

N I N C

May 2013
Vol. 24, No. 5

*New World
of Best*
Book
PRACTICES

CHOOSING A NARRATOR, Step-By-Step Process

BY KAREN ROSE SMITH

How do you choose a narrator for your audiobook?

I delved into the project of developing some of my novels into audiobooks, never realizing what type of challenge this could be. I listened to hundreds of narrator samples on ACX.com, attempting to decide which voice will best convey my hero or heroine, emotion and multiple characters. This can be a difficult decision to make from a ten-minute audition sample. With two audiobooks for sale, two more “in the can” waiting to go live, as well as four other audiobooks in various stages of production, I’ve developed a set of guidelines that help me. Maybe they will help you.

1. Choose an audition sample with multiple characters and emotion as well as narrative.

I usually upload an audition script that includes three characters so I can tell if I can distinguish voices with the narrator. I also upload a scene containing dialogue, narrative, and emotion. This is a true test of a narrator in a short script. It makes a difference to me if the narrator only reads the minimum required or all the pages I uploaded. That is a sign that shows me if the narrator is willing to go the extra mile. That could be vital in working together, whether for deadlines or editing concerns.

2. All recording equipment is not created equal.

You will have varying levels of expertise in not only the telling of the story but in the equipment narrators use to tell it. The first thing to do is buy a set of studio headphones. (I found mine at Sears.) You will have customers who listen on everything from computer speakers at their desktop to ear buds and expensive headsets. You need to know exactly what they will be hearing.

3. When you listen to an audition, you will need to listen on several levels.

First, listen for tone and cadence of voice. Could this person be your hero? Could this narrator be your heroine?

Second, listen to the story itself to see if you’re distracted by the voice or

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Address changes may be made on the
website.

Members without Internet access may
send changes to the Central Coordinator.

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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: Tracy Higley

tracy@tracyhigley.com

New Applicants:

Brooke Counts (Kathleen Brooks), Lexington, KY

Connie Cox, Benton, LA

Kieran Kramer, Summerville, SC

Jo Ann Ferguson (Jo Ann Brown, Marianne Ellis,

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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.

NINC Legal Matters

As all of you are aware, Harlequin has been involved in a class action lawsuit commenced by three of their authors regarding e-book royalty rates. At present the disposition is this: "On April 2, 2013, the Court issued a decision dismissing the First Amended Complaint on the ground that, in Judge Baer's view, it did not state a claim." Though it appears that the case has been dismissed, this did not happen before NINC was brought into the matter as a subpoenaed third party.

On Friday, March 15, 2013, I, as president of NINC, received an email from Cecil Chandless, Legal Consultant for Harlequin Toronto, that NINC headquarters in Manhattan, Kansas, would be served with a subpoena. On Monday, March 18, 2013, Tonya Wilkerson, our Central Coordinator, was served a subpoena.

The general contents asked for all records related to conversations and documentation between the complainants and/or NINC members on issues involving Harlequin e-book royalties.

The board met in both regular and special session daily during the subsequent week in order to discuss the matter and hire legal counsel to help us both comply with the subpoena and protect our members' rights and privacy.

Because of the possible complexities the subpoena represented, I interviewed several attorneys in order to find appropriate counsel.

We are very fortunate to have a good and strong relationship with several attorneys through our Literary Lawyer Directory. Thanks goes out to Mr. Thomas Higgins, who was instrumental in helping define our issues and who aided us in seeking the appropriate legal counsel in the correct jurisdiction.

After investigating several other possibilities, I spoke with Mr. F. Robert Stein, an attorney many of you may be familiar with because he writes a column for *Nink* from time to time on legal literary matters. Mr. Stein was very enthusiastic about helping NINC but felt we might need an attorney with litigation skills. This was the general consensus of all attorneys I spoke with. Mr. Stein, in turn, approached one of the partners in his firm, Pryor Cashman LLP NYC, Mr. Phillip Hoffman, who agreed to represent us. We signed a contract and engaged him. Mr. Hoffman understood completely NINC's desire to comply with issues where we could without violating the privacy of our membership. We were up to speed with documents delivered to Mr. Hoffman and ready to comply with the subpoena when the judge's ruling was delivered on the matter on April 4.

Your board served you well, effectively, quickly, and very professionally. I could not have done this alone in the timely manner required. Members of the board researched and screened our archives for materials appropriate to the subject of the subpoena, did background checks on potential issues, and exercised due diligence in all areas of this matter. Thank you, board.

At present, because of the actions taken by the judge, the subpoena is a non-issue and *no documents were delivered to Harlequin*. The Plaintiffs are confident of the merits of their position and are considering how they will next proceed in this matter.

Now for something completely different. Once every three years, NINC sends out a membership survey. 2013 is our year. You will be receiving a short but very important survey this summer. Please take a few minutes and fill it out. It will be up on the website, and we will send it out as an email. The information gathered helps us know our membership better so that we can better serve your needs. This year's survey will take a more in-depth look at e-books. We would like to have some hard facts to put forth this year at our conference to counter the assumptions made last year about e-book sales. Our membership is not the average self-published author, and we want to be able to represent you and NINC in the best possible light.

— Laura Castoro
President, NINC

The 2013 Nominating Committee is putting out a call to members to step forward and volunteer for service in 2014.

Here's what we're looking for:

President-elect: This is basically a training period before taking the position as President the following year (2013). You'll want this. It's the year you'll have skilled people to guide you as you learn all about the workings of Ninc. It is time-consuming, to a point, but it's also rewarding. If you'd like to learn more about it, just e-mail me at laronica@fictionstudio.com and I'll be happy to discuss it with you.

Nine candidates to run for the 2014 Nominating Committee: Nine will run and five will be elected and it will be their job to find candidates for 2015. Not all that time consuming but extremely important to Ninc. These members will have a direct hand in finding members to serve on the Ninc board.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please get in touch.
laronica@fictionstudio.com

Thanks, everyone.
Lou Aronica
Nominating Chair

Volunteers Are Always Welcome!

Along with Board positions offering leadership opportunities, NINC can always make use of every member who will pitch in. We've an exciting Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC this year as well as ongoing committees. Check out our committee list on page 2— we invite you to add your voice and your ideas to keep NINC strong and moving forward.

Choosing a Narrator

Continued from page 1 ▶

propelled into the plot by it. Is there some type of speech that takes your attention from the story? Does the narrator have an accent? Does that add to or detract from the telling? (Example: My narrator for *Always Her Cowboy* is Australian. His accent is somewhat evident. However, his voice and his talent for reading the exact emotion into scenes made the accent irrelevant. He was my hero.)

