

N I N K

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GOLD MINES and MINEFIELDS: selling and promoting your book in Europe

BY ELIZABETH JENNINGS

So — you've sold a book to a European publisher. Congratulations! Before popping that bottle of champagne, though, make sure you've sold that book well, and then we'll talk about promoting it!

European publishers love us, love our books. In every major country, in every major language, there we are on the bookshelves of the many bookstores still open (though the European marketplace is digitizing fast). European readers love American writers, and we regularly make appearances on the bestseller lists.

For a European publisher, publishing an American bestseller in translation is a win-win. They don't have to troll the slush pile, there is no editing involved. They have already seen sales figures, so they have reasonable expectations of sales. The only costs are the translation costs and designing a new cover. And, a very small advance. Ah yes, low-advance-itis has hit Europe as well.

Europe is a huge book market of around 400 million prosperous readers and they read *us*, mostly. So — a gold mine. However, it is also a minefield, so before we talk about promotion, let's look at the problems that crop up when signing a contract with a European publisher.

The problems begin with your agent, who sells through subagents, soaking up 20 percent of your royalties instead of 15 percent. This practice probably started before the invention of the telegram and hasn't changed

much since. If I were Queen of Publishing it is the first thing I'd change. In an era in which there has been a great deal of consolidation in Europe as in the States, with most countries only having a few conglomerates to sell to, there is no reason to use a subagent. Go to Frankfurt, get to know the foreign rights department of the handful of major publishers, all of whom speak excellent English, and negotiate the contracts yourself. The contracts are in English, too.

Newer agents, such as Christine Witthohn of Book Cents Literary Agency, do this already, bypassing the creaky sub-agency system. As she says, "Born from my business travels as a literary agent, I now deal directly with foreign pub-

Continued on page 5 ▶

INSIDE this ISSUE

<i>Eye on Industry: The Cardamom Principle</i>	3
NINC 2013 Conference:	
<i>Author Support 2.0</i>	6
METADATA 101:	7, 13, 17
<i>It's a Note Jotter. It's a Mind Mapper ... It's Scapple.</i> ..	8
<i>Playing Paper Dolls</i>	10
<i>Forensic Files: How Is a Gunshot Wound Treated?</i>	12
<i>Writing Is Taxing: Same Sex Marriages Now</i>	
<i>Recognized for Federal Tax Purposes</i>	14
<i>Not Your Usual Writing Advice: Negotiating with</i>	
<i>The Muse</i>	15
<i>The Mad Scribbler: One Down, Twenty-Nine to Go</i>	18

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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:

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NINC has room to grow...

Recommend membership to your colleagues.

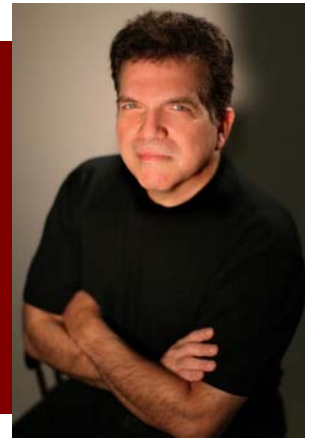
Prospective members may apply online at

<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.

The Cardamom Principle



I need cardamom. I've needed it for a couple of months now. This hasn't put a stress on our household. My kids haven't lost trust in me because I've shown a willingness to deplete our pantry. My wife hasn't suggested that some of the spice is missing from our marriage. Still, I like using cardamom. Homemade donuts dipped in cardamom sugar? That's something everyone should have at least a few times a year. I've been told that my cardamom ginger ice cream is worth traveling miles for (or at least the distance from the family room to the kitchen). In an ideal world, I would always have cardamom in my culinary toolkit because you never know when it might be exactly what a dish needs.

Why, then, have I gone so long without it? It's available in any grocery store. I could pick it up this afternoon when I get a couple of other things I need, if I wanted. I wouldn't do that, though. I don't buy my spices in supermarkets. The supply and the quality just isn't what I want. Instead, I buy my spices from a site called MySpiceSage. Excellent selection, good value, extremely high quality. And on top of everything else, they always offer a bonus. A free quarter pound of applewood smoked sea salt with a minimum purchase. A free four-ounce jar of vanilla paste. Something that closes the deal.

There's the problem. Instead of just going to MySpiceSage and getting the cardamom, I'm waiting for them to offer me a bonus I want. I get e-mail messages from them every few days telling me about the latest promotion. The smoked salt has come up again recently. So has the vanilla paste. I could have gotten a couple of free glass spice jars last week. I have enough of the first two items, and I have no need for the last. So I'll just keep waiting. Something will come up soon that appeals to me, and then I'll again be able to make the spice butter for the Ethiopian beef stew that my youngest daughter enjoys so much. It's all rather ridiculous, I realize. A four-ounce package of cardamom (that's a lot of cardamom) costs \$12.50. I can handle it. But the idea that a better deal is waiting stymies me.

I'm doing with spices what so many people are now doing with e-books. A recent poll indicated that, with the exception of their very favorite authors, the majority of commercial fiction readers surveyed were happy to wait until a book was deeply discounted to buy it. If they encountered a novel that sounded good to them, they'd add it to their to-be-read list and then wait to see if it showed up at \$.99 or \$1.99 or at the outside \$2.99. *Maybe* if everyone they know was talking about a book, they might be willing to pay more to read it. Otherwise, there are plenty of \$.99 books to choose from.

I assume you see the issue here. Book consumers are becoming conditioned to believe that books should cost less than three dollars — in many cases much less than three dollars. I'm not an economist, but I have a feeling that this is not a good thing.

This is hardly the first time book consumers have recalibrated their price expectations. There were the pricing wars of the early '80s (anyone remember the Crown bookstore chain?) that first got readers thinking that the cover price of a bestseller was more than they should pay. Then internet retailers extended this to nearly every book in print. The difference in these cases, though, was that the discount was funded entirely by the bookseller. Yes, publishers gave a little in terms of discount and co-op money when it came time to negotiate new contracts, but authors got the same royalties for their books whether those books sold for \$22.95 or \$13.77. Readers still have lowered price expectations for print books, especially hardcovers — does anyone ever pay \$27.95 for a novel? — but the author is not affected, at least not directly. ▶

The same is not true with e-books. If the consumer has decided that e-books should be \$.99 or \$1.99, the author participates fully in this dilution in value. When a bookseller runs a promotion featuring an e-book or a group of e-books for a heavily discounted price, the publisher and therefore the author is paid based on that price, not the list price. This isn't true when an account decides to cut prices based on some algorithm. If they take this upon themselves, they pay the publisher based on the list price. But in any promotion like Amazon's Daily Deal, B&N's Daily Find, Apple's Great Books for \$3.99 or Less, or Sony's various promotions, the publisher — and therefore the author, because the author is paid on net receipts — funds the price reduction by agreeing to be paid off the discounted price.

