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President's Voice

By Julie Ortolon



Are you one of our many NINC members who got hit with a natural disaster in 2017? Or suffered a personal blow that is making it difficult to pay conference registration this year? If so, you are not alone. Times like these are why the NINC board created the Linda Kay West conference scholarship.

Each year, up to three conference scholarships are awarded to cover the cost of conference registration. To apply, simply email the Central Coordinator (CC) at admin@ninc.com. She is the only person besides you who will know that you have made this request. It's a completely confidential process and you don't have to give a reason.

On June 15, the CC will award the scholarships. If more than three people have requested use of the conference scholarship, the CC puts the names into a hat and pulls three. She then notifies the winners and lets those who don't receive it know as well.

The conference scholarship is a once-in-a-lifetime use and is funded by the generous donations made by our members. The CC keeps a list of who has used it and who hasn't. If you put your name in and aren't one of the three names drawn, you can apply again in a future conference year.

I'm so happy that NINC is able to honor Linda Kay West by offering this scholarship to members who are going through a bit of a rough patch and I hope to see you on the beach.

Julie

NINC Member Benefits

Don't forget to sign up for the [email loop](#), [critique/brainstorming group](#), and the members-only [Facebook group](#) if you haven't already. The Pro Services Directory, member [discount page](#), and [sample letters](#) are also great resources.

Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](#). You can also [propose an article](#), submit

a [letter to the editor](#), or volunteer to [be an assistant editor](#) and become part of the team. You can also [buy a paperback copy](#) of the 2016 Best of Nink!

Accessing the NINC Website

Not sure how to log in to the NINC website? Visit the login page here: <https://ninc.com/membership-overview/login-to-ninc/>

Julie Ortolon is a USA Today bestselling author of contemporary romance. First published by Dell Publishing in 2000, she has also written for St. Martin's Press, and Signet Eclipse. Since going indie in 2009, she has hit the Amazon Top 100 several times. One of her greatest joys is helping other authors find success. When not writing, she enjoys traveling the world with family and friends.

The Art of the Cover

Commissioning Your Own Original Cover Art

Part One: Your project and finding an artist

By M.C.A. Hogarth



As an indie/hybrid author, one of the most exciting yet daunting aspects is shopping for cover art. As an author and an artist, I've worked on both sides of this relationship. There are cover designers who create covers from vague concept to glossy final product, using stock photos or existing art resources, and this works for many genres; for the genres it doesn't, this series of articles zeroes in on how to commission and contract original art from a person who paints (whether that's on a tablet or on a canvas). Even if you don't decide you need that commissioned art for your cover, you might want to employ an artist to realize something for you: a logo, an iconic image from your story to put on merchandise, etc.

Deciding on style

Since your cover serves to inform a reader whether she's in your potential audience, your cover should clearly signal your story's genre, and within the genre, your cover should signal the category as well. All genres have tropes. Your first job, then, is researching your field. Identify authors writing books like yours and take notes on how those books are packaged:

- What font choices are typical? What colors?
- How much space does the writing take up? How about the graphical elements? Are they realistic or stylized?
- What information is on the spine, and what does it look like?
- What about the back cover?
- Is it dark? Light?
- Text-heavy? Image-heavy?
- Jagged, soft, etc.?

I find it helpful to take photos of the covers from a distance so I grasp the overall feel.

Your goal is for your book's thumbnail to sit alongside four others in the same genre and look like it fits.

Styles change; you will have to do this research continually. For example, in fantasy, for a long time an epic started out with a depiction of a scene on the cover. Then, when the author became popular enough to sell out the first edition, the new edition's art got smaller and the text got larger, and there were more pull-quotes from reviewers. When publishers launched the book into the mainstream, the covers went extremely stylized—a single abstract dragon, maybe—in order to appeal to non-fantasy readers. Finally, the covers started showing movie posters/TV actors when the book got popular enough to make the transition to film. Likewise, you'll notice that the more well known the author, the larger her name becomes, even larger than the title. Try to spot the trends in your genre. Ask yourself questions like, "At what point do covers cut off the faces on romance novels?" or "How much bare skin is needed to indicate erotica?"

A special note about text on a cover: books intended for physical bookstores almost invariably have a lot of cover text because it's assumed the reader is looking at the full-sized product. These books may look "busy" when reduced to thumbnails on online retailers, *but that's not necessarily a bad thing*. We assume books with lots of busy text are meant to be seen in person, and subconsciously we think of those books as having gone through a design process intended for bookstore sales. If you don't yet have a print edition, don't skimp on those pull-quotes or taglines just because they're unreadable at thumbnail size. Just make sure the thumbnail is *attractive*—that the extra text blocks don't bleed into each other or cover the important aspects of the design/art—and relax!

Scope of work

Once you've decided on your cover's style, you need to detail the scope of work: what type and what size. For instance, you have a choice of sizes in trade and hardcover. You also might want a wraparound cover where the illustration extends onto the back, or you might only want an e-book, so front cover only. If you're doing an audio edition, you'll need to fit all your planned design elements on a square the size of a CD jewel case. If you want matching interior art/design elements, this is the time to jot those down, too.

It is important to note that design is not art! The visual elements of your cover (the title block, the art, the graphic flourishes) have to be arranged in a design in order to work. Some artists will do both art and layout. Some artists only do one or the other. When you're planning your budget, make sure you set aside enough money for both tasks.

Finding an artist

So, you've decided what you want the cover to look like and what you'll need from your potential artist. Now you have to find one. Here are some avenues to pursue:

- **Check other books:** The great part about finding an artist by snatching them from an existing book is that you know they can do the work! The cover artist is usually listed on the copyright page (or sometimes in the acknowledgments). If they're not, you can take a photo or

image of the cover and use [Google's Reverse Image Lookup](#).(Or, I guess, you could shoot the author a quick email!)

- **Cruise ancillary media:** If your genre has other media, like games or merchandising, you can find artists by flipping through credits for those properties; a lot of artists do work for trading cards, storyboards for movies, concept art for games, etc. Again, if you can't find the credit, you can use Reverse Image Lookup.
- **Wander art sites:** You can also browse art sites. I like [Artstation.com](#), which is focused on portfolios and freelancers who are actively seeking work. You can also try [Conceptart.org](#) and [DeviantArt.com](#).
- **Consult your peers:** Finally, ask your fellow authors for help! Just make sure you ask authors who are working in your genre. That quirky artist who does New Adult college romance covers isn't going to be much help to the horror author.

When you find an artist, *don't stop looking!* There's no guarantee that artist will be available or affordable. Get at least three names before you stop. Or do what I do and keep adding to a list, so when you have a new project you can quickly consult it.

