



Hi Readers

OK, where did January go? But it's great to think that the evenings are drawing out now and spring is on the horizon. So let WomansWork put a spring in your step and move us on to a great February with lots of training, events and your information in this issue – and don't forget this is the month of romance! Read on and Enjoy!

Page 1	Your News
Page 2	Your News and Opportunities
Page 3	Your Arts & Crafts, Holistics and Events
Page 4	Happy January? and SavvyWoman
Page 5	Unleash Your Dragon, Your Books and Networking
Page 6	Networking and Training
Page 7	Useful Information, Your Websites and Next Issue Deadline.

Your News

Good News For Illustrator

Coloured pencil illustrator Karen Middleton has been asked to have one of her artworks featured as the cover image used for the February issue of Color Pencil Magazine in the US. Initially turning down an interview for fear of global exposure (yes, the opposite of what she should be doing!), Karen was both flattered and pleased to have been asked if they could still feature one of her drawings. "I sent the piece I had literally just finished as it featured a heart and seemed ideal for Valentine's month, but sent my website address www.karenmiddletonillustration.co.uk in case they didn't like what I'd sent. The kitten was so well liked they asked if they could use it for the cover!"



One For The Girls

A new group for like minded people. Whether you like to go to restaurants and pubs, the theatre, cinema, or fancy trying a new salsa class and don't want to do it alone, then this group can cater for you! With strong member input we like to do new things we have never tried and great things which are tried and tested. If you want to make new friends and have a great time - This is the meetup group for you! Visit

<http://www.meetup.com/One-for-the-girls/>

A Valentine's Day Special

If you're going for the 'stay at home' alternative for Valentine's Day, Francique Caribbean Cuisine has the perfect idea to top off your soiree, whether you're planning for that special someone or a party of friends. Book our delicious 3 course home-cooked dinner priced at £40 per couple.



- Starters
Coconut curry prawns desire in Unkai spoons
- Mains
Passion roasted chicken breast fillets
Roasted salmon with a scotch bonnet sauce,
Sweet potatoes, butternut squash, carrots, peppers,
onions slowly cooked in coconut sauce
All served with pumpkin rice and steamed plantains
- Desserts
Banana fritters with mango rum sauce
Coconut tart with fresh cream.

● The next time you are craving for something home-cooked, fresh, tasty and wholesome, give us a call on 0798 008 0775, we will be happy to help. Visit

www.franciquecaribbean.co.uk

Simplicity Chair Covers

Based in South Wigston, Leicester they offer chair covers and sashes to hire for your occasion be it a wedding or a party, nothing is too big or too small. Transform the room and give it that Wow factor. We do it all for you, call 07821 303237 email simplicitychaircovers@hotmail.co.uk or visit www.simplicitychaircovers.co.uk

Coco Angels

A premier Chocolate Fountain Hire Company based in Leicestershire, providing high quality Chocolate Fountain hires to weddings, parties and corporate events. We service any social event that is looking for that extra bit of "WOW" factor to their occasion. Call Anna on 07788 722201 or visit

www.cocoangels.co.uk



New Online Accounting Service

Rebecca Taylor is offering a new online service that bundles a number of functions for a regular fixed price. This service includes access to Xero, which is an easy to use but powerful online accounting system that's designed specifically for small businesses. Xero gives you a view of your financial information in real-time. You can access this anytime – at home or out of the office, overseas – anywhere there is an Internet connection.

Keeping your accounts up-to-date will make it easier to use financial management tools that help your business run more effectively and efficiently. Being up-to-date also makes the year-end process less painful.

For more information, please visit

www.parfitttaylor.co.uk/online or call Rebecca at Parfitt Taylor – Chartered Management Accountant on 01604 330220.