Obviously, the same is true with indie publishing. Authors who want to price a book at \$.99 are paid a royalty based on that price. You can't price a book at \$7.99 and hope that a bookseller decides to drop the price to \$1.99 while still paying you a royalty based on the list price.

Therefore, consumers who adopt the Cardamom Principle (no, I really don't expect anyone to take up that term) are putting us in a perilous position. Are writing careers truly sustainable if readers only expect to pay a dollar for a book? Obviously, some people are cashing in on this and selling in such quantities that they're making it up in volume. That's the one percent, though. Several of you have dozens of backlist books to sell, and making a little bit on each adds up to a good living. But how does that play out in the long term?

One of the scariest things I've seen recently is the \$.99 bundle. The message here is "\$.99 is too much for one novel, so we're giving you *four* novels for that price." I've spoken with some writers who have participated in these bundles, and they've all suggested that doing this has helped build awareness of their other books, though none have reported numbers for those other books that are even in the same zip code as the sales they got on their bundle. Several of these bundles have shown up on the *New York Times* list, often the first time for many of the participants. All of this has some value, but if one is at all concerned with the ecosystem, it's horrifying.

The price of e-books is still a fungible thing. While commercial fiction readers seem to be leaning toward \$.99, there may still be time to convince them to set the bar higher. I think there are ways to offer value without relegating yourself to the bargain basement, such as higher-priced bundling or special offers with full-price purchases. I also think there are ways to make it clear that the *words* are valuable enough to pay more for them. There has been a notable uptick in literary fiction e-book sales over the past year. I think it's interesting that, as I'm writing this, there isn't a single \$.99 book in the Kindle literary fiction top 100 (even though KDP allows you to designate any book as "literary") — and the #100 title is still inside the top 1,000 on the overall Kindle list. There's something to be learned here.

Now that I'm finished with this column, I'm going onto MySpiceSage to order my damned cardamom. I need a couple of other things as well. I don't know what today's bonus is. And I think it's very important that I stop caring. ▲

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

ABA, Amazon & State Sales Tax

Early in September, the ABA wrote a letter concerning Amazon's stand on state sales tax. Basically, the letter wants to know which side Amazon is on because the company seems to be on both sides of the issue. The most recent example was Amazon taking legal action to overturn the New York state decision in favor of the collection of state sales tax by online retailers.

<http://www.bookweb.org/news/aba-responds-amazon-supreme-court-filing>

PW Daily

More E-books Hitting the Market from Smashwords

Smashwords announced the release of its 250,000th e-book in September. Currently 9,000-plus e-books are released by Smashwords per month — quite a change from their annual release of 140 books in 2008.

PW Daily

Goldmines and Minefields

Continued from page 1 ▶

lishers.”

Next, read your contracts with foreign publishers. A shocking number of writers don't.

Ask for royalty statements and royalty payments twice a year and not once a year, as is common with many European publishers. And specify that the payments should be at the same time as the statement and not three months later.

Look at your reserves. Some publishers take as much as 15 to 20 percent reserves against returns. You will get most of that back at some point down the line, but try to negotiate the high amount down to a reasonable level. No one likes to leave money on the table for years.

Most contracts include a clause allowing the publisher to cut as much as 20 percent of your novel, the reason being that many books (mainly romances) are sold in newspaper kiosks instead of bookstores and they cannot exceed a certain page count. This might be a deal breaker for many publishers, but at least be aware of the issue. Also be aware of the fact that the person cutting the heart out of your book is the translator, not an editor.

Once you have successfully navigated the shoals of the actual sale, there is a lot that the writer can do to promote his or her book in Europe and ensure that as many eager readers as possible enjoy it.

Make sure you and your agent are aware of the publication date of your book. Your publisher will be delighted if you want to say hello to your fans through the publisher's newsletter or Facebook page, or on their website. Fabiola Chenet and Agnès Caubet, who run a large romance webzine, Les Romantiques (www.lesromantiques.com), suggest getting the name of the editor overseeing your book and speaking often with her or him. “French editors have power ... you should go straight to them. They can organize events for you to meet readers.”

When Eloisa James — who sells very well in France — was in Paris, the editors of Les Romantiques contacted her and organized a get-together with readers. Such an arduous task — going to Paris to promote your book! (But remember, it's tax deductible.)

For France, another smaller but interesting event in May would be les Imaginales, in La Rochelle for fantasy and paranormal romance.

The German romance magazine *Love Letters* organizes a readers' conference every May, where readers meet their favorite authors.

Fabiola Chenet says — “Google the title of your book in French, German, Italian, Spanish or whatever language and see which blogs did a review of your book. They would probably be very interested in helping you promote if you contact them.”

So, in short: vet your contract, try to get the best conditions possible, befriend your foreign editor, use the resources of your foreign publisher and harness the power of the web via book bloggers.

Stay tuned for more information and a closer look at bloggers and reviewers in Europe. And work that gold mine!!

Elizabeth Jennings writes romantic suspense and spicy romantic suspense as Lisa Marie Rice. Her 24th novel, I Dream of Danger, by Lisa Marie Rice, was published in July by William Morrow Paperbacks. She has lived in Europe all her adult life. She currently lives in southern Italy which is...interesting. The food is very good. She also runs an international literary festival/writers conference, The International Women's Fiction Festival — www.womensfictionfestival.com — which affords her a bird's eye view of publishing on both sides of the Atlantic. That's interesting, too.



Author Support 2.0

By the time you get the October issue of *Nink* you'll be planning those last minute to-do lists before leaving for Myrtle Beach and the NINC 2013 Conference. We know you're prepared to learn, engage, participate, listen, question, challenge, and enjoy. But, here are just a few more thoughts to keep in mind:

Last year at the conference, Julie Ortolon introduced the concepts of authors teaming up to create a lifeboat to support each other's marketing and platform building efforts. Many NINC members have gone on to create their own groups. Some have been successful (and innovative, which those of us lucky enough to go to the conference will hear all about). Some have struggled to juggle time, money, and expertise. But, based on the teams that were established as a result of last year, the concept is clearly a sound one and worthy of pursuit.

Some of the questions that have arisen are:

- ▶ How can you find people with complementary skills to join your team?
- ▶ What are the top three important things for a team to do when they are time strapped?
- ▶ Exactly what plans are necessary to build a solid Author Support Lifeboat?
- ▶ How much time should go into author support vs writing?
- ▶ Is any of this really working? How can we measure it?

This year at the conference, we will be creating templates to help authors who are starting or fine-tuning their efforts to form author support groups. These templates will give every attendee a concrete action plan with steps they know they have the time, money, and expertise to accomplish in 2014.

