

NINK

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I Need Promo Help!

BY TINA WAINSCOTT

Haven't we all shouted this out? Sure, we can hire a publicity firm, for umpteen hundreds or thousands of dollars. We can hire someone to do mailings and handle social sites. But how about getting people out there handing out your promotional material, singing your praises, and even insisting that people buy your books? For free.

Ah, now I've got your attention. Well, okay, it's not completely free. How much you spend depends on you.

I've found a new and different kind of promotional tool called "Street Teams." I kind of fell into it. I did a special promotion in which folks could sign up in a database program and get their names in one of my books. For this purpose, I found a contact manager website called FanBridge (www.fanbridge.com). It's suited for bands to use as a way to collect contacts and reach out to them through campaigns. It's free until you amass more than 400 names, and campaigns can be targeted. That site is useful in itself.

Some of the people who signed up chose the "Street Team" designation. I figured it had to do with music bands and dismissed it. Until I went to Heather Graham's *Writers for New Orleans* conference last fall. On a panel about promotion, L.A. (Leslie) Banks talked about Street Teams—people who hand out your promo material to the masses for you. This intrigued me.

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Leslie said, "Street Teams are great because they are made up of people who really enjoy the authors and their work. These individuals respect both and go forward as ambassadors of goodwill. They spread the word with a level of enthusiasm that an author could never pay for. It's a labor of love, not a 'job'—and that comes through in everything they do."

It got me thinking: how can I use these people who assigned themselves Street Teamers? Did they even know what it meant? I sent out a quick missive to everyone on the sublist (27) asking if they'd like to be my Street Teamer, aka "teamer" (my own nickname). I also threw out the idea on my Facebook page. Fifteen people jumped right in, and, surprisingly, several were teamers for other authors.

Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

Founders

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Janice Young Brooks
Jasmine Cresswell

Maggie Osborne
Marianne Shock

Advisory Council

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

2011 Board of Directors

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2011 Conference

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Program: Karen Tintori Katz

Anthology

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Authors Coalition Reps

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Elaine Isaak

Elections

Chair: Sylvie Kurtz

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Chair: Open; contact Kay Hooper

Marketing

Chair:

Member Retention

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Blog Coordinator

Patricia Rosemoor

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are available on the website:

<http://www.ninc.com>

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Novelists, Inc.
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Manhattan KS 66505
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Address changes may be made on the
website.

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

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newsletter may be used or reproduced
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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:

Laura A. Shoffner (Laura Abbot), Eureka Springs, AR
Elissa Wilds, Wesley Chapel, FL

Pamela Callow, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Ola Ghaith (Olivia Gates), Cairo, Egypt

Lois Kleinsasser (Cait London), Hollister, MO

Theresa Meyers, Port Orchard, WA

Jennifer Lewis, Surrey, UK

Kieran Kramer, Summerville, SC

Tracey Lyons, Warwick, NY

Janelle Denison, Hillsboro, OR

Adele Budnick (Adele Ashworth), Flower Mound, TX

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Anna Adams, Newnan, GA

Shiloh Walker, Jeffersonville, IN

Maureen McGowan, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Nick DiChario, Rochester, NY

Merrilee Whren, Fernandina Beach, FL

Christyne Butlier (Christyne Butler), Leominster, MA

Michelle Holman, Cambridge, Waikato, New Zealand

Toni McGee Causey, Baton Rouge, LA

Wendy Wootton (Portia Da Costa), Ossett,

West Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Nina Bruhns (Nikita Black), Summerville, SC

Tracy Higley (T. L. Higley), Wernersville, PA

Lee Duncan (Leigh Duncan), Rockledge, 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

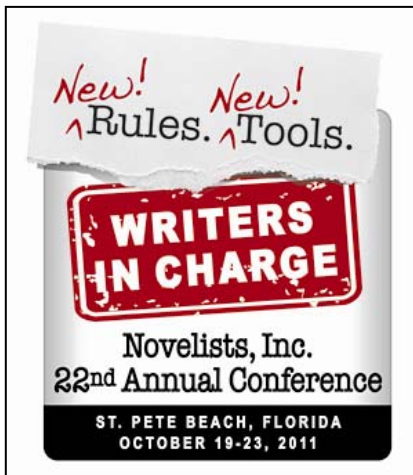
brochures to conferences. Email Pari Taichert with your

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.



Ahem: Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

BY SASHA WHITE
CONFERENCE TOWN CRIER

Let's talk promotion.

As professional authors, we all know self-promotion is essential. The same can be said for most enterprises, like, say ... a writers organization. Novelists, Inc. is a fabulous organization, and that makes promoting it pretty easy. The 2011 conference is coming up soon, and that's also fabulous, so we'd love some help getting the word out about it, too.

How can you help?

If you're on Twitter, please follow NINC and retweet everything you see concerning the conference—blog posts as well as the conference announcements. We want the organization to grow, not just the conference. When tweeting about all things NINC, be sure to use the hashtag #ninc to help build name recognition.

NINC members are and have always been the best advocates for NINC membership. Just as a good book gains traction by word-of-mouth recommendations, our conference and our organization are gaining visibility from the extra effort of so many of our members. We've been tweeting and otherwise getting the word out about the conference for approximately two months now, and NINC has received near-record numbers of applications from prospective members in that time. Many of the applicants have told us that they're eager to attend the conference.

Facebook is another great way to get us some recognition. Take a minute to "Like" NINC on Facebook, and share our news with your friends. Conference posts and blog posts are given a shout-out there daily.

If Twitter and Facebook are not your thing, don't fret: blogging is not dead. Why not do a post about why you joined Novelists, Inc., and what it offers? Or if you were at last year's conference, share your thoughts on what you got out of it. Share some pictures of that fabulous beach setting, or one of those beautiful sunsets. You can blog on the NINC blog, or on your own—just send me a quick email with the link to your post, and I'll get it posted on Twitter and Facebook for you.

Don't forget that we're still looking for two people who will do NINC Blog posts—live—during the conference. If you're going to be attending this year, and are interested, please contact me and I'll set it up.

If you aren't interested in doing a full blog post somewhere, but have a small something you want to say or share about NINC or the conference, email your thoughts/comments to me, and I'll slide them into a post. Pictures are always welcome, too.

While you're online, take a minute to surf over to the Files section of the NINCLink YahooGroups page. On May 12, 2011, Kasey Michaels uploaded a one-page document titled "Announcement," which contains the latest news about the conference. Feel free to send it along to writer friends, editors, agents, other listservs, etc. The file titled "Invitation" is a condensed version of our industry invitation, which Kasey uploaded May 13. Send this one to your editor, agent, and other industry acquaintances. Grab both files while you're on the site. Couldn't be easier! Or, if you think it *could* be easier, just email me and I'll email back the documents.

