragraph tags in between the body tags, and type any text you fancy in between. Your document should now look something like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
    <title>Frauke's Home Page</title>
</head>
<body>
<p>
This is my wonderful copywriting page. Hire me!
</p>
</body>
</html>
```

If your document looks like this, well done! Now save it under the name "index.htm" and open it by double-clicking on the file. Your web page should now open in your web browser. Congratulations! You've just created your first web page.

**Nifty Hint:** In 1stPage, place your cursor anywhere inside a tag and press F1 to get information about it.

Homework:

1) Spot and correct the mistakes in the following HTML document (answers in the next issue)

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN" >
```

```
<p>
```

```
Frauke's Home Page
```

```
</p>
```

```
<htm>
```

```
<head>
```

```
    <title>Welcome!<title>
```

```
<body>
```

```
</head>
```

```
<p>
```

```
This is my wonderful copywriting page. Hire me!
```

```
</p>
```

```
<p>
```

```
Really! My work is great, and it's dead cheap!
```

```
</body>
```

```
</html>
```

2) Write the text you want to appear on your home page. Put it in the body section of your document and use <p> and </p> tags to break it up into easily readable chunks. Just put in everything, including headlines, subheads and text you want to be specially formatted (bold, italics etc.) For now the text will all show up the same, but don't worry – we'll cover formatting later.

In part two I will show you how to format fonts and insert images...

# ***Distribution Lists and Databases: A Primer for Freelancers***

*By Lyn Blair*

Self-marketing is a freelancer's meal ticket. Promoting yourself through e-mails is one important avenue for self-marketing. Did you know you could set up your contact base to send one e-mail to numerous prospects? Or you could send one e-mail to all the freelance partners in your business network at the same time?

**Microsoft Outlook (not Outlook Express) has the feature to do just that.**

There are two Microsoft mail management systems. **Microsoft Outlook is designed for business use, and Microsoft Outlook Express for personal use. MS Outlook has organizational tools like distribution lists, mail merges and more that Outlook Express doesn't have. Therefore, we're using MS Outlook. I recommend using MS Outlook for your freelance business.**

One of the features in the **MS Outlook** program is called "Contacts". According to MS Outlook 2000, "Contacts" are defined as: "The **contacts folder is your e-mail address book and information storage** for the people and businesses you want to communicate with. Use the contacts folder to store the e-mail address, street address, multiple phone numbers, and any other information that relates to the contact, such as birthday or anniversary date."

Let's assume you've created your

contacts folder. For each individual contact you've included all the important information, such as: name, address, e-mail address, phone numbers, web page address etc.

The easiest way to access Contacts is through a *contacts shortcut*.

Here's how to create a contacts shortcut.

Making a Contacts Shortcut in MS Outlook

1. On the left side of the program, there's a column, called the Outlook bar. At the top of the column it says "Outlook Shortcuts". Point the cursor on the background of the column. Right click and a pop up window will open.
2. Select Outlook Bar Shortcut. Another window will pop up offering you choices. Select the "file card" icon with Contacts written beside it.
3. Click OK.

Now you have created a shortcut for your contacts base. If you look in the Outlook bar (the column entitled "Outlook Shortcuts"), your shortcut will appear as a Rolodex icon with "Contacts" written beneath it.

Suppose you want to e-mail all your client prospects a self-marketing letter.

Let's make a distribution list.

Making a distribution list in MS Outlook

1. Click on the Contacts shortcut icon to open your contacts database.
2. Click on File (at the top of the program, located on the menu bar). A box will open up.
3. Click on New. (Another box will open.)
4. Click on Distribution List. (A file card will open.)
5. In the Name box, type the name of your group, for example "Client Prospects".
6. Click on Select Members. Your address book will open.
7. Select the client prospect names from your address book. You'll see them being added below in a list, consisting of names and e-mail addresses.
8. If a name isn't in your address book, you can still add it to your group list now. Click on Add new. Fill in the name and e-mail address, and then click on OK.
9. When you finish compiling your list, click on the Save and Close icon.

