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a professional organization
of writers of popular fiction

 **novelists,
inc.**

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President's Voice

By Julie Ortolon



Author Advocacy. Those words are buzzing on the internet and in author email groups. It's something that I heartily support. Authors need to band together to have strength in numbers when fighting for our rights with those who have power over our income and our careers. In 1989, NINC started at a moment of change—when five professional authors joined together with one clear mission in mind: address the needs of career novelists.

Over the years we have banded together in ever-increasing numbers to fight for fairness in an industry that frequently takes advantage of individual authors. Today, we are an international organization with more than 800 members, all savvy, successful, hard-working career novelists. NINC brings our many voices and talents together for one purpose—to help each of us manage our writing career throughout a lifetime.

In the past, we have not shied away from taking on traditional publishers. Today, that fight includes retailers and self-publishing platforms. The abuses of power have escalated gradually over the past 10 years, since indie publishing became a viable business model for professional career novelists. There is a need for authors to negotiate with retailers for fairer terms, and there is a new group forming called the Indie Author Support Network exclusively for indie authors. We support their efforts, just as we support all writers organizations that protect authors' rights.

Any attack on authors' rights affects all NINC members, and as a global community of more than 800 multi-published novelists committed to the business of writing, NINC is an organization grounded firmly in the now—with all its opportunities and challenges—while looking to the future.

NINC has a long and established relationship with all ebook retailers. We welcome your input on how we can use those relationships to represent you. At this year's conference, we will hold a special Night Owl to discuss this topic. Come to St. Pete Beach prepared to brainstorm and share ideas.

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.

Self-promotion That's Not Selfish

Learn from selfless pros

By Heather Villa



As an author, your fan base includes writers who respect your talent and non-writers who read what you write. Your admirers and future admirers deserve to hear about your author-related news. Whether you avoid talking about yourself, or you've reached a tipping point of oversharing, effective and unpretentious self-promotion is possible. The next time you engage with an audience, be it newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or face-to-face, you'll know *what not to do* and *what to do*—because you'll have a strategy that works.

Don't neglect the business-side of novel writing. Discover the bigger story.

Novelists are entrepreneurs. To become an honorable entrepreneur, market your novel with humanity in mind. Brit Kolo, founder and marketing coach at [JAM Marketing Group](#), is an expert at helping clients fashion "feel-good" businesses. When asked to share a favorite self-promotion strategy, she highlighted an analogy from Donald Miller's new book, *Building a StoryBrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen*. While crediting Miller, Kolo said, "I'd say anytime you're promoting something you've created and you're allowing the customer to be the Hero in your brand story, you're doing it selflessly."

Think about this concept from a novelist's perspective. Could it be that the real hero of your novel is your reader, the customer?

Kolo also explained the opposite of a customer-hero strategy where "salesy" people position themselves as the Hero, acting as if the customer needs them desperately.

As a novelist, consider what you offer readers. There should be a reason someone wants to read your novel.

Don't shine the spotlight solely on yourself. Make your good news about others.

Instead of announcing, "Yay, it's my book's birthday," take the opportunity to separately thank your publisher, literary agent, editor or whoever else deserves recognition in your recent path to publication. You can even thank the book jacket designer. Also, remember the readers

who will be immersed in your words for countless hours.

Get to know your readers by hosting a novel giveaway. For author [Dan Gemeinhart](#)'s first giveaway on Twitter for his middle grade novel, *Good Dog*, he asked fans to tweet a picture of their dogs with any book and to tag him for a chance to win a signed ARC. Not only was this a smart way to promote his novel, but other authors shared his limelight. As pictures of dogs with books were posted, along with Gemeinhart's *likes* and positive comments, one could witness a community being built.

Don't brag. Let others mention your achievements, but also cheer on others.

Think about the amount of time you spend marketing your own work and the amount of time you spend offering words of encouragement or sharing others' good news. Legendary author of *The War of the Roses*, [Warren Adler](#), shares humorous writing-related GIFs and links encouraging articles on Twitter. If he writes a review of another author's work, he posts a link. Adler's modesty seems to propel the genuine connections he creates with his fans. He understands why it's important for writers to maintain humility and explains it like this: "An inspired fiction writer's muse thrives best in isolation and humility. Celebrity can be toxic, self-deluding and creatively destructive."