In a nutshell, the invitation is for your editor, agent, publicist, whomever, to attend the conference—as NINC's guests. They're welcome to attend the one-day pre-conference program, *The New Publishing: Welcome to Tomorrow!*, all daytime workshops during the main conference, and any meals we provide. We allow them to get the conference ▶

rate at the hotel and, if we have room, we'll ask them to sit on a panel. They'll also get a complimentary year of eNink. It's a *great* deal for industry professionals, so spread the word!

Non-NINC members may attend only the one-day program, which includes two meals, for \$150. The success of the one-day program is vital to the funding we get as a nonprofit organization, so please talk it up. It not only gives non-NINC writers a chance to see what we have to offer, it allows us the opportunity to encourage them to become full members as soon as they can.

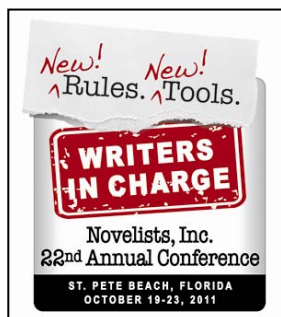
The conference is only five months away. That might seem like a long time, but in reality, it isn't, so please join in the effort to spread the word *now*.

Here is all the information you need to get started:

Novelists, Inc. on Twitter: http://twitter.com/#!/Novelists_Inc
Novelists, Inc. on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/novelists.inc>.
Novelists, Inc. Blog: <http://www.ninc.com/blog/index.php>
Conference Website: <http://www.ninc.com/conferences/2011/index.asp>
Sasha White: sasha@sashawhite.net

Speakers for the One-Day Program and the Main Conference are:

Mark Coker, Founder and CEO, Smashwords
Don Weisberg, President, Penguin Young Readers Group
Carolyn Pittis, Senior VP, Global Author Services, HarperCollins
Tracee Gleichner, Founder and CEO, Literal Exposure
Linda Quinton, Associate Publisher, VP of Marketing, Tor Books
David Wilk, Creative Management Partners
Thubten Comerford, WePost Media and Social Potency
Angela James, Executive Editor, Carina Press
Joan Schulhafer, Publishing and Media Consulting
Christopher Kenneally, Beyondthebook.com and Copyright Clearance
Lou Aronica, Publisher, The Story Plant and Fiction Studio
Linda Parks, Co-Owner, Fireside Books and Gifts
Sally Hawkes, Manager of Network Services, Arkansas State Library
Dianne Despain, Author and Freelance magazine writer
Laura Hayden, Owner of Author, Author! Bookstore
... and more to be announced, so stay tuned!



New Rules, New Tools: Writers In Charge

October 19-23, 2011

Tradewinds Island Resort • St. Pete Beach, Florida

Fee: \$285 • Payable in one lump sum or three payments of \$95



Special One-day program open to all writers and industry professionals:

The New Publishing: Welcome To Tomorrow!

October 20, 2011

Fee: \$150; includes lunch and dinner buffets

(NINC members: this cost is included in your conference fee)

Registration now open at www.ninc.com



I Wish I'd Said That

5 Questions Never to Ask at a Bookstore Reading

BY EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL

Let me first be clear: I love touring. I love bookstore events. A great many of my favorite memories transpired in independent bookstores and at festivals from New York to Calgary to California. (I also have a lot of memories involving airports at this point, but that's neither here nor there.) It's an absolute pleasure to meet booksellers, and readers, and I like the reading itself.

I even like the post-reading Q&A. That's the wildcard part of the evening, where you might be asked interesting questions about your work or your writing process or what great books you've read recently or how you tied your scarf in that nifty way, or, on the other hand, you might be asked whether you and your husband plan on procreating any time soon. This is what makes Q&As exciting: it could go either way.

That being said, a brief list of questions that ideally I'd love to never be asked again at a post-reading Q&A:

1) "So when's your next book coming out?"

My NEXT book? I have no idea, but it'll probably be a while. In the meantime, allow me to introduce you to my current book. It came out a week ago. It took me two and a half years to write.

2) "Are you planning on having kids?"

Um. As much as I enjoy discussing the nuances of my marriage into a microphone before a sea of inquisitive strangers, could I maybe get back to you on that? Also, while I'm typically the last person to notice gender bias, I'll confess that I can't help but secretly wonder whether you'd ask that question of a male novelist.

3) "Here's my copy of your book. Please sign it and also draw a cartoon."

I'd love to, but I have no idea how to draw cartoons. Would you like a shakily-rendered outline of a penguin? I can also do fluffy dogs. Thanks for the idea, by the way—the next time I go to a cartoonist's book signing, I'm going to ask if they'd mind doing a signature plus a quick dash of literary fiction.

4) "Is your book on Amazon?"

It is! But you know what? That's perhaps not the best possible question to ask at an event held in an independent bookstore. Actually, it might be the worst possible question to ask at an event held in an independent bookstore. Amazon is what puts bookstores like this one out of business. You can't see it because she's standing behind you, but there is a bookseller glaring at the back of your head.

5) "How many books have you sold?"

You know, the last royalty statement was a few months back, so I'm actually not entirely sure. But while we're on the subject of our personal finances, what's your checking account balance?

Emily St. John Mandel has published two novels, Last Night in Montreal and The Singer's Gun. A third novel is out on submission. She's a staff writer at The Millions (www.themillions.com.) She has an essay in the recent anthology The Late American Novel: Writers on the Future of the Book, and her short fiction will appear in the Venice Noir collection, forthcoming in 2012. You can find her on the web at www.emilymandel.com, and on Twitter at @EmilyMandel.

This article first appeared on May 10, 2011, on the *Blurb is a Verb: Adventures (and Misadventures) in Book Publicity* blog (<http://blurbisaverb.blogspot.com/>). It is reprinted with permission.

I Need Promo Help!

Continued from page 1 ▶ So first, you tap into your fan base. They're, after all, the ones who will passionately promote your books with the cred of not being related to you.

Then decide what you want to do with them. Mine were extremely enthusiastic and willing to hand out whatever I sent them. One respondent said, "Heck, if you wanted me to wear a shirt that says I'm your official book pimp I would do it." Gotta love that.

Third, come up with a cool name for your peeps. I dubbed mine Rushkies. (My pen name is Jaime Rush.)

Next, give them ammo. Pens, sticky-notes, and other tchotchkes can get lost on the tables at big conventions. In the hands of your fans, though, they are special giveaways that they are excited to both have and give away to their friends.