Third, listen for pronunciation. My rule of thumb for this issue is if a word stops me from concentrating on the story, it will stop someone else. This can easily be handled in editing if the narrator has expertise with editing. And your narrator should.

Fourth, listen for emotion and natural dialogue.

4. Listen several times.

You can probably do all of the above on the first listen-through. But you're not finished there. Adjust your earphones again and listen for any strange noises...any background noises. Some narrators leave natural breaths in. Others take them out. Figure out if leaving them in is distracting to you.

What I've discovered wearing earphones are the noises you won't hear if you are trying to analyze a voice from your desktop computer. Automatically the hum of your computer will cover noise someone using ear buds or earphones might hear. One of the noises I've picked up with earphones is the hum of the recorder when it starts and when it goes off. If I can hear it, a listener with ear buds in a quiet setting will hear it. You want a nothingness vacuum in back of the voice that acts as a cushion for it. You don't want to hear pages turning, static, or any type of hum or echo.

Listening can be an art, but you want it to be an effortless endeavor for the buyer of your audiobook. The best way to ensure their positive experience is to choose the best storyteller for your novel. But you also need to choose a narrator with a level of expertise as the producer. (Some use outside studios to edit but many edit and upload the chapters themselves.)

And... after the audition, once you approve the first 15 minutes, you are tied in to that narrator whether you like the finished product or not. This is a seven-year commitment. Remember that if you're tempted to make a fast decision rather than a more thoughtful one.

5. Male or female narrator?

I'll be writing more about this in future blogs when I spotlight my narrators so my readers can learn more about them. For now, I'll tell you that out of eight projects, all romance novels, I have chosen six male narrators. I look at my opening scene, check the book for point of view shifts, then decide whose story is being told the most—my hero's or my heroine's. If it's a toss-up, I ask both to audition then make an agreement with whomever tells the story the best. So far, the men are leading! I've found I enjoy listening to a male narrator reading with a higher voice for my heroine more than listening to a female narrator reading a male voice I often can't distinguish from the heroine's. But my projects are still in flux, and I have more planned.

So if you're considering developing your books into audiobooks, find a set of headphones and start listening carefully. We want our readers to get lost in our story. Choosing a narrator who captures the essence of our work is the best way to make that happen.

Karen Rose Smith's 80th novel will be published in 2013. Her latest, Her Sister, is a women's fiction indie-published e-book. In December, Staged To Death, her first mystery, will be released from Kensington books. For details, see www.karenrosesmith.com.

ROYALTY SHARE or PAY for PRODUCTION?

BY KAREN ROSE SMITH

In developing your audiobooks, should you agree to royalty share or pay for production?

I went into the venture of audiobooks thinking that making the decision about royalties or paying for production was a no-brainer. Why would I want to put out money when I don't have to?

However, let's look at my goal. I had 15 books I wanted to develop into audiobooks. Seven of them were part of a continuing series. The main characters were different in each book. So it didn't seem a viable option for me to have the same narrator do all seven. I wanted to get the books up quickly, yet using an effective voice for each. I also realized that the "perfect" voice is different for each and every listener. I've avidly listened to audiobooks over the past 15 years because of eye problems. I know the voices I enjoy and those I don't. I also realized that the audiobook market will get glutted just as the e-book market has, so I wanted to be efficient and timely in getting the books ready for retail.

About that "perfect" voice...

I knew whatever narrator I chose, I would have to live with him or her for seven years, the life of my distribution agreement with ACX. And even if the voice is "perfect", presentation is rated on Audible along with the story, so the narrator will be receiving reviews, too. The rating is averaged.

Let's look at both royalty share where payment is split between ACX, the narrator/producer, and the rights holder. The narrator is usually the producer. In some cases, the narrator uses an outside producer to clean up the recording for sale (extraneous sounds, mouth sounds, editing discrepancies). But in that case, the narrator pays the producer. This can be the arrangement in both royalty share as well as pay for production.

On my first audiobook, TOYS AND BABY WISHES, a narrator who was looking for royalty share agreements came to me. However, I had romances to develop into audiobooks, and I wasn't sure I wanted a male narrator. After all, weren't most romances read by women? Yet when I listened to his audition, I loved Johnny's voice and his performance of my characters. His narrating, as well as his technical skills, were excellent, and I had no doubt I wanted him to produce my book. We worked well together, and the process was easy. He uploaded chapters. I listened and gave him editing changes. He edited, and I listened to those changes. At the end, I listened to the book again. This process took about six weeks. He was taking a chance on me as well as I was taking a chance on him. What if the book didn't sell? When that first book went live, I wanted it to do well for him as well as for me.

My second narrator came to me, too. However, there was a difference. This book had a stipend. (ACX puts stipends per production hour on some books. I'm not sure how they choose.) Because the narrator would receive the stipend in addition to the royalty share, I received several unsolicited auditions. I listened to the first voice who was again male. Not only male, but Australian male. He absolutely nailed my hero in his audition. It had just the right tone and the right emotion. And I liked the way he made his voice "lighter" for my heroine. But he was Australian. How would listeners take to the light accent? I asked Ben to do a second audition with different characters. I also listened to more men and women audition. Every time I heard Ben's voice, I fell into it. I liked the sound of it. I had my BFF listen to the audition, and she said any woman would want to listen to his voice! He was good. She just confirmed what I'd realized from the first time I heard him. He was my hero, and that's what mattered.

My third project to be developed was also royalty share. This was my first female narrator. She uploaded the chapters when she was finished, and I listened to the whole book at once for editing.

I kept listening to other female narrators and not connecting with them. Taking a look at the next book I wanted to upload to ACX, I auditioned male narrators when I found the book was very much the hero's story. This book was also royalty share.

For the next few books I knew I needed female narrators. One, which was a new release, would need a more mature woman's voice different from my younger heroines. I believe at this time more authors were finding ACX. I went through hundreds of audition samples on the site by narrators who were accepting royalty share terms, unable to match voices to books. Or if I did find someone, I would message them. Many were busy. Two told me they would only look at royalty share projects with stipends. So I decided to explore samples from pay-for-production narrators. I ended up with four at various fees--\$100, \$125, \$140 and \$225 per production hour. You'd think with paid production there would be no technical problems. That wasn't true. After we started the project in two cases, hearing the recording machine go on and off and echoing sounds was something I had to note. These were eventually corrected thanks to the professionalism of the narrators.

I want anyone deciding to develop audiobooks to understand excellent narrators with excellent technical skills can be found in both royalty share as well as paid production. And vice versa.