Contacting the artist

Once you have a list of potential artists, it's time to see who's interested. You want your query to contain as much information as possible so the artist can make a decision; no one has time for extended email chains. Here's what you should include:

- **Job description:** What are you asking for? Wraparound art for a fantasy epic? Full design-and-art services for your latest thriller? What size (does it take up the entire cover, or is it just a window)? Does it need to be print resolution? (Spoiler: always ask for print resolution, which is 300 dpi or larger.)
- **Scope of work:** How many books are you planning in this series? Are you seeking a long-term relationship or do you just need a single task?
- **Deadline/Job length:** How long before you need it done?

Here's a good template. You can cut and paste something like it for all the artists you're querying.

[Salutation of choice!]

I saw your work [describe where here] and you look like a great fit for one of my projects. I need a [description of cover/covers here], which will be [a standalone/first in a series I'd like a single artist for]. I need this cover by [date] ([but I can be flexible for these reasons, if I can be]).

Would you be interested in this project, and if so, what do you charge and when can you start?

It goes without saying that you should make it clear that you are paying for their services. As we all know, no one can buy dinner with "free exposure." Even if you're a bestselling author who has a lot of free exposure to hand out.

Evaluating the responses

How fast did the artist get back to you? Did the email arrive within an hour? A day? Two weeks? While everyone's definition of responsive is different, you want someone who gets back to you in a timely fashion.

How definitive was their reply? There's a big difference between "Sure, I can do that," and "I'm available beginning mid-January for a job that size, and I can be finished within three weeks."

Finally—how much do they want? The average I've observed for original cover art is between \$500 and \$1,500, US, depending on project size. These prices are complicated by several factors. First, the internet makes it possible to employ people in other countries. Some of them will be much cheaper to hire; others are going to be more expensive. Keep currency conversion in mind when you choose your artist, or your expenditure might balloon up by the current exchange rate. The internet also makes it possible to find artists for hire at every stage of their career: the go-getter building a portfolio might be cheaper, but also riskier (Do they know how to conduct themselves professionally yet? Are you fighting for their time with their college courses?). The high-end concept artist working for big gaming companies will probably be immensely easy and pleasurable to work with, but will cost accordingly.

A side note here, for US readers: a US artist working for you in this capacity is a contractor! So if you pay them more than \$600, you'll need to issue them a 1099. If they're not in the US, they need to send you a form stating that they don't live here.

Is \$1,000+ a lot to spend on art for your book? Yes, yes it is. But it's worth it: your cover is your number one marketing tool.

In Part 2, I'll walk you through a sample contract you can use to protect your investment ... and make the artist happy too.

M.C.A. Hogarth is a former vice president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, and the author of over 40 novels in the genres of fantasy, science fiction, and romance. She is also a professional visual artist, and doodles cartoon jaguars for fun. See samples at her website, mcahogarth.org.

Refilling the Well

Part two: Pushing through the shadow

By Michele Dunaway



Editor's Note: Part One: The Soundtrack of Your Life can be found in the February 2018 issue of Nink.

Back when students signed yearbooks, I would often write, "Don't be a hollow man." I'd also write, "Only shooting stars break the mold," because Smash Mouth's "All Star" would be a song some student would teach (my students teach songs as poetry as an end project).

Being an English teacher, I'd teach T.S. Eliot's "[The Hollow Men](#)," a poem my AP English teacher Claudine Vignery taught me in the spring of 1983.

Those last lines, which once you know how to find them, appear everywhere (the *New York Times* in Eliot's obit described them as being some of the most quoted lines by a 20th Century poet):

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

As I tell my students, poetry can be interpreted in many different ways, rather like how Shrek tells Donkey that ogres are like onions because they have layers. If one simply reads poetry and doesn't apply the lesson, both personally and globally, then one hasn't truly grasped a poet's intentions. It's why I also tell my students that poetry is the highest of the cerebral skills because it wants you to think. To learn. Apply. Grow.

So in a nutshell, T.S. Eliot's poem, which begins with hollow men who are leaning together, "Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!" is rather talking about the way we live our lives. Insert the words "my career" for "the world" and you pretty much have how every writer feels when things go amuck or look pitch black because lines close. Sales sag. Your agent dumps you. Your

editor no longer answers your emails even though she says, “Send me something else.”

While Eliot in 1925 concerned himself with decays of states, nations and humanity, the fact is, **the reason many of us fail is because we give up.** I understand, because for the past year, I’ve been at that point. Everything I’ve written has for one reason or another not been good enough. It’s enough to give a person a complex (thank God for the day job where I’m competent) and enough to cause someone to want to quit.

Things in our lives get too heavy—as Langston Hughes pointed out in his poem [“Harlem,”](#) which asks, “What happens to a dream deferred?” and then uses similes to tell how dreams dry up, fester, stink, crust over, sag and explode when people put them off. While Hughes spoke to African Americans who were up against more challenges than I will ever know as they tried to achieve the American Dream, the lesson here is also simply that **our dreams die because of 1) outside circumstances over which we have no control, or 2) because we haven’t nurtured or fought for them. We’ve set them aside.**

We get stuck in the shadow (another reason why I love U2’s “Stuck in a Moment”). Eliot describes the shadow in the last section, stating:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow
Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

We can pray all we want, but because the shadow has come between what we want and paralyzed us, we will never achieve it. There’s no hope for us unless we become men of action instead of hollow men. True, Eliot was talking about the world post World War I, but the same

holds true for our careers. At some point, life seems very long and the joy of our writing and creativity has, as Hughes described, “dried up.” All seems lost. As Mrs. Vignery said, “You have to push through the shadow.” Trouble is, that’s hard to do.

But unlike the Hollow Men, who when leaning together are “Shape without form, shade without colour/Paralysed force, gesture without motion,” when we authors lean on each other, we can push through the shadow and get things done. So let’s get going.

Picking yourself back up

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve gotten back up. When my most recent proposal was rejected I cried for a whole day. I’m not the only one who has been knocked down.

Author [Trish Milburn](#), who conceived of the private “Upbeat Authors” Facebook group, has had to reinvent herself many times. “I’ve learned through the years that I need time to process the news before I make any decision,” she said. “That’s what I did last year when I got the news that Harlequin was ending my line this upcoming June. I took about a month to process, to ask myself where I wanted to go with my career and thus what I needed to do in order to make that happen.”