For my first foray into Street Teaming, I made up temporary tattoos with the design my Rogues have tattooed on them. I sent each Rushkie a package with a welcome letter, personally signed cover flat, a bunch of tattoos, and 25 post cards to hand out. I also scored a widget from my publisher that allowed them to access an e-galley, so they all got my new book early. For each release, I'll make up some little gift to send out with their packages. They see helping us as a privilege, but I make sure they know how grateful I am.

Once I had a list of Rushkies, I asked for advice on what they like to receive. Here is a list of things they suggested, some of which they get from other authors for whom they Street Team:

Giveaways:

- ▶ Post cards, bookmarks, cover flats, excerpt brochures, and other small items. Basically your typical promo stuff.

"Thank you" gifts for the teamer:

- ▶ The standard type of giveaway, including keychains and mouse pads.
- ▶ T-shirts; these can also be incorporated into contests in which the teamer posts a picture of her/him wearing it to win prizes (pictures chosen at random or you could give a prize to the person who posts the most pictures of her at different locations).
- ▶ Sneak peeks at the new book and news before anyone else.

What's the benefit for the author? Word of mouth. Isn't that the gold standard for growing your name and brand? You have fans who are handing someone a bookmark and saying, "You *have* to buy this author. She's fabulous!"

Some of my teamers have ties to bookstores, so they'll take extra bookmarks in to them. Some are members of book clubs. One told me she already talked some of her friends into ordering my new book before it was even released. They will also report to you where they find your books on the shelves.

Who can benefit from this? Published authors who have at least one book out and who have a presence on the social sites. Reach out to the fans who always do a *WHOOT!* when you post something about your books. This is what I said in my Facebook post:

Want to be a Street Teamer? I'm just discovering this great concept where folks support their fave authors by handing out bookmarks and goodies that we send them (& signed flats for the teamer!). If anyone's interested, message me with your snail mail addy, and I'll add you to the list.

It wouldn't hurt, especially in the beginning of your career, to enlist friends and family. The more established you are, the more likely you'll have volunteers.

What's it going to cost you? This will depend on how many teamers you have. Fifteen seems a good number to start with. Some authors have Welcome Packages they send to new teamers containing any of the items listed above. You probably order these things anyway, so making up a few more costs little; using up the extras you have lying around, nothing. Gifts can get pricey, but again, it's a limited number. Keep an eye on blow-outs at stores. Some authors utilize the skills they already have, such as jewelry making or other forms of art. Vistaprint.com offers a lot of ways you can use your cover art, for mugs, shirts, etc.

Time is spent setting things up, but once you've got your group, then it's a matter of how involved you want to get with them. You can send them emails from time to time, or just send a package and email when your book is coming out. I contracted someone to assemble the packages and mail them out for me, though that translates to more money on top of postage and envelopes.

You can make this as simple or complex as you want. Some authors have elaborate systems where teamers earn points for doing things such as friending their character on Myspace/Facebook, affixing a bumper sticker to their car, and posting on blogs. The top point earners get additional prizes.

I asked L.A. Banks about the drawbacks. The biggest? "Time. Managing a Street Team requires involvement and interaction, and with the increasing demands of social media as well as deadline pressures to write, the social aspects can become difficult to juggle sometimes."

What do the teamers get out of it? The key word is *team*. They're part of our team, and that makes them feel special. One Rushkie summed it up nicely: "It makes a reader feel like they are a part of the story ... more personal." Getting excerpts first, ARCs, gifts, and contests just for them are perks, too.

Melanie Thomas said, "Reading is one of the biggest passions in my life and getting the opportunity to share books and authors that I love with others is very rewarding for me. Being a Rushkie gives me that opportunity. Sharing the Offspring love with my friends and introducing others to the world Jaime Rush has created is thrilling since I love to talk about the books I've read. The fact that I got an early e-galley is just icing on the cake."

Chris Jones, another Rushkie, said, "I love doing it. Word of mouth is so important, I believe. Meeting someone who has enthusiasm for books, authors, and reading is so wonderful. It gets you and them excited. You are promoting something, someone you believe in, and get enjoyment from." She made a great point when she said, "Also, you are promoting reading in general. Not a bad thing."

She continues: "Usually book people/readers are very receptive to talking and discussing authors and books. We are always looking for new authors, new stories as most authors put out one book a year. It is the perfect opportunity to find new authors. Handing them a bookmark or postcard is like whoo-hoo, bonus. Or makes you say wow, that is a great cover ... yes there are some of us who are cover junkies. As to the booksellers, sometimes they are receptive and other times they look at you like you are crazy.... Smaller chains are more receptive to someone coming in and leaving bookmarks for their customers. Barnes and Noble, it just depends on who you talk to. But on their customer help desk there are usually bookmarks and that is where I leave them. Libraries don't usually mind and they have a whole area for things for the patrons."

For Chris, the bottom line is, "I love helping people and it is kinda like my way to give something back to the author for the enjoyment they give me through reading their stories."

I asked L.A. Banks for any extra advice. "Do your best to reciprocate that love and respect. Nothing is cast in stone and I suppose every Street Team will be as individual as the author's relationship to his/her readers. But major do's would be to have fun/keep it fun, to set the ground rules that your ST always responds to others with civility and respect (no verbal hazing on your boards, etc.), and leave room for the group's autonomy. People like to create and co-create their own organizational structures, so sometimes you have to fall back and allow them space to define themselves within loose parameters. But *don't* ever allow people to act in your name in a way that you are uncomfortable with—check that immediately, because at the end of the day, your wider base of readers will associate bad behavior that is tolerated with you."

Leslie said there was some language and attacking on her boards, but her teamers checked it themselves. She said, "They culled slackers from the group because by then they'd evolved tasks, committees, and offices ... with military efficiency they gave folks not pulling their weight the boot. I guess they didn't like that a few people weren't participating but still getting swag [goodies] and privileges. Human nature prevailed." ▶

“Street Teams are great because they are made up of people who really enjoy the authors and their work. ... They spread the word with a level of enthusiasm that an author could never pay for. It's a labor of love, not a 'job'—and that comes through in everything they do.”

I suppose fans could sign up just to get swag. I purposely didn't promise ARCs when I put out the call.

As with any form of promotion, the question is always, "Does it work?" And the answer, as usual, is, "I don't know for sure." But I'd say anytime you have people hand-selling your books to their friends, the answer has to be Yes. Fostering a relationship with enthusiastic fans is always a good thing. If you keep it simple, time and cost will be minimal. It's the kind of face-to-face promotion that's priceless.

Missing the romance, relationship drama, and action of her favorite television shows, X-Files, Roswell, and Highlander, Jaime Rush created her own mix in the Offspring series, from Avon Books (Touching Darkness). Rush is a pseudonym for Tina Wainscott, best-selling author of 18 novels for St. Martin's Press and Harlequin. Contests, sneak peeks, and more at www.jaimerush.com.