International Women's Day

8th March is the perfect excuse to get your friends together, have fun and raise money for a great cause. Get the girls together on International Women's Day and raise money with friends to support women around the world. We'll give you everything you need to make your event happen and raise as much money as possible – so you can focus on catching up with the girls. Do whatever you love doing – a dinner party, coffee morning, cocktails. But with one big difference: you'll be raising money to support women worldwide. Visit www.oxfam.org.uk/womensday



Opportunities

Mum's The Boss Networking

Would you like to join our award winning team and bring child friendly networking to your area? We now have 7 groups across the country and are looking to start more in your area. Mum's The Boss is networking with a difference, affordable and child-friendly, no one per profession rule or pressure to become a member... and we always provide a warm welcome and homemade cake! If you would like more information drop us a line at

info@mumstheboss.co.uk

Achieving Your Goals For 2012

You have started the New Year with good intentions and made a vow to achieve certain goals in the workplace and at home, just as you probably set out to do every year. But how often do actually manage to achieve what you set out to achieve? Have you already fallen foul of the goals and resolutions you made? That being the case, it's not too late to rectify the situation. Here are some tips on how to stick to your good intentions during the months ahead.

- Could you do with some support in achieving your goals for 2012? To all Notebook readers during February: - An hours' 1:1 telephone coaching for £50 (worth £70). Contact Pavlenka at: info@smallstepscoaching.co.uk or visit www.smallstepscoaching.co.uk

Stuff You Don't Need? Freegle It!

Don't throw it away – give it away on Freegle! You might not need that old sofa or wheelbarrow any more – but there might be someone just around the corner who does. Or if there's something you'd like, someone nearby might have one.

Visit www.ilovefreegle.org and find a group near you. All groups operate with a basic principle – all offers and requests must be Freegle: Free and legal. The aim is to keep anything reusable out of landfill sites.



Services Of Social Expertise

A new organisation offering training and courses in 'Protective Behaviours' (PBs, a process to enable adults and children to 'FEEL SAFE'.

Mrs Hilla Joshi-Thompson, who worked for several years as a practitioner with Hertfordshire County Council through Extended Schools, now delivers courses in 'Overcoming being bullied', 'Managing others' anger', 'Feeling Safer' and Foundation Level training in PBs to work as a practitioner. Courses currently being developed for February and March 2012. If you are interested please contact Hilla on 07854 041946 or email

hillajoshi@yahoo.co.uk for further information.



Your Arts & Crafts

Are You Struggling To Find The Right Words?

Everyone needs to communicate with people who use their services. It's how you publicise what you do, how potential clients get to know about you and how you keep in touch with your existing clients. People say you need a good website, some glossy brochures or flyers about your business. It may be an advert letting people know about the work you do or that special offer you're planning. Whatever it is, you need to make an impression - and it needs to be a good one.

"So my question is – can you afford not to have a copywriter?" To find out how I can help you give me a call on 07854 771924 or 01992 577472. You can email me at june@kisscopywriting.co.uk or visit my website www.kisscopywriting.co.uk

Holistics

Wellbeing – Why Settle For Less?

March 24th and 25th, Leicester.

Are you looking for a simple, inexpensive and effective way to enjoy greater levels of happiness and wellbeing without having to study new strategies or tackle techniques? Would you like to gain an understanding through insight and realisations that continue to grow without you having to do anything except be open to your own new thinking? Stress, distress, low moods and mental dis-ease are not the products or effects of external events, people or circumstances however much they appear to be. Our monthly two-day introductions to the Three Principles of Innate Health have the potential to lead to transformation in any area of your life. Mindsets that create anxiety and doubt, known and hidden negative beliefs and the many forms of self-constraint and criticism can be left behind effortlessly.

Contact Sue at sue@principledwellbeing.com Visit www.threepinciplesmovies.com or www.principledwellbeing.com



The Holistic Directory

Imagine an online directory exclusively for the promotion of holistic businesses and therapies – welcome to www.HolisticDirectory.co.uk You can be listed under as many of our 400 categories of therapies as you wish, allowing customers to find you in the places you want to be found – and our easy-to-use admin page gives you complete control of your listing. Once you have joined, you can add events and articles free of charge, and reach out to potential new customers with improved search rankings and active social network participation. Want to spread the word about your business? Join our online holistic community today.