Another Harlequin author whose line closed, [Laura Marie Altom](#), literally “took a Xanax and went to bed for the rest of the day.” Altom took the next day off too, ate a crapload of comfort food, binge-watched Netflix and “in general threw myself an excellent pity party,” she said. “I’m sure none of those are politically correct coping skills, but it is what it is.”

Afterward, Altom quit moping. “I got mad—and energized,” she said. “I’ve been in this biz since before email existed! My first manuscript was written on a typewriter! I’ve survived more rejections than I can count, plus had a front row seat to the demise of Precious Gems and Dorchester. Now that I’m a stronger writer, I’m determined to also survive the end of what for the past 20 years I’ve considered my day job.”

For *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author [Simone Elkeles](#), her black moment came when she lost a big contract. “I was living with an immediate family member with a plethora of mental health issues and it was a daily struggle not to be depressed,” she said. “The situation prevented me from getting focused on my contracted books. Sometimes life kicks us in the butt, and no matter what we do, the words on the page evade us. What helped me this time around was getting a used Apple computer off of the Facebook Marketplace and completely disabling the Wi-Fi/internet so when I use the computer, I’m 100 percent focused on writing. You can’t help what happens to your beloved family members, and sometimes your life gets sidetracked. Dusting yourself off and getting back in the saddle is the best thing you can do.”

Author [Nicole Evelina](#), besides citing wine and chocolate as her go-to source for a pick-me-up, said talking to friends and family is one of the best things she could do. “Their support sees me through anything,” she said. “Beyond that, for me it’s a matter of sheer determination. I know this is what I’m meant to be, because it makes me happier than anything else. If a reader/reviewer/agent/editor/contest judge/whoever can’t see the value in what I’ve written, that is their loss. I remind myself that I told the story that was asking me to give it life to the best of my ability. Then I focus on proving them wrong. The best way to do that is to move on to the next book and make sure it is even better than the last.”

We must remember that other artists have been where we are, and that we must keep going. We can't let the shadow suck the life out of us (like hollow men), or our circumstances keep us from nurturing our dreams (like in "Harlem"). Poet Robert Frost was a failure at pretty much every job he'd tried, including when he started writing poetry. His last-ditch attempt to make a success of being a poet was to move his wife and children to England in 1912 so he could take part in a new poetry movement (literally taking the "other road"). Yet, once in London, Frost questioned his choices. In 1928, he wrote "[Acquainted with the Night](#)" about that time of self-doubts, about how long before he was known as a great poet, he'd walk the streets of London after the rest of the world had gone to sleep:

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right
I have been one acquainted with the night.

[George Bennett](#), who taught English to students at [Phillips Exeter Academy](#) for 37 years (and now has a writer-in-residence fellowship named after him), spoke on this poem and the personal significance he found in its words during a time when he was hospitalized. He said, "And that phrase, 'acquainted with'—what a casual off-hand way of describing an ordeal... As I lay there in the dark looking toward the light, Robert Frost seemed to reach out toward me with his fortitude, and the poem seemed to include me with its courage, its triumph: 'I have been acquainted with the night.'"

When, in my life, the shadow seems suffocating, I remember that this poem is about (as Bennett says), "doubt or despair or pain or grief, this poem is about the night, was about the dark side of life that we must face—and outface." He continues, "There was no whining, no lament about fate, no excuses, no self-deceptions."

Frost's life wasn't easy, with children dying, family expectations and career struggles, but he pushed through the shadows to become one of America's beloved poets, winning multiple

Pulitzer Prizes and even reading at John F. Kennedy's inauguration. He showed, as Bennett said, "fortitude."

It's easy to get lost. Elkeles advises "Don't isolate yourself, even if it's your first instinct when bad things happen."

As the authors quoted in this article did, we must push through the shadow. The morning light is just on the other side.

Part Three will focus on how authors have survived career glitches, how to take care of your mental health, and how authors can pay it forward.

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With thanks to the authors who graciously answered my questions for this article:

[Laura Marie Altom](#) is a hybrid author of nearly 60 books in three different genres. She's been happily married to her college sweetheart (Go Hogs!) for 29 years and believes their boy/girl twins actively plot to drive her crazy! She is active on all major social media sites.

[Simone Elkeles](#) is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of 10 teen romances. Her book *Perfect Chemistry* was the RWA 2010 RITA winner in the Young Adult category and her books *Leaving Paradise* and *Rules of Attraction* were RITA finalists in 2008 and 2011, respectively.

[Nicole Evelina](#) is a historical fiction and romantic comedy writer whose four novels have won nearly 20 awards, including two Book of the Year designations. Her first non-fiction book, *The Once and Future Queen*, about how the character of Guinevere in Arthurian Legend changes according to social views of women, releases this month.

[Trish Milburn](#) is the author of nearly 40 romance and young adult titles for Harlequin, Razorbill/Penguin, Bell Bridge Books and via indie publishing. Visit her website to sign up for her author newsletter and find links to her various social media accounts.

In addition to writing over 26+ romance novels for traditional New York houses, Nink Editor [Michele Dunaway](#) teaches English III with a focus on American literature. She never gets tired of exposing her students to the classics and puts a literary allusion in every novel she writes.

Creativity & Criticism

By Denise A. Agnew



“I think I was 40 before I realized that almost every writer of fiction or poetry who has ever published a line has been accused by someone of wasting his or her God-given talent. If you write (or paint or dance or sculpt or sing, I suppose), someone will try to make you feel lousy about it, that’s all.”

—Stephen King, *On Writing*

Fear of criticism might be the number one creativity blocker in the world. No matter how much handwringing you do, it isn’t possible to completely escape criticism if you write stories, novels, poetry or screenplays. The quality of your writing won’t save you. There are plenty of trolls, or even well-meaning individuals, who won’t like what you say and how you say it, and they won’t take into consideration your right to say it.

The rub is, if you choose not to write as a way to avoid criticism, you still won’t escape it. Chances are you will criticize yourself.

The reality of criticism

Even the most famous writers encounter disapproval. In fact, the more famous, the more likely people will try to tear you down. How you face that criticism could be the difference between creating for life and giving up.

I could say to a writer, rather bluntly, that if they can’t take the heat get outta the kitchen, but this approach doesn’t help creative people to move forward, especially if they are facing a creativity crisis. Instead, they first must look at the types of criticism out there and how to deal with them effectively.

Past, present and future criticism

Writers are often haunted by past rejections: a grade school teacher who gave you a low grade on a piece of writing; or a college professor who said disparaging things about your

desire to write genre fiction rather than literary; or that person at a book signing who called your erotic novel smut or trash. Maybe your husband or wife doesn't support your ambitions, even after you published your novel. Your children continuously butt in when you've told them that your 30 minutes of writing time is sacred. Your friends give you side eye and mock your writing as less than important. If that doesn't stop a writer from creating, a dread of what *could* be said about your writing in the future can shut down creativity in a heartbeat.