Business Briefs

In Case We Need Proof that E-Books Are the Wave of the Present....

According to the Book Industry Study Group (BISG), a holiday surge in sales of e-readers was the "turning point in e-book history." The group's second installment of its Consumer Attitudes Toward E-Book Reading survey indicates that the number of print-book consumers who also download e-books went up from five percent in October 2010 to almost 13 percent in January 2011. The survey also states that two-thirds of respondents now use e-books "exclusively or mostly." Nearly half of the respondents reported purchasing more books in the last six months than they had in the past.

The survey has been underway since November 2009, and tracks the "habits and preferences" of print-book consumers who have also purchased an e-reading device in the last 18 months. Other results reported in the newly released Volume Two of the survey include good news for NINC members: fiction is the dominant genre for downloads. Literary fiction, science fiction, and romance *each* comprise more than 20 percent of purchases across formats. The survey also states that the "most influential factors leading to an e-book purchase are free samples and low prices" and that among readers of fiction, the Nook and the Kindle are the most popular e-reading devices.

For additional information about the survey or to order a copy, visit www.bisg.org/publications

Good News for Book-into-Movie Buffs

The line-up of novels being adapted for films just keeps growing. Yann Martel's bestselling *Life of Pi* is being adapted for the big screen by Oscar-winning director Ang Lee, and will feature Tobey Maguire. In a departure from comedic roles, Steve Carell will star in the film version of Carolyn Parkhurst's novel *Dogs of Babel*. Jennifer Garner and Marcia Gay Harden will appear in the adaptation of Tawni O'Dell's 2000 bestseller *Back Roads*. *Home in the Morning*, the debut novel from Mary Glickman, has been optioned. Open Road Integrated Media, described as a "digital content company" will produce the film; the company also oversaw the book's e-book publication.

The romantic comedy business is alive and well. The 2008 novel *How To Be Single* by Liz Tuccillo will be directed by Drew Barrymore. Allison Pearson's *I Don't Know How She Does It* will star Sarah Jessica Parker, Pierce Brosnan, Kelsey Grammer, Olivia Munn, Christina Hendricks, and Seth Meyers.

The science fiction/fantasy market lives on. Sophie Jordan's YA fantasy *Firelight*, published in September, 2010 by Harper Teen, will be adapted for the screen with Nick Pustay doing the writing. David Hayter, of "Watchmen" and "X-Men" fame, will write the screenplay for *Dragonflight* by Anne McCaffrey. *Earthseed*, the 1983 novel by Pamela Sargent, will be the inaugural project for Tall Girls Productions.

— compiled from Film News Briefs and The Hollywood Reporter



VOTE!

Novelists, Inc. 2011 Proposed Bylaws Amendment

You may use the ballot published on page 10 to vote on this Bylaws amendment, or you may vote electronically. If you choose to use the paper ballot, please send the completed ballot to:

Novelists, Inc.
P.O. Box 2037
Mission, KS 66505

If you lose or misplace this ballot, you can download a replacement ballot at www.NINC.com in the Members Only section of the website. You must log in to download a ballot.

If you choose to vote electronically, please go to the NINC website and log in at the Member Login prompt in the upper right corner of the Home page, then proceed to the Bylaws Ballot, which will be on the Members page where we place announcements, and cast your vote.

Each NINC member may cast only one vote, whether electronically or by paper ballot. Only the final tally of the votes and a running tally of which members have voted will be available to the Board. The Board will not know which members voted for the amendment or against it.

Votes must be cast electronically by June 30, 2011, or postmarked by June 30, 2011. After June 30, 2011, the electronic poll will be closed. Paper ballots received with a postmark dated later than June 30, 2011 will not be counted.

***Please take a moment to vote on this issue.
A quorum of members is required to enact this amendment.***

Every vote counts.



VOTE!

Proposed Change to the Bylaws of Novelists, Inc.

The 2011 Board of Directors proposes the following change to the Bylaws, Article II, *Members*, Section 2

The current Bylaw states:

To be considered for membership, an applicant must have published two works of book-length fiction, one within the last five years.

The proposed amended Bylaw states:

To be considered for membership, an applicant must have published two works of book-length fiction, ~~one within the last five years.~~

Rationale:

Twenty-two years ago, when this section of the Bylaws was written, the publishing world was a different place. Today, working authors are not published with the regularity of yesterday. A portion of our current membership, if applying for membership today, and past NINC members who wish to come back to the organization—although all multi-published professionals—would not qualify under the five-year rule.

Member signature: _____

Member Name (printed): _____

Date: _____

_____ I vote **FOR** the revision of Article II, *Members*, Section 2 of the NINC Bylaws.

_____ I vote **AGAINST** the revision of Article II, *Members*, Section 2 of the NINC Bylaws.

e-Publishing: Then and Now

BY NEFF ROTTER

In the late '90s, a group of Novelists, Inc. members (Julie Tetel Andresen, Patricia Wynn Ricks, Fran Baker, CurtissAnn Matlock, and yours truly) formed a cooperative called “The Author’s Studio.” Our intent was to individually publish our own books, and perhaps those of others. Print on Demand (POD) wasn’t available then, so we each contracted with printers who produced copies of our works. It was expensive.

Author’s Studio faded away eventually, but Belgrave House was born in 1998 from that publishing effort. Realizing that two of my backlist titles were 15 years old, I offered them for sale on my author website as digital books in Word and Rich Text Format. Then I developed the Belgrave House website to start handling not only my backlist, but those of my fellow Author’s Studio members and some others who’d heard of the project.

The two major problems with selling e-books at the time were that no particular format had achieved the status of “standard,” and few e-book readers were available. Anyone with a browser could read an HTML file, but LIT required Microsoft Reader, RB required a Rocket, PDB required a Palm, and KML required a Hiebook. (I’ve treasured my Rocket e-book reader and only gave it up recently when I got an iPad.) E-ink was being developed for the Kindle, which arrived in November, 2007 with the asking price of \$399. You could order an e-book and have it delivered to your Kindle in less than three minutes. Very promising. But the Kindle basically used a Mobipocket format (PRC), which was less well known than PDF.

By the time Kindle arrived, Belgrave House was already offering eight different formats—the arrival of the Kindle meant offering a ninth. More recently, when e-pub became the “standard,” we had to convert all 500 e-books on our list to that format, too. Converting to all the formats was quite a challenge, but we still do it.

Since I don’t understand the interior workings of website management, I had the Belgrave House site and its offshoot, Regency Reads, set up so that I could upload content whenever I chose. My current webmaster can solve most problems that arise—and I’ve never met him. But he’s in my time zone, which is useful. And he’s taught me a lot about search engine optimization (SEO).