- Special offer of £50 including VAT per listing until March 31st for new businesses that sign up to the website. Usual price is £99 including VAT per listing.

Events

Food & Drink Expo

A trade only event open to professionals involved in the food and drink market. It is free to attend, visitors may register via the website www.foodanddrinkexpo.co.uk or can request an invitation and bring this along on the day they wish to visit. Your badge is valid across all 3 days of the show and will allow entry into the co-located shows. No under 16s will be admitted, this includes babes in arms.

Please call 01293 610244 for more information.



Exporting For Growth

1st March, 9.00am - 2.00pm at The Henry Ford College, Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU. Lunch to be provided. A major initiative to boost the number of SMEs that export for the first time or spread to new markets over the next four or five years.

To register for this event call 0115 947 5666 or visit www.regionalexportforgrowth.com

- Closing date for registration is 24th February.

Why Have An Integrated Marketing Campaign?

For reasons beyond your control you will always lose clients and therefore turnover and, worst of all, profitability. Now in today's world there is an even more urgent need to address any potential downturn by pursuing a steady marketing strategy. In today's economic environment the majority of us want a combination that works, is low cost and effective.

BHT recommends: Start with newsletters followed by telemarketing, linked to your website and promoted by Social media. The newsletter is always a good hand-out at meetings because it carries your message, your company's identity, it links to your web-site and Social Media – again interweaving each strand of marketing. Once you start thinking like this you will start finding ways to link most of your marketing together. So you promote you website in your documentation – your website has special offers to any reader - the website allows readers to download your brochure and articles - your brochure refers to your articles - anyone downloading from your newsletter or website leaves their contact details for you to follow – and so on and so on. It's all very exciting once you get into it, but of course it has to be handled with care and, most importantly, within your budget. That's where BHT comes in. We can discuss with you what you want to achieve and work with you to build a complete marketing strategy to suit both your aims and your budget.

- BHT, in conjunction with Aark Design, is running several campaigns of this nature and would be delighted to discuss the concept with you in more detail. For more information or to arrange a meeting call 0808-172-1900 or go to www.bhtmarketing.com

Happy January – The Best Or Worst Of Times? By Sarah Dale

There is no evidence for the popular myth of one particular day in January being more depressing than others.

Nevertheless, sitting here on a cold, grey day, we might be tempted to blame January for our downbeat feelings if we have them. When I was at school, I hated January. I would have been readily prepared to believe it was the most depressing time of year.

Looking back, this was due to a combination of factors. As a teenager, I struggled with getting up and leaving home in the dark and cold. In those days we had no central heating (I'm that old) so it was a truly physical wrench to get out of bed. Our school invariably set us a whole set of mock exams in January. Much of our social contact with friends and family happened over Christmas and that had now dried up. I spent much of my time longing for future events – counting down and willing time to pass.

Now I realise it wasn't January's fault.

We love to find an explanation for things. It's an important quality that enables us to make sense of a complex world. However, we often leap to the wrong explanation. It makes sense on the face of things so we hang on to it as a shorthand for why we feel as we do.

Those shorthand assumptions can be very useful, but sometimes it is worth shaking some of them up. The January blues is one, it isn't the most depressing month, nor is it the happiest. It's just a month. Some people will be having a hard time, others will be having the time of their lives. And for most of the others it is probably business as usual.

If we are feeling down, it is probably due to factors other than the time of year (excepting true SAD sufferers). It may be because of particular memories, or challenges. It may be because we have an empty social diary in January. It may be because of harsh New Year regimes, or feeling unfit or overspent. It may be because we're focusing on the past or future instead of noticing any good things about the present.

We can't change the weather. But, with help and practice, we can change our mindset. I like January now. The teenage me would have been amazed.

● If Sarah can help you create focus give her a call on 07748 494 688 or visit www.creatingfocus.org



SavvyWoman By Sarah Pennells

When Is A Storm Not A Storm?

