

NINK

February 2010
Vol. 21, No. 02

Research Redux: The Central Intelligence Agency

Ed. Note. I'm excited to introduce the first in a series of articles on internet research tools from an award winning, NY Times bestselling author, and Ninc member, Marianna Jameson. Marianna, a self-professed "research geek," brings to the topic her pair of degrees in journalism, over fifteen years of experience working in the aerospace, defense, software, and environmental engineering fields, and insatiable curiosity.

BY MARIANNA JAMESON

We're writers. No, wait. We're *fiction* writers. It's our life's work to make stuff up and get paid for it. I ask you: Does life get any better than this?

Well, okay. I won't try to kid the kidders. We don't make everything up. We occasionally (incessantly, obsessively, fill in the adverb of your choice) research things. It's the R word and we all have a love-hate relationship with it.

We know all about research. We know all about deep research. And, if pressed, we'll admit to knowing a thing or two about the quick-and-dirty research we need to do when we want an answer, a description, or just a smidge of realism... *now*. As in *on deadline*. While the Internet has made all of the above easier, it is this last sort of research that the Internet has made really fun.

INSIDE this ISSUE

<i>President's Voice: Once Upon a Time...</i>	3
<i>Social Media Marketing</i>	7
<i>Never Give Up... Never Surrender</i>	11
<i>Ask the Agent: Selling on Proposal</i>	13
<i>Ask the Lawyer: Using Cover Images for Self Promo</i>	14
<i>Writing Is Taxing: Pros and Cons of Converting</i>	
<i>To Roth IRA</i>	16
<i>In Memoriam: Kathleen Givens</i>	17
<i>The Mad Scribbler: Fallibility</i>	18
<i>Bulletin Board</i>	20
<i>eNink Extra: Book Trailers Today</i>	21

My purpose in writing this sporadic column is to bring that didn't-know-I-needed-it information that much closer to your fingertips. Painlessly. My topic this month:

The Central Intelligence Agency.

This shadowy, secretive, clandestine, independent government agency has a veritable goldmine of information available on its website <http://www.cia.gov>. The CIA we know and love to exploit today evolved from the historic and ground-

Continued on page 5 ▶

Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

Advisory Council

Rebecca Brandewyne*	Linda Barlow	Pat Rice
Janice Young Brooks*	Georgia Bockoven	Jean Brashear
Jasmine Cresswell*	Evan Maxwell	Vicki Lewis Thompson
Maggie Osborne*	Victoria Thompson	Brenda Hiatt Barber
Marianne Shock*	Steven Womack	Pat McLaughlin
* Founder	Barbara Keiler	Kasey Michaels

If you have questions regarding Novelists, Inc., please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

2010 Board of Directors

President: Kay Hooper 1090 PeaRidge Road Bostic NC 28018-8565 828-247-1523 (Ex #110) kay@kayhooper.com	Treasurer: Marcia Evanick 7 Laburk Lane Reinholds PA 17569-9315 Marcie@ptd.net 717-336-3245
President-Elect: Donna Fletcher 1035 Mill Creek Rd Manahawkin NJ 08050-3785 donna@donnaletcher.com 609-312-7229	Newsletter Editor: Joanna Novins Aka Jody Novins 15 Deepwood Road Stamford CT 06903 pbnovins@aol.com 203-595-0666
Secretary: Charlotte Hubbard 3913 Rustic Lane Jefferson City MO 65109-9148 573-634-8114 cmhubbard@embarqmail.com	Advisory Council Representative: Jasmine Cresswell 5331 Hunt Club Way Sarasota FL 34238 941-927-7370 Jasmine444@aol.com

2010 Committees

2010 Conference Chair: Kasey Michaels Program: Karen Tintori Katz Registrar: Leslie LaFoy	Nink Online Index Denise Lynn
Anthology Chair: Lillian Stewart Carl	Nominating Chair: Kasey Michaels
Authors Coalition Reps Deborah Gordon Elaine Isaak	Outreach Chair: Open; contact Donna Fletcher
Digital Rights Mgmnt Chair: Open; contact Kay Hooper	Renewals Coordinator Delilah Devlin
Elections Chair: Sylvie Kurtz	Volunteer Jobs
Member Retention Chair: Barbara Bretton	List Coordinator Mary Glazer
Membership Chair: JoAnn Grote	Website Chair: Pati Nagle
	Blog Coordinator: Patricia Rosemoor

Complete committee member listings
are available on the website:

<http://www.ninc.com>

Central Coordinator:

Tonya Wilkerson, Varney and Assoc.
Novelists, Inc.
P.O. Box 2037
Manhattan KS 66505
Fax: 785-537-1877
Ninc@varney.com

Website:

<http://www.Ninc.com>

Address changes may be made on the
website.

For members without Internet access,
send changes to the Central Coordinator.

Copyright ©2010 by Novelists, Inc.
All rights reserved. No part of this
newsletter may be used or reproduced
in any manner without written
permission.

Introducing...

The following authors have applied for membership in Ninc and are now presented by the Membership Committee to the members. If no legitimate objections are lodged with the Membership Committee within 15 days of this NINK issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of Ninc. For further information or to recommend eligible writers, contact:

Membership Chair: JoAnn Grote
PO Box 5, Le Sueur, MN 56058
jaghi@rconnect.com

New Applicants:

Nicola Cornick, Swindon Wiltshire, UK
Nancy Gideon, Portage MI
Debra Bess, Apex, NC
Sara Littman, Cos Cob, CT
Lori Dandrea, Hilton Head, SC

New Members:

Tawny Stokes, Calgary AB, Canada
Paula Roe, Penrith Westfield, Australia
Jennifer Haymore, Santa Clara CA
Paula Graves, Gardendale Alabama
Virginia Henley, St. Petersburg FL
Terri Garey, Tampa FL
Julie Compton, Lonwood FL
Barbara Henderson, North Fort Myers FL

Ninc has room to grow...

Recommend membership to *your* colleagues.
Prospective members may apply online at
<http://www.Ninc.com>.

Refer members at Ninc.com. Go to Members Only,
"Member Services" and click
"Refer a New Member to Ninc."
Take Ninc brochures to conferences.
Email Pari Taichert with your mailing address and
requested number of booklets.
ptaichert@comcast.net.

Ninc Statement of Principle.

Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve.

Once Upon a Time ...

... publishing was a “business” run by people who loved books. It wasn’t about making tons of money; it was about publishing really good books for people to read. Books to entertain, to enlighten, to educate and inform. Good times.

As we all know, that was then and this is now. Now, it’s pretty much all about the bottom line. Money. Profits. Authors aren’t nurtured, their careers guided along toward success with a few low-selling books expected in the beginning; now you’d better have measurable success right out of the gate if you want to get another contract, and chances are at least fair that your baby editor is going to know a lot less about writing and publishing than you do. Worse still, that same editor is likely to be at the mercy of “Marketing,” that mysterious entity many publishers now apparently depend on to decide what gets published.

Marketing, not to put too fine a point on it, would not know its tush from its elbow.

I did warn you that I have Very Decided Opinions, remember?

Marketing fascinates me. And not in a good way. It fascinates me because despite all evidence to the contrary, marketing people persist in believing that books can be marketed the way soap and toothpaste are marketed: find the right scent, the right flavor, the right jingle, and buyers will come in droves to plunk down their hard-earned money. And it works with buyers who want to repeat the experience as soon as the soap and toothpaste are used up, and who will buy the same scent, the same flavor, and respond positively to the same jingle.

We all know what this marketing mindset causes in publishing. “Jump on the Bandwagon Syndrome.” Hollywood suffers from the same syndrome. If something is successful, the rush is on to produce more of it. Quickly, and usually badly.