Long before [Tim Tebow](#) won the Heisman Trophy, there was a rule in his childhood home: Never brag about yourself. Tebow mentioned the rule in his memoir, *Through My Eyes: A Quarterback's Journey*. But there was an exception. If someone asked about another's accomplishments, the person asked could answer. You can probably guess how the Tebow siblings responded. They asked each other questions and bragged about each other.

There's a difference between mentioning your accomplishments versus someone else mentioning your achievements. When you promote another author, you're indirectly promoting yourself. Why not join with another writer or writers and make a plan to cross-promote?

Aside from Kolo's marketing coach position, she also has a knack for creating communities by promoting others, namely creative female entrepreneurs. She's the brains behind [Marketing in Yoga Pants](#), a movement that includes a blog, private Facebook group, interview podcasts, plus a recently added Pinterest board.

Can you think of a new way to spread your reach that includes connecting with others?

Don't seem too busy for your followers. Keep fans engaged.

Make fans feel like they're part of your world. Ask fans to tell you what books they're reading. And then tell them what you're reading. Adler has done that. While traveling, ask for restaurant or bookstore recommendations.

Author and speaker, [Jon Acuff](#) is known to make announcements on social media that the first person to find him at a specific airport gate will get a free book. When I messaged Acuff on Twitter and mentioned I'd like to include his creative self-promotion strategy in this article, he responded within two minutes: "Awesome. You should also look up [@Sheaserrano](#). He's brilliant at promotion."

I took Acuff's advice and discovered why [Shea Serrano's](#) self-promotion is noteworthy. By the way, did you notice how Acuff promoted someone else, without hesitation? Before Serrano,

a former ESL teacher, became a published writer, he generated a significant following. Writer [Eric M. Ruiz's](#) article, "[4 Marketing Lessons from Pop-Culture Writer Shea Serrano](#)," published in *Entrepreneur*, features an interview with Serrano. Serrano explained he created coloring book pages of rappers and posted them on Tumblr. A publishing company noticed. Eventually, he asked the featured rappers to promote his drawings in book form.

Even though both Acuff and Serrano are nonfiction writers, their approach to marketing work could serve as inspiration for novelists. Are there unique opportunities to meet your readers or for future readers to find you? Think about the central theme of your novel and if there's anyone who'd feel honored to promote your story.

If you don't receive fan mail, someday you will. If you're not already a *New York Times* best-selling author, humbly act as if you are. Respond when fans contact you via emails or social media. The response doesn't need to be elaborate and should only take a few minutes of your time.

Your fans will appreciate you even more when you offer what matters to them.

Extra credit homework:

For inspiration and encouragement, watch Warren Adler's two-minute video here: [Warren Adler #WriteOn](#)

Heather Villa is a former cartographer and told stories with maps before becoming a professional writer six years ago. Between assignments, she writes fiction. Visit [HeatherVillaWrites.com](#) or say hello on Twitter: [@HeatherVilla1](#).

What's in it For Me?

Traditionally published authors share the various perks they have received from their publishers

By Victoria Thompson



Working with a publishing company means, at a minimum, that your book will be edited, receive cover art and cover copy, and be distributed to bookstores and other retail outlets. Depending on where you are on the publisher's "list," you might also receive display placement in brick-and-mortar stores' new book racks, special sales incentives offered to buying accounts, or special displays with backlist titles. Not everyone will receive these extra perks, but many authors have discovered other things their publishers can and will do for them if they know to ask. NINC authors graciously agreed to share these "perks" so others will know to ask for them too.

Extra books

Traditionally published authors typically receive a box of "author's copies" of their book, usually a month before publication. Most publishing contract boilerplates have a number already listed, but that number can be negotiated. For example, my latest contract had 10 copies, but my agent had changed it to 45. Most authors surveyed had similar stories of asking for and receiving additional copies. Authors shared they had asked for and received as many as 150 author's copies to give away when they did appearances. Authors also use these extra books to send to reviewers, donate to libraries, for gift baskets at events, and as giveaways at speaking engagements. One author remarked that her publisher was more willing to give her more copies rather than to increase her advance! If you've gotten extra author's copies from a previous publisher, a new publisher will probably be happy to match that number, and no matter what number was in the contract, many publishers are happy to provide extra copies for events if an author asks.