Belgrave House sold, and still sells, mostly romance, romantic suspense, mystery, and paranormal, but what sold best on the site were the Regencies. I’d written more than a dozen Regencies myself and had a special affection for them. And they were outselling everything else on the site by leaps and bounds. My guess is that when most publishers stopped offering new Regencies, that small but devoted audience had nowhere else to go but to the Internet to find them.

At that point, it made sense to spin off Regency Reads from the Belgrave House site, offer PayPal payment options and instant downloading—as other e-book publishers were doing. Eventually I added the same benefits on the Belgrave House site. Before PayPal, I had jerry-rigged a system where a friend’s commercial business processed credit cards for me. And before instant downloading, I had e-mailed e-books as attachments to the purchasers.

The first distributor sites that I used were Fictionwise and ebooks.com (an Australian company). Fictionwise required that an author (or publisher) have 10 e-books to offer that had been previously published. That attracted me. Already there were many e-books being offered that hadn’t been vetted or edited, but Fictionwise’s policy meant that on that site you would find only those that had been.

One of my tenets for accepting authors and their books was that the books had to have been commercially published and the rights reverted to them. Another was that I took no rights in the books themselves, but formed a partnership with the author to convert the books to the various formats, provide cover art, and offer the e-books on my two sites and the distributor sites. Since DRM (digital rights management) ▶

was a handicap for purchasers, who were, by and large, honest, I chose not to use it. And I shared revenue with the authors 50-50. This structure remains in place

Early on in this e-book publishing business I learned that my taste in fiction is not the same as other people's. If a story didn't appeal to me, that didn't mean it wouldn't appeal to a vast audience. So, basically I take any work that meets my criteria of having been previously published and reverted, and I will also allow BH/RR authors who have been unable to place a newer book to do so on my site. But I still don't edit, so they have to provide me with a clean, edited file. If authors don't have a word processing file of their books, I scan them and have the authors proofread the resulting file.

There will always be people who want to hold a book in their hands and smell the paper (!), but more and more people will learn the advantages of e-books: their instant availability, the ability to enlarge the font size, the fact that most of them are less expensive than paper books, how quickly one can be produced compared to paper, etc., etc.

Also, early on, I discovered Regency fashionplates. They make great e-book covers, a little different from the usual mass market paperback covers. For the mysteries, contemporary romance, paranormals, etc., I have the authors choose a photo from Big Stock Photo (or a similar site), and turn it into a cover. There are seven different sizes of cover to choose from—for the seven formats we offer—which is another challenge.

But the biggest recent challenge has been spreadsheets. When I only dealt with Fictionwise and ebooks.com, I could manage to print out the sales information and apply it to an author's royalty statement. Now I get spreadsheets from those two as well as Amazon (US and UK, the latter in pounds ...), Content Reserve/Overdrive, Apple, Barnes and Noble, and my own Belgrave House/Regency Reads records. Fortunately, a spreadsheet guru advertised on Craigslist just when I needed him, and he set up a system for me to use. A dangerously high learning curve on that one, as I'd never really used spreadsheets before, but it was necessary to learn—B&N, for one monthly check, sends seven to nine spreadsheets!

Pricing was another matter that intrigued me. Most of the Belgrave House/Regency Reads e-books are priced at \$5, and novellas at \$3. But B&N started offering them for \$1.78—*without telling me*. This quadrupled sales, but made it difficult to deal with Amazon, as they require you to match the lowest prices your e-books are available for on the web. If you don't, that lovely 70% royalty drops to 35%. B&N agreed to raise the price, but they're still discounting by 20%, which means Belgrave House/Regency Reads e-books have to sell for that on Amazon, too.

There will always be people who want to hold a book in their hands and smell the paper (!), but more and more people will learn the advantages of e-books: their instant availability, the ability to enlarge the font size, the fact that most of them are less expensive than paper books, how quickly one can be produced compared to paper, etc., etc.

While e-book publishing is here to stay, it won't eliminate paper publishing. It will, however, make the publishing industry rethink how it does business. Authors need to be on top of their e-book rights, because an e-book can be out there forever—not like our mass market paperbacks that sit on the shelf for a month and then disappear. Publishers need to pay authors more in e-book royalties than they do for paper books, too, and they need to either publish backlist as e-books, or give the rights back to the authors.

E-books have now officially taken off. We finally have that "standard" format (epub), and we have many, many e-readers that do a great job of displaying text on a screen—the Kindle, the Kobo, the iPad, the Sony Reader We have instant availability of a wide variety of e-books with more being added every day. You can even download e-books from your local library (if your reader recognizes epub), and Amazon is in negotiations with Content Reserve to offer their e-books to libraries. It's a whole new world out there—and e-books are a significant part of it.

Neff Rotter wrote Regencies as Laura Matthews and women's fiction as Elizabeth Neff Walker for many years but now she publishes ebooks at www.BelgraveHouse.com and www.RegencyReads.com.

Not Your Usual Writing Advice — Writing Rituals

BY JOANN GROTE

“Ritual is one of the ways in which humans put their lives in perspective ... Ritual calls together the shades and specters in people’s lives, sorts them out, puts them to rest.”

– Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run With the Wolves*



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

My mother is a strong believer in having rituals when raising children. She believes rituals—or regimens or routines—make it easier for children to transition from one thing to another. Every night as children, my siblings and I followed a bedtime ritual: wash up, change into our pajamas, eat a snack, make a choice between a bedtime story or one last TV program, and then to bed. Mother insisted this routine made bedtime an easier transition for us and for her.

Creativity acts a lot like a child. Ritual can make the transition from other life actions to writing feel easy and natural, signaling your conscious and subconscious when it’s time to write.

The ritual you select needn’t be complex; something as simple as lighting a candle might work. Kelly L. Stone, author of *Thinking Write: The Secret to Freeing Your Creative Mind*, (Adams Media, September 2009), attended a writing workshop where attendees lit a candle before they began writing. “After three writing periods, I discovered that lighting the candle had an immediate effect on me. I slipped into writing mode simply upon striking the match.” She advises, “Gazing into the flame can also help you get centered, still your mind’s chatter, and allow you to focus on the work at hand.”

NINC member Yvonne Lindsay says, “I’m a strong fan of ‘getting into state’ or ‘anchoring’ when I write. If I don’t follow my pattern, my writing output is never as good, nor as good quality, as it is when I do follow the pattern. To me, it’s a form of self-hypnosis. It puts me into that rhythm/state that I need to work.”

Her pattern “involves using pure essential oils in a vaporizer, a little water fountain, a closed office door, and brainwave or New Age music.”