Right now, as far as I can tell, publishing is producing lots and lots of vampire books. Because there were a few runaway successes, Marketing has decided readers must want to read about more vampires. I’m not quibbling with that; I’ve talked to enough readers to know that, right now, they actually *do* want to read about more vampires. (Especially young readers, which I find rather disturbing.) But wrapped in good stories, in good writing. Not just vampires because, hey, there’s something erotic about semi-human fangs piercing the neck, or because it’s the one way a writer can actually create an absolutely forever, eternal love story.

Readers are already complaining about the quality of the vampire stories being thrown at them. Sooner or later, Marketing will look at falling numbers, wrinkle its brow in consternation, and will probably stop buying vampire stories. And maybe even cancel some contracts of authors who were supposed to write more of them.

Because the next Bandwagon will be storming past, and Marketing will want to jump aboard.

We’ve discussed all this. A lot. Writers constantly question the follow-the-market mindset as opposed to the follow-your-nose mindset. Opinions are divided, as they always are when writers question and debate. Some keep a close eye on the market (or try to divine what’s on Marketing’s radar) and try to write with trends in mind. Others write what their instincts are telling them to write and keep their fingers crossed that it will appeal to the broad audience Marketing is trying to tap into.

Writers are a lot like marketing people in one respect: when it comes to knowing what’s going to take the fancy of the reading public in the future, we also don’t know our tushies from our elbows. ▶

So what's a working writer to do? Well, I'm in the follow-your-nose camp and so far it's served me well. That doesn't mean I don't eye the latest trend with fascination – or concern. It doesn't mean I don't sometimes get a fleeting, even wistful, wish I could reinvent the wheel and come up with a story that taps into the monster audiences who devoured *Harry Potter*, *The Da Vinci Code*, and *Twilight*.

What it means is that while I fully acknowledge today's profit-driven publishing industry, I also firmly believe there is, and will always be, room and support for well-told stories that Marketing is unable to box and label so they look like everything else out there. The stories that will never be monster hits, but will nevertheless speak to and entertain an appreciative audience. And, hopefully, earn enough to keep the storyteller working away at his or her desk.

Because that's the thing, you know. We're storytellers. And storytellers have been around since the dawn of man, when our ancestors huddled around a fire for warmth and listened to tales of bravery and romance and adventure. Storytelling was an art then. It's still an art. No matter how hard publishers try to make it something else.

Which is why, despite everything, including my own cynical nature, I have faith in a future in which storytelling is valued. Maybe the delivery system will change, as it has changed in the past, but the story's the thing. Without the story, the pages are blank. The screen is blank. The CD or tape has no sound. Without the story, there's nothing for Marketing to even try to market.

Once upon a time, people huddled around a fire for warmth and listened to stories that helped keep the darkness and their own fears at bay. They listened to the storytellers.

They still do.

— Kay Hooper
Ninc President 2010

CORRECTION: In Elaine Isaak's SF article, Alisa Kwitney's father, the late Robert Sheckley, was incorrectly identified as William Sheckley. Known for his sardonic wit and absurdist sensibility, Sheckley's *New York Times* obituary said that "he is considered one of science fiction's seminal humorists, and a precursor to Douglas Adams, whose *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979) seems to take place in a Sheckleyan universe."

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

New Time and Date for Canadian Book Seller's Conference

In the wake of last year's decision to shut down Reed Exhibition's BookExpo Canada, the Canadian Booksellers Association have announced the CBA National Conference to be held at the Toronto Delta Airport West Hotel, May 28-30, 2010. The event is timed to follow BEA, in the hopes of accommodating booksellers returning from New York, and will also coincide with the Canadian Retail Council.

French Convict Google

A Paris court ruled that Google Inc. broke French law with its policy of digitizing books, ordering the company to pay a \$14,300-a-day fine until it rids its database of the literary extracts, as well as \$430,000 in damages and interest to the French publisher, La Martiniere, which brought the case on behalf of a group of French publishers. Google plans to appeal the decision.

New Young Reader Imprint

G.P. Putnam and Sons Young Readers president, Nancy Paulsen, will begin producing her own imprint in 2011. Nancy Paulsen Books plans to publish 12 to 15 picture books, middle grade and young adult novels annually.

Research Redux: CIA

Continued from page 1 ▶ breaking Office of Strategic Services, or OSS, which came into being in 1942. Today's CIA (or The Agency as we novelists like to call it) consists of four major components, called directorates: the [National Clandestine Service](#), the [Directorate of Intelligence](#), the [Directorate of Science and Technology](#), and the [Directorate of Support](#). These four units comprise the workings of “the intelligence cycle”: the collection and analysis of information and its dissemination to the upper echelon of US government officials.

So that's the brain center, but, let's face it, no agency (or Agency) can operate without a nerve center—the administrative end of things; the functions filled by a whole other set of people who oversee the care and feeding of our spies. These nameless others make sure there is paper in the printer, book the plane tickets, and soothe the ruffled congressional feathers. They provide counseling, produce documentation and graphics, provide medical care or legal assistance, and, well, you get the picture. There's more to the Agency than poison pens and more opportunities for character development than the now-cardboard, MacGyveristic super spy.



Marianna Jameson

So if you need to know just where or for whom your agent (or case officer, as they are known in real life) or physician's assistant, legal eagle, or hapless admin assistant might work, what they might do in a day, or what they earn, then go to: <https://www.cia.gov/careers/opportunities/cia-jobs/index.html> and put in the career of choice. The page will tell you what you need to know. Well, at least it will tell you about the mundane stuff—it's up to you to manufacture the Wow Factor. (See statement above re: making stuff up and getting paid for it.)

Want to know the government structure of modern Somalia? Whether Americans are allowed to travel freely to Cuba? What Tonga's major exports are? The World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>) is your one-stop source for all the up-to-the-minute nuts-and-bolts information about any country. It's kept current and it's comprehensive.

The site also offers a guide to current world leaders (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/index.html>), and in a world in which a nation's leadership can unfortunately change at the speed of a bullet or a market failure, it's an invaluable resource. The information is listed alphabetically by nation, and each country's page provides the names and positions of those in the top several tiers of government. So if you need to know who heads up Denmark's Ministry of Refugees, Immigration, Integration, and Ecclesiastical Affairs (Birthe Ronn Hornbech) or who is Djibouti's Minister of Youth, Sports, Leisure, and Tourism (Akban Goita Moussa), you know where to go.

If you want to know who said what to whom when, the News and Information page (<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/index.html>) can help you out. It provides links to interviews, congressional testimony, press releases, feature stories on issues and personnel (mostly historical), and timely updates in response to current world events.

If you need to know how America's intelligence community operated during the Revolutionary War or Civil War, there's an entire collection of articles at your disposal at <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/intelligence/index.html> and ▶

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/additional-publications/civil-war/index.html> respectively.

If you want to get a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges facing the intelligence community today, head over to the Center for the Study of Intelligence (<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/index.html>) and prepare to read unclassified, academic articles from the journal *Studies in Intelligence*.

Or head over to the site for the Kent Center Occasional Papers if your taste really runs to the academic (<https://www.cia.gov/library/kent-center-occasional-papers/index.html>). Whether the articles you find fire up your imagination to that stage where everything is crackling and there aren't enough hours in the day to write, or they numb your brain into something resembling day-old polenta, is between you and your synapses, but it's all there for the taking.