Shared royalties drew my attention first because my investment in the projects was time rather than money. But then, I rather liked the idea on the pay-for-production projects that I wouldn't have to share royalties with my narrator, just ACX. I look at this whole audio adventure as an investment in my future earnings. And, as with any investment, I believe diversification is the way to go. I've diversified with my narrators. If a listener doesn't like one, hopefully they'll be drawn to another. I've diversified utilizing both payment options because seven years is a long time.

I still have books which need narrators. But now I'm easier with the whole process. Five are live and six are developing in stages. I do need time to write for other deadlines! So I'm biding my time for the next books to be put into audio. I'm waiting for two narrators who were booked when I wanted to collaborate with them. One is male and is a pay-for-production rate, the other is female and will participate in royalty share. They both will be worth the wait.

So... After reading everything on the ACX.com website, after deciding whether or not you have time to give to this venture--listening to sample of auditions, uploading books with a marketing plan, listening to the finished product in stages--should you enter into a royalty share plan or a pay for production agreement? Analyze your goals, your finances, the voices you hear on samples, then jump into the audio waters with whatever you're more comfortable with and can afford. Then sit back and wait for your book to really come alive.

Karen Rose Smith's 80th novel will be published in 2013. Her latest, Her Sister, is a women's fiction indie-published e-book. In December, Staged To Death, her first mystery, will be released from Kensington books. For details, see www.karenrosesmith.com. This article first appeared on the author's blog.

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Moving Up

Christian Trimmer moved from Walt Disney Co. to senior editor at Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers in mid-April. Irene Goodman Literary Agency's Barbara Poelle has changed her name plate from senior agent to vice president. *PW Daily*

Harlequin the Winner in Royalty Dispute

Federal court judge Harold Baer, Jr. ruled in favor of Harlequin in a dispute over e-book royalties. Barbara Keiler vs. Harlequin Enterprises Ltd. dealt with net receipts on digital editions. The three authors asserted the royalties should be 50 percent for e-books editions, not 3 to 4 percent of the cover price for contracts signed between 1990 and 2004. Harlequin stated the royalties given were based on the three authors' contracts. The suit was dismissed because they "failed to state a claim" according to reports. *PW Daily*

Pros, Cons, and Eight Options to Sell E-Books Direct from Your Website

BY DAVID WOGAHN

Who wouldn't want to make more money by selling their e-books direct to readers? If you already have an audience this can be much more lucrative than selling on Amazon, Apple, BN, etc. Of course the operative word here is audience because part of the commission that these high-traffic online stores take from your sale is essentially a sales commission.

(Note: Independent Book Publishers Association members can also access my article in the October 2012 edition of the Independent magazine titled Selling E-Books Direct to Readers—Options and Considerations.)

Before we get to the 8 options let's look at the pros, cons and considerations for selling direct to readers.

Pros:

- You keep a higher percentage of the sale.
- You can charge any price you like.
- You can offer bundles, i.e. print + e-book, for a discounted price.
- You control how your book is marketed. (no competing offers or products)
- Readers can buy immediately without having to visit or register on another site.
- You get your reader's email address (subject to your privacy policy, of course).
- You can track where your customers are coming from.

Cons:

- Readers may not know how to transfer the book to their reading app which may cause a support headache.
- There is no DRM (copy protection) for Kindle mobi files sold from your website. You can implement DRM for your ePub files but it is an extra cost and you need special store software.
- You may need to collect sales tax depending on your local laws. This is something you need to research.
- It's more work to setup than uploading your file(s) to the online stores.
- You cannibalize sales through your other stores. Fewer sales can mean lower rankings.

What to look for and think about:

- Do you have one book, or many?
- Do you have items other than e-books such as a print edition, merchandise, or audio/music files?
- What is your expected sales volume?
- How important are merchandising tools such as vouchers, gifting, or the ability to use payment methods other than PayPal?
- How do your needs match up with the pros and cons above? For example, if you insist on using DRM you cannot sell Kindle-compatible e-books and you'll be limited in your choice of ePub selling tools.
- How technical are you? Some options may require programming skills.
- Do you want your customers to have access to their purchases after the initial download?
- What kind of analytics are you looking for?
- Does the vendor have their own store where they will feature your e-book?
- Is there any integration with social media networks such as Facebook?
- Where is the company based? Since you are dealing with financial transactions you want to make sure they operate subject to U.S. laws.
- Do you want to offer your customers the ability to store their purchases indefinitely so they can return to download other formats or re-download a lost file?

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NINC 2013 – Update III

BY SANDRA KITT, CONFERENCE PUBLICITY COORDINATOR

It's now official. We're halfway through the planning period for the October conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Our guest speaker list is falling into place. Registration opened several weeks ago, and many of you have already signed up and secured hotel rooms. A number of guest speakers have been confirmed, and we have a bunch of feelers out to other industry professionals. Among the confirmed is F. Robert Stein, a literary rights attorney for almost 30 years. Bob counsels and represents authors, literary agents, book publishers, and others in publishing negotiations and disputes. He also reviews book manuscripts prior to publication for libel, copyright, and other problems, and he represents film producers in the pre-release review of screenplays and films.

The committee has been paying attention to the NINC Link conversations about contracts, agent agreements, electronic rights, etc. NINC members will recall that Bob has written a column for *Nink*, "Ask The Lawyer." Bob will be taking part in **First Word** on Thursday, October 24, giving us hints on the contract minefields to watch out for, especially in the digital age. Bob will take his participation a step further by conducting six (count 'em, six) mini legal sessions during the conference, each covering an issue of importance to writers. Unfortunately, due to space restrictions the attendance for each session will be limited to six members (count 'em again, six). The committee has decided that the best way to select attendees is by a first-come, first-served basis. A specific date will be chosen in late summer that will open for enrollment in the six sessions. (Members, wherever you live, will have to pay close attention to the proper time zone.) Members will only be permitted to apply for one session so as to give the greatest number an opportunity to participate. So, look out for reminders in upcoming bulletins for the application date. On your mark...get set...

CALL TO ACTION:

Visit the conference website http://www.ninc.com/conference_center/ for updates. The committee will be adding breaking news as it happens. Be part of the conversation! We are asking all members who

SPEAKERS:

Mark Lefebvre, Kobo
Lisa Vance, Aaron
Priest Literary
Agency
Carrie Ryan,
YA Author



attended the 2012 NINC conference in White Plains if they will share some of their photographs on the conference website. And we'd like to hear comments about what the conferences, or NINC in general, means to you. Add your thoughts to the **What Authors Are Saying** tab on the website home page.