This winter has been pretty mild compared to the last couple of years, but we've had our fair share of storms. But, as some homeowners are finding out, there's no guarantee that because your home has been damaged after a bout of bad weather, the insurer will pay out. So what happens if you and your insurer don't agree?



● When is a storm a storm?

When it comes to storm damage claims, insurers don't have any official definition of what makes up a 'storm'. While household insurance will pay for damage caused by a storm, it won't cover the costs during normal rough weather. If you're claiming for storm damage an insurer will look at several factors, such as:

- The weather report from the nearest Met Office weather station. The problem is that some storms can be very localised and the nearest weather station may be some distance from where you live.
- Whether other properties nearby have suffered from (similar) damage. Just because your property suffers from damage and your neighbours' homes don't doesn't mean yours wasn't in a good state of repair.
- Wind speeds. Some insurers will only pay out if wind reaches a certain speed on what's called the 'Beaufort scale', which categorises wind speeds on a scale of 1-12.

SAVVYWOMAN TIP: The Financial Ombudsman Service says that a storm can occur without high winds and disagrees with those insurers that insist on a wind speed of force 10 or above before they'll pay out.

● What to do if you're making a claim

If you're making a claim for storm damage and your insurer turns you down you should:

- Get evidence of damage to nearby properties. Your insurer doesn't have to pay up just because other properties have been damaged but it should strengthen your case and it's something that the free complaints service, www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk would take into account.
- Get evidence of maintenance you've carried out. It can be hard to show that your property was in a good state of repair but if you've had any maintenance it's worth providing details.

● Be prepared to take things further

Don't give up if your claim has been rejected. Malcolm Tarling from the Association of British Insurers says you should get evidence of damage to other properties or that other insurers have paid for damage to neighbouring properties. If that doesn't work you should:

- Make a formal complaint. Do this in writing. Mark your letter or email 'formal complaint' and state what you would like the insurer to do.
- Give the insurer time to respond. The insurer must respond within eight weeks and tell you whether they agree with you and will pay out, disagree or want more time to look into your complaints.
- After eight weeks you can complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Even if the insurer hasn't decided whether or not it agrees with you, you can complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

● When your claim may not be covered
Your household or contents policy may not pay out if, for example, heavy snow fell over a period of several days, damaging your roof, or if a storm wasn't the main reason for the damage. Items stored in a shed or outbuilding (or a satellite dish, for example) also may not be covered.

■ SavvyWoman email newsletters: You can sign up at the www.savvywoman.co.uk website and you'll receive a £20 Virgin Wines voucher as a 'thank you'.

Unleash Your Inner Dragon!

By Jenny Eaton

Wishing you all a belated Gung Hay Fat Choy! Or, a happy and prosperous Chinese new year. The Chinese have just welcomed in the year of the Dragon – this is considered to be the most auspicious and powerful of their zodiac signs, with this year being particularly well-favoured, as it is the year of the water dragon, which only happens every 60 years.



● What the experts say:

"The dragon is a symbol of power and superior control," says Stephen Chu, of the Mississauga Chinese Business Association. "It's not evil. The dragon is a good symbol." "Dragons seem to be a change year, and usually from bad to good," says Paul Ng, a feng shui master. "In general, in the dragon years, the world economy does a little better."

So, all the signs are boding well for 2012 – and I'm guessing that many of you would welcome a boost in energy and prosperity over the coming months. Well now that you know it's going to happen, you can dump all the media doom and gloom that we're currently being bombarded with and fill your head with some positive Dragon energy! I'm not suggesting you all start reading your horoscopes to decide what kind of day you're going to have (although some people do); I'm suggesting that the kind of day / week / year you believe you're going to have will seriously affect the day / week / year you actually end up having.

Our brains are hard-wired to want to prove ourselves right; and they regularly do! There's no shortage of evidence in the daily media to prove that the world is full of good / evil people – but which is right? Well, I guess both are; but which focus gives you the most benefit in your life? If you believe that 2012 is going to be a desperate slog; that you'll have less work, less money, harder times, then your subconscious will find a way to prove you right. Let's harness our Dragon energy this year and bring in some positive change, strength, good luck, prosperity and growth!