Want to know where to find information that falls outside the purview of CIA? (Yes, there are some things they don't want or need to know...) Then head over to the page that leads you to the other US intelligence agencies (<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/us-intelligence-sites.html>). This page contains links for the intelligence arms of each branch of the US military, as well as links to the FBI, DEA, NSA (National Security Agency or, as it used to be known, No Such Agency), and the intelligence arms of the Departments of Homeland Security, Energy, State (yes, really), and Treasury. As if that wasn't enough, the page has links to the lesser known agencies, such as the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) (I only learned about that one two years ago...).

But one of the best pages on the website, in my opinion, is the Intelligence Literature page (<https://www.cia.gov/library/intelligence-literature/index.html>). It provides a pretty comprehensive bibliography of books written about the intelligence community, its operations, history, and personalities. The page provides a cross-referenced list of works about the agency and the industry, ranging from historical eras (for example, World War II and Before <https://www.cia.gov/library/intelligence-literature/index.html#world-war-ii-before>) to topics (for example, Terrorism <https://www.cia.gov/library/intelligence-literature/index.html#war> or Espionage <https://www.cia.gov/library/intelligence-literature/index.html#espionage>) to social divisions (Women in Intelligence <https://www.cia.gov/library/intelligence-literature/index.html#women>) to biographies and memoirs of former intelligence personnel (<https://www.cia.gov/library/intelligence-literature/index.html#bio>). The most interesting thing about this list, which is comprehensive, though not exhaustive, is that it's not a list of polished press releases. Not all the books are flattering to the Agency, and it includes books the Agency tried to suppress.

The wealth of information out there is a little staggering when you think of it. And when it's all at your fingertips, there's not a reason in the world not to take ten or twenty minutes to tiptoe through the tidbits to get the good stuff.

Happy researching. Next up: NASA.

When she's not indulging her inner research geek, Marianna Jameson is a New York Times bestselling author of eco-thrillers. Her current release is Frozen Fire. Her next, Dry Ice, will be published in Spring of 2011.

Editor's Note: Got a topic you're eager to learn more about but haven't the expertise to dig into as deeply as Marianna? Send your requests to: mjameson@levelplain.com.

Social Media Marketing. If You Build It, Will They Come? (And can you get them to send you to Thailand?)

BY LIZ MAVERICK & HOPE TARR

Build a network of followers who are also building up a network of followers and you can virally amass an audience for your message. Tweet, blog and update your status on communities such as Facebook and MySpace with sufficient diligence and your marketing message will gain traction, your brand and books will sprout legs, and ultimately your sales numbers will soar.

At least, that's the idea behind social media marketing...

Of course, caveats abound—success depends on whether your life provides enough interesting fodder, on your talent for turning a phrase in 140 characters, on whether you send the right message down the right channel at the right time, and on how well you develop and cultivate your online presence and relationships overall.

And there's always the concern it will turn out to be a smoke-and-mirrors time suck that provides little return on investment. Still, the growing consensus of the writing community is that if a writer isn't on the Internet promoting work through social media, he/she is missing the boat.

We're big believers in social media marketing and the two of us have been on the boat in a big way for several years now with Twitter and Facebook and personal author sites. So, when we came across a press release from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) calling on "Internet-savvy World Travelers" to compete for a six-day trip to Thailand this December, we were totally game. A free trip and a built-in opportunity to take our respective brands on the "road" globally? It seemed like a win-win scenario.

We calculated with our combined social media audience and, yes, "savvy," we had a pretty good shot at winning....

How it Began

The only requirement for winners of the "Ultimate Thailand Explorers Competition" was to report on the six-day trip through video, pictures, and blogging via the Internet. As popular fiction writers with books to promote, we already devote a healthy chunk of time to maintaining an active online presence. Keeping up a similar level of connectivity from a beach towel in the Land of Smiles sounded like an ideal work week if there ever was one.

The contest entry required applicant teams to select from among five Thailand destinations (we chose Pattaya) and then to submit a one-minute video and application form. Far from trying to hide our romance novelist selves, we highlighted them, calculating the trip would have the side-bonus of providing an opportunity to combat some of the negative stereotypes with which the romance community struggles. The ▶

lynchpin of our pitch was, “Telling stories to the world is what we do and we want to share this (Thailand’s) story with you.”

Two very different audiences would be judging the same video, creating two major hurdles. First, we’d have to impress the TAT officials—they’d be choosing the finalists. Then we’d have to impress the general public—they’d be choosing the winners from among the five finalists.

After some deliberation, we decided it would be easier to get votes from the general public than from the TAT officials, so we shot a video with TAT as our primary audience and the general public as our secondary audience.

We researched our destination, Pattaya, and scripted a message touting ourselves as successful romance novelists, natural adventurers, and savvy social networkers with nearly 2,000 followers.

A few weeks later, we were informed that TAT had chosen us as one of the five finalists from among the hundreds of entrant teams. We were halfway to toasting our winter white bums on a prime patch of Pattaya beach. We could practically taste the spicy tom yum goong soup burning a hole through the backs of our throats.

Luckily, we didn’t start packing, because the second round public vote was where the real (social net) “working” began.. (In hindsight, perhaps we should have targeted the public audience more strongly than TAT...)

Reality Bytes

For the public vote we hit the Net running. We Tweeted our friends, family and fans. We took turns sending out beg-o-grams on Facebook and MySpace. We pimped out our personal author blogs as shout-outs. Liz repurposed a previously used promotional web site where she posted not only our entry video and links back to the TAT voting page but a blooper reel of outtakes.

Still, out of five finalist teams, we couldn’t break out of third-place and within days we were sinking fast. Desperate to save face, we re-spammed our friends, reminding them they could vote more than once—daily—and, yes, to please re-tweet and otherwise pimp us on their own social networking profiles, blog pages, and listservs. (Between us we owe one first-born child and two kidneys in payback and possibly some liver cells, too.) We reached out to friends who reached out to friends who reached out to friends—and still for every 100 contacts we reaped a mere fraction of votes.

After that, Liz came up with the idea of mutual endorsement. We stepped outside the romance fiction community and approached leaders of non-romance blogging communities who were also trying to win contests. They were incredibly enthusiastic, in part because they were having the exact same problem of trying to convert eyeballs into votes.

By Week #2 Team Cute Baby was spanking us big time and Team Cheeky Canucks was nipping at our heels. By the end of the third week, we’d fallen from third-place to the loser spot at #5. In the end we placed a semi-respectable fourth.

But fourth was a far cry from our expectations. The experience of trying to wring out online votes was making us wonder if logging in so many promotional hours on social networking was really such a smart use of our (writing) time.

So What Does It All Mean?

We had a lot of eyeballs, but where were those legs? Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, and the like are great ways to connect online, including putting out the rallying cry for events, contests or products. But while these networks are great forums for reaching out online and connecting with other people in a positive way, it is much harder to actually influence buying behavior.

And how did we know if those eyeballs were really focusing? We had no way to prove that we were bubbling up from what Liz refers to as “The Noise”—the collective shoving by authors of promotional Tweets and posts and blogs and comments and “likes” and events and inbox spam down social media channels.) When you end up mired in a promo swamp of like-minded people, the danger is that you are either preaching to the converted or promoting to people who only want to promote right back to you.

That said, there were many wonderful people who supported our quest (and were willing to brave the contest’s hideous voting mechanism), and we thank every one of you!

Lessons in Play

One of the reasons we were so surprised by the outcome of our contest is that we’d made assumptions, some of them flawed, about the behavior of our users/followers/fans. Measurement is the backbone of a successful Internet marketing campaign (and can help you avoid the dreaded time-suck.) The best way to understand your followers is to look at the statistics pertaining to who they are and what they do. Too many promotional dollars are spent on forms of advertising that, by their very nature, cannot actually provide information about return on investment. Ads in magazines, participation at writing conferences in a teaching, book signing or reading capacity, giving books away through contests—you rarely know what if anything had a direct impact on buying behavior.