We'll be looking forward to sharing those templates and concrete steps with other interested NINC members who were not able to attend the conference, too. "Author Support" is the watchword for the conference.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the template(s), or helping in developing and fine-tuning them before the conference, please contact Kelly McClymer: kelly.mccllymer@gmail.com

Kelly McClymer, NINC Conference Co-Chair

Legal Advocacy

As if you haven't heard enough about the legal mini-sessions at the conference, here is the FINAL word on the event. Again, following the many threads on the NINC loop over the summer, it's confirmed that many members have legal, or quasi-legal, questions that can be readily addressed by our attending legal ex-

pert, Bob Stein. Most recent were complaints about the difficulty of securing reversion rights to work that's out of print. Some authors have been very successful making the request on their own, myself included. Others feel themselves blocked, deliberately or otherwise, by current and former publishing houses. Sometimes what's needed is the correct and forceful wording of a request along with a reminder that by contract the publishing rights have expired. This is one of many issues that Bob can discuss with NINC members.

Even if your issues are not serious (relatively speaking, of course) the conference is providing a venue for getting answers so you can strike the questions from your list of worries. Requests have already begun coming in (sekitt5e@gmail.com) for a slot in one of the six sessions, and there are still some open places to be filled. Don't wait until the last minute to sign up.

Sandra Kitt, Guest Speaker Liaison

METADATA 101: A Non-Techie Does Her Best to Explain Metadata (and Why It Matters) in Plain English

BY RUTH HARRIS

First of all, what the hell is metadata? According to Wikipedia, it's "data about data." But we're writers, and we're talking about books, so, huh?

Let me try again: when it comes to a book, metadata can be defined both by what it is and what it isn't. Metadata's everything in a file that's not included between the first word and the last word of your book. Which leaves us, well, exactly what?

Essentially, for a writer, metadata is everything except the book we include when we upload a book: cover, title, author's name, series name (if the book is part of a series), categories, keywords, blurb, ISBN, reviews, author bio.

Metadata also includes front matter and back matter and tells a reader what s/he wants to know before deciding to buy (or not to buy) your book. Metadata matters (a lot) and here are some reasons why, starting with the front matter (everything the reader sees that comes before the actual beginning of the book):

The cover is the writer's first sell opportunity and the reader's first clue to genre. A naked male torso avec bulging six-pack promises the reader hot s-e-x and maybe romance. A fanged death's head drooling pus and blood means horror. Be creative but don't mislead your reader! Book designer Joel Friedlander often blogs about covers at www.thebookdesigner.com.

The title (and the series title, if there is one) is another crucial signal, so choose wisely. You wouldn't call a sweet romance set in a sleepy Southern village *Night Of the Psychotic Avenger*, would you? You wouldn't call a dystopian urban zombie thriller *Aunt Matilda's Ye Olde Knitting And Crochet Shoppe*, would you? And *Adventures of a Girl* is hopeless: too generic, tells the reader nothing. Bottom line: choose your title carefully. Leading a reader astray or leaving him/her to wonder what the book is about isn't good for you, your sales — or for your reader.

The author's name is your brand so respect it. If the author name is a pseudonym, though, match the name with your genre. "Studly McBoozehound" might be an OK choice if you're writing brass-knuckled noirpulp. It would be a lousy choice if you're writing swoony 18th Century historical romance set in the Scottish Highlands. Capeesh?

The blurb, or as Amazon refers to it, the Product Description, is your opportunity to tell readers why they absolutely must buy your book. Your blurb needs to pop and sizzle and compel the reader to hit the buy button. After the purchase, when your book is already present on someone's e-reader, placing the blurb in the front matter will remind the reader why s/he bought the book in the first place.

Writing a powerful blurb is both an art and a craft. Superstar indie author, Mark Edwards, gives advice on how to write a compelling blurb in a February 10, 2013 guest post on Anne R. Allen's blog. (<http://tinyurl.com/mlqq9lr>)

METADATA 101 continues on page 13 ▶

It's a Note Jotter. It's a Mind Mapper. It's an Idea Organizer. It's Scapple.

BY CAROLYNN CAREY

Scapple — for those who may not be familiar with the name — is a relatively new (April 2013) Mac application created by Literature & Latte, the company that developed the popular writing program Scrivener.

When I received an email from Literature & Latte in late April telling me that the company had released new “sort-of-but-not-quite-mindmapping software for Mac OS X,” I was skeptical. After all, despite having bought Scrivener twice, I wasn't really a fan, and I didn't want to waste my time on yet another piece of software I wasn't going to use. However, the description sounded intriguing, and I could download a free 30-day trial, so I decided to give it a whirl. I was sold instantly. In fact, I sent in my \$14.99 payment for a license long before the 30 days were up.

What did I like about Scapple that I hadn't liked about Scrivener? While I always felt somewhat fettered by the features of Scrivener (unlike many writers I know), Scapple set me free to plan, to organize, to map, and to do it *my way*.

But what exactly is Scapple? As described in the email I received from Literature & Latte, Scapple is “like a freeform text editor that allows you to make notes anywhere on the page and to connect them using straight dotted lines or arrows.” The email continued, “If you've ever scribbled down ideas all over a piece of paper and drawn lines between related thoughts, then you already know what Scapple does.”

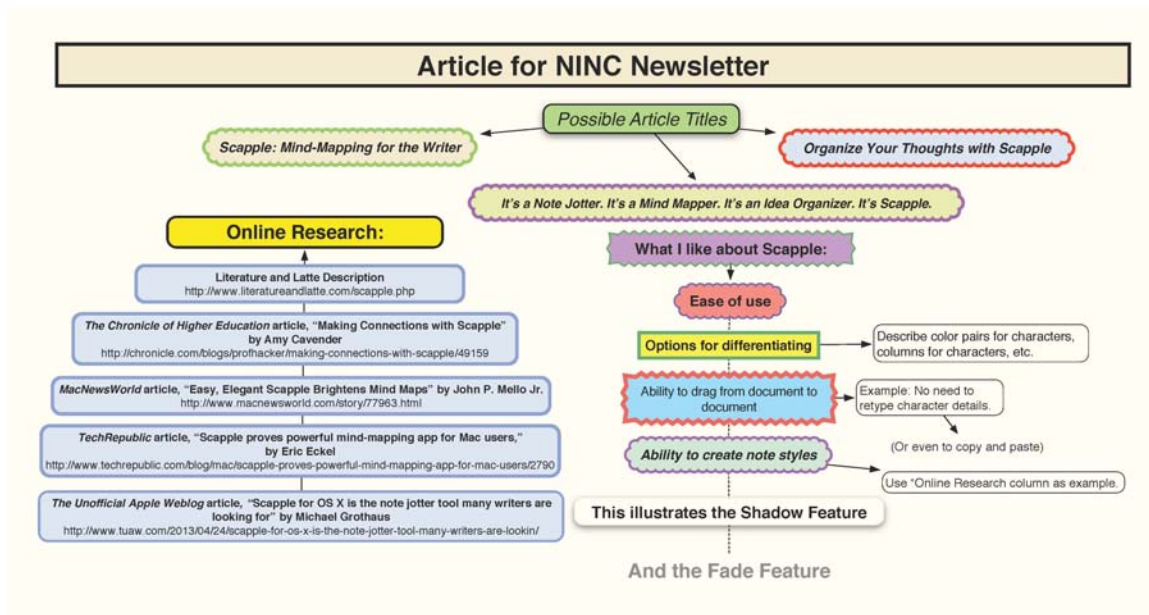
Actually, I wasn't in the habit of scribbling down notes, so that didn't apply to me. But I had struggled for years to find a convenient way of keeping up with details related to my works in progress. I usually have two or three stories under way at one time, and it's easy to forget what happened in chapter one when you haven't written on that particular project for a few weeks or months.