GUEST SPEAKER UPDATE:

As we go to press we're happy to add four new guest speakers to our list of industry professionals for the conference: Mark Lefebvre of Kobo; Avon editor Lucia Macro; Lisa Erbach Vance from Aaron Priest Literary Agency in New York, and *New York Times* bestselling YA author Carrie Ryan. More to come!

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Pros, Cons and Eight Options to Sell

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Still interested? Great, because the good news is that digital media e-commerce is bursting with activity (due in large measure to the popularity of music downloading). New companies and services have been launched over the past couple years to serve the more specific needs of e-book publishers.

In the list below I've outlined several of these services; some very simple and some more full featured. As you research and evaluate each one return to the above lists to help you think about your needs. Alternatively I offer consulting to publishers on this topic and would be happy to visit with you regarding your needs.

(By the way, drop a comment to me if you know of a service that should be included in this list.)

Gumroad (<https://gumroad.com>). A simple, straight-forward tool that is free and relatively easy to use.

Ganxy (<http://get.ganxy.com>). Lots of great features specific to e-book publishing. Also free.

EditionGuard (www.editionguard.com). One of the few "simple" solutions for selling DRM-protected ePub files. They also have a plugin for WordPress websites.

E-Junkie (www.e-junkie.com). A well-established vendor of e-commerce tools and capabilities.

MyCommerce (www.mycommerce.com). Offers three different levels of online store functionality. More relevant for large libraries or publishers with more sophisticated needs.

MyTabletBooks (www.mytabletbooks.com) and **Qbend** (www.qbend.com). These companies are unrelated but their services are very similar. Both license Adobe Digital Editions (as has EditionGuard and Cyberwolf below) and they also have their own stores.

Cyberwolf (www.cyberwolf.com). Cyberwolf has expertise with Adobe Digital Editions and works with publishers interested in building their own stores.

David Wogahn is the founder of Sellbox, an e-book agency that assists authors and publishers with developing and marketing e-books. He is the author of Successful eBook Publishing and blogs at www.sellbox.com. This article previously appeared on the Sellbox blog.

Are We Badgering Readers?

BY RANDY SUSAN MEYERS

*When I was a reader, I spoke as a reader, I understood as a reader.
When I became a writer, I read as a writer, I understood as a writer.*

I just finished “Readers Don’t Owe Authors S**t” (<http://tinyurl.com/readersdontoweauthors>) on the online site Book Riot. The credo of the post is basically this: writers and independent bookstores shouldn’t nag readers (into shopping Indie, posting reviews, asking for shout-outs, etc.). Much of it resonated in me. I’ve been asked to spread the word many times—and though most of the time I’m happy to help, I don’t like to feel I’ll be ostracized for non-compliance.

When my first novel debuted, it was pretty late in my game. (I was 57.) Though an addicted reader, the only “insider” information and terms I knew, came from novels such as *The Bestseller* by Olivia Goldsmith. (The first time anyone used the term “the list” I didn’t have a clue that’s how the cool kids referenced the *New York Times* Bestseller list.) I published my first novel just around the time social media exploded (at least in my awareness,) so I’ve never experienced books or authors online, except as an author/reader—but being a reader is my identity.

As a small child, I went to the library daily. (The only books we had was a *Reader’s Digest Condensed Digest*, an oversized photo book about Africa with a scratchy grey cover, and a copy of *Ideal Marriage* by Van de Velde, hidden in my mother’s nightstand.)

Eventually, I built up a small shelf of books—spending my babysitting dollars on the YA of my time, by Beverly Cleary (*Fifteen! The Sister of the Bride!*), I read and re-read every book I owned. When I traded Brooklyn NY for Berkeley California, books took up as much room in my backpack as my teensy mini dresses. When I became a mother, I managed my book-a-day habit by using the library, so I could buy books for my daughters.

Books have always been the platform on which my sanity rested. Reading was a quiet private pursuit, consisting of reviews, bookstores, library shelves, and trading books and titles with friends.

Authors were akin to gods.

Is it different now? I go back to the sudden onslaught of articles such as “Readers Don’t Owe Writers S**T.” (The article references other essays.) It’s an article I agree with in many facts, if not tone. The author writes, in bold, **I don’t owe you your dream career**, explaining:

“I want very much for my favourite writers to write books, and I often make the choice to support that by purchasing their books. Sometimes in more than one form. Sometimes in multiple copies as gifts. But I don’t owe my favourite writers those things. Likewise, when I read a wonderful book, I tell lots and lots of people about it. But I don’t owe that to the wonderful books I’ve loved. These are choices I make freely because I love stories and books. And when I make these choices, it is about my relationship with the person I am sharing my love of the book with. It is about neither author nor bookshop, at the core.”

The author goes on to say, “When an author I follow on social media tells me I am not doing enough to sell his or her books for him or her on social media, I stop following that author.”

I understand. Completely. Who wanted to be scolded? It’s not a readers’ job to sell our books. I’ve winced seeing writers online doing everything from groveling to begging to screeching for readers to buy them, “like” their pages, write Amazon reviews. I’ve winced at myself, even as I pretend that when I do it I somehow sound cute and not pathetic.



But, though books have a life outside of the writer, they are still our books. Readers do not need to do a blessed thing after closing the last page, that is true—but at their core, these are our books. They exist only for the multiplicity of hours we spent writing them.

Stephanie Cowell (<http://www.stephaniecowell.com/>), author of five novels and a winner of an American Book Award, wrote this when I asked her opinion on the topic: “I do think that kind of pushy behavior (described in the article) is beyond the pale ... no one should be pushed like that. But I think if we like an author’s work or the author is living and not making a Dan Brown fortune, it is the right thing to buy the book, not borrow it. We contribute to all sorts of things, most of us. We don’t borrow a meal in a restaurant. Of course, if we can’t afford it, then we can do second-hand or borrow by all means...but again, the author has no right to say anything. It just creates bad feelings. I remember when a friend with a lot of money sent me two remaindered books to autograph... I bit my tongue hard.”

Here’s the thing—we’re caught between the proverbial Scylla and Charybdis. Just as actors love acting, dancers love dancing, and comedians love cracking jokes, writers love writing. But though some of all of the above are doing it for a joy of craft alone, a great deal of us are doing it for a living and suddenly, in this new online world, this translated into promoting anything and everything we can. (Cute puppies! Funny kids! Adorable elderly parents saying the sweetest things!)