A great place to start developing a social media marketing strategy is to set up tools that measure both traffic and trends. You may have 800 followers on Twitter but if you use a tracking device on your URL you will likely discover that only a fraction of those 800 followers even saw it or cared enough to click on the link in your Tweet. And when you begin to understand what your followers notice and care about, you can craft your marketing message in a way that maximizes the likelihood of positive action.

Numbers won’t tell you the whole story—and the lack of a click on a URL does not necessarily mean the reader missed or chose not to act on your message. But measurement and tracking tools like Google Analytics can help you identify which of your activities on the Net are working best for you—or not at all.

Tools To Help You Track Interest in Your Message

1. URL Trackers

There are several online sites you can use to convert unwieldy URLs into bite-sized links known as “tiny urls” that fit better into character-constrained social media tools. The best thing about them isn’t their size, but the automatic tracking that comes with them. When you feed one of these shortened URLs down your marketing channel, it will collect data including how many people clicked on your link, where they clicked, who passed your link along, etc. Bitly at <http://www.bitly.com> is our favorite.

2. The Facebook Fan Page

There are several different kinds of Facebook pages. Product-focused pages are referred to as ▶

“Fan” pages, and they have capabilities that go far beyond what is offered by the generic profile page most Facebook members use. For example, Facebook Fan pages can be seen even by web surfers who are not logged into Facebook and they have a special tool called Insight that automatically provides statistics about the demographics of fans and their behavior on the page. The Fan page stays connected to your regular page but can take a specific name. For example, Liz’s original Facebook page targets a general audience at <http://www.facebook.com/lizmaverick> but her Fan page is customized for a reader audience at <http://www.facebook.com/LizMaverickCentral>. To set up your own Fan page, look in the icon bar at the bottom of your Facebook page for an icon that says “Ads and Pages.”

3. Page Statistics

This is the classic measuring device for web page traffic. Do you know how many people visit your blog site? Do you know how many pages they viewed, what they clicked on and how long they stayed? Statistics trackers are generally badges that you place into the code of your web site. They feed the data about site activity to one central place.

Hope recommends Google Analytics (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>). The tool provides simple but informative tracking and trending statistics in chunks of a single day, week, or month. You can track how much of your traffic comes to you directly versus from search engines and referring sites; the latter include social networking communities as well as publisher websites, other author websites with link backs, chapter links and so forth. Using the mapping function, you can obtain global statistics on all these variables and more by country and city; the latter is a great way to gauge how well that multi-city book tour paid off in site traffic as well as sales.

Going Forward

Our quest to win a trip to Thailand ended with nothing more exotic and exciting than a post mortem at a Thai restaurant in Manhattan, but the lessons we learned were absolutely worth it. We wound up with a template for identifying what technologies and sites we’ve been overestimating and overusing (hint: time suck) versus those we may want to give a little more play. We’ve both changed the way we approach social media strategy in our careers, (plus we learned a lot about making videos, including that you cannot shoot an audible video from the red steps in Times Square without a serious microphone.)

Liz Maverick’s personal website is <http://www.lizmaverick.com>
<http://www.facebook.com/LizMaverickCentral>
<http://www.twitter.com/lizmaverick>
Current release: *Crimson & Steam*, January 2010

Hope Tarr’s personal website is <http://www.hopetarr.com>
<http://www.facebook.com/hopetarr>
<http://www.twitter.com/hopetarr>

Coming release: *Tomorrow’s Destiny*, December 2010 (Novella, Harlequin single-title Victorian Christmas anthology with Jacquie D’Alessandro and Betina Krahn)

Are hard-times keeping you from renewing your Ninc membership? Apply to the Linda Kay West Memorial Fund to cover the cost of your yearly dues. Information about the fund and how to apply is available under membership services and on the renewal form. There’s still time to apply and renew your membership. Ninc wants you back! (And don’t forget, when the conference rolls around, the fund will be offering scholarships.)

Never Give Up... Never Surrender!

BY MARI MANCUSI

I know I can't be the only author who mutters the *Galaxy Quest* creed every time the publishing industry throws me a curve ball. This particular time was three years ago, when I got an email from a fellow author, published by the same publishing house that did my *Blood Coven Vampires* series.

"They're not picking up anyone's options!" she lamented.

Shocked, I frantically called Kristin Nelson, my agent, and she started to do some digging. Turns out, the author was right. My publisher was basically fading out their YA line and concentrating more on their core business of adult romance. If did publish any YA, it would be Gossip Girl-esque style contemporaries, not paranormal.

My series was basically DOA before the third book had even come out.

I was devastated. Though I'd written other books, none meant as much to me as my little Buffy-esque vampire series. And I hated disappointing all my loyal teen readers who kept writing to me, begging for more books. But what could I do? Kristin went back to the publishing company to ask again and again, but they kept saying no.

I could have given up there. After all, I'd just gotten a new children's publisher and was under contract for two hardcover books at a much higher advance. I could have easily moved on and said goodbye to my blood coven vampires. To my twin heroines, Sunshine and Rayne.

But I decided, in the end, the series meant too much to me to just go quietly into the night. If there was a way to save it, I had to try. I knew that fans of TV shows often launched campaigns to save their favorites from being cancelled and I figured something like that might work for a book series as well. So I started a "Save the *Blood Coven*" campaign in which I got readers to spread the word about the series through blogging, social media, school, and, most importantly, going to bookstores, libraries and school libraries, to convince those in power to stock the books. I, myself, did videos, enlisted a street team, gave away prize incentives, and constantly empowered my readers not to let the big corporations dictate what they got to read.

And so sales continued. Slow and steady over the next two years. Books that should have rightly fallen out of print kept getting reprinted by the publisher due to continued demand. Every day I'd have new teens write to me or friend me on MySpace to tell me they'd recently discovered the series. I felt like my campaign was working.

But it still wasn't enough. The publisher wasn't publishing any YA books at this point and while they were happy to keep on reprinting the first three, they weren't at all interested in investing in number four.

It was a frustrating time for me. Knowing there was an audience begging for the book, but not being ▶

able to deliver it to them. I couldn't sell it anywhere else, since most publishers aren't interested in picking up a series halfway through, unless you're an extremely established, bestselling author. I wondered if I should just cut my losses and give up. The way things looked, the *Blood Coven* couldn't be saved.

Then, out of the blue, I received an incredible email. My German publisher, who had just finished releasing the first three books, translated in their country, wrote to me about the huge success they were having with the series overseas. They wanted more books as soon as possible. I explained the deal with my US publisher, but they didn't care. They said they'd buy them outright, whether the US publisher wanted them or not.

At first I wasn't sure what to do. After all, taking the time to write book #4 for a foreign sale would take time away from trying to sell a new series to a new US publisher. Was it worth it? But then I realized, this could be a great opportunity. An excuse and a paycheck to write the book I was dying to write and when I was done, I'd still retain the US rights. I could find another way to get it to my American readers. Maybe a smaller, independent publisher would agree to take it on. Maybe I could sell it POD. Or, worse comes to worse, I could just give it away for free online. Somehow—somehow—I could get this story to my readers. And that seemed worth it.

So I said, "yes," and began writing the book. Some of my teen readers joked that they were going to have to learn German just so they could read it. Luckily, that turned out to be unnecessary. Kristin (who never gave up or surrendered herself!) went back one last time to my US publisher and explained how I was writing the book for Germany and would they like to see it when it was done? Timing was good—the first *Twilight* movie had just swept into theaters and vampires were hotter than ever.