With these channels of criticism in your way, the odds can feel stacked against you.

The biggest critic

At the end of the day, criticism from the outside world can only stop you from writing if you allow it. The worst critic is the one sitting on your shoulder with the pitchfork breathing the hell and damnation of doubt. You can find dozens of reasons not to create and to put everyone and everything before your own desire to manifest that story. Avoiding the pain of disapproval, even when it creates its own brand of misery, is one of the biggest creativity busters in the universe. When doubt reaches toxic proportions, it's time to take action.

How to battle toxic criticism & embrace fear

As a creativity coach, I have heard dozens of reasons not to write and can say without a doubt that they are all rooted in fear. Past criticism blows this fear into the size of Mount Everest, yet the writer doesn't even know it.

One of my instructors, the well-respected creativity coach Eric Maisel, says that toxic criticism impacts our ability to perform, no matter how that criticism was delivered. Maybe your friend or your mother or your husband didn't mean to deliver a nasty blow when they said mean things about your desire to create a horror novel. Yet if that criticism has the power to stop you from creating, it is indeed toxic.

A writer may react in anger, or she may avoid the criticism. She might choose to ask readers to take vengeance on the critic or write a scathing note to the critic herself. None of these avenues are healthy.

If toxic criticism is frying your circuits, how can you control it?

1. Think about the times you've encountered disapproval and criticism and note if those events have influenced and/or colored the way you attempt to create. By noticing patterns of thought and behavior, and by consciously working to change them into positive action, you can start taking control rather than the toxic criticism controlling you.

2. When you stop writing, ask yourself *why* you're stopping. What were you thinking at the time? Every time you hear the inner critic or the outer critic talking smack, write down your thoughts and reactions. When you see the pattern, you may have good information on what is stopping you.

3. Practice detachment. This is a tough one. When emotions boil up, being detached and mindful about what you're hearing is difficult. Remind yourself that the statement "no pain, no gain" is a reality. Not taking a risk can't save you from criticism. Practicing detachment eventually becomes easier. Soon that same criticism is far less likely to stop you.

4. Recognize that perfection isn't possible. Perfection is an illusion, and even if it wasn't, there would still be someone who doesn't like your brand of perfect.

5. Read rejection letters or reviews that famous writers have received. Note that most of these authors are still writing books. You can, too.

6. Recognize that some criticism can be valuable or not meant to harm. Was the criticism constructive? Was it done in a friendly and loving fashion? How well do you know the person giving the feedback? Sometimes how someone criticizes your writing can give you excellent and even valid feedback.

7. Never hide what you write. Take pride in what you're writing, no matter the genre. Over the years I learned people can sometime sense if you're secretly ashamed of your genre. Example: A person in my circle of friends likes to tease me because I've written romance. If they haven't seen me in a long time, they will inevitably say, "So, how are you doing? Still writing that smut?" They've been saying this to me for years, and they've never criticized me or treated me poorly in any other way. I decided to take that question with a grain of salt and not let it bother me. I answer, "Absolutely." This last Christmas they said, "Are you still writing that smut?" My answer was, truthfully, "Yeah, and I've added horror to it as well." Then I explained I'm writing horror screenplays. I'm not hiding what I do, and the satisfaction of that is enormous. I've also noticed that I rarely run into people now who are verbally critical of the fact that I write romance and horror.

8. Understand that some days you'll be afraid to write. On some days, fear and toxic criticism *will* win. Even the most "evolved" and mentally healthy writer will have days where doubts rule. Have a plan to work through that fear. If you are determined, fear can't defeat you, and that's half the battle.

If some of these suggestions don't put a dent in your inability to fight off toxic criticism, explore the possibility of creativity coaching or therapy or both. If your self-esteem has been damaged significantly by early toxic criticism, it might take a little more to untangle the threads. Don't give in or give up. Your creativity is worth fighting for!

Denise A. Agnew is the award-winning author of over 67 novels. Denise's novels Love From the Ashes and Blackout were optioned for film/TV by Where's Lucy? Productions. Denise is a writer/producer (Happy Catastrophe Productions/Bright Frontier Films/Where's Lucy? Productions), a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, Certified Creativity Coach, and RT Academy Mentor. As a creativity coach, Denise assists anyone in the arts to maintain lifelong creativity. You can find her at www.deniseagnew.com and www.creativepencoaching.com.

NINC Advice Column

This is a monthly feature that crowdsources writer-to-writer advice. Questions are posted on NINCLink by the end of each month. Answers of 100 words or less are due to the editor by the 15th of the following month.



QUESTION: In keeping with the “[Soundtrack of Your Life](#)” article, what is your #1 or favorite current song that gets you going, or gets you through a bad time, or makes you happy?

Gloria Gaynor – “[I Will Survive](#)”

It tells me and the world that no matter what is thrown at me, I will handle it and I will come out ahead.

—[Shirley Hailstock](#)

I keep going back to the duet from the “[Pearl Fishers](#)” by George Bizet, some of the most beautiful music ever written. I listen on YouTube and prefer the [Jussi Bjorling and Robert Merrill](#) version.

—[Rebecca York](#) (aka Ruth Glick)

“[Greater](#)” by Mercy Me. On any given day, this song, the snappy rhythm and words, lifts me out of the blues. I’m reminded that I’m pretty great after all.

—[Curtiss Ann Matlock](#)

My favorite song? There are way too many to name. Although, almost without fail, I hear Natasha Bedingfield’s “[Unwritten](#)” exactly when I need it. Every time I hear it I get motivated. Since I do a majority of my writing in loud coffee shops I keep my headphones plugged in to tune out conversations. (Unless I want to overhear some juicy gossip to use in my next book.)

But while I have my headphones in, I listen to music without lyrics: instrumental, Tibetan healing sounds, chimes. That way I won't be distracted singing along (and distracting other coffee shop patrons).

—Lois Lavrisa

Life can change in a moment. Over the past few years, this theme has reverberated throughout my life and that of my family, both personally and professionally, as my husband suffered a double stroke and I became a caregiver and I lost a major contract just as I became the sole breadwinner. The reminder in The Texas Tenors' song "Rise" to "find the strength you know you have inside and RISE," has often kept me going when I feel like quitting.

—Deb Kastner

My all-time favorite song is a good one for a romance writer—"Take My Breath Away" by Berlin, from the Top Gun soundtrack.