Now you're ready to e-mail your self-marketing letter. In your e-mail, click On To: and your address book will open. As you scroll down, you'll see, Client Prospects. Point to it and click. Client Prospects will fill in the To: space on your e-mail. However, when your clients receive the e-mail, they won't see "Client prospects". Clients will merely see their names along with other individual names to which the email was sent.

That's all there is to it. Making distributions lists will save you time. Have fun!

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## ***Co-op Connections***

### **Copywriter - Exciting opportunity!**

Established company needs writer for marketing strategy to drive sales.

Project includes preparation of 3 marketing pieces: 1) Postcard, 2) Sales letter to generate leads, and 3) Display ad for state associations. Sales data including past controls available. Lucrative situation, if your copy is a huge success. Potential for additional projects! INSTAR designs software for insurance agencies.

***For product background see:***

[www.instarsw.com](http://www.instarsw.com)

Contact at [brad@instarsw.com](mailto:brad@instarsw.com)

### **Graphic Design – Sweet Deal**

Here's a chance to fatten up your portfolio and get a great testimonial, too.

Fledgling catering business on a shoestring budget needs menu designs and a flyer ASAP. Email: [cuisinetogo@consultant.com](mailto:cuisinetogo@consultant.com)

#### ***In the next *Freebird*:***

Look for more money making ideas, setting up your Professional Web site, Part II, The (Sometimes Rocky) Road to Success, Chap 2, Easy Steps to a Clean PC, It's Not Just About Raking in the Money... You'll Have a Business to Run.

# *Tuscany: an Off-Season Sojourn*

*By Michael Slagle*

Touring Tuscany during the height of the tourist season can, at times, be tortuous. The mid-summer snarls of traffic, the seemingly interminable waits to enter the popular attractions, and the nearly unbearable heat of the afternoon sun can all detract from your enjoyment of the Tuscan experience. In the summertime you'll be a tourist among many other tourists. Consider visiting Tuscany during the off-season. You'll be rewarded with a more genuine experience of Italian life—and among Italians.

We chose mid-March for our week at a rental villa near Castellina in Chianti, where we settled into a relaxing routine. We'd have our coffee on our terrace overlooking the hills of vineyards as the morning sun gradually burned the fog and overnight chill from the air. We'd notice the sounds first—the muffled groans of tractors in the fields across the valley, the Siena-to-Florence bus downshifting to make the hairpin curve below our terrace, the occasional high-pitched buzz of the ubiquitous three-wheeled utility vehicle called the *Ape* (literally “bee” in Italian). The fog always

disappeared faithfully before mid-morning, revealing a pastel blue sky and a postcard-like view of the Chianti hills.

As we negotiated the winding mountain roads leading to Montalcino or Siena or wherever the day's destination was, the traffic was generally light and the drive non-stressful (barring the missed turn one afternoon that placed us in the midst of Florence rush hour traffic!). We'd eat lunch, usually outdoors, at a small *osteria*, where the menu and the diners were Italian and the non-tourist prices unbelievably inexpensive. The afternoons cooperated with temperatures around 14 or 15 C. (mid-50's F.)—ideal for sightseeing—before the sun started to drop behind the hills. On the drive back to our villa, we'd stop at the Co-Op to purchase pasta, fresh vegetables and wine for our evening meal. After dinner, as the night chill set in, we'd build a fire in the huge stone fireplace. Sitting in the fire's glow, maybe with a glass of *vin santo*, we'd collect the day's experiences into small talk or journals.

It was an easy routine to fall into... savoring the lifestyle of Tuscany.

*Well folks, that's it for this issue. We hope you enjoyed it and found the articles useful. To the students who contributed material for this, our first issue, thank you for your ideas, tips, slick tricks, design work and articles. We enjoyed showcasing your work. As Freebird continues to spread its wings, we look forward to seeing your imagination and ideas soar in the coming issues. Send your articles, tips, design work, resume examples (or any other surprises) to: [thompson@lakeozark.net](mailto:thompson@lakeozark.net)*