Well, I'll never forget Kristin's excited call later that day. Not only did the publisher suddenly change their mind and say yes to a fourth book, but they also decided they wanted to reprint the first three books in the series as well. With shiny new covers for a whole new generation of (vampire hungry) fans.

The *Blood Coven* was saved.

I cried when Kristin told me the good news. She, in return, said the sale meant more to her than ones she'd made for six figures. Because this particular sale was a victory. The result of a two-year battle that seemed hopeless until the very end. But we didn't give up. We didn't surrender.

And sometimes, even in these bad economic times, a story of publishing can actually have a happy ending!

POSTSCRIPT: By the time you read this, *Bad Blood* will have been released in stores. Hopefully it has done well and the publisher has decided to continue the series further as well. The German publisher released their version last summer and subsequently bought Book #5, which I'm finishing up writing now. (And they're already asking for a Book #6 as well.) It's a little backwards—to sell foreign rights before the US ones, but that's okay with me. The bottom line is readers around the world are enjoying the books and that makes it all worthwhile!

Mari Mancusi is online at <http://www.bloodcovenvampires.com>

Ask the Agent...



Joanna Stampfel-Volpe Nancy Coffey Literary & Media Representation

Q: *It seems to be getting harder to sell on proposal, is this true, and if so, why?*

A: Is this true? Well, yes and no. Yes, it's harder to sell on a proposal for mid-list authors who are switching editors/imprints/houses. Yes, it's harder to sell on proposal for writers whose sales numbers are on a downturn, even if they were a bestseller at one point. And yes, it's harder to sell on a proposal for writers who are attempting to switch genres (the most common is switching from adult to YA). But if you're an author who is working with the same editor, if your sales numbers are up, or if your attempt at YA is a good one, you can still sell on proposal. So I guess the real question is: realistically, do you know where you stand in the publishing marketplace? And are you willing to write the manuscript in full to sell the story?

We all know that publishing isn't the same as it was ten years ago. Heck, it's not the same as it was two years ago. The entire process has and is continuing to change. And that goes for acquisitions, too. Publishers aren't acquiring projects that they don't feel are a sure thing. Editors have more hurdles to jump than ever before to buy a project they'd like to work on. And predicting what the Sales departments will want or need is no easy thing. Editors are being told the market is oversaturated with projects like theirs. Or their project is too unusual and this isn't the market to be innovative. The hook isn't "grabby" enough, or it's too cliché. What's the gimmick? Does the author have a web presence? (The cultural phenomenon of vampires is the perfect example of the fickleness of sales — please, dear God, there better not be a vampire in it. Unless, Sales happens to want vampires that day...)

With all of these obstacles, an unfinished manuscript makes it even harder to convince an acquisitions board that they should take a chance on you. And that's one of the few things that you, the author, can control.

One of the statements I hate hearing most is "I don't want to put a lot of work into this if there isn't a guarantee of it selling." Or "I've been a published author for XX years. I shouldn't have to complete the entire manuscript to get my next contract." Unfortunately it isn't how many books you've published that determines this anymore. In this day and age of publishing, it's all about how well your books are selling. Are they earning out the advance? If it's a series, are the sales numbers increasing with each book? Even if it's not a series, is your reading audience getting larger? You don't have to be a best seller to achieve that "high sales" status, but you do have to be selling consistently.

Before you go out with your next project, you have to be realistic. If you're starting in a new genre, unless you are a current *NYT* bestseller, consider it like starting a new writing career. Even if you've written thirty historical romances, your typical YA reader doesn't even know who you are, so your project won't be selling on your name or past successes. It will be selling on the quality of the work, and the quality of the work can be best judged when it's complete. ▲

Ask the Lawyer...

Question: *What are the limitations on an author using the cover image from their book for publicity purposes? I was trying to print out the cover for my latest at a copy shop, but they refused because of copyright concerns, despite the fact that my name is on it. So now I'm curious...*

Answer: The important thing to remember here is that the cover image was in all probability not created by the publisher, but rather by an independent artist or designer, who almost certainly owns the copyright to that image.

The publisher of your book purchased a license to use the cover image from that artist or designer who created it. Whether or not you can use that image depends entirely on the written agreement between the artist and the publisher.

It is entirely possible that the publisher purchased only the right to include the image on the cover of a single edition of the book, and in advertisements, to the extent that they include a photograph of that edition. Alternatively, the publisher may have purchased the right to include (and to allow the licensees to include) the image on the cover of all editions of the book throughout the world, in advertisement, in publicity materials, and in connection with the exploitation of subsidiary rights.

Whether the publisher also purchased the right for its author to use the cover photos for those purposes, or for any other purposes, is a question which can be answered only by looking at the contract between the artist and the publisher.

You should ask your publisher either to let you see a copy of that agreement, or to advise you of its contents. Keep in mind that most publishing contracts never mention the book's cover art (other than possibly to discuss whether the author has a right of approval or consultation) and thus you have no right to force the publisher to show you its licensing agreement, or to put you in touch with the artist, etc. So this is a situation in which tact and restraint can be useful tools.

— **Bob Stein**

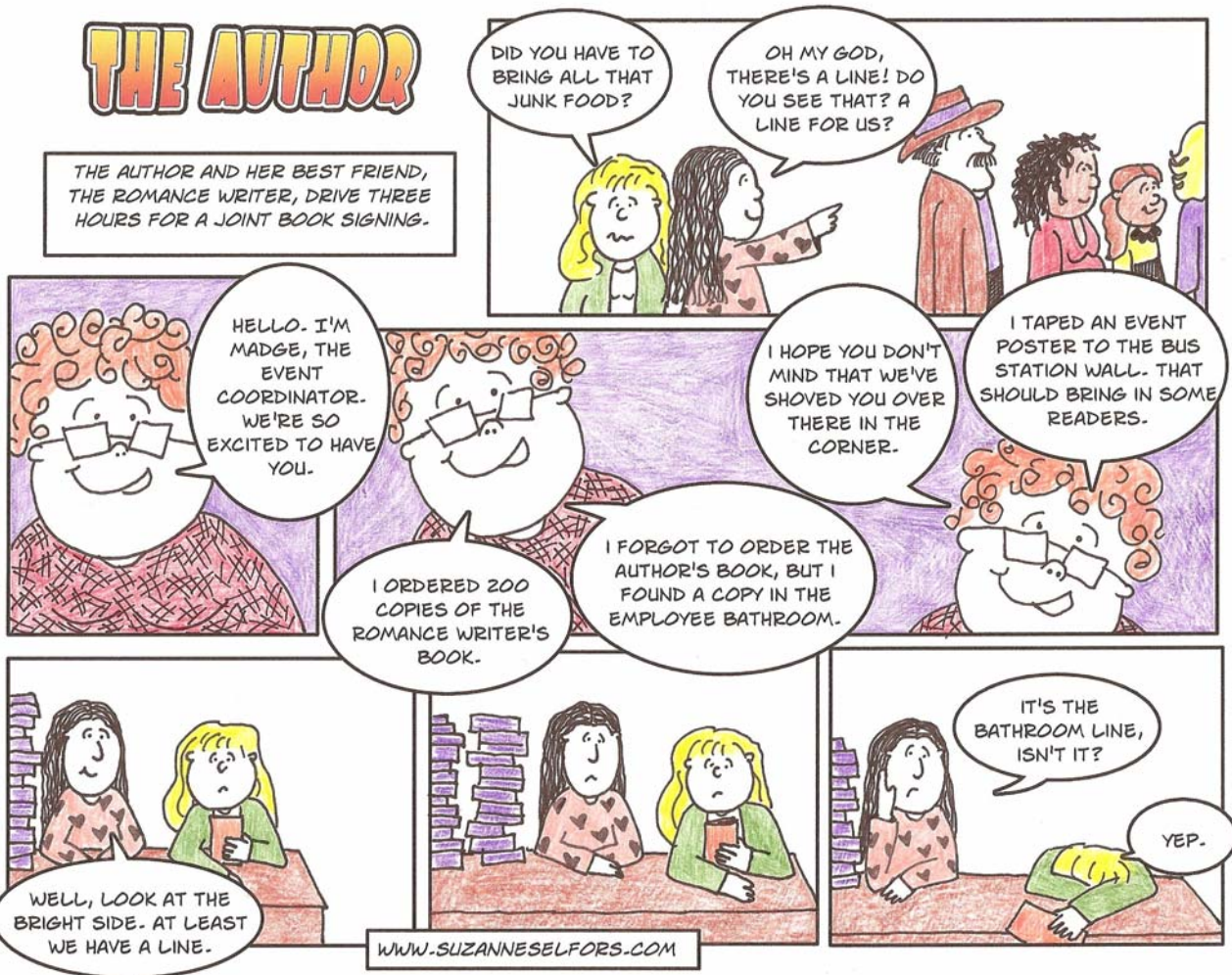
Law Office of F. Robert Stein, 478 2nd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215. (718) 369-0998 / (718) 369-0076 (Fax).
Email: F.RobertStein@nyc.rr.com, Website: <http://www.pryorcashman.com/attorneys-119.html>