To illustrate how the software works, I outlined this article on a virtual sheet of paper in Scapple and then exported it as a pdf file so it could be reproduced with this piece. First I headed the sheet “Article for NINC Newsletter.” Under that I made notes of various titles I'd considered. I used different colors, shapes, and borders to illustrate what is possible. However, to show that a stack of notes can be consistent in appearance — such as those under the “Online Research” bubble — I created a Note Style and set up the parameters for the notes in that stack.

When you open a new document in Scapple, you'll see two lines of instructions in the center of the virtual canvas: “Double-click anywhere to create a note” and “Drag notes onto one another to make connections.” The instant you double-click, those instructions disappear and a bubble appears in the area of your double-click. Inside the bubble are the highlighted words “New Note.” Click inside the bubble to begin typing your note.

You can change the appearance of notes in many ways. If you do nothing but type, only your words will appear on the sheet. But if you prefer, you can embed your type in colored bubbles with borders of various sizes and shapes. You can make your bubble appear to stand out from the page by choosing the Shadow option, or you can have the type appear light by choosing the Fade option (see illustration).

When I first downloaded Scapple, I decided to try outlining my current work-in-progress, which is the fourth book I've set in the fictional town of Barbourville, Tennessee. I summarized my completed chapters on the left side of the virtual sheet of paper, stacking notes on top of each other and using blue for scenes in the hero's point of view and pink for scenes in the heroine's point of view. Next, I created a stack of notes on the



right side of the sheet for the characters in the order of their appearance. I color-coded characters (gray for secondary characters, orange for the hero and heroine of the third book in the series, blue for the hero and heroine of the current book, etc.).

Then, because I was bogged down in the middle of the book, I started brainstorming and adding notes on my virtual sheet. To my amazement, it helped me plot the rest of the story. Of course I had in mind a couple of main events but not the dark moment or the resolution (beyond an HEA, of course). Some of my ideas didn't work out, so I deleted those. If an idea was incomplete, I made notes of questions and connected them to the idea note with a dotted line.

I plan to create a virtual sheet for each book in the Barbourville series, and I've started using Scapple to build a bible for the series. Another neat thing: if a note applies to multiple documents (such as a character description), you can drag it from sheet to sheet and it duplicates itself. You can also drag image files from the Finder onto your virtual sheet, as well as dragging text files onto the sheet.

In summary, Scapple is a simple piece of software with a great deal of potential. If you wish, you can use it just to store a few notes or, like me, you can build a bible with it. But I would never assume one method is appropriate for all writers. If you're interested, download the free trial and decide for yourself if it's worth your time and trouble. (Note, however, that as of this writing, Scapple is available only for Macs. I emailed the company to ask about a PC version and was told that they are working on it but can't tie themselves to a release date yet.) ▲

Business Briefs

Google vs. Author Guild

The fight over Google's massive digitizing process (20 million books) continues. The eight-year battle seems to involve presenting briefs from both sides on the Google library project on a regular basis with no resolution from the court.

PW Daily

Playing Paper Dolls: How Should Your Characters Look?

By Nichole Bernier

During a Skype chat, a woman in a book club said she visualized my main character looking a bit like ... well, like me, and wanted to know if I gave my protagonist longish dark hair because I identified with her.

Technically, my character was described in the book as having a shorter bob, though the woman in the cover illustration does not (covers rarely match characters).

I don't bring this up to point out the disconnect between characters and their cover depictions, or even to riff on readers' assumptions about authors projecting themselves onto their protagonists.

It got me thinking about how we as authors come up with what our characters should look like, and why.

What's in a choice of hair color, or body type, or physical idiosyncrasies? Do they say something about the character from the getgo, or only in combination with the behavioral and emotional baggage we saddle them with as the story unfolds?

It strikes me that there are two categories of attributes from which an author can puzzle together a character's appearance. There are the things people are born with — being blonde or brunette, straight or curly-haired or balding, overweight or lean, acne-prone or clear-skinned. These are naturally occurring physical features that, in theory, don't say anything substantive about a character, beyond any stereotypes that might accompany the features themselves. These are the raw materials the characters roll with or wrestle with.

The fun comes in when you pair them with acquired features and props like tattoos, jewelry, clothing, scars, choice of glasses vs. contact lenses, shaved head vs. bad toupee. Playing with the combination of inherited and adopted features is a way for the author to toy with cultural assumptions. Does a character's personality sync up with the visual stereotype, or emerge in spite of it? Is the overweight guy unmotivated, or is he a frustrated Type A triathlete-in-training with a glandular disorder? What kind of fertile ground is a summa-cum-laude skinhead who wears Barbra Streisand concert t-shirts, or a firefighter who has one leg slightly shorter than the other?

I've often wondered whether for other authors, characters rise from their personality-beds fully visualized, or if they piece them together, one poignant well-fitting detail at a time. Or if maybe they never really form tactile people so much as personality bubbles floating in the ether, dressed up with a few corporeal features.

In my novel, the hair for my main character was the first and most prominent physical detail — a well-kept bob a la Anna Wintour that in my character's case went counter to stereotype. It's a striking trademark, a look that can telegraph perfection, rigidity. But to me it signified something else: someone who sticks with a look because it works for them. It was convenient for my character working in restaurant kitchens to have hair that didn't swing around her shoulders, and was stylish enough for TV, once upon a time. If it ain't broke why fix it, it's nice to have one less thing to figure out. More importantly, it was a physical way I could show her unraveling psychologically as her trademark hair grew out, neglected.

The next book I've begun has characters who are literally all over the map, in terms of nationality and ancestry, and I wanted a more tangible way of fixing them in my mind. This time, I wanted to be able to see them.

I began with a search through Google images. I wanted an Armenian-American woman haunted by the loss of something invaluable, something secretly swapped with a stand-in and she's obsessed with finding it. I

wanted a Russian cab driver who plays in a band, looks a little rough but is so loyal he sticks to you like glue. A gaunt, ironic Soviet tour guide who cannot be trusted. Two infants of mixed ancestry. And so on.

It took a few weeks of flipping through pictures, working like the child who plays paper dolls and ends up with quite a mash-up of Lands' End and Victoria's Secret and Orvis catalogs. Then I found them, photographs that captured something in the spirit of the people I was in the process of designing. The collage was hypnotizing: nine faces stared out, compelling and full of stories only I knew, begging me daily on my screensaver to come out and play.