—Trish Milburn

I give myself a few hours to one day to suffer through a rejection or a bad day, then I listen to Chumawamba perform "Tubthumping" ("I Get Knocked Down but I Get Up Again"). It does the trick like nothing else.

PS: I do wonder if other people have to pull themselves up like we creatives. We should give ourselves a giant pat on the back just for that.

—Cherie Claire (aka Cheré Coen)

April question: How are you doing on those goals you set? What advice could you give others to recover if sidetracked? *Email answers with your name and website address to newsletter@ninc.com by March 15th.*

Tips for Researching Historical Fiction and Non-Fiction

By Nicole Evelina



I love research. A LOT. Like I could do it for my full-time job if someone would offer. (Hint, hint.) So it's natural that I gravitated toward historical fiction when I started pursuing writing as more than a hobby. Because why not give yourself ongoing, voluntary homework as an adult, right?

I was very lucky that in my senior year of college we learned proper research techniques. Everything from citing sources to using journal databases was covered, so I had a solid foundation. For the next decade or so, I cut my teeth on learning everything I could about Arthurian legend in order to write my historical fantasy trilogy about Guinevere. And in case you are wondering what kinds of things I researched, [I put together a list of things you need to know](#) about your time period when writing historical fiction.

I never thought I would graduate to non-fiction, but in late 2016, I was asked to give a presentation on Guinevere for Women's History Month 2017. Since Guinevere is fictional, I had to organize my talk rather than just giving a life story. I wondered how the character had evolved over time, and once I started doing my research, I had the makings for a book. That's how *The Once and Future Queen: Guinevere in Arthurian Legend* was born.

So here are some research tips I've learned along the way that might be helpful to others:

Use Amazon to your advantage

The first thing I do for any research project is look up the subject on [Amazon](#) to get an idea of the kinds of books available on my subject. If they don't have it, chances are good it will be a bear to track down. (Though not impossible, mind you.) As I go, I add to my "wish list" so I can easily find books I liked later on. [Abe Books](#) is another site you can use like this, though it is a little more cumbersome than Amazon.

Take advantage of the interlibrary loan system

Most libraries (at least in the U.S.) will allow you to request a certain number of books (my library's limit is five at a time) from other libraries with which they have agreements if they

don't have a book in their catalogue. Worldcat.org, a library holdings database, is a great tool to find out if any libraries near you have a book you're looking for. And interlibrary loans aren't just for books; you can request copies of journal articles, CDs, DVDs and microfilm that way as well. Check out your library's website to see if they have a form you can fill out to make a request.

Talk to experts

Don't be afraid to email people who are experts in your area. Most are more than willing to share what they know, especially if they know you are writing a book. My top suggestion is to wait to contact them until you have done your basic research so you can ask informed, pointed questions. I was very lucky that when I was researching my Guinevere books, I was able to talk with Arthurian scholar Sir Geoffrey Ash and Arthurian enthusiast Jamie George, both of whom helped Marion Zimmer Bradley research her famous book, *The Mists of Avalon*.

Travel, if you can

As author C.C. Humpries says, "There is memory in stone, in the places where the characters you hope to conjure trod." Places have an energy that remains even over centuries. Because of this, there is something about traveling to a location, even many years after your characters would have been there, that can't compare to all the internet research or looking at pictures in the world. Take in the slant of light and smell of the air and then translate that into your book; your readers will notice.

Journal articles don't have to cost an arm and a leg

If there is an article you want to read, first check Jstor.com and Academia.edu to see if they have it. If not, see if you can get it through your library's interlibrary loan system. If that fails, ask if that library (or another one nearby, like at a college or university, especially if you are an alumni) has access to a database that can get it for you.

Don't neglect theses and dissertations

They contain not only new theories and original research, but also often cite sources that will be useful in your own research. They can be hard to get a hold of, but many are available online or at request from the school at which they were submitted. Try Googling your topic plus "thesis" or "dissertation" and see what you get. If you know the school at which the paper was submitted, you can also see if they house their listings online. (Some do, like Stanford, UC Davis, Oxford, etc.) You can also try databases like EBSCO, ProQuest, OATD, or Global ETD, though they often require you to login. Your local public or college/university library might be able to help you get access to those for free or at a discount.

Remember to use the bibliographies and footnotes in your sources

Some of my best sources have come from the bibliographies in other books, at least in part because two people will approach researching a subject differently and people don't always have access to the same sources. If your source is more than a few years old, the author may

have had ready access to books/ articles you'll now have to search for because they are out of print or old, but at least you know they exist since they were cited. Sometimes awareness is as important as anything else in research.

If you are writing non-fiction, learn how to index your own book

This is especially important if you are an indie or if your publishing house would make you pay for it. It takes time, is tedious, and can be quite frustrating, but no one knows your material better than you do. Here's [an article I wrote](#) on my first foray into indexing and what I learned.

I'm not quitting historical fiction even though I'm already hard at work on two more non-fiction works: a biography of Catholic mystic Marie Rose Ferron and a book on the history of feminism in the United States. I'm expecting to publish the last book in my Guinevere trilogy this year and gearing up to work on a couple of WWII novels. And I'm just as excited about the research as the first time, though perhaps a little wiser, thanks to experience.

Nicole Evelina is a historical fiction, romantic comedy and non-fiction author whose four novels have won more than 20 awards, including two Book of the Year designations. Her most recent release and first non-fiction book, The Once and Future Queen, examines popular works of Arthurian fiction by more than 20 authors over the last 1,000 years to show how the character of Guinevere changes to reflect attitudes toward women. She's currently working on Mistress of Legend (2018), the final novel in her Guinevere's Tale historical fantasy trilogy and researching two future non-fiction books. You can find her online at <http://nicoleevelina.com/>.

The Author's Archive

By Lindsay Randall



Are you a packrat, or a pitch-everything type of writer—and in the end, does it really matter?

Whether you are a new professional novelist or a seasoned expert with a long list of titles and accolades, the matter of your archive is one you ought to consider.

Imagine an unfinished draft being published after your death, or a manuscript you toiled over for years and fully intended for publication being deliberately destroyed. The former happened to a work by Vladimir Nabokov, which he requested, on his deathbed, be destroyed; the latter happened to the memoirs of Lord Byron, which he'd expected to be published but were burned by his friends following his death.

Unless you purposely preserve your work in the way in which you want it to be conserved, you run the risk of leaving your literary labors to the whims of others. Addressing the matter of your archive puts the power in your own hands.

But what should an author keep (or not keep) and how?