Promotion

I have never met an author who felt her publisher did enough to promote her books, so here are some things a publisher can do that you might not have thought to ask for. Publishers have whole promotion departments and they are usually willing to design and even print things like bookmarks and postcards. I can't tell you how long it took me to realize this and ask for it! Our authors have also had the PR department design and make posters and signs of all sizes, on foamboard, for book signings and other appearances. They will also design banners and ads for Facebook, Twitter and other social media. If you buy your own print ads, they will probably design them for you, at least. You can also request ads in specialty magazines that have a tie-in to your book to expose your work to new fans.

The PR rep will also probably set up blog tours and/or interviews, if you're interested. One author who lives outside the U.S. reports that her publisher handles mailing books to U.S. contest winners to save her the cost.

If your publisher sends out ARCs to reviewers and you're highly motivated, you might want to ask if they'll include some swag that you will provide. One author provided scarves embroidered with a tagline that the publisher included with her ARCs.

Another author wrote a book that featured bull riding, and the publicist put together beautiful raffle baskets containing books, jewelry, purses, etc., which they donated to an organization that supported injured bull riders. These baskets were on display at all the Professional Bull Riders events across the country at the Rider Relief Fund table, creating great cross promotion for all the authors included in the baskets. Another series featured a particular restaurant, and the publisher allowed the restaurant to buy books at cost to sell. When I visited Alaska, every gift shop had a carousel filled with books that had Alaskan settings, so if you've got a tie-in to a real place or a unique occupation, ask your publisher to help you take advantage of putting books in unusual places.

Several publishers have begun marking author milestones, such as when an author publishes a 50th or 100th book. Even if your books are with different publishers, you can ask your current publisher to promote these milestones. One publisher gave away 80 copies of an author's new book to celebrate, even though that publisher had not published all 80 of her books.

Bookbub

Several authors reported their publishers purchased Bookbub promotions for them, which is an excellent perk and often results in a bump in the sales of an author's books. This could be an ad or a promotion and is a great way to find new fans, especially when your publisher is paying for it.

Book tours

Few of us will get full-blown book tours, but some authors reported that their publisher provided at least some help. One author had her expenses paid to bookseller conventions in the cities where her books were set. Another author reported her small publisher arranged a local launch party and paid for refreshments—and her publisher and editor attended. Another got her

Big 5 publisher to chip in \$1,500 toward a tour she organized and paid for herself. On another tour, the publisher provided an escort so she could make it to eight bookstores in one day! And when one author attended conferences or events on her own dime, her publisher arranged for her media interviews.

It's not exactly a book tour and opportunities are limited, but one publisher has partnered with Princess Cruise Lines to feature novellas set on a cruise. Three authors got paid to write the novellas, received all expenses paid Princess Cruises, and had their books placed in all libraries on Princess ships. Other authors have organized writing retreats, workshops or conferences on cruises, receiving a free cruise in exchange for teaching one or two classes per day.

Contract terms

Thirty-four years ago, I learned my first publishing lesson: everything is negotiable. If you have an agent, hopefully, s/he has taken care of those niggling contract terms that can be so troublesome, but just in case, here are the ones our authors mentioned in particular.

As more and more publishers are dividing advances into three or even four payments, many authors are receiving part of their advance "on publication" of their book. If you're lucky, publication comes about a year after you turn in the manuscript, but sometimes it can be much longer, which means years go by before you see the rest of your advance (not to mention royalties!). And if it's a hard/soft deal, at least another year will go by before the paperback version is published, holding up that portion of your advance even longer. One of our authors mentioned that she has written into her contracts that the on-publication payment will be made "upon publication OR 12 months from acceptance of the completed MS, whichever shall come first." In the case of hard/soft deals, where the paperback is published at some future time, on-publication payment for the paperback edition will occur "upon publication OR 24 months after acceptance of the completed MS, whichever shall come first." These clauses guarantee the author will receive her payments in a timely fashion, no matter how erratic the publication schedule may become.

Publishers like to hold onto subrights, even when they have no intention of trying to sell them. Another of our authors suggests a compromise clause for the contract that says, "This right shall revert to the author upon request two years after publication of the book." If the publisher has licensed the rights, the clause is irrelevant; but if they have not licensed the rights after a reasonable period, the author has a choice to get them back and sell them herself.