Fragrance can be used in the form of essential oils, such as Yvonne uses, or in scented candles, or even in something as simple as simmering spices in a pot on a stove or in an electric simmering pot. Fragrances known to stimulate the mind include peppermint, lemon, pine, and cinnamon.

Kelly suggests that if you find music distracting while you write, you might instead use it to establish a mood before you write. Something that puts you in a romantic mood before writing a love scene, for example, or music that sets your heart racing before a scene where your hero fights for his life, might stimulate your imagination and draw you toward your writing chair.

Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist’s Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*, and the many she’s inspired, begin their day with Morning Pages—three pages of stream-of-consciousness journal-type writing. Cameron believes this helps a writer get past the niggling thoughts and worries that keep a writer from the page of his or her creative work.

NINC member Melinda Haynes, creativity and performance enhancement coach, believes journaling is excellent as a pre-writing ritual. “Imagine that the journal is the magic answer book. It could be helpful to briefly state a problem with your manuscript. You could write a brief prologue of how you’d like your manuscript to develop, then take some deep breaths and let your pen rest on the page or fingers on the ▶

keys—and begin to imagine the effortless unfolding of your story, what you see, hear or feel in your mind's eye. You could allow your eyes to close as you ease into your creative daydream. Just stay with it as long as it feels good. If it drifts into detail that doesn't feel happy or easy, take a breath and open your eyes. Then write down what you experienced and especially all the good emotions you felt, because you can recall these and feel your way back into a creative state whenever you need."

In my first column in this series in March 2010, I mentioned a ritual Sue Grafton used back when her alphabet mystery series was gaining popularity. "I have one ... suggestion, a practice that's boosted my productivity by 50 percent. Start each day with a brief meditation ... five minutes of mental quiet in which you visualize yourself actually sitting at your desk, accomplishing the writing you've assigned yourself."

If you try one of these ideas and it doesn't work for you, experiment with something else. If a ritual you've used in the past has stopped working for you, try something new. What appeals initially might not be the best practice for you. I first used Morning Pages in 1998 with great benefit and loved them. Eventually I came to love them too much. I stretched the time and pages allotted for Morning Pages until they ate into my creative writing time. I still journal, but I usually do it after my creative writing.

One of my accounting clients was an author and a professor, and was considered the world's top expert on Kierkegaard. He didn't know I'd published a number of books. When I told him I planned to leave accounting to write full-time, his response delighted me. He didn't tell me I was foolish. He didn't ask what I planned to write. He didn't ask if I'd published anything yet. He simply said, "Do this. Set aside a specific place to write. Every day sit in your writing chair and don't leave until you've written something."

Back in those days, I wrote on my laptop and accessed the Internet from my desktop computer; sitting down with the laptop was all the ritual I needed to put me into the writing state. Now I work primarily on my desktop computer, upon which I also socialize and do research. Usually sitting down in front of the computer doesn't kick my mind into writing mode. I find, however, that when I sit down in my writing chair first thing in the morning, my manuscript already on the screen, the blue-shaded screen visually differentiating my WIP from other items on my computer, my creativity kicks in immediately.

When we begin our writing careers, often what we find difficult is not falling into our writing mind, but transitioning from our writing state back to our other life responsibilities. The knowledge that an editor and readers like our work and are waiting for another story fuels our creativity. It overflows, and threatens the balance in our lives.

I suggest something simple and quick for this reverse process. For example, if you use a candle as part of your getting-into-writing ritual, blowing out that candle can help you transition back into non-writing life. Printing out the pages you wrote, turning on your email, checking phone messages, or performing a few stretching exercises are other reverse transitioning possibilities.

If you are having difficulty transitioning to or from your daily experience, retrain your conscious and subconscious as you would a child: establish a gentle ritual and ease through your transition. As Yvonne states, a writer "might find that she gets a result more in tune with what she wants from her work if she's in control of when and how she gets into that state."

JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 38 books, including inspirational romances, middle grade historical novels, and children's nonfiction. Contact her at jaghi@rconnect.com.

NINC is exploring the possibility of publishing back issues of the newsletter on the public page of the NINC website. If you have contributed to our newsletter in the past and do not wish your material used in this way, please contact the Nink Editor.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Lemon Possession

"Readers, after all, are making the world with you. You give them the materials, but it's the readers who build that world in their own minds."

— Ursula K. Le Guin

Although there is a well-known concept in customer service ethos that “the customer is always right,” most people who’ve actually worked with the public, as I have in various capacities during my misspent life (waitress, receptionist, cashier, bartender, sales clerk, etc.), know that a percentage of customers in any business are rude, ignorant, offensive, unreasonably demanding, whiny, and/or prone to use minor business transactions as an excuse to exercise their unresolved grievances against life.

Recalling such experiences always helps me keep in mind a piece of conventional wisdom in our own profession which has the rare quality of actually *being* wise: “Never argue with the reader.” The reader is the customer, after all, and a percentage of customers in any business (did I *mention?*) are rude, ignorant, offensive, etc.

Remembering this fact of life is particularly important for the sensitive novelist in this era of blogs, Facebook, Twitter, email, Instant Messaging, e-bulletin boards, reader reviews, poking, pinging, and the full court press of 24/7 e-connectivity.

Since (brace yourself for a shock) I hate people, I don’t actually do most of this e-stuff. I don’t blog. I’m pretty sure I’d rather eat ground glass than do anything called “tweeting.” I habitually disable Instant Messaging and other “social” functions when I’m online. I don’t own a PDA or Blackberry. I mostly try to avoid reader reviews, bulletin boards, discussion groups, and blogs. And I have never once put an Author Note in any of my books which says, “Email me! I love to hear from readers!”

Nonetheless, even I, while deliberately avoiding most connectivity, am exposed regularly to comments from my customers (i.e. readers). Many of these comments are very gratifying, flattering, rewarding, or touching. But a few of them make me want to shake the reader until his head flies off.

For example, in recent months I have received some stunningly rude emails about an error in *Unsympathetic Magic*, the most-recent release in my Esther Diamond urban fantasy series. The novel’s text mistakenly refers to Ophelia as the hapless heroine in Shakespeare’s *Othello*. (Er, no. Othello strangles Desdemona; Ophelia dies in *Hamlet*.) Oops.

It was a brain-glitch moment, the sort of thing that I do often—much like when I put my paper napkin in the sink and throw away my earthenware dinner plate (which I do once every week or two). I usually catch glitches like that on my 12th or 17th revision of a scene; but I missed it entirely in this instance. The book’s editor and the copy editor both missed it, too, so the error is in the published novel (possibly for the rest of my life, thanks to digital rights).