Treasures in the “tracery”

An author conserving his or her own literary legacy isn't so much about narcissism as it is altruism. Just ask the scholars and readers who have spent time sifting through an archive in search of a deeper understanding of an author's world, or of how the writer moved from one thought to the other—or even of a spark of inspiration for their own work.

Dr. Thomas F. Staley, former director of the [Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin](#) and the man behind acquiring 25 years' worth of prominent literary collections for the center, offers authors this advice: “Whatever physical method you use to create your work, be it electronic or holographic, be sure to take the time to protect the process of creation. Your false starts, your preliminary notes, your sources. All of this material offers a tracery of the creative process, the trajectory of your imagination as you conceived and drafted your work.”

Staley's enthusiasm for the riches found within an author's collection is palpable. In fact,

this founder of the [James Joyce Quarterly](#) would often “sneak a peek” of the final page proofs of [Joyce’s Ulysses](#), which are housed within the Ransom Center.

Clearly, an author’s archive is more than just a collection of content stuffed into boxes. There is treasure to be found in the tiniest of details, and a wealth of wonder can be discovered, even rediscovered, with every visit.

“It is false modesty to feel your work is not important enough for posterity, even if this posterity is only for your grandchildren,” Staley adds. “The final published copy of your work is the end of the creative process; your manuscripts are the maps to how you got there.”

Anatomy of an archive

If manuscripts are maps, then all other materials are guideposts.

Brenda Marston, curator of the [Human Sexuality Collection at Cornell University](#) in Ithaca, N.Y., suggests that authors today preserve the same types of documents as in the past: acceptance and rejection letters, letters from fans and readers, correspondence with other writers and friends who influenced ideas, and drafts showing significant revisions, all of which “illuminate the writing process and the life of a writer,” Marston says.

By way of illustration, Marston points to the [Valerie Taylor Collection](#) housed in [Cornell’s Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections](#) and spans the years 1923 to 1997. It consists mainly of literary manuscripts and correspondence, but also contains Taylor’s unpublished works, drafts of speeches, book reviews, and audio and visual materials.

“All of these rich, personal documents combine to create a deep, vital, fascinating look at the life of this woman who supported herself and three sons by her work writing romance and lesbian pulp novels,” Marston says, adding, “I’d like to see more authors saving this kind of record of their own lives.”

A living example

In 2006, six banker boxes arrived at the archives of St. Bonaventure University in St. Bonaventure, N.Y. Filled with multiple drafts and galleys of at least three novels, the collection wasn’t the detritus of an author gone from the world, but rather from one who is very much alive and fully engaged in the publishing world.

Meet [John F. Carr](#), a publisher, biographer and science fiction author who began writing his first novel while a student at San Diego State University. More than 50 years and a house fire later, he has learned the value of archiving one’s work. What the flames didn’t destroy of his music and book collections, water and smoke damage did. Luckily, the majority of his writing archive was stored in his garage.

Today, [that collection—along with Carr’s latest work—is making its way to the archives of St. Bonaventure](#). His plan is that the archive eventually be “the summation of my writing career, from beginning to end.”

Carr, author of the nonfiction work [H. Beam Piper: A Biography](#) has become the recognized authority on the life and works of Piper, a science fiction writer whose literary talents continue to captivate readers 54 years after his death. Carr’s path to publishing the Piper biography was a long and winding one.

He began the work in 1979 when he was “approached by Ace Books to edit the four original collections of Piper short stories.” Piecing together the past of the very private Piper (who committed suicide in 1964, literally on the eve of the science fiction boom that might have brought him fame and financial stability) proved to be a colossal task.

The turning point for Carr—a moment he calls similar to “finding the Rosetta Stone”—was receiving an unpublished manuscript that contained the contents of letters written between Beam and his closest friend of 20-plus years.

“The collection contained over 300 letters between two compatriots, from 1925 to 1952, who shared their dreams, aspirations and failures,” Carr says, adding that with these letters he at long last “had the other half of the Piper puzzle and material from a period of Piper’s life where he was optimistic and working toward becoming a professional writer.”

What makes Carr’s creation of an archive even more interesting is the fact that he is continuing the Piper tradition as well as the story of one of Piper’s more memorable characters, [Lord Kalvan](#), in his own novels, which he publishes through Pequod Press, a publishing imprint he began in 1981.

Carr’s final archive will be a dual one, filled with his personal and original source material as well as the treasures he’s uncovered concerning Piper’s life and writing career.

Says Carr, “As a history student, I was taught that everything is of value—nothing more so than the unvarnished and unrehearsed.”

An archive is first a collection

Dennis Frank, archivist at St. Bonaventure University, says that an author’s archive is “described first as a collection” when it arrives at the library. The staff notes its scope and size, and from there, depending on the “perceived value of the collection and the time available to the library staff,” it will be cataloged.

Most collections will become a list of boxes and folders. “Particularly valuable collections, or pieces of collections, will be listed by item, but that is unusual,” says Frank.

It is during the description stage that the pieces of a collection are processed for preservation. “This may involve replacing existing files with acid-free material and removing metal clips and staples,” Frank says, explaining that the pieces of the collection “are stored in acid-free boxes and, ideally, in environmentally controlled spaces to enhance their physical longevity. Some materials may be microfilmed or digitally copied to avoid the self-destructive nature of some paper. Old news clippings, for example, are usually copied immediately as they will literally eat themselves as time passes.”

According to Frank, an archive can also demonstrate “the difficulty of putting a volume together, the obstacles to its completion.”

He points to the Carr archive and Carr’s work on the H. Beam Piper biography as an example that illustrates, piece by piece, the various issues that can crop up during the creation process.

“Documentation of those problems is instructive for students of writing and adds to the story of its subject as well,” he says.

A visit to the St. Bonaventure archives revealed the studious care Frank and Carr have

taken in conserving the archive. In crisp, accordion manila folders rest draft after draft of the stories chronicling Kalvan of Otherwhen, the character created by Piper and continued by Carr.

“Our collection includes correspondence between authors collaborating on a project,” Frank explains. “This shows the writing process at work as the two share ideas and the load of writing. There are also drafts returned by proofreaders familiar enough with a project to comment on larger aspects than single proofing would normally include.”

Frank warns that “not every copy of every proofreader is going to be of long-term value, but a representative collection for a particularly interesting piece, or the work of a particularly helpful reader, would be valuable pieces to save as examples of work in progress.”

Your voice beyond today

Whether you are pitching everything after reaching a writing deadline, or are a packrat who can't part with a thing, you might want to consider the matter of your archive rather than leave it to others who don't know your works as you do.

Consider what you want left behind once you are gone from this world.