Ask The Lawyer is just one of many services Novelists, Inc. provides membership. And as the publishing world continues to change rapidly, the member services of Ninc will keep you cued-in to the important issues of the writing life.

Now Ninc has added **Ask The Agent**. The benefits of membership continue to grow. Renew your membership now at <http://www.ninc.com>

THE AUTHOR

THE AUTHOR AND HER BEST FRIEND, THE ROMANCE WRITER, DRIVE THREE HOURS FOR A JOINT BOOK SIGNING.



Business Briefs

Galley Cat Announces New Review Site

Noting that 2009 was a rough year for the book review, Galley Cat has announced that it has contacted professional reviewers and readers and will launch Galley Cat Reviews this month (February). Additionally, Galley Cat is looking to build a directory of online outlets for book reviews to share with readers. If you would like to be included in the book review directory or participate in their review program, email them at jason@mediabistro.com.

Bowker PubTrack Reports on Buying Trend

December 2009 PubTrack reported that 34% of US consumers are buying fewer books and at lower prices. Almost 20% are going the used books route, or exchanging books with friends. Paperbacks are increasing over the purchase of hardbacks, and more discounted and sale books are being selected.

The survey found that only 2% are purchasing more books rather than spending money on other forms of entertainment.

Kobo Comes to the E-book Market

Shortcovers has rebranded itself as Kobo E-books international, in a bid to compete with Kindle. The company, established in February 2009, sells e-books that can be read on Macs, PCs, iPhone, Blackberry, Android, Palm Pre and any e-reader that can work with EPUB-format books, such as the Barnes & Noble Nook or the Sony Reader. Kobo is teaming up with Borders, REDgroup Retail and Instant Fame to make books available in the United States, Canada, the EU, the U.K., Australia and the Asia Pacific region. (Borders will be incorporating Kobo into its store later next year.)



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane O'Brien Kelly

Pros and Cons of Converting to a Roth IRA

In previous years, taxpayers who wanted to convert funds from their qualified retirement plan or traditional IRA (including SEP IRAs) into a Roth IRA were only permitted to do so if their modified adjusted gross income was less than \$100,000 and if they did not file a married separate return. In 2010, however, the income limitation and filing status rules do not apply, which means any taxpayer can effectuate a conversion. Converting causes the untaxed funds in the traditional IRA or retirement plan to be taxed. The good news, though, is that taxpayers who convert in 2010 may elect to include half of the converted funds in their taxable income in 2011 and the other half in the doomsday year of 2012.

So, what's so great about a Roth IRA? A Roth IRA is a unique type of retirement account created by Congress in 1997. While contributions to a Roth IRA are not deductible when made, all distributions made from a Roth are tax-free so long as the taxpayer has reached the age of 59 ½. Distributions before the age of 59 ½ are tax-free so long as they do not exceed the amount of the contributions. This tax structure allows earnings to accumulate tax-free in the account. Cool, huh?

While a taxpayer must begin taxing distributions at age 70 ½ from their traditional IRA or qualified plan and cannot thereafter continue to make contributions, Roth IRAs are not subject to the minimum distribution requirements. Thus, a taxpayer can let the funds sit in the Roth as long as they'd like, and can even continue to contribute to the Roth after age 70 ½, if the taxpayer otherwise qualifies to make contributions. What's more, unlike other IRAs, under current law, no income tax is assessed against a person who inherits a Roth IRA.

The Roth tax scheme is especially attractive for younger taxpayers with decades ahead of them in which to accumulate tax-free earnings. In addition, if investments increase significantly in value, substantial tax savings can result by having funds in a Roth, rather than a traditional IRA (including a SEP IRA), or qualified plan. A Roth IRA also makes sense for taxpayers who are in the lower income tax brackets now, but expect to be in higher brackets at retirement.

Converting sounds great. But is it right for you? Maybe. Maybe not.

If you do not expect to need all of your retirement funds, converting to a Roth can be a good way to leave tax free assets to your heirs. Also, if you are relatively young and in a low tax bracket, conversion may be a good idea since you'll have a long time over which to build up tax-free earnings.

Now for the downside.

As noted above, you will have to pay tax on the converted amounts, though you have the option of reporting half of the amount converted during 2010 on your 2011 and 2012 tax returns. If you don't have liquid funds to pay the income taxes, converting may not be a good idea, especially if you have to tap into the IRA funds to pay the tax. If you aren't yet 59 ½, you'll be hit with a 10% early withdrawal penalty on amounts withdrawn from the IRA to pay the tax.

Tax rates are uncertain. It is unknown what rates will be in effect in 2011 and 2012, when the converted amounts would be taxed. The lowered rates put into effect during the Bush administration are set to expire, and some believe rates may go up.

Generally, you can pull amounts out of an employer-sponsored plan only if you've left your job, retired, or — gulp — died. Thus, if you are currently employed, your funds in your employer's retirement plan may

not be available for conversion.

Some financial experts believe that when inflation is considered, the benefit of receiving tax-free distributions from a Roth IRA later does not outweigh the benefit of a tax deduction for contributions to a traditional IRA or qualified retirement plan now.

If you are receiving social security, the inclusion of the converted amounts in your income may cause a larger portion of your social security benefits to be taxed. Drats!

The case for conversion may not hold up if the “opportunity cost” is taken into account. If the funds you’d use to pay income tax on the converted amounts could be put to better use, or could earn a high return elsewhere, conversion may not be a good idea.

Finally, some financial experts believe that the government may decide at some point in the future to start imposing tax on inherited Roth IRAs. If so, it may defeat your plan to sock away money in a Roth with the hope of passing it down tax-free to your heirs.

If you’re considering conversion, call your investment company. Some financial advisors have conversion evaluator programs they can run for you to determine whether converting will benefit you.

Got a tax question for Diane? Email her at Diane@dianeobrienkelly.com. Your question might be addressed in an upcoming issue.

For further tax tips, check out the “Tax Tidbits” page on Diane’s website, <http://www.dianeobrienkelly.com>.