I don’t mind the readers who email me courteously to point out this mistake. (Doing so is certainly redundant by now, but inoffensive.) However, I do mind the correspondents who spend several paragraphs *railing* at me about how shockingly ignorant, inexcusable, and unprofessional my mistake is, how I should be “ashamed” of myself for this error, and how this gaffe makes the entire novel suspect.

Am I tempted to tell such customers how rude and unbalanced I find their behavior? Or how wrong I think they are about the merits of my work? You *bet* I’m tempted!

But I keep in mind the age-old wisdom of our profession: “Never argue with the reader.” Not only because I ▶

know from all my other work experiences that a percentage of customers are always rude, ignorant, obnoxious, etc... but also because I can't think of a single instance of a writer arguing with the reader which turned out *well*. I only know of instances that turned into frustratingly pointless private arguments, and instances which turned into embarrassing public train-wrecks for the author.

And I, for one, am not an avid customer of pointless private arguments or of self-inflicted public embarrassment.

Once in a while, we see a writer publicly go ballistic in response to negative reviews, blogs, or discussions of their work. These incidents always become instantly notorious, and they're remembered long afterward. And what's remembered is *not* that readers nastily criticized a novel or verbally attacked the author; what's widely repeated and recalled (usually for years) ... is that the author behaved badly in public, and perhaps even came across as abusive, childish, or unbalanced.

Frankly, given a choice between the two things, I'd rather live with some jerk saying unreasonable things about me and my work in a public forum than with being known for staging a notorious tantrum.

That's what I kept firmly in mind a while ago when I unwisely read a review by some blogger who *eviscerated* both me and *Unsympathetic Magic*. With fervent loathing, he dissected my story, my characters, my writing style, my research, my dialogue, my sensibility, etc. And while nattering on at length about what boring, idiotic, badly written, unmitigated garbage my novel is ... the blogger also said that I am *lucky* that he's the sort of reader who sticks with a book no matter how bad it is, or he'd never have finished reading it.

So I wrote, "*Lucky???* You call it 'lucky' for *me* that you forced yourself to finish reading my book so that you could write a blog post about *what garbage I write?* How is that **LUCKY** for me?" I also went on to point out a lot of the fallacies in his criticism of my work, as well as places where I thought he was either unfair or just plain wrong.

And then ... I sensibly deleted my entire post without ever sending it. Because nothing good ever comes of a writer responding to a customer that way.

No, swallowing my bile and walking away in silence isn't easy; but it is much smarter than arguing with the reader. After all, that guy's excruciating blog post about my book got no comments and probably only a few hits from personal friends. Whereas it would have attracted lots of negative attention—to *me*—if I had responded and argued with him there.

Fortunately, some minor eye-opening experiences have lately made it easier for me to shrug off annoying comments and just quietly move on with my sanity and my professionalism intact.

For example, I've deliberately structured my Esther Diamond urban fantasy novels to ensure that, so far, one regular character (Lopez, the love-interest), who's a skeptic, doesn't ever directly see or experience any phenomenon for which rational, real-world explanations aren't feasible. So I was surprised to learn that Lopez's skepticism strikes some readers as irritating and exasperating—or even as offensive and idiotic. This really puzzled and annoyed me ... Until I happened to see a couple of such readers enthusing quite seriously about various "the pyramids were built by extra-terrestrials" pseudo-history books and theories.

This reminded me that a reader's experience of reading my novel belongs to him, not to me; and that he brings his worldview, not mine, to reading it. That's the reader's right—and, indeed, it's also one of the great pleasures of books. Reading a novel isn't passive, it's participatory; it requires the reader to bring his own imagination and thought processes to the party.

So we should indeed never argue with the reader, because the experience he has when reading our books belongs to him, not to us.

Additionally, a personal friend wrote to me one day a few weeks ago: "I am reading *Unsympathetic Magic* now. Since I do not crack the spine of a book, I lost half of a letter in the margin and saw 'lemon possession.' Had to look three times before it became 'demon.'"

And thus I realized that sometimes, no matter how clearly and deliberately you write "demon possession," the reader—through no fault of your own, and completely out of your control—nonetheless reads "lemon possession." And then the reader (unlike my friend, who bothered to look three times) publicly ridicules you for writing about lemon possession.

Although Laura Resnick doesn't argue with readers, she has posted a response on the FAQs page of her website explaining how the Ophelia/Desdemona gaffe occurred in Unsympathetic Magic ... and also adding that while she doesn't mind readers pointing it out to her, she does discourage them from being rude to her when they do so.



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

How Many Schedule Cs?

A question I'm often asked is whether a person can file a single Schedule C that combines their income and expenses from their writing business with the income and expenses from another business operated by the writer or the writer's spouse. Because it would be easier to keep just one set of books and file one tax form for all lines of business, this proposition sounds tempting. But there are several reasons why taxpayers should keep separate books and file separate Schedule Cs for each business.

Reason No. 1: Uncle Sam Says So

The instructions for Schedule C specifically state that if a taxpayer owns more than one business, he or she must complete a separate Schedule C for each business. Follow the rules and you'll stay out of trouble.

Of course, this rule raises a critical question. When do activities constitute one business and when do they constitute separate businesses?

If activities are intricately related they will constitute a single business. For instance, if you are paid to speak at events specifically because you are an author, you can include the payments and expenses related to the speaking engagements with those of your writing business on one Schedule C. Also, if you engage in incidental activities related to your writing business, it would be acceptable to include these on the Schedule C for your writing business. For instance, if you teach occasional writing classes and the amounts you earn from these classes is not significant relative to your income from sales of your written work, it would be okay to treat these activities as part of your writing business.

On the other hand, if you regularly tutor students in English in addition to your writing, it would be best to include your income and expenses related to the tutoring on a separate Schedule C. Even though you may have acquired the tutoring gig due to your exceptional language skills and your qualification as a writer, the tutoring activity is distinct from your writing business. While both writing and tutoring use your language skills, to be a successful tutor you must also be able to teach. A writer does not necessarily have to have teaching skills to succeed in publishing his or her work. While you may use grammar guides in both your writing and tutoring work, in your tutoring business you'd likely also use basic language books and practice workbooks that you would not use in your writing business. You would sell your tutoring services to parents or students, while you sell your written work to publishers. These factors distinguish the two lines of business.

Here's the bottom line. If your business activities require the use of different skills, require the use of different materials/supplies/equipment, or if the products or services are provided to a different client or customer base, the activities would likely constitute distinct businesses that should be reported on separate Schedule Cs.



Reason No. 2: Combining Businesses Could Increase Your Risk of Audit

Section A of the Schedule C asks the taxpayer to identify the “Principal business or profession, including product or service.” Section B requires the taxpayer to enter a “Principal Business or Professional Activity Code.” There are approximately two hundred different codes to choose from, covering a wide variety of businesses. Freelance writers and novelists use code #711510 for “Independent artists, writers, and performers.”