God save the writer with neither cuteness nor tragedy to promote, because we’re all fighting for attention. There are more books than ever. Bowker reports that over three million books were published in the U.S. in 2010 (May 18, 2011 *Bowker Report*, <http://www.bkpxnet.com/AuthorMaterials/10AwfulTruths.htm>). The number of new print titles issued by U.S. publishers has grown from 215,777 in 2002 to 316,480 in 2010. And in 2010 more than 2.7 million “non-traditional” titles were also published, including self-published books, reprints of public domain works, and other print-on-demand books.

Cable television somewhat democratized the medium, but it also brought a din of competition—the same is going on with publishing. There are fewer mainstream reviews and a greater number of consumer reviews. There is tremendous pressure to be online, get the word out, do book clubs in person, by Skype, by train, plane, and automobile. Write posts. Do events. Go to festivals. Participate on panels. Form support groups. Shout out other writers. None of the above is breaking rocks, but for mid-list writers there is no money in it either. It’s done for free, or, more likely, it’s done for free and paid for by the writers. When you see those “book tours!!” you can bet that 90% of them are author-funded.

After our books are published, most writers spend months online and in person, trying to convince readers—without turning them off—that our books are worth their time and money. (Or just their time—libraries are book buyers of the highest order. Writers love having readers request our books.)

All this après-writing work requires learning the close-to-impossible: how to do it graciously and well. One (well, me) can spend hours and hours studying how to do it properly, how to find the right tone and voice, and one can still blow it. Ah, that rock and hard place: on the one hand, squirming at posting another “Me! Me! Me!” and on the other hand, studying your Bookscan numbers and Amazon ranking as though examining the Dead Sea Scrolls. How tempting, how easy, to simply post one more me-me-me about one’s book.

MJ Rose, owner of Authorbuzz—a book marketing firm—and a bestselling author (her next book, *Seduction*, releases May 7) says, “Authors live in a time when what we’re asked to do, what we think we need to do, and what our publishers often expect us to do, make us look unseemly. Authors online act in ways they’d never allow themselves in person. It’s rare when I meet an author in person who acts the way they do online. One rule I use is this: before I say anything online, I ask myself is this something I’d share with someone I just met at a cocktail party? If the answer is no, then I don’t post it.” (Read more about Rose’s writing at <http://mjrose.com/content/>)

Author Catherine McKenzie (her latest book is *Forgotten*) is acutely aware of this issue: “I think every writer these days has that me-me-me feeling whenever their book comes out (and in the months leading up to it and after it). I remember when my first book came out a couple of years ago in January, 2010. I dubbed it the “month of me” and was thoroughly sick of myself by the end of it. One thing I find helps is I turn that me-me-me spotlight onto other authors. It’s so much easier to say “read this!” or “buy this!” when I’m

getting nothing out of it other than turning other people onto good books.” (You can see Catherine’s current such project at <http://catherinemckenzie.com/52-books-in-52-weeks/>)

Relentless recounting of successes by authors (the extreme-don’t-try-this-at-home version of Me! Me! Me!) can also drive other writers insane. Internationally praised historical fiction writer C.W. Gortner, (his most recent book is *The Queen’s Vow: A Novel of Isabella of Castile*) is the friend I need when the torture becomes too much. As we went back and forth about a recent online debacle, he said:

“Watching that was like a mash-up of Wonder Woman and Shameless. I’m going to Prada to bask in things I cannot afford and escape the Me-Me Circus. It’s getting to the point that Facebook qualifies as an instrument of torture.”

That’s okay. In some ways. I am doing my dream job. And I don’t expect anyone owes me a thing (except not stealing my book. No piracy please. I never did it to a musician: I’m glad my karma is clear.) And then, with in between all that booty-shaking, uber-gracious tweeting, and traveling, you have to write. Most authors will say writing their first book, in the quiet of non-selling, was the most comfortable. I know for me, because of the whole corporate problem my publisher is caught in (ongoing negotiations with Barnes and Noble, which has resulted in almost no Simon & Schuster books being carried at the only major chain bookstore in the United States, <http://tinyurl.com/BandNSandSdispute>) my promotion time has extended beyond the normal month or two. I’ll be traveling, online and on Amtrak, from February through June, visiting independent bookstores, book clubs, and participating in events. The result is that I’m fighting for a quiet space to write. And the result of that is working seven days a week since my book came out in February.

So, are writers being unseemly? Perhaps some of us are, sometimes. Some appear me-me-me all the time. Laura Harrington (<http://www.lauraharringtonbooks.com/>), winner of the 2012 Massachusetts Book Award for fiction, says, “I like to think of Katherine Hepburn. She understood stardom, and she also understood privacy.

“Her desire for privacy actually enhanced her mystery and her allure. She will always be considered a ‘class act.’ I think there’s something nearly desperate about some of what’s going on—and that is never attractive.”

I agree with Laura. And yet, I study my numbers. I worry, I watch, and like most authors I vacillate between my desire to be Katherine Hepburn and my pull towards jumping up and down like a contestant on Let’s Make a Deal.

So, when I cringe at another’s (or my own) urges towards me-me-me, I try to remember to allocate a bit of kindness towards writers (like me) trying to dance as fast as we can.

Randy Susan Meyers is the author of The Murderer’s Daughters and The Comfort of Lies. She also co-authored What To Do Before Your Book Launch with M.J. Rose. Find out more at www.randysusanmeyers.com. This article previously appeared April 14 in the blog Beyond the Margins.

Business Briefs

Strange Bedfellows—Amazon & Big 6 vs. Indies

Independent booksellers filed suit claiming restraint of trade in *Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Inc. et al v. Amazon.Com* back in February over Amazon and the Big 6 working out a deal on materials only available in DMZ Kindle-friendly format. Amazon.com, et al fired back to get the case dismissed. The booksellers want to stop the publishers and Amazon from providing apps or restricting digital formats on DRM specific readers, and the independents want to be allowed to sell open-source DRM e-books. PW Daily

Out of Print: The Movie

A documentary of the shift in the book world with the digital revolution premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and narrated by Meryl Streep. <http://outofprintthemovie.com/> Publishers Lunch



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Ten Tax Tips for Travel Expenses

Summer is on its way, and many writers have planned to take trips that relate in one way or another to their writing business. Perhaps you'll travel to a writers' conference or readers' event, or maybe you'll take a trip for research purposes to investigate a setting for a story. Keep these tax tips in mind to make sure you take the full deduction you're entitled to and that you don't claim expenses that are ineligible.

Tip #1: A dual-purpose trip is only partly deductible.