You might also like to know that a recent poll in Hong Kong identified that 70% of couples wanted a baby born in the year of the Dragon; so I imagine that there will be lots of romantic evenings planned over the next couple of months... a great way to keep warm and save money too! Visit <http://www.chinesezodiac.com/dragon.php> Jenny Eaton runs the new Eos Programme for women, email jenny@eosprogramme.com or visit www.eosprogramme.com

Your Books

Business Writing Made Easy

By Suzan St Maur

Want a very easy and cost-effective way to place yourself head-and-shoulders above your competitors ... whether they're individuals or companies? Simple: make sure your writing for business is powerful, effective and persuasive. Available from Amazon or visit www.howtowritebetter.net

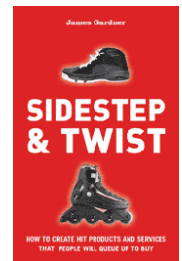
The Niche Expert By Rachel Henke

Harness the power of the Internet to attract perfect clients, publicity and opportunities. In this step by step guide to building an effective social media and automated online marketing system, you'll discover exactly how to plan and create a strong foundation for your Internet empire. Identify your perfect niche. Create multiple streams of income by simply giving your clients what they must have to succeed. Create your magnetic expert brand. Use the new rules and tools that will establish you as an expert in your niche. Create compelling copy for the Internet. Set up your authority blog and website. Build your database and attract hot prospects.

Sidestep & Twist

How to Create Hit Products and Services that People will Queue up to Buy, Published by Marshall Cavendish, £15.

Why do some products succeed and others fail. How come some company's have a great hit rate and others continually struggle. The "sidestep" is taking an existing product or service and moving it into a parallel market. The "twist" involves adding a new market-specific dimension. There are plenty of research and real life examples to back up claims. For more information www.businessbookshop.co.uk/browse.html or email Helen@bookedPR.com



Networking

Women In Business Network

Wednesday 8th February 12 noon – 2.00pm at Hunting Lodge, South Street, Barrow Upon Soar, Loughborough LE12 8LZ. £24 includes lunch. A one profession networking group that is structured, friendly and relaxed. Aimed at women business owners and women in employed positions looking to grow their client base through networking. Contact Barbara Hodgson on 0844 324 4034 for more detail.

Table Swap Breakfast

Monday 20th February 8.30am - 11.30am at Hinckley Island Hotel, A5 Watling Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 3JA. Cost £20 in advance. Start with bacon butties (let us know if you want a vegetarian option) and follow it up with table swap networking. After a short time of open networking, you will be seated in small groups where you will have a minute or two to tell the rest of the group who you are, what you do and what sort of work you are looking for. You'll then move to another table and repeat until you have met all the delegates. To book your place and for more information contact Trevor Wood trevor@network-midlands.co.uk

The Womens Business Clubs

- Tuesday 21st February, 12.00 - 14.15 at The Regency Hotel, 360 London Road, Leicester LE2 2PL. £22.00+VAT for members, £30.00+VAT for non members.
- Friday 24th February, 2.00 - 14.15 at Quorn Grange Hotel, 88 Wood Lane, Quorn, Leicestershire LE12 8DB. £21.00+VAT for members, £30.00+VAT for non members. Join likeminded professional women for a business focussed meeting and a fantastic chance to promote your business, share contacts, participate in open forum discussions and be inspired with brainstorming and problem solving sessions. To book your place contact info@thewomensbusinessclubs.com or call 01903 201100.

Business Live

Thursday 23rd February at 89 - 91 Charles Street, Leicester.
Relaxed, informal lunchtime events which are ultimately 'business driven', but who says you can't have a bit of fun at the same time? The cost per person is just £20 + VAT, including a two course meal, structured networking and drinks on arrival. If you are new to Business Live then contact Jack Ferguson on 0844 822 3120 or email jack@businessliveuk.com with any queries.