In Memoriam: Kathleen Givens



Kathleen Givens (1949-2010) was born in Brooklyn, NY, but spent her early years living in the Northeast, Georgia, and Southern California. She received a BA in English from the University of California, Irvine. It was while attending UCI that she met her soul mate and husband of forty years, Russell Givens. Russ and Kathleen raised two daughters, Kerry and Patty. She ran a family business even as she actively pursued her dream to become a published author by the age of 50, which she did. Her first book, *Kilgannon*, was published by Dell in 1999, followed by *The Wild Rose of Kilgannon*. She went on to publish Scottish historical novels with Warner and Pocket, including the RITA award winning *The Destiny* (Warner, best long historical, 2004) and *On a Highland Shore*. Her last full-length novel was *Rivals for the Crown* (Pocket). She has a short story in the upcoming *Mammoth Book of Irish Romance*. She spent most of her career with editor Maggie Crawford, but she also worked with Beth de Guzman and Karen Kosztołnyik. She is represented by literary agent Aaron Priest.

She died suddenly and unexpectedly on New Year’s Day in the arms of her husband. It seems that her heart simply stopped. She leaves her husband, two daughters, four beautiful grandchildren, and many many friends.

— **Sherri Browning Erwin**

Additional tributes appear at the group blog, The Whine Sisters, <http://www.whinesisters.com>

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Fallibility

“Editors are extremely fallible people, all of them. Don’t put too much trust in them.”

— Maxwell Perkins
(editor of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Thomas Wolfe)

A regular ritual of the writing life is waiting for an editor’s response to a delivered manuscript. We wait for three weeks, eight weeks, three months, or sometimes (my own personal record) for *thirteen months*, wondering whether the editorial phase of the book is going to be a painless process, a bit more work than anticipated, or an excruciating nightmare.

Upon getting the anxiously awaited reaction from any editor, I always keep in mind three key things about a manuscript:

The first is that I have to protect the manuscript, because it can’t protect itself.

The second is that my name, and no other, will go on the book’s cover; so I need to be able to stand by everything that’s *inside* that cover.

The third is that no writer is infallible, and a good edit makes almost any book better. Also, editors are people, too (well, at least *some* of them are), and they want to feel useful and respected in this process.

Therefore, over the years, I’ve developed a habit of dividing most editorial notes and suggestions into three categories: (1) helpful, (2) harmless, and (3) bad.

A “helpful” note is one that makes me say, “Oh, of *course!* Why didn’t *I* see that?” This kind of note is great, not only because it helps me improve the book, but also because it’s clear evidence that I and the editor are on the same wavelength about my work. It proves the author-editor relationship is functional and productive, which is exactly what it needs to be.

“Harmless” edits are suggestions that neither improve nor hurt the book. These most often show up in line-editing, but they can also be editorial notes (ex. an editor once asked me to reveal more about a heroine’s family background; I didn’t think it was needed, but I also didn’t think it hurt, so I added a couple of pages in revisions). I think that incorporating harmless suggestions demonstrates a spirit of cooperation to the editor, without compromising the work. Also, in the case of an editor who gives me a lot of *good* notes, it may be that I just don’t recognize that some of the “harmless” notes are also good notes; so it’s worth incorporating them, just in case.

Helpful and harmless notes make up the bulk of a productive editorial response to a manuscript.

However, even a good editor will usually include some bad notes. These may be purely a matter of personal taste or individual quirks (some editors hate flashbacks or loathe metaphors, some want the narrative to overstate the obvious, others suggest distracting digressions, etc.). Sometimes bad notes are just the prod-

uct of overwork (ex. a sleep-deprived editor writes a confused line-edit note asking you to describe a character the text described one page earlier). Or it may be cultural (an older male editor once asked me to change a gay male decorator to a female character, because he mistakenly assumed all decorators are women). Bad notes should always be rejected (or, whenever possible, tactfully ignored). Bad notes will hurt the work—and I have to protect the work, because it can't protect itself.

In a productive editorial relationship, the editor recognizes that, ultimately, this is the *author's* book and therefore all final decisions about its content must belong to the author—who will own the copyright, whose name will be on the cover, and whose career will be affected by its contents far longer and far more substantially than the editor's ever will. There may be some discussion, even disagreement; but, in the end, in any viable editorial relationship, there is enough productive communication and mutual respect that the areas of disagreement are relatively few and they're resolved satisfactorily.

A satisfactory resolution may mean that the editor says, "You don't have to fix this problem the way I've suggested, but it is a problem, so please think up your own way to fix it," and you agree to that. Or it may mean the editor says, "I disagree with you and urge you once again to revise this section; but it's *your* book, so I'm dropping the subject now."

So although bad notes can occasionally be a source of discord, they're not a serious problem. Bad *editors*, on the other hand, are a *huge* problem.

Here are the key clues that you're working with a bad editor—or, at least, that you're working with an editor who's bad for *you*:

The bad notes outnumber the good and the harmless notes.

The editor's reaction to the story makes you wonder if she ever even *read* the book's synopsis back when she acquired or approved it.

The notes make it clear that the editor doesn't want you to *revise* the book so much as to write a completely different one.

The editor's arguments and reasons for the changes she wants don't make sense to you.

The line-edit is so heavy that it's clear the editor simply hates your style and your voice.

The line-edit is characterized by page-after-page of arbitrary changes: "he shut the door" is changed to "he closed the door;" and "the temperature dropped after dark" is changed to "after dark, the temperature dropped." And so on.

Above all, a bad editor is one who believes that her vision of a book should trump yours, and who thus winds up wrestling with you over what your book is about and how the story should be told.

The editor's job is to evaluate whether *your* vision of the book is fully realized in your manuscript and, if not, to make suggestions (sometimes *many*) about how you can improve your execution of your story. That's a very challenging job. Not everyone can do it well (in fact, *most* people can't do it well). And it's probably *not possible* for an editor to do it competently if she just doesn't like your work—or, in some cases, just doesn't like your vision for a particular book.

In cases where bad editing is obviously going to be the steady theme of the relationship, I firmly believe a writer should request reassignment, specifically asking for a new editor who likes her work.

And in cases where requesting reassignment is not possible or practical, then I think the writer should protect the manuscript (and her own sanity) by whatever means necessary. That may mean asking your agent to intervene, for example, or quietly ignoring the editor until she's got no choice but to send the manuscript into production if she doesn't want to have to explain to her company why she's postponing publication. Alternately, perhaps you could talk obsessively about your collection of whips and machetes until the editor decides that upsetting you further would be a Really Bad Idea.

Or you may just need to be direct and firm with the editor: "Both of us are fallible. But this is my book and my name will go on the cover, so mine is the final judgment that we'll be relying on here."

Laura Resnick has mostly worked with good editors; but, over the years, she has told a couple bad editors to get their hands off her work and back away slowly if they want to see another sunrise.

Ninc Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY JACKIE KRAMER

Got any news or information
for the Bulletin Board?

Send it to Jackie at
jackiekramer7@netscape.com

Did you miss the NINC renewal 1/15/2010 deadline? Never fear; you can still renew without paying that pesky administration fee. And here's how.

You can renew by mail with the renewal form we mail through the USPS. You can also download that form from the Members Only area of Ninc.com and from the Files area of Ninclink's Yahoo page. Or you have the option of renewing online in the Members Only area of Ninc.com.

When renewing, you should remember to also fill out the Authors

Coalition (ACA) Survey that is included with the renewal form, whether hardcopy or electronic. The ACA Survey is vital to Ninc's financial well-being and the continuation of various services and programs that benefit all members, such as educational Ninc articles, superior conference programming, and the LegalFund.

(*If you can't afford to renew this year, remember you can apply to the Linda Kay West Memorial Fund, which is explained in detail in Section 3 of Ninc's Policies & Procedures [PPM] manual which you can download from the Members Only area of Ninc.com. There is a space on the renewal form, which allows you to use this fund to renew.)