If you take a trip that is primarily personal, such as a family trip to the beach, the expenses of traveling to the vacation site would be non-deductible. However, if you take a side trip that relates to your writing business, the expenses specifically related to that side trip are deductible.

For example, let's say you tour a ship or submarine that is docked at a nearby beach because you plan to write a historical novel featuring pirates or a military-themed novel featuring a submarine captain. In such a case, the costs of traveling from your vacation spot to the ship or submarine and the costs of the tour would be deductible. You could also deduct 50% of the cost of meals during the time of the travel to and from the dock or during the tour if it is necessary for you to stop and rest during that time period.

The opposite is also true. If you take a trip that is primarily for business purposes, you can deduct your travel costs to and from the business site. You cannot deduct costs related to personal side trips you take, however, or extra lodging and meals costs incurred if you stay at the locale before or after the business days for personal enjoyment and general sightseeing.

Tip #2: Keep your clothes clean.

While the cost of laundry and dry cleaning are not normally deductible when you are at home, the cost of laundry and dry cleaning while you are on a business trip are deductible.

Tip #3: Maximize your meals deduction.

You have the option of deducting 50% of your actual meals cost while traveling, or you can deduct half of the daily meals and incidental expenses rate ("M&IE" rate) published by the General Services Administration for the locale. If you tend to favor more upscale restaurants, your actual expenses will likely give you a higher deduction. But if you tend to eat cheap, the government rate could give you a higher deduction. You can find the M&IE rates online here: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>

Be aware, however, that while self-employed persons can use the GSA rate to determine the deductible meals expenses, you cannot use the GSA per diem rate for your lodging expenses. You must use actual lodging expenses in determining your deduction. In addition, your first and last travel days are pro-rated as noted on the "breakdown" link below each locale's detail on the GSA site.

Tip #4: Call me, maybe.

Don't forget that business-related phone calls are deductible.

Tip #5: Have fun!

Entertainment expenses are 50% deductible if you engage in business before, during, or after the entertainment. For example, if you take a trip to New York for a writers' conference and attend a Broadway show with other writers with whom you have discussed writing business during that day, you can deduct half of

the cost of your show ticket. If you attend the entertainment alone or with non-business-related persons only, the cost would be considered personal and not deductible.

Tip #6: Don't forget the tips.

Tips you pay to bellhops, maids, cab drivers, shuttle bus drivers, tour guides, etc. are deductible. Because most of these tips are paid in cash and no receipt is provided, be sure to keep a log of the date, amount, and purpose of the tip. Tips related to meals and entertainment are only 50% deductible.

Tip #7: Don't deduct expenses that aren't yours.

Confusion often occurs when a writer pays costs up front that are later reimbursed. For instance, a writer who presents a workshop at a library might be reimbursed for the costs of travel. If the writer must account to the library for the expenses, provide the library with receipts, and the library reimburses the writer the exact amount of the costs, the costs are considered to be costs of the library rather than the author. The writer would not deduct the costs and would not include the reimbursement in income. On the other hand, if the writer were paid a flat travel expense amount regardless of actual expenses and did not have to account to the library, the expenses are considered to be the writer's expenses. The writer would include the fee in income and deduct the travel costs on his or her tax return.

Tip #8: Don't be a diva.

The IRS can deny or reduce costs that are lavish or extravagant. If you go out for a \$200 dinner when more reasonable options are available, the IRS isn't likely to be too happy and you could end up with a tax bill.

Tip #9: Personal expenses while traveling on business remain personal.

For example, if you travel for a book signing and schedule a massage alone at a local spa after the event, the fact that the massage takes place during a business trip does not make it a deductible business expense. The massage is a personal cost and cannot be deducted.

Tip #10: Cruises and foreign travel are subject to special limitations.

Take a look at IRS Publication 463 "Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses" for a detailed discussion of these particular rules.

Happy summer travels!

Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney and the author of the humorous Death and Taxes romantic mystery series and a self-published romantic comedy.

Business Briefs

First Sale Stands for Now (as of presstime)

Federal judge Richard Sullivan: "The novel question presented in this action is whether a digital music file, lawfully made and purchased, may be resold by its owner through ReDigi under the first sale doctrine. The Court determines that it cannot." Sullivan also called ReDigi a "clearinghouse for copyright infringement." Amazon was awarded a patent in January, and Apple has applied for one for a process to sell used digital items. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/133451611/Redigi-Capitol> *Danger, danger, Will Robinson!* PW Daily

New York and Taxes

The New York Court of Appeals in a large majority (4-1) upheld the state's affiliated nexus law from 2008. This mirrors the passage of U.S. Senate's Marketplace Fairness Act amendment (S.336) (75-24) to the FY2014 budget resolution. The basic concept is remote retailers (can we say "Amazon") that have over \$10,000 in affiliate sales have to remit and collect sales tax. PW Daily



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

Not Your Usual Writing Advice

By JoAnn Grote

Recovering from Crazy

“True life is lived when tiny changes occur.”

— Leo Tolstoy

Most NINC members are probably familiar with the concept of crazymakers as presented in Julia Cameron’s 1992 classic, *The Artist’s Way* (Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam). She describes crazymakers as people we invite, most often unconsciously, into our lives to distract us from our writing. It’s a fascinating concept, and a liberating one to recognize in our own lives. If you aren’t familiar with Cameron’s concept, I urge you to pick up a copy of her book.

Like most writers, I’ve managed to surround myself with crazymakers at various times in my life. These crazymakers were as damaging to my writing life as Cameron declared. Lately, however, I’ve wondered about another aspect of crazymakers: how often are we our own crazymakers?

Too often.

When we are the crazymakers, our actions have a negative effect on those we live with and on the lives of those whom our writing directly affects. For instance, a writer might choose to postpone starting a book until the deadline looms so close that the book can’t be completed without too many hours at the computer, not enough hours asleep, and little time left over for family obligations, fun or communication. The writer might like the adrenalin rush of writing flat out, might even feel he does his best writing in this manner, but his actions look like those of a drama queen to the family that depends on him. Perhaps one reason the writer pushes the limit is to avoid other responsibilities for a time. “I can’t possibly help you with your homework tonight. I have to write. Your dad (brother, sister, friend) will need to help you this time.” If a writer procrastinates too long, the action might prove crazymaking for his editor and others at the publishing firm who have their own responsibilities regarding the manuscript.

As you can see, acting as a crazymaker is a form of self-sabotage. Crazymakers create drama in not only others’ lives, but their own. “Keep the drama on the page,” Cameron advises.

How can we avoid acting as our own crazymakers?