Using the proper business code is critical because the code tells the IRS what to expect on the report. For instance, the IRS will not be surprised to see home office deductions on a writer’s Schedule C since most writers work out of their homes. The IRS may be surprised to see home office deductions on a Schedule C for a restaurant business, however, since most restaurants have office space for management to use.

If dissimilar activities are lumped together, defining the principal business or profession and choosing an appropriate code that encompasses all lines of business will be difficult if not impossible. The IRS won’t be happy if they feel the description on the Schedule C is incomplete or misleading. Moreover, if the code doesn’t jibe with the information reported on the return, you may be setting yourself up for an audit. For instance, the IRS will not expect to find a writing business with large deductions for the cost of equipment (which are claimed through depreciation or “Section 179” expensing) since a writing business does not require the routine purchase of expensive equipment. If a writer’s Schedule C included income and deductions of a spouse’s landscaping business, which does require the routine purchase of expensive equipment, the large deductions could be a red flag to the IRS and may subject the taxpayer to an audit.

Reason No. 3: You or Your Spouse Won’t Get Credit Toward Medicare and Social Security

The Schedule C form contains space for only one name and one Social Security number. The person whose name and Social Security number appear on the form will get credit toward their future Social Security and Medicare benefits for the earnings reported on the form. If you lump your spouse’s business income with yours and report it under your name and Social Security number, only you will get credit and vice versa.

The effects of reporting under one name can be devastating. I recently counseled a woman who had worked with her husband in their jointly owned business for decades. All the business profits had been reported under the husband’s name and Social Security number. Unfortunately, just after the couple retired, he filed for divorce. The wife found herself with no credits toward Social Security and Medicare.

The IRS allows spouses who jointly operate a business to separate the income and expenses of a single business into two separate Schedule C forms so each spouse can get credit toward Social Security and Medicare. Information about the “Husband-Wife Qualified Joint Venture” appears in the Schedule C instructions, which can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1040sc.pdf>. If you and your spouse write together as co-authors, you can divide your income and deductions on two Schedule C forms under this special rule.

Diane Kelly’s debut romantic mystery, Death, Taxes and a French Manicure, will be released November 1 by St. Martin’s Press.

Business Briefs

The “Kindle Million Club” Now Numbers Four

On May 11, 2011, Amazon announced that Charlaine Harris became the fourth author to sell more than one million books on Kindle. She joins authors Stieg Larsson, who was the first author to hit the one-million milestone, James Patterson, and Nora Roberts.

NINC Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY SUSAN LYONS

Do you have info
for the Bulletin Board?
Send it to Susan at
susan@susanlyons.ca

Among the Many Things I Didn't Know

Did you know that NINC's P&P says, "NINC is available by subscription to editors and agents for \$35 per year electronically or \$60 per year for a printed and mailed copy. A one-year electronic subscription will be provided at no charge to editors and agents who **participate** in the annual conference for one year from the date of participation.

These editors and agents may renew these subscriptions for at the above-named rates."

Well, I never knew that. Or, if I did, I've long forgotten. I think our newsletter is amazing. Yet it never occurred to me to tell my editors or agent about it. If I did, they wouldn't have to take my word for it; they could check out a recent issue on our website, under the "About NINC" tab. How about you? Have you shared the news with the industry professionals in your life? Do you know if your editor or agent subscribes? Should we be publicizing this more than we do—and, if so, how? If you're interested in exploring this further, feel free to chat about it on the NINCLink loop.

*Remember to vote NOW on the
Bylaws Amendment change.
We need a quorum!
We need you!*

Adventures at the NINC Website

My theme for the month seems to be "I didn't remember that." Are you aware of these two great opportunities?

- ▶ **The Linda Kay West Memorial Fund** is used to cover the cost of yearly dues for members who otherwise could not afford to renew their membership, or it can be used to fund up to *three* conference scholarships. (That's under the Member Services tab on the website.)
- ▶ **Looking for a "cease and desist" letter** for copyright infringement on the Internet? Or a rights reversion letter? Sample letters are available to members. (Also under the Member Services tab.)

What's Going on with Other Writers' Organizations

Note: The following is provided for member information and does not constitute an endorsement by NINC of the organizations or activities.

ThrillerFest VI – July 6-9; NYC; with Ken Follett, Diana Gabaldon, Karin Slaughter, John Lescroart, Linda Fairstein, R.L. Stein, Robert Crais, Joe McGinniss, and more. For info: www.thrillerfest.com

NINC Online

NINC's Blog

NINC's blog is a large part of our online presence and a great way to promote your work. Please sign up to blog by going to the YahooGroups NINC Calendar. We also feature industry professionals, so pass along suggestions—e.g., your own agent, editor, publicist, website designer, cover artist, etc.

NINC on Facebook

Don't forget we're on Facebook, too. Please visit often and share your news and ideas. It's another great place to promote yourself and help expand NINC's public profile.

Crowdsourcing's Literary Offspring

A sake-and-sushi-fueled conversation a few years ago about how to make book readings “fun” resulted in the Literary Death Match, “a competitive literary night” that began in New York in 2006 and has spread to 33 cities worldwide. Founder Todd Zuniga writes that when it began, friends and friends-of-friends “knocked on the doors of literary magazines, independent book publishers, and asked the curators of other reading series to send along who they felt was the best, brightest talent” to participate, with the quid pro quo that the organizers would “crow about the writer in relation to their magazine/series/latest book.” The events are set up American Idol-style, complete with judges—who are, he writes, asked not to be a [fill in the pejorative of your choice].

Four events were held that first year and 64 happened in 2010. Zuniga says he “can’t wait to find out where Literary Death Match will go next. The magic of LDM for us: we get to hear amazing writers we may not have heard before, or ones we’ve always wanted to see; no two events are ever the same; and it never turns out quite how we expect. So, we’ll just keep going until no one shows up, or until we get it just right.”

For more information and a schedule of upcoming LDMs, go to: <http://www.literarydeathmatch.com/>.

— *From BooksMachine.co.uk*

Feeling somewhat Bookish?

This summer, three major publishers—Hachette Book Group, Penguin Group (USA), and Simon & Schuster—will join AOL Huffington Post Media Group in a venture called [Bookish](http://bookish.com). (<http://bookish.com>) Specifics are not being shared yet, but, according to a press release, the website will give readers “a personalized experience connecting them with their favorite authors and books through original editorial features, unique tools, and more.” At the moment, the website offers readers and authors the opportunity to sign up, but little else. We’ll keep you posted.

— *From GalleyCat*