If you have any questions at all, or need to see whether your payment has been credited, please contact me at Delilah@delilahdevlin.com

But hurry! The NINC rolls will be purged of all non-renewed members after 2/25. And don't forget that dues have not been raised since 1997, so NINC still remains not only the best professional organization out there, but the most reasonably priced! So renew today!

Your BlogMistress needs industry guests. If you haven't done so already, would you ask your publisher, editor, agent, publicist, cover illustrator or anyone else in the industry if they would like to blog for us. If you'd like to do more than just find an industry guest who will blog..

If you're willing to secure a guest, receive the materials and post them, there is pay—\$25 and some publicity for you (byline, photo & bio on the entry).

For either option, contact me at Patricia.Rosemoor@gmail.com

Confused about the mysterious worlds of Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites? Julie Ortolon has started a blog where we can help each other with questions, answers, and more.

Go to: <http://www.juliesjournalonline.com/>

NINK a publication of Novelists, Inc.
An Organization for Writers of Popular Fiction
P.O. Box 2037
Manhattan KS 66505

Publishing Services by Huseby Agency, Ltd.

Book videos can now be found on social sites, bookmarking sites, bookseller sites, library sites, blogs and media sites.

Return on Investment (ROI)

Return on investment means that you get something good for your money. You might pay \$1 or you might pay \$10,000 you still want a good return for your money. ROI is not the same as having a budget. You need to set your budget, know what you can spend and then get the money to work for you as hard as possible. The result of the “work” is your return on what you invested.

A book video can be done by the author if that person knows how to use a video camera or an editing suite. That does not mean it is free. The pictures, footage, music and time all cost something. Even if you are lucky enough to not have to pay for the pictures, footage or music, the time it takes to make a video can be extensive. The person needs to determine for his/herself whether the time they lose when working on the video is worth it or not. It may be that the person really enjoys making the video so the experience itself has value. But, there is still a cost associated with making the video. The cost (your time) may be a good investment for you. Only you can determine that.

Making the video isn't enough. Not if you want to get the best return on your investment. You need to know what to do with the video once you have it.

You should be sending it to your publisher in case they can make use of it. Upload it to your website, social profile and any other sites in which you feel it would benefit you to have your video there. You can burn it to a CD or DVD and play it during a book signing. You can use it to help sell foreign rights, option your book as a movie or as a tool to get you on talk shows or news programs.

You can pay someone to create the video, distribute it and even use it for further promotions. If you don't have time to figure out where the best placement is, but you want something better than YouTube where every other author is uploading to, then you might want to consider outsourcing this element of your work.

If you hire someone to create your video and/or distribute it you want to know that they are going to give you the best return on your investment. For example, do they have a positive online reputation? You might want to check on that before you allow your book video, which represents you, your book and/or your brand to be associated with that company. Does that company have references? It is absolutely fine to ask for references when you are investing money into a service. Hopefully that company will have references or a client list on their website. Does the company have resources you don't have or that are not easy to acquire? Do they have distribution contracts or platforms that are unique and targeted to your audience?

If you invest in having someone else create your video you want that person or company to have an expertise in book video utilization, creation, formatting, distribution and analytics. Otherwise you can have your best friend's 14 year old make the video for you and throw it up on some social profiles and YouTube.

Having a larger company do your video has benefits because a larger company can negotiate deals in bulk and get contracts that a single individual cannot attain. For example, COS Productions has a contract with



LexCycle which is the top iPhone eReader and with OverDrive which services 5000 libraries. As a company we are considered content providers, not advertisers. Though we do advertising, we are also content providers which allows us better negotiating terms when looking for new venue contracts. That means we can get a video places that are more specific to the target audience, where there are more people to see it or in a place where there aren't thousands of other competing videos.

Whether you create your own video and upload it or you hire someone else to do that job could depend on a number of variables. Do you have time, resources and ability to create your own video? Do you have a very specific need for your promotional campaign and the resources to meet that need? What is your budget? What is your goal?

You might be able to make your own video with numerous photos, uploading it to the top 20 or so online sites and getting it to your publisher all for the cost of your time. But you might find that having a video utilizing one picture, your book cover, paying \$300 for it and getting it to 300 booksellers, 5000+ libraries, dozens of reader destination sites, 20+ social sites and some specialty sites specific to your target audience is the better return. If you don't need all of those distribution outlets then the first option is the better return. More is not always best.

How do you determine what is best?

Goal Attainment

Before you spend time making a video or spend money having one made you need to set aside time and effort for researching your audience and determining your goals. You may find that your particular goals do not require you to have a book video. You may find that your goals require you to mortgage your home. You are the only person who can set your goals and determine if they are attainable or even logical for you.

Throwing your promotional dollars into the wind and hoping something sticks and makes you rich and famous is a sign that you may not be operating in reality. Thinking you can become rich and famous by being on every social site online is an equal stretch. Nothing is absolutely certain. I mean, you could win the lotto and this entire conversation would be a mute point as you have Spielberg or Tarantino direct your book trailer. It could happen. Just don't hold your breath. Create goals that are realistic for you. Goals for your situation. Goals you can actually attain.

1) Your goals may include making a bestseller list, which means your big push needs to happen the first week the book is out.

2) Your goals may include branding yourself within a genre, or as a certain personality type in which things like a tagline, including your photo at the end of the video, including a logo or setting a mood could be included.

3) If you're a new author you want to get your name out to as many people as possible in order to lay a foundation of name recognition.

4) There are a lot of potential goals and a variety of ways to attain those goals.

Identifying what your goals are in advance will help you see more clearly what your promotional campaign will require.



Before we start a video project we have the client state their goals. A goal may even change the way we would create the look and feel of the video. It certainly will help us create a strategy for distribution. It can also clue us in on your needs so that we can make recommendations to your overall campaign.

The fact of the matter is, most anyone can create a video these days. Anyone can upload it to a variety of sites. But, if your career requires more strategy than luck you might want to seek someone with a lot of expertise, experience and connections. If you're one of those rare people who have expertise in marketing you already know that utility and goals are key to identifying the right tool for the job. If you're unsure, start with setting your goals and identifying your audience. Don't use a marketing tool just because it seems everyone else is. Be thoughtful in your marketing strategy and you'll get better results for your money.

Tips & Tricks and Inside Information

Author interviews are great if you are already famous and have a big fan base. If you have been involved in something unusual or in popular culture. Otherwise you are a talking head selling your wares. There must be a catalyst for the viewer to want to watch an author interview.

Book videos should not exceed 2 minutes. 90 seconds is ideal, but 60 seconds gives you the most utility since you can use it as a viral video and as a commercial if you so choose.

Your visuals (photos and/or footage) should not compete with your text. Too much on the screen makes it hard to follow what is being said and hard to remember it at the end.

Never use photos, footage, music or fonts that are not licensed to you. Even "royalty free" images have rules. You need to know what kind of license you have.

A great place to go to upload to several places at once is <http://www.tubemogul.com>. You need to have profiles on those sites first, but if you're doing a lot of videos this is a great service. You can use their basic free service or for deeper analytics you can pay for a premium account.

A nice online editing system is- <http://animoto.com/>. It can be fun!

For information about COS video productions go to-
<http://www.cosproductions.com/servicesVideoProducts.php#chart>

For information about distribution including having COS distribute your video go to-
<http://www.cosproductions.com/servicesDistribution.php>

Be certain to research any company you are going to invest in. Ask for references and examples of work. Today's Book Trailers are a tool not a novelty. ▲