Business For Breakfast

Fortnightly at The Whipper Inn, Market Place, Oakham, Leics LE15 6DT. £10 for breakfast. A private referral and networking group designed to enable members to increase business, make valuable new contacts, establish genuine referrals, develop strategies and relationships. Only one member per discipline. Contact Joan Edwards on 0844 576 3280.

Leicester Breakfast Meeting

2nd Weds of every month, 7.30am at Beedles Lake, Broome Lane, East Goscote LE7 3WQ. £10 per person (inc VAT). Network on a more focused basis over breakfast. Sit back with a coffee and listen to the guest speaker. And yes, you have it, finish off with more networking! Contact Maxine Aldred on 0116 2597 707 for further details.

Training

The Food Enterprise Workshop

Designed to help individuals from Leicester City who are interested in starting their own food business but need that extra bit of motivational or business support. The free two day workshop breaks down the key legal requirements of what you must do to start a business and offers access to free ingredients so you can test your own ideas in a real life market environment. Also, for a limited time you can apply for a £250 food business start-up grant for participants to buy equipment. Visit www.thefoodworkshop.co.uk to register or contact Joe Harkin on 07792 720 530, 0116 223 2371 or email Joe@thefoodworkshop.co.uk

Leicester Business Women Programme

A programme offering women from Leicester the chance to follow their dreams or turn their hobby into a successful business. Incorporating a training programme; one to one advice sessions with some very experienced business advisors and personal coaches; and regular networking events. The programme is encouraging and empowering local women from disadvantaged areas and backgrounds to support themselves. We pride ourselves on the number of women that have developed in confidence. Our programme covers key elements to consider when setting up, plus developing your confidence and overcoming obstacles. After overcoming any motivation and confidence issues, battling through those barriers, our members have gone onto to register their business and successfully started trading. Businesses include hairdressers, fashion designers, beauty therapists, caterers and fitness trainers as well as a number of social and community enterprises. So what are you waiting for?

The Leicester Business Women project is a funded programme and our FREE support, advice and help is available to women from Leicester until June 2012 – this doesn't give you long to make the most of the opportunities that are available. Our next programmes are as follows:

Braunstone

- Now is the Time – Tuesday 28th February
- Your Passion Plan – Thursday 1st March
- Your Financial Planning – Tuesday 6th March
- Motivate Yourself – Thursday 8th March
- Your Style, Your Selling, Your Brand – Tuesday 13th March
- Influence Your Word – Thursday 15th March

Leicester City

- Now is the Time – Tuesday 27th March
- Your Passion Plan – Thursday 29th March
- Your Financial Planning – Tuesday 17th April
- Motivate Yourself – Thursday 19th April
- Your Style, Your Selling, Your Brand – Tuesday 24th April
- Influence Your Word – Thursday 26th April

To find out more contact 0116 251 8730
nicole.hocking@skillsforenterprise.co.uk visit www.leicesterbusinesswomen.co.uk

Useful Information

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

The helpline that provides free confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems. You can be confident that the advice they offer is targeted to you. Lines open Monday - Friday 9.00am - 9.00pm, Saturdays 9.30am - 1.00pm. Call the National Debtline free on 0808 808 4000.

Your Websites

www.landlordlaw.co.uk

Landlord-Law online is written and run by solicitor author Tessa Shepperson, who specialises in residential landlord and tenant work. If you are a landlord or a tenant this is the place to go to get your questions answered and find out where you stand legally.

www.mylittlepickle.co.uk

A refreshing collection of luxury baby knitwear, t-shirts, baby blankets, hats and booties, which caters for newborn babies to two year old toddlers. And they are sooo cute.

Next Issue

Deadline For The March 2012 Edition

No later than 12 noon on Thursday 23rd February. Please send your information to me as soon as possible as deadline day can be a little bit busy!

Take care and best wishes to you all
Lesley

Facebook: [WomansWork Group](#)

LinkedIn: [Lesley Kershaw](#)

Twitter: [@womansworkuk](#)



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