Facing fears. Remember, the reason we invite crazymakers—and our own crazymaker actions—into our lives is to avoid going to the page. The first thing to do when tempted to act like a crazymaker is to ask why you’re afraid to face the page. Maybe the book is a new direction for your writing, and even if it’s a direction you’re eager to travel, you fear you haven’t the skill to pull it off. Maybe you don’t know how to start the next scene, or even know where you want the next scene to take your characters. Maybe you just wish you could take a day off from writing, so you create drama in your personal life to make that happen – and then blame the people around you instead of your fear. Whatever the fear, face it, deal with it, and move into the writing instead of into crazymaker actions.

Schedule. A writing schedule establishes a sense of order, a path in the midst of life’s unending chaos. It means we’ve committed to writing during a set time, usually daily. Our conscious and subconscious know this. Our family and friends come to know this, sometimes grudgingly, because it gives us a reason to say, “I’d love to help you out, but I can’t right now. This is my writing time.” If we keep our schedule, we’re less apt to write the last third of the book feeling like a zombie from lack of sleep, or to shirk our duties to our

family, or to get angry at others, or to turn in a manuscript we feel isn't our best work, and less likely to miss our deadline and destroy others' schedules. (As parents, we often think establishing a writing schedule may be unfair to our children, but perhaps it teaches them to respect others' schedules and how to use time wisely for themselves.) According to Cameron, "In the hands of a crazymaker, time is a primary tool for abuse." A schedule helps us avoid abusing time.

Go after inspiration. Earlier this week an unpublished writer told me he didn't want to have to work at a writing career, he just wanted to write whenever he felt inspired, send off the book and collect royalties for the rest of his life. We've all heard versions of this from unpublished writers. "You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club," Jack London said. Every NINC member knows this. Yet, often when we procrastinate it's because we are hoping for inspiration to strike so the work of writing will feel easier. Working with a schedule, as recommended above, is a form of going after inspiration rather than waiting for it. Waiting instead of acting creates tension and drama—and crazymaking behavior.

Honesty. Honesty with ourselves is primary, then honesty with others: family, friends, co-workers, editors, agents and all others directly affected by our writing life. Honesty in regard to our writing fears, as noted above, is one of the best deterrents to acting as a crazymaker. Honesty with ourselves includes seeking the approval of our muse, or the Divine, rather than seeking other's approval. Honesty includes admitting we need to write to be happy and healthy emotionally. It includes keeping our word, which is a form of respecting others, their time and their schedules. Honesty with others includes explaining how important writing is to us and helping family understand that the creative process can be messy and might require quiet time alone on a regular basis.

"No" means "Yes." Saying "No" to others is often necessary in order to say "Yes" to the time we need to fulfill our writing obligations. This is a hard one for me and certainly hit home while writing this column. This column will likely arrive in the *Nink* editor's inbox the day after I promised it, because I said "yes" to others too often during my writing time today. A friend who recently re-entered my life after many years called. She's going through a difficult time in regard to her health and her relationship, and I hadn't the heart to ask if I might call back later. Another friend called about a problem with technology—not asking my advice, but to complain about the people who helped with the solution. A family member called to discuss her fear that another family member might be upset with her over a situation that wasn't her fault. I spent hours of writing time with these people. My choice to say "yes" to them and "no" to the writing translates into a lack of trust in my friends and family to understand my need to meet my writing obligations and keep my word. My actions today were crazymaking—for me and for the editor.

Healthy actions. We've heard all our lives of the importance of a good night's sleep, regular exercise, and nutritious food. It's tempting to steal from sleep when racing toward a deadline, especially if we've already practiced the crazymaking action of procrastination. Each night that we don't get the amount of sleep we need, we threaten our ability to work at our best the next day. Some experts say losing even one hour of sleep can slow down our brain function, which we all certainly want working at peak capacity when we're writing. If we go only a couple nights without enough sleep, we're on a hamster wheel of fatigue and stress. Crazymaking indeed. I've learned that the sugar and caffeine for which I'm tempted to reach for energy during such times only makes the problem worse. They give me a rush of energy that helps to write late into the night, but make it more difficult to get started the next day. Healthy eating keeps my energy level up. A short walk revives me if I'm getting tired, and revives my creativity, too. Unhealthy practices are self-destructive, and can destroy a writer's best intentions. Healthy habits are anti-crazymaking.

Responsibility. One of the primary ways to avoid crazymakers and crazymaking actions lies with self-responsibility, of course. We are responsible for our choices. As easy as it sometimes is to point fingers, blaming others gives away our ability to make choices that lead to serenity, order, self-respect, respect for others, and productivity. "I am responsible" is a mantra that promotes sanity.

The items on the above list are things we all know, but tend to forget when we're trying to avoid writing even while insisting we're trying every way possible to get to the page. Here's the short list:

Follow your muse, not your fears.

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.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Bad Things

“Excuse me, which murder are we talking about?”

— **Alphonse D’Arco**, Lucchese crime family *capo*

There are so many unsavory messes in the publishing world lately that, when discussing them, I invariably wind up feeling a bit like Alphonse D’Arco, a New York mob boss who was involved in so many murders that he famously lost track of which one he was being questioned about when turning state’s evidence in a US district court in 1992.

I mean... *which* recent publishing-world lawsuit of truly gothic wickedness are you referring to?

The one where writers filed suit against a major house for excessively creative accounting practices that involved the publisher funneling money through a foreign shell company in order to avoid paying a fair royalty rate to its authors? Or the lawsuit wherein, through magical thinking, a major house claims it holds publishing rights that it never actually licensed? Or do you mean the Department of Justice’s case against five major houses (who’ve all chosen to settle out of court) for antitrust violations and collusive price fixing? Oh, wait, I know! Are you referring to the class action suit filed against those same houses by more than 30 U.S. states? Or am I mistaken, and you’re talking about the lawsuit recently filed by independent booksellers against Amazon and six major houses?

Sorry, I just have so much trouble keeping track!

(And apparently I’m not alone. A *Publishers Weekly* article noted in March: “If you’re getting weary of publishing-related lawsuits dragging on in the Southern District of New York, you have company.”)

Or, to give another example... *which* publisher’s recent financial mess wherein the authors got shafted are you talking about?

The one where the publisher that was going bankrupt started selling off publishing rights it didn’t actually own? Or the mess where a major house’s releases haven’t been distributed through the biggest bookstore chain in the US, due to negotiations going badly between the two corporations, thus ensuring a nosedive of print sales and earnings for the authors? Or are you referring to the recent mess wherein a small house in financial trouble may be acquired by a bigger house and the contracted authors have been advised to sign a document accepting new, unfavorable terms or else see their publishing rights embroiled in the quicksand of bankruptcy?