One of our authors was able to have the cross-collateralization removed from her contract. We used to call this "basket accounting," for those of you who have been around a while. If you're still not sure what this is, it's terrible for authors. Here's a definition: "When a publisher and author enter into an agreement, whether for one book or a series of books, there is a clause that deals with cross-collateralization that should be negotiated. This term refers to the provision that allows the publisher to recoup, recover, any unearned advances paid the author from Book 1 against royalties or monies coming due from Book 2. Or vice versa. Or any such other combination of books depending upon the nature of how the clause is structured."

Practically speaking, what this usually means is that, for example, you sign a 3-book contract and your advance is \$15,000 per book, for a total of \$45,000. Your contract says you'll

receive 1/3 of the total (\$15,000) on signing, one third of the advance for each book on the acceptance of that book (@\$5,000) and one third on publication for each book (@\$5,000). When the first book comes out, you will have received \$25,000 (\$15,000 signing + \$5,000 d/a + \$5,000 on pub). If you have separate accounting, Book 1 will only have to earn its own \$15,000 advance back before you start to receive royalties for it.

However, if you have cross-collateralization, before you receive any royalties, Book 1 will have to earn out the entire \$25,000 you have already received or maybe even \$30,000 if you've turned in Book 2 and received acceptance money for that by now, too. Then Book 2 is published and you turn in Book 3 and the counter starts over again, and if one of the books doesn't earn out its own \$15,000, the other books will have to cover the shortfall before you see any royalties. Years will pass before you see royalties. So negotiate this out of your contracts.

Finally, in our current publishing market, authors should always keep our options open, so one of our authors recommends removing the "non-compete" clause from your contracts.

Little extras

One of our authors reported that her publisher has been extremely helpful in dealing with book pirating, working with a third party to whom authors can submit suspicious links for investigation. Ask your publisher if they can help with this.

And finally, one author reported that the first time she attended the Malice Domestic Conference, her publisher paid for her banquet ticket.

While we probably won't get everything we'd like, we should know what others have received so we know what's available. Remember, it never hurts to ask!

Many thanks to the authors who shared their perks:

Heather Burch
Patricia Burroughs
Laurie Alice Eakes
Jessica Estevao
Alyssa Holliday
Anne Gracie
Anna Jacobs
Cat Johnson
Suzanne Johnson/Susannah Sandlin
Katie MacAlister
Dana Marton
Ashley McConnell
Vickie McDonough
Diana Peterfreund
Laura Resnick
Lea Wait
Anna Loan-Wilsey

Victoria Thompson is the bestselling author of the Edgar ® and Agatha Award-nominated *Gaslight Mystery Series* and the new *Counterfeit Lady Series*. Her latest books are *Murder in the Bowery* and *City of Lies*. She has published 21 mysteries and 20 historical romances and contributed to the award-winning textbook *Many Genres, One Craft*. She currently teaches in the master's degree program for writing popular fiction at Seton Hill University. Victoria is a founding member and past president of *Novelists, Inc.*, *Pennwriters*, and *New Jersey Romance Writers*. She lives in Illinois with her husband and a very spoiled little dog.

Rewarding the Creative Spirit

Rewards

By Denise A. Agnew



“Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout with some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand.”

—George Orwell

George Orwell’s quote seems like doom and gloom. Yet, he’s talking about something many fiction writers can understand. Most writers have an experience with writer’s block or exhaustion where the ideas aren’t forming. Maybe, in your case, it isn’t that you don’t have ideas and that you’ve got writers’ block. In fact, you just finished a book. Time to start the next one, right?

Maybe not.

While the urge to write the next book is often strong, maybe you shouldn’t do it immediately. Perhaps all you need is to renew your creative spirit because your chances of encountering a writer’s block actually increases if you *don’t* take periodic vacations from the writing schedule.

Many of us have tried going to the library, having a picnic, hiking, and touring a museum in order to boost our creativity. All of these adventures could nourish your spirit. I’m happy to say, though, that there are alternatives, especially if you’ve tried all of the above. Each of the ideas below could be the next boost you need to keep your creative life on track.

Ways to renew your spirit

Take a week off

Maybe you don’t have a week to spare, but the advantages of putting some time between you and the next project can be enormous. You can return to the project you just created with a fresh perspective. This might be a good time to take the vacation you’ve promised to yourself.

Read outside of your genre

All of us can get in the rut of reading only one genre. Consider thinking outside of the box. If you're always reading fiction, try reading non-fiction. Whatever it takes, discover at least one story outside of your genre and dig into it. Creativity is generated more by exploration than conformity.