I've had them in front of me for six months now, and it's a bit surreal to remember from time to time that these flesh-and-blood people are in fact out there, on my radar screen only through the vicissitudes of some art director or news organization. Somewhere in the world, my Armenian-American woman is buying her Starbucks or picking up the day's kefir. Somewhere my Russian cabbie is lifting weights with pals, or drinking Stoli & Red Bull at a dance club, or dropping off the kids at preschool.

I choose not to dwell on it, because it's a little like imagining my daughter's Madeline doll getting up and doing a pole dance at night when we're not watching. And I do feel a bit thieving, borrowing these people for the creation of entirely different identities, even though no one will ever see this collage but me. I tell myself it's an invisible part of the process, the plaster mold before the statue, a meaningless visual tool to help bring these characters to life.

But that's a bit disingenuous. Nothing having to do with inventing characters — trying to make them so vivid that others reading your book will talk about them as if they're real — feels meaningless. Pygmalion and Frankenstein were based on this impulse, the obsessive side of creation that drove the creators to want their creations in the flesh and blood.

It's potent, this imagining of something into a form that's nearly lifelike, which might be subconsciously behind some writers taking out Facebook pages and Twitter accounts in the name of their character. It might not breathe, but it breathes life into a page and can quicken a reader's breath. *IT'S ALIIIVE.*

Nichole Bernier is the author of the novel The Unfinished Work of Elizabeth D. (Crown/Random House, 2012), which spent eight weeks on the Boston Globe bestseller list and was a finalist for the New England Independent Booksellers fiction award. A Contributing Editor for Conde Nast Traveler magazine for 14 years, she has also written for publications including Psychology Today, Elle, Health, Self, Salon, The Huffington Post, and Post Road Literary Magazine. She received her master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, where she received the school's annual award for literary journalism, and is a founder of the literary blog Beyond the Margins. Nichole lives outside of Boston with her husband and five children and is at work on a second novel. She can be found online at nicholebernier.com. This article first appeared on Beyond the Margins and is reprinted with the author's permission.

Business Briefs

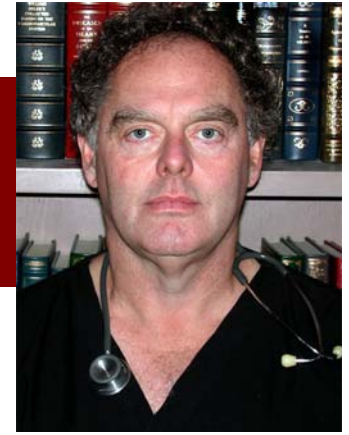
E-book Class Settlement Favors Consumers

The settlement web site, <https://ebooksagsettlements.com/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.aspx>, expects the rebate amounts to consumers to double. The settlement fund will include \$93.21 million from Penguin and Macmillan and \$69.04 from prior settlements. The consumer is estimated to receive \$3.06 per book for NYT bestsellers and 73 cents per book for non-bestsellers. It has been confirmed that more than 23 million e-mails or postcards were sent to consumers. (I received mine last week by e-mail.) If consumers don't request checks within specified deadlines, credits will be issued automatically. The qualifying period was April 1, 2010 to May 21, 2012, and the purchase of at least one e-book from those settlement publishers was necessary.

PW Daily

Forensic Files

By D. P. Lyle, MD



How Is a Gunshot Wound to the Chest Treated?

Q: My character suffers three small caliber gunshot wounds to his lungs with a not-so-good time lapse before hospitalization (say half an hour, maybe 45 minutes) and pretty bad internal bleeding. How would they treat him? Surgery to repair the internal wounds and stop the bleeding? What about the lung tissue? Then post-op: what drugs might be used and what medical concerns might arise? In the end, a friend smuggles him out of the hospital, because he'd rather die at his apartment. Would this work?

A: What happens to your shooting victim and how he is treated depends upon what injuries he received. A gunshot wound (GSW) can be a minor flesh wound or can be immediately deadly or anywhere in between. It all depends on the caliber and speed of the bullet and the exact structures it hits. A shot to the heart might kill instantly or not. The victim could die in a few minutes or survive for days or could recover completely with proper medical care and surgery. It's highly variable but ask any surgeon or ER doctor and they will tell you that it's hard to kill someone with a gun. Even with a shot or two to the chest. The bottom line is that whatever happens, happens.

Your victim is shot in the lungs, so he would likely cough up blood, be very short of breath, and could die from bleeding into the lungs — basically drowning in his own blood. Or the lung could collapse and again cause pain and shortness of breath. But we have two lungs and unless the GSWs are to both lungs and both lungs collapse the person would be able to breathe, speak, even run away, call for help, or fight off the attacker. Whatever happens, happens.

Most likely your guy would be very short of breath, cough and wheeze out blood in a fine mist or in larger droplets and even cough out a few clots. He would quickly become very weak, dizzy, and slip into shock. Here his blood pressure would be very low and with the injury to his lungs the oxygen content of his blood would dip to very low levels and he would lose consciousness. Or not. Your call.

Once rescued, the paramedics would probably place an endotracheal (ET) tube into his lungs to help with breathing, start an IV to give IV fluids, and transport him to the hospital immediately. He would then be seen by a trauma surgeon or chest surgeon and immediately undergo surgery to remove the bullets (if possible) and to repair the damaged lung and whatever else was injured. The surgeon might simply repair the lung or he might have to remove an entire lobe of the injured lung. Each lung has three lobes — upper, middle, and lower.

After surgery, he would be on a ventilator for as long as needed but usually only overnight. We always try to remove ET tubes as soon as we safely can since there are many complications if they remain in place for several days. Most commonly this is pneumonia. Also, being tied to an ET tube and a ventilator immobilizes the patient and sets him up for deep venous thrombosis (DVT — clots in the leg veins) and a pulmonary embolus (PE) — this is when a leg clot breaks free and travels to the lungs. Very dangerous, deadly, and a common occurrence in these situations.

He would have a chest tube (actually a thoracostomy tube but we call them chest tubes) in place. This is a flexible plastic tube that is inserted in surgery through the chest wall and into the chest cavity — but outside the lung. It is attached to a suction device and is used to evacuate any residual blood or body fluids from the

chest cavity and to keep the lung inflated. Once the lung heals and can stay inflated on its own, the tube is pulled out. This could take a couple of days or up to a week. It's highly variable.

He would be treated with antibiotics to prevent lung and wound infections and pain meds. Once he was off the ventilator he would be mobilized from bed to chair as soon as possible. This helps prevent pneumonia, DVT, and PE. He would then begin respiratory therapy — they would put him through deep breathing exercises to help the lung stay inflated and heal more readily.

He could recover quickly without complications and go home in a week, rest there for a couple of weeks, return to part time work for a few weeks and be up to full speed in three to four months. Or he could have one of any number of complications and die. It all depends upon the nature of injuries, the effectiveness of the treatment, and luck.