Advises Frank: “It's important to recognize that every author's collection is different. Some are more valuable than others; that's the nature of life. What we don't know, especially at the beginning of authors' careers, is which ones are going to be the valuable ones. And sometimes we don't even know the answer to that question years after they pass away. All we can do is make our best estimation. Authors have to assume they're going to be among the best and save what they think will be of interest to posterity.”

Lindsay Randall—who has saved, for good or bad, nearly every scrap of information related to everything she has ever written—is the author of more than a dozen romance novels, including the award-winning *Phantom*.

Save That Data!

By Ann M. Tenglund

While working on a project, you'll want to make sure that you have regular backups. You can never have too many backups! When should you back your work up? Any time that you've done enough work that you'd hate to lose what you just did. Make it a regular practice to save a copy on your hard drive and then another on external media such as a flash drive or external hard drive, as well as to network storage or cloud storage. Remember that a printed copy of the work is also a backup.

Establish a regular backup schedule

Make sure to create regular backups of your work. For example, back up your computer every week in addition to the incremental backups that you save of individual files. The weekly backup should be all the data on your computer that you'd want to save (you don't need to back up temporary things, or program files—for program files, you'll want to keep the original install files so that you can reinstall them if needed).

Back up to cloud storage and also to stable media, such as an external hard drive. Have two or three hard drives on hand—the prices have dropped and it is good insurance for your data. Label them and each week use a different one for your backup. That way, if you have a problem and need to go back to work completed two weeks ago, you'll have that data. There are also cloud-based backup services available that have reasonable prices, such as Carbonite.

Also, keep the drives in different geographic locations. An off-site backup is safest—store one of your backup drives in your office, someone else's house, etc. If you are using cloud storage that you trust, it probably is not necessary to have an off-site backup.

And don't forget about files you might have shared through Flickr, Google Docs, etc. Be sure to keep copies of these in your long-term storage files.

Migrate data as you upgrade

For older material, you'll want to migrate it to your current computer as you upgrade. Keep in mind that today's flash drives and external hard drives won't be around forever and make sure that you don't forget about the data on them when you upgrade to something newer. Copy those files to your new computer, or at least ensure that the media can be read by your new computer.

Plan for tomorrow's software

It's also important to make sure that the data you have stored will work with today's and tomorrow's software. For example, if you have an old WordStar file from the 1980s, you'll have some work to do to bring it into a modern version of Microsoft Word! It is best to open your

files when you get a new version of your word processing software to ensure that everything opens okay. This isn't as big a problem these days, though. Most software will continue to read files from earlier versions. For example, Microsoft Word is backwards compatible, so it is able to open files from older versions back through Word95.

What do you do if you have one of those old WordStar files? If you have a printed copy, it might be easiest to scan it in, using a scanner that has Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. Many office-based copy machines also have a scanning function that can perform OCR. Modern OCR software is very good at turning a printed page into a workable word processing file.

Final thoughts

It sounds complicated, but you can safeguard a lot of things with just a couple of minutes a day as you work. Don't forget to keep printed copies of your work as well—you can always scan them later in if needed. And you can see, at a glance, if you have what you wanted to preserve.

Ann M. Tenglund is director of the Friedsam Memorial Library at St. Bonaventure University.

The Mad Scribbler

Eye of the Beholder

By Laura Resnick



“Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it.”

—artist Andy Warhol

Terry Goodkind, a #1 *New York Times* best-selling fantasy writer, recently made a [public announcement](#) about his new novel: *“Shroud of Eternity* is a great book with a very bad cover. Laughably bad. So let's have some fun with it. Tell us what you think of the cover... and we'll pick 10 random entries to win a signed copy of the hardcover.”

Thousands of people posted reactions to and comments on this Facebook post, which was shared or forwarded more than 800 times.

Some of the comments from Goodkind's readers sympathized with him over his disappointment in the cover and/or assured him they buy his books for the writing and don't care about the cover illustrations. Many of the reactions, though, sharply criticized Goodkind for publicly insulting the cover artist.

It's worth clarifying that artists in the science fiction/fantasy world aren't anonymous illustrators known only to a bureaucratic art department that never communicates with the writer. They're an active and central part of the genre culture. Artists and illustrators attend most sf/f conventions, regularly appear on programming there, and display their work in the art shows and art auctions that take place there. Most sf/f conventions host an artist guest of honor (GoH), as well as a writer GoH and fan GoH. In addition to their own organization's awards (the Chesley Awards, given out annually by the Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists), the genre's artists are also recognized by the Hugo Awards, arguably the sf/f genre's most prestigious writing awards; a Hugo is awarded every year for Best Professional Artist and also for Best Fan Artist.

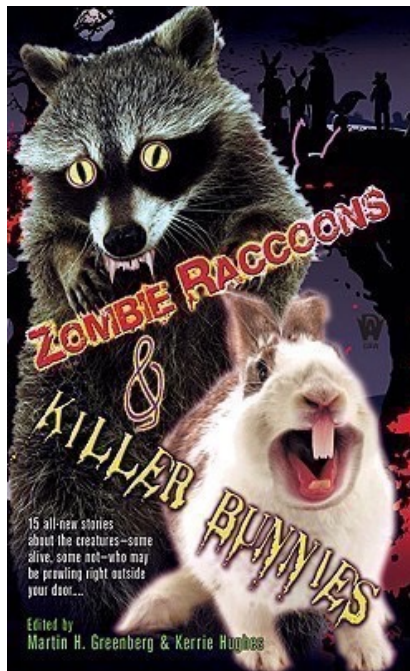
In other words, many people involved in the genre, whether professionally or as fans, are likely to be familiar with a given book's cover artist. Some will be fans of the artist's work, and some know the artist personally. Others will just feel it's bad form for a writer to publicly

disrespect his cover artist's work. As one Facebook commenter pointed out to Goodkind, what if the situation were reversed, and the artist was publicly declaring that his "very good art has been put on a laughably bad novel," for example?

So, overall, publicly announcing that the cover of your new sf/f novel is terrible is bound to be a controversial move.

Which is not to say that no one in the genre ever criticizes book covers. On the contrary!

In 2009, for example, DAW Books published a short story anthology called *Zombie Raccoons and Killer Bunnies* (eds. Martin H. Greenberg and Kerrie Hughes), and the book's cover certainly elicited some negative commentary.



New York Times bestselling writer Jeff VanDerMeer called the cover "a hot mess" on his blog. Hugo-winning best-seller John Scalzi described it as "arguably the worst book cover by a major publisher, ever." Fantasy writer and Hugo-winning blogger Jim C. Hines opined a bit more tactfully, "This is not my favorite cover from DAW." He also argued that Scalzi was going a bit over the top by claiming that this cover would make blood shoot from your ears. (Opinion about that still remains divided.)