Plan a staycation

If you can't afford to leave town for a vacation, you could choose to stay home and spend a week of relaxation, reading, or sleeping.

Binge on TV or a movie

Is there a television show you've wanted to watch for some time? Or a movie you've longed to see? Treat yourself. Binge on that show. Take yourself out to that movie or rent it at home.

Drink/eat/cook

Celebrate your accomplishment with a glass of your favorite beverage. Grab that latte or bottle of wine. Eat that ice cream or cupcake. Have that goodie as a reward for your hard work. Cook your favorite dish whether anyone else in the house likes it or not.

Ban social media and/or news media

Banning social media for a day (or longer), can go a long way toward refreshing your perspective. Leaving out the daily round of news can also go a long way to clearing the noise in your head. You could take a day off or a few days off and see an improvement in your attitude and energy level.

Re-engage with hobbies/start a new one

Who says you can't find time for the hobby you've always wanted to try? Now is the time to explore the possibilities. If you've neglected a hobby, get back into it with enthusiasm if it is something you'd still like to do.

Meditation/exercise

I've mentioned meditation before as a good way to reduce stress. If you can snag 30 minutes a day for meditation or exercise, you may discover that either or both generate new ideas. You might feel better physically and ready to take on the next challenge.

Stillness

What if you hate to meditate? Stillness might work as well. Start in little chunks. Sit somewhere quiet for 10 minutes. Don't read, watch television, or write. Just sit. Allow your mind to wander. Breathe deeply. Relax. Allow thoughts to wash over you without attaching negative meanings to what you're thinking. After 10 minutes of stillness, your body and mind

will thank you.

Notice nature

Finding a connection with nature every day is a good thing. Stop and look at a tree. Really look at it. Observe all the things you would normally ignore. Examine a flower or a cloud. A story idea could pop into your head.

Write down all ideas

No matter when you get an idea, if you get an idea for a project, write it down. Never ignore an idea, even if it sounds crazy. Don't judge the idea, because you might discover later it is a true gem in disguise. Get a notebook, or a Google Doc, or something and write that idea down.

Spend time with upbeat writers

It's said that misery loves company. So does optimism. Upbeat people have a way of looking at the world that can rub off and improve your mood. A glass-half-full outlook can go a long way toward improving creativity. Spending time with negative "yes, but" people lowers your chances of feeling positive about your own environment and reacting creatively.

Call that friend or family member

Is there a friend you haven't called in months? How about family? Connection with people you haven't talked to in a long time can improve your mood and therefore creativity.

Enjoy

Now you have a new arsenal of creativity at your disposal. Don't forget to advocate for yourself every day and be on the lookout for ways to renew the creative well.

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: What is your go-to or “best choice” promotional strategy?

“The best promo tool, if you can get one, is a Bookbub feature with other ads stacked around it for a week. Use your newsletter, blog and social media to tell people about it. Be willing to accept international features, not just U.S., and you’ll have a better chance. As an indie author, speaking at events/going to conventions is a great way to get sales and meet new people. Be friendly and make sure you have a concise way to explain what your books are about. And don’t be on your phone at your table! People want to connect.”

—[Nicole Evelina](#)

“I’m very lucky in that I have many books and can get Bookbub features fairly often. I also use Twitter, Amazon Ads and Facebook Ads.”

—[Cynthia Woolf](#)

What’s up next? Watch Ninclink for the new question around May 6-8. If you have questions, send them to newsletter@ninc.com.

Those Who Can, Teach

Teaching writing classes for fun and profit

By Mindy Klasky



As a professional writer, you excel at many things, including craft, marketing, and career management. With some advance planning, you can create meaningful in-person or online classes, sharing your hard-won experience with other writers.

Examining class structure

How to disseminate information matters, so consider the following questions to help you structure your class. Is your subject matter narrow and therefore suitable for a single session? Or is it broad and best learned in multiple sessions? Even if your topic is narrow, can you create a linked set of classes? (Just as it's easier for authors to market a book series rather than single titles, it's easier for teachers to attract known students rather than finding new enrollees for wholly separate classes.)

If your course ideas lend themselves to single sessions, can you create a grouping such as Introduction, Journeyman, and Advanced? Or can you unite a series of single-session ideas using market realities such as Traditional Publishing, Self-Publishing