He could of course sign himself out of the hospital Against Medical Advice (we call it AMA) at any time after he was off the ventilator. If he did, they would give him antibiotics and pain meds to take with him and have him see his MD every couple of days for the first week or so, and then less frequently until he had completely healed. Of course, if he slipped out of the hospital he wouldn't have these meds and the possibility of a wound infection would increase. So he could easily go home and die from this. Or he could go home, heal on his own, and survive. Whatever happens, happens. It's all possible.

D. P. Lyle is the Macavity Award-winning and Edgar, Agatha, Scribe, and USA Best Book Award-nominated author of many nonfiction books as well as numerous fiction, including the Samantha Cody and the Dub Walker thriller series, and the Royal Pains media tie-in novels. He has worked with many novelists and writers of popular television shows. Dr. Lyle is a practicing Cardiologist in Orange County, California. See his website at www.dplylemd.com or his blog at <http://writersforensicsblog.wordpress.com>. These Q&As are republished with the author's permission.

Continued from page 7

METADATA 101: The Invisibles (to the reader but not to search engines.)

The ISBN (or ASIN) is the alpha-numeric string (ZZ12345) that identifies your book to readers and book-sellers. ISBNs can be purchased from Bowker (<https://www.myidentifiers.com/isbn/main>). The ASIN is the FREE number assigned by Amazon. Kobo and Apple also offer their own FREE identifiers when you upload your book.

There is disagreement about whether it's worth buying your own ISBN or not. Some think buying your own ISBN is worthwhile. Others think it doesn't much matter.

Joel Friedlander discusses the pros and cons of the different flavors of ISBNs/ASINs here on The Book Designer Blog. (www.thebookdesigner.com/2010/11/isbn-101-for-self-publishers/)

Keyword and keyword strategy. Although the reader doesn't see keywords, they are crucial to discoverability and visibility.

Joanna Penn writes about the importance of keywords and explains the techniques for finding ones that will work best for you. She uses specific examples using one of her own books here:

<http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2013/02/28/keywords-metadata-discoverability/>

Lisa Grace, mystery author, goes into the mysteries (sorry, couldn't help it) of SEO and keywords here: <http://tinyurl.com/bs4rlzz> and Christopher Shevlin tells how he used keywords to bring his book back from the dead and turn it into a best seller here: <http://tinyurl.com/l94ucue>.

Category tells where a book would be shelved in a bookstore. No one will find your sci-fi epic if it's shelved with gardening manuals so choose your categories (Amazon allows two; Nook permits five; Kobo and Apple also permit multiple choices.) carefully.

M. Louisa Locke blogs about the importance of choosing categories (and keywords) here:

<http://tinyurl.com/3tgjt3s> and FreelanceSwitch offers a detailed tutorial about category-choosing here:

<http://tinyurl.com/mgbqnf7>.

Amazon provides overall metadata guidelines here: <http://tinyurl.com/o7hely4>, and lists required keywords for certain categories (romance, sci-fi, YA, thriller, mystery, suspense) here: <http://tinyurl.com/lagvlyk>.

METADATA 101 concludes on page 17 ▶



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Same-Sex Marriages Now Recognized for Federal Tax Purposes

In the past, taxpayers in same-sex marriages did not receive the same benefits as other married couples for federal income, gift, and estate tax purposes. However, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service recently issued a ruling that same-sex couples who have been legally married in a jurisdiction that recognizes the marriage will now be treated as married for federal tax purposes. The ruling was enacted after the June 26, 2013 Supreme Court decision that invalidated a key provision of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act.

The ruling applies regardless of whether the couple currently lives in a jurisdiction that recognizes same-sex marriage. In other words, so long as the couple was married in a jurisdiction that recognized their marriage, relocating to a jurisdiction that does not allow same-sex marriages will not nullify the marriage for federal tax purposes. Same-sex couples can move freely about the United States without worrying about the effect the relocation will have on their federal taxes.

Any same-sex marriage legally entered into in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory, or a foreign country will be covered by the ruling. Be aware, however, that the ruling does not apply to registered domestic partnerships, civil unions, or similar formal relationships recognized under some state's laws. In such cases, the taxpayers in these relationships will not be considered married for federal tax purposes. In addition, be aware that each jurisdiction has the authority to determine whether the marriage will be recognized for purposes of taxes imposed by the particular jurisdiction.

Income Taxes.

While same-sex couples were not permitted to file as married for federal income tax purposes in the past, such couples will now be required to file under either married joint filing status or married separate filing status, starting with their 2013 return.

Besides filing status, other income tax provisions that are affected by marital status include claiming personal and dependency exemptions, taking the standard deduction or itemized deductions, employee benefits, contributing to an IRA, and claiming the earned income tax credit or child tax credit.

Same-sex couples are also now eligible to report their small business as a "qualified joint venture," which allows both spouses to receive credit toward social security and Medicare. If your same-sex spouse assists you in your writing business, you should consider whether filing as a qualified joint venture makes sense for you. More detail is available at this link: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Election-for-Husband-and-Wife-Unincorporated-Businesses>

Be aware that taxpayers in same-sex marriages might need to adjust their payroll withholding or the amount of estimated tax paid to ensure that the proper amounts are paid in. For information on how to adjust your withholding and how to compute your estimated taxes, take a look at IRS Publication 919 *How do I Adjust My Tax Withholding?* and Publication 505 *Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax* available at www.irs.gov.

Individuals in same-sex marriages may, but are not required to, file amended returns choosing to be treated as married for federal tax purposes for previous tax years that are still open under the statute of limitations. The statute of limitations for filing a refund claim is generally three years from the date the return was filed or two years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later. As a result, refund claims can still be filed for tax years 2010, 2011, and 2012. Some taxpayers may have special circumstances that permit

them to file refund claims for tax years before 2010, such as in cases in which the taxpayer signed an agreement with the IRS to keep the statute of limitations open for audit purposes.

To file a refund claim, use Form 1040X, *Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return*. For information on filing an amended return, go to Tax Topic 308, *Amended Returns* at <http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc308.html> or the Instructions to Forms 1040X. Information on where to file your amended returns is available in the instructions to the form.

Gift Taxes.

A gift tax return must be filed by any person who makes transfers of property to a single recipient in a given calendar year if such transfers total more than the annual exclusion amount for the year. The exclusion amount for 2013 is \$14,000. However, gifts to a spouse are not subject to gift taxes and do not have to be reported. Thus, same-sex couples may now transfer property between themselves without having to report such transfers on a gift tax return.

Estate Taxes.

Another benefit that same-sex couples will now enjoy is what's known as the "unlimited marital deduction" for estate tax purposes. Tax law provides that any property that transfers on the death of one spouse directly to the other spouse will not be included in the taxable estate. Estate planning for married couples can be complicated, and I would suggest that anyone in a same-sex marriage have a qualified estate planning professional review their wills to determine whether they have taken advantage of the tax-saving provisions allowed to married couples.

Taxpayers who wish to file a refund claim for gift or estate taxes should file Form 843, *Claim for Refund and Request for Abatement*. More information is available at www.irs.gov.

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

Amazon Kindle Paperwhite & Goodreads

The latest version of Kindle Paperwhite, <http://www.amazon.com/Kindle-Paperwhite-Touch-light/dp/B007OZNZG0>, debuted in early September. This release included integration with the recently purchased Goodreads. The Kindle/Goodreads connection allows adding Amazon purchases to the Goodreads list, rating books, sharing reading status, and looking at member profiles.

PW Daily

Kindle Matchbook — Will It Work?

The Matchbook program will allow readers to purchase e-book editions of print books they purchase or have purchased. The pricing will be \$2.99 to free. Amazon claims to have 10,000 e-books in the program, from new to titles listed in 1995. So far, only HarperCollins is participating with the bulk of the books coming from Kindle Direct Publishing and Amazon Publishing titles. A disquieting discussion has begun on the fact that Matchbook type sales aren't covered in author e-book rights in their contracts.

PW Daily



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

Not Your Usual Writing Advice

By JoAnn Grote

Negotiating with the Muse

“Sometimes Muses are open to negotiation.”

— Karen Harbaugh

Last month’s column discussed different ways writers decide which of the always numerous ideas to flesh out into the next story. Part of the discussion revolved around whether to follow the Muse or silence her.

Karen Harbaugh recommended following the Muse. She offered the example of her book *Night Fires* (Bantam/Dell 2003). She’d chosen to write the Muse-inspired book instead of the Regency her editor wanted and was glad she did.

Okay, so Karen followed the Muse — but how did she *negotiate* with the Muse?

“At the time, my husband was on strike, we had no income,” Karen told me. “I hadn’t worked outside the home for seven years. We were getting pretty desperate, and here was the Muse telling me I had to write this book that everyone told me would never sell. That was in 2000, when everyone was saying that vampires were a no-no, and that setting a romance during the French Revolution was the kiss of death, so to speak. *Night Fires* had both. And here was my editor, offering me easy money to write a Regency. Even my agent at the time said [writing *Night Fires*] was a bad idea.

“So I literally shook my fist one day and said, ‘Fine. If you want me to write this book, you had better make sure my family is financially secure, and that book sells and sells well.’ Crazy, right? But honestly, I felt pushed to the wall.

“A week and a half later, I got a technical writing job making good money. My husband’s union negotiated a good contract. We made enough money not only to pay our debts but to get my son orthodontic work and me a newer used car. To top it off, the book sold to Bantam/Dell within six months of my “negotiating” for twice what I would have received for a Regency. Then it was a finalist for the Rita award.

“I’m not saying that this kind of thing will happen to everyone, but sometimes figuring out what you can work out with the Muse (I did take that day job, after all) is worth it.”

Karen’s advice was originally offered to NINC member Edie Claire. Edie was working on two projects — a proposal two-thirds complete and a rewrite of a finished book she hopes to sell to a specific “picky editor.” Then the Muse interfered. “The wench has a Glock to my temple, and she just won’t let up,” Edie said.

I asked Edie whether she’d followed Karen’s advice.

“I did follow the Muse and write the \$#@# project. Whether or not that was a mistake is hard to say. I never did sell any of the three projects to traditional publishers. After I put my backlist up as e-books with some success (five years later), I decided to self-publish the books in question. Both the ‘picky editor’ book and the ‘two-thirds finished proposal’ have done very well, and I’m glad I was able to write them the way I wanted. As for the \$#@# project, I tried harder to sell it to NY than any other book I’ve written, but as I expected, no one wanted anything so weirdly cross-genre. I plan to self-pub it and would have done so already except that I recently brought in a co-author to add nonfiction commentary and he’s not finished.

“I can’t say the \$#@# project was or will be a success. But I *did* get it written. I’m quite certain I would *not* have written it if I hadn’t done so when the Muse had the Glock in place. If faced with this situation again, I think I’d base my decision on the importance of finishing the current project. If under deadline, either a ▶

publisher's or my own based on promises to readers, I'd finish the WIP first. If what I was writing wasn't a sure thing anyway, I'd definitely go with the Muse. Writing without a Muse in place is like paddling a kayak against the current. It's doable. But if the Muse is on board and you're going with the flow, you not only go faster, but feel like you're hardly working at all."

I expect there are other aspects of writing that one might be able to negotiate with the Muse. Maybe a writer needs to negotiate for more time to write the Muse-inspired story. Maybe a writer needs to negotiate for more knowledge about a certain topic or knowledge about how to handle a different type of story than he's written in the past in order to write the story the Muse insists comes next.

If one is negotiating with the Muse, listening must come into play. Pay attention to the ideas that come to mind and act on them. Karen took a job to ease some of the financial stress while she wrote *Night Fires*.

The Muse can be pushy, as we all know, and her timing often leaves us in despair at the thought of following her. "Really, sometimes you *have* to negotiate with the Muse," Karen advises.

JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children's nonfiction. Contact her at jaghi@rconnect.com.

Continued from page 13

METADATA 101: Back matter (the last pages the reader sees & another chance to sell — but be careful.)

Possibilities for back matter:

Mail list sign up.

Request for a review.

Links to your other books.

Link to your blog/website.

Excerpt from another book.

Copyright.

Acknowledgments.

Some advise that back matter should be no more than 5 percent of the entire length. Readers can feel cheated if they get to 55 percent of a file (the end of your story) only to find that another 45 percent is devoted to sales pitches! Obviously, a full-length novel will allow you more back matter space. A short story, less.

The savvy authors on the KB Writers' Cafe share their thoughts about back matter (they don't always agree about everything) here: <http://tinyurl.com/lg36llw>. Writers share examples of different approaches to back matter here: <http://tinyurl.com/ljyf8ea>. Another discussion of front matter and back matter and what information should go where is here: <http://tinyurl.com/qy5w6b7>.

From the first word of your title to the last period at the end of the last sentence in your back matter, metadata matters because metadata is one of the most important ways readers can find (and buy) your book. Ignore it at your peril!

Ruth Harris is a million-copy New York Times bestseller. Her critically-acclaimed fiction has been published in hard cover by Random House, Simon & Schuster and St. Martin's Press and in mmpb by Fawcett-Crest. Ruth has made her backlist available in e-editions and is publishing her new work directly in e-reader format. Ruth's newest book is THE CHANEL CAPER. James Bond meets Nora Ephron. Or is it the other way around? This article first appeared online at AnneRAllen.blogspot.com and is reprinted with the author's permission.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



One Down, Twenty-Nine to Go

“Welcome to home ownership! It makes health insurance seem like a bargain.”

— Mark Gerberick

My old high school friend Mark was perhaps feeling a little cranky when he emailed me that comment, since he had just done an involuntary swan dive down three flights of stairs, a feat soundtracked by his emphatic primal screams, while being pursued by cold water that was spewing forth from the pipes he'd been trying to repair.

My fear of such incidents was on the list of reasons I didn't buy my first home until last year.

Speaking of which — as you read this, I'm celebrating my first anniversary in this house! I bought it on October 1, 2012, after fighting my way heroically past bankers and underwriters whose reaction to my mortgage application was, “You do *what* for a living? Are you *kidding* me?”

So I've paid the first year of my 30-year mortgage. Only 29 years to go!

I'm happy to say that I've had no busting-pipes-leading-to-accidental-swan-dive incidents so far ... though there was a debilitating sewer gas leak my first week here, and a portion (a *small* portion, really) of my bedroom ceiling collapsed in a wet, chilly mess thanks to an improperly soldered gutter. But that all got sorted out. Since then, I have been living Happily Ever After in my enchanted castle on the hill. (Well, okay, no, in my renovated 19th Century townhouse on a small lot in a neighborhood undergoing revitalization.)

My peripatetic nature is another reason I never before owned a home. For much of my adult life, I was the sort of person who got anxious signing a 12-month rental lease. What if something came up and I wanted to move on in five months?

By now, though, I've been through so many moves and am so tired of packing and unpacking, they can bury me in this house. I'm here to stay!

Which means that *paying* for my new home is important to me. I find that having a mortgage—far and away the biggest debt I've ever owed—is effective at getting me to focus intently on income and earnings.

Which brings us to that topic so beloved among writers: money!

As a full-time, self-supporting novelist, money *always* topped the list of reasons that I didn't buy a home. For most of my career, I simply couldn't afford to purchase a house.

Two key factors altered that situation by 2012.

One of those factors, of course, is the rapidly changing nature of our profession these days. The evolution has substantially enhanced a writer's ability to generate income through old backlist, new frontlist that isn't under contract to a publisher, crowdfunding, increased licensing of audio rights, self-production of audio projects, and deals with innovative publishing ventures and media companies that work well with “disruptive technologies.”

My self-published backlist income, for example, accounted for one-third of my 2012 earnings. This income was crucial in a year when mortgage bankers and underwriters reviewed (yes, really) every single income payment I received for six months while they tried to decide whether they wanted to loan me enough money to buy a house. All things considered, I'm convinced that the steady monthly deposits from my self-publishing venture, as well as how that income increased my annual revenue, were crucial in my being approved for the mortgage to buy this house.

The other factor that made home ownership possible for me by 2012 was my decision in 2007 to shed literary agents from my business model. At the time, it seemed a risky experiment. Within months, it proved to be such an excellent business decision that it became a permanent career choice, and my only regret ever since then is that I didn't do it years earlier.

I started my career without an agent, only hiring the first one after making my eighth book sale. My income actually went *down* once I started working with agents. Although there were occasional fiscal peaks after that, during the years I worked with four different agents, I was usually broke and under severe financial stress. There were two key reasons for this: (1) As an agented writer, I never got as much work as I did before I started dealing with agents, or as much work as I've gotten ever since after I stopped dealing with them. (2) Agents took a 15 percent commission, which was a big chunk of my earnings; and in all but one sole instance, this was also a shockingly bad waste of my money.

For example, I paid 15 percent commission to an agent (who insisted on it) for an option deal at a house where I had already established a longtime working relationship by myself, and the agent did not get me better terms or more money than I had been getting on my own. On three different occasions, I paid 15 percent commissions to agents (who insisted on it, though I argued against their demands) for deals which I got on the table on my own (in two cases, with projects the agent had specifically declined to send out). I paid 15 percent to an agent who carelessly left bad clauses in an option contract (the terms were less favorable than my previous contracts at this house) and refused to go back to the publisher to get this fixed. I paid 20 percent commission on a foreign deal that I got on the table myself, after my agency pitched a fit about my doing business on my own—though this was a project the agency had declined to market overseas.

I added it all up recently, and I estimate that I spent at least \$20,000 on agency commissions that I should *not* have spent. That's a bigger sum than it cost me to get this house, so it's hard to avoid the conclusion that if I had not thrown away that money on bad agency commissions, I could have become a home owner sooner than I did.

That conclusion seems even more convincing when I consider the other factor in my post-agent career that has made such a difference in my finances: more book sales—and for better advances than I got while I was agented.

A key moment that led me to quit working with agents in 2007 was when I did a tally that revealed some eye-opening patterns. I had made most of the sales in my full-time, self-supporting writing career *without* an agent—even during periods when I was agented. My four agents had made only 30 percent of my sales; I had made 70 percent. Yet I had paid agency commissions on 50 percent of my sales—which struck me as too high a toll. The most interesting item in the tally, though, was that at least 40 percent of my sales were with books which various agents whom I queried or who “represented” me at the time all told me were unsaleable. *Forty percent* of my career income was based on books that I sold on my own after agents had declined to send them out at all, or which they retired permanently after 1-4 rejections, refusing to discuss those projects ever again.

Comfortably ensconced in the lovely home I can afford now, I did some more math recently.

Since shedding agents from my business model, I have made 11 U.S. book sales in six years; 10 of these sales are in a series that multiple agents, including two who represented me, all declined to represent. In other words, I wouldn't be having the career I'm having if I had relied on literary agents. And I am really enjoying this career! (I am also extremely happy at the publisher, DAW Books, where I've sold these 10 novels—and guess what? My third and fourth agents consistently refused to send my work to DAW.)

The remaining book of my 11 sales since 2007 was with a company where one of my agents convinced me to turn down an offer once, claiming they wouldn't go any higher on the advance; as an unagented author when they approached me again some years later, I got them to increase that sum by 240 percent. ▶

Ca-ching! Ca-ching!

Above all, I have saved a tremendous amount of money due to not paying agency commissions on any of those deals. After I deduct the sums I've spent since 2007 on legal fees for contract negotiations (and my contractual terms are better in my post-agent career, due to having them negotiated by an attorney now), I calculate that I have pocketed almost \$40,000 that I would have paid out in commission if I were still feeding and watering a literary agent.

Which is why I could buy a house last year.

Moreover, 2013 is turning out to be the most lucrative year of my entire career—and most of my 2013 income is from traditional publishers in good deals where I am keeping 100 percent of the income, less my legal fees—which 2013 fees were approximately 0.3 percent of my most recent advance, rather than 15 percent of all US earnings now and in future. Because of this, guess what I can afford in 2014?

Landscaping.

Laura Resnick's upcoming release is The Misfortune Cookie, the sixth novel in the Esther Diamond urban fantasy series published by DAW Books.

25th Anniversary Committee — Members needed

How can you help? We're looking at various PR and marketing activities throughout 2014 that will spotlight NINC to increase membership as well as ways to promote our members' books. Do you know any professional writer's blogs that would be good contact sites? Have you had experience doing Skype programs? Do you have a contact at Amazon or Barnes & Noble that could help with program or promo ideas? Would your publisher sponsor an ad for NINC members?

Contact Sally Hawkes, aka Sally Falcon, Sarah Eagle at sally@library.arkansas.gov