I get so confused! Who can keep all this straight?

When reviewing these messes, I am reminded of an episode of *MI-5*, a British TV show to which I am slightly addicted, called “Legitimate Targets,” in which a frightened dupe who got into ill-advised business transactions with the wrong people asks his stern interrogators at MI-5, “What’s going to happen to me now?” And one of the spooks replies, “Bad things.” Yep.

Of course, unless you’re directly involved in or damaged by one (or more) of these publisher messes—and many of you *are*, in fact—you don’t need to remember the specifics of any of these incidents or to keep them straight. (However, I find them all so appalling that, despite my confusion, the details tend to be seared

into my little blonde brain.) But we all do need to take away an important lesson from the sum of these redolent piles of publisher malfeasance and mismanagement:

When you sign a publishing contract, your writing career, your earnings, and your intellectual property rights become vulnerable to any weaknesses in that contract, as well as to any bad business judgment or ethical lapses which may afflict that publishing house.

I point this out because there's a refrain I've heard among writers for many years, and it's so self-evidently foolish—especially in the light of the odorous events described above—that anyone who's *still* saying it is so delusional that they really need an intervention. I first heard it when I was a zygote who'd recently sold my first book, and I attended a bookstore event in another city where several much-published genre writers were speaking. Each of those writers said, at some point in their comments, that they weren't interested in business and contracts and money, they left “all that” up to their agents and paid no attention to any of it because, “I just care about my stories. I just want to write.”

And I would be rich beyond the dreams of avarice now if only I had a fiver for every occasion since then that I've heard a writer say something similar. I've encountered writers who don't read their contracts, don't bother to understand their contracts, don't know what their agency agreements say, don't examine their royalty statements, don't know when/whether their books are eligible for reversion, don't know what “reversion” means, don't know what their option clauses say (or what an “option clause” is), and don't know which subrights they've licensed or retained.

I've also been gobsmacked by how many of these writers, rather than being sheepish about their recklessness, consider this reasonable, sensible behavior because it allows them to “focus on my writing.” As if it would be pointlessly distracting to be familiar with the terms of the legally binding business agreements to which they commit themselves, their intellectual property, and their earnings.

To give just *one* simple example (among oh-so-many possibilities) of how much we cannot afford to “just write” and “pay no attention to” our business agreements, let's consider the appalling consequences of signing a contract with a “non-compete” clause. This clause prohibits the author, while under contract (which, in the digital age, could be for decades), from releasing other works which the publisher deems to be “in competition” with the contracted work.

For years, the purpose of a non-compete clause was primarily to prevent multiple non-fiction books by one author from cannibalizing each other's sales. If you buy two 2013 guidebooks to hiking the Appalachian Trail, for example, you're almost certainly not going to buy them both by the same author; so publishers protect the sales of their book by ensuring the author can't have a virtually identical release out there from another house. But the common view for decades was that there was little or no real-world relevance for the non-compete clause in fiction contracts. After all, if you like one novel by Laura Resnick, you're *more* likely to buy other novels by Laura Resnick, not less so; and the option clause is what typically defines the novelist's obligation to the publisher beyond the current contract.

However, if you've got a non-compete clause in any of your fiction contracts, your publisher can use it to contractually prohibit you from writing for another house—and *also* from self-publishing—in the same genre and/or under the same name.

Let's pause a moment to consider the devastating consequences of a publisher having *that* level of egregious control over your ability to release books, build audience, and earn income with your work.

And it's no good your saying, “Oh, but my publisher wouldn't do that.” In the bad behavior that too-often characterizes publishers in confrontation with the digital age, a number of them *are* doing it. You can find the details of a well-known 2011 example simply by googling the phrase “Penguin non-compete clause;” and various other authors have been victimized by similar gambits in less-publicized incidents.

Moreover, I've heard first-hand accounts in the past year of negotiations ending and deals falling apart when an author declines to accept a non-compete clause. *That's* how crucial some publishers now consider a non-compete clause in a fiction deal; *that's* how much control some houses are determined to have over a contracted writer's career and livelihood.

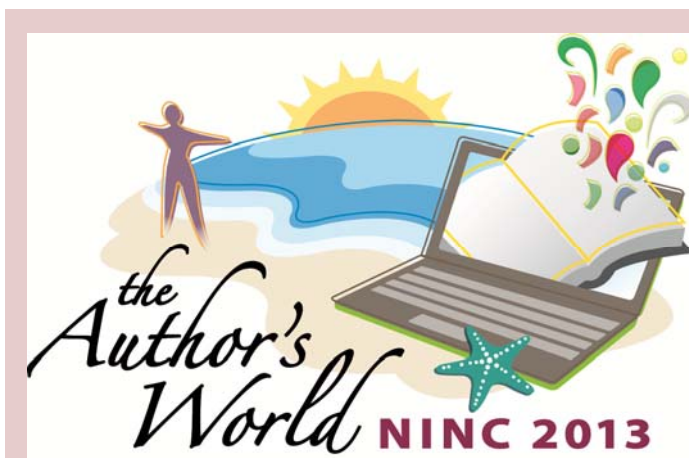
Which is not to say that only writers who refuse to think about business have problems with publishers these days. On the contrary, many business savvy writers are damaged by the Bad Things that publishers do in the digital era. ▶

After all, no alert writers who negotiate good contractual terms with a house that has published many fine novelists *expect* to receive a document advising them to sign for new, egregious contractual terms or else see their publishing rights tied up in bankruptcy for years; but it happened to dozens of them. Shrewd writers who sign with a major house don't *expect* to get shafted on their earnings because the publisher plays corporate shell games with authors' earnings in a country known for its secret banking laws; but it happened to hundreds of them.

The many Bad Things that keep happening to writers in traditional publishing these days evince why it's *delusional* when someone says they want to stick with traditional publishing, rather than self-publish, *because* they don't want to think about business, they just want to write.

There are a lot of good opportunities these days for a writer, including (yes, really) many paths in traditional publishing; but there are no circumstances in the contemporary landscape in which the writer can survive—let alone thrive—if she's only willing to “just write.” If you “ignore business” in this industry, then Bad Things will certainly happen to you—simply because they're happening all the hell over the publishing industry these days.

Laura Resnick recently celebrated (so to speak) her 25th anniversary as a full-time, self-supporting career novelist.



NINC 2013 Conference
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October 24-27

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Read more about it on page 9

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.