Photoshoppers whose names have been lost to history offered up alternative possibilities for the book's cover; but none of these could, in good conscience, be described as a noticeable improvement over the original.

I, for one, think that doing visual justice to a title like *Raccoon Zombies and Killer Bunnies* may just have been a cliff too high to scale.

One of the contributing authors of *Zombie Raccoons* wrote plaintively to readers of his blog, "I hope you will find it in yourself to look beyond the vision of the cover artist, and pick up this anthology to see if the stories inside are worth your time. I'm positive you will be pleased."

DAW Books took the criticism in stride; a member of their team wrote that they had hoped the cover would amuse and provoke a smile... and, well, at least it got people talking about the book.

Let us never forget, though, that all art is subjective, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder (which is the only explanation I have for that whole “Gerard Depardieu is the sexiest man in France” thing). The book’s editor, Kerrie Hughes, commented, “I LOVE this cover. I’ve done seven books with DAW and this is my favorite because it is totally B-movie kitsch.” Moreover, a number of readers commenting on various online discussions wrote that the cover was hilarious and made them want to read the book.

So, I guess you never can tell.

Anyhow, although criticism of book covers is certainly not unknown in sf/f, boundaries are recognized, and many people in the genre decided that Terry Goodkind violated them by hosting a give-away promo in which he invited readers to vote on whether they agreed with him that his new novel’s cover was “laughably bad.”

The cover artist for the novel was certainly not laughing; [Bastien Lecouffe-Deharme](#) (a French artist whose clients include Random House, Tor Books, Orbit Books, Del Rey, Spectrum, *SFX Magazine*, *Popular Science*, *The New Republic*, *The Economist*, and many more companies) wrote on Goodkind’s Facebook wall, “What you are doing is totally disrespectful... In my entire career I have never seen an author behaving like that.”

Goodkind’s dismissive response to him concluded with, “I think there’s been enough pot-stirring for one day,” which seems like something the novelist should perhaps have considered before he put the pot on the burner in the first place.

[John Picacio](#), who is this year’s artist GoH at the World Science Fiction Convention, opined: “Authors, please take note, especially those new to the sf/f field. [This] is some of the most unprofessional behavior you will ever witness. This is a writer publicly throwing his cover artist under the bus... Never make the same mistake [Goodkind] just did.”

(As an aside, when Picacio won a Hugo Award for Best Professional Artist in 2012, he gave possibly my all-time favorite Hugo acceptance speech. He put the bling of awards in perspective by discussing great artists in the field over the years who’d influenced him and others while never even getting nominated for an award.)

Many readers reacted by telling Goodkind that he was being “incredibly rude and unprofessional,” “a disrespectful person,” “childish and inconsiderate,” and “a bully.”

According to *The Guardian*, which reported on the incident, “While almost 12,000 readers took part in the vote, some pledged to never buy another book by Goodkind again.”

The hashtag [#wrongtargetTerry](#) appeared on Twitter, where authors, readers, and artists criticized Goodkind for this incident.

And so the day after posting his give-away promo, which he did not discontinue, Goodkind issued an apology “to the artist, his friends, and of course my own community here,” and a clarification... in which he blamed his publisher, Tor Books, for packaging his novel with art that is “a poor representation of characters within the book.” His intention here, he explained, had been to “encourage my publisher to devote more thoughtful consideration with the artwork they wrap around my books. To more carefully value the characters and to be more

respectful of my work and the readers.”

Presumably his publisher is aware of his wishes now, since multiple people Tweeted about this mess to Tor Books using the hashtag [#wrongtargetTerry](#).

Look, many of us say things we regret, or take missteps because we don't really think through the ramifications before we act. In the era of social media, the consequences of such mistakes are often unreasonably harsh. I await the day when #Resnickscrewedup trends on Twitter, or when hundreds of strangers write angry comments in response to a poorly conceived joke of mine.

That said, publicly humiliating your cover artist is a bad way to handle disappointment with a book cover; and apologizing for doing so by explaining that your actual intention was to embarrass your publisher doesn't really clean up that mess. A writer who's disappointed with a book cover (and many of us have been there, for goodness sake) would be wise to eschew such public antics and instead discuss with his publisher (indeed, nag and push, if need be) how to ensure mutually satisfactory results in the cover process from now on.

In next month's column, I'll discuss the ways in which I have approached the cover process with various publishers. Some of it has worked out very well, some of it has not made a difference, but none of it has gone as badly for me as trying to publicly embarrass my publisher (or cover artist) would go.

Laura Resnick is the author of the Esther Diamond urban fantasy series published by DAW Books, as well as an epic fantasy trilogy previously published by Tor Books.

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Founded in 1989

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.

Founders

- Rebecca Brandewyne
- Janice Young Brooks
- Jasmine Cresswell
- Maggie Osborne
- Marianne Shock

2018 Board of Directors

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

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- Treasurer: [Mindy Neff](#)
- Newsletter Editor: [Michele Dunaway](#)
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- Kasey Michaels
- Diana Peterfreund
- Pat Rice
- Erica Ridley
- Marianne Shock
- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
- Steven Womack

2018 Committees

- *Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.*
- 2018 Conference Committee:
 - Conference Director: Laura Hayden
 - Program Director: Julie Ortolon
 - Sponsorship Chair: Rochelle Paige
 - Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
 - Registrar: Pam McCutcheon
 - Onsite Coordinator: Hannah McBride
- Authors Coalition Reps: Laura Resnick & Laura Phillips
- Social Media Coordinator:
 - Dianne Drake
 - Sue Phillips
 - Laura Hayden (conference communications)
- Membership Committee
 - Chair: Sarah Woodbury
 - Boyd Craven
- *Nink* Newsletter
 - Editor: Michele Dunaway
 - Assistant Editor: Susan Anderson
 - Assistant Editor: Heather C. Leigh
 - Copy Editor: Cynthia Moyer
 - Production Manager: Laura Resnick
- Nominating Committee:
 - CJ Carmichael
 - Steena Holmes
 - Tawdra Kandle
 - Pam McCutcheon
 - Laura Phillips
- Technology Committee
 - Nick Thacker
 - Elizabeth Ann West
 - Jamie McFarlane
 - Erica Ridley

- Discount Program Chair: Emilie Richards
- Volunteer Jobs (Just One Thing) Coordinator: Lois Lavrisa

Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Terese Ramin
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Address changes may be made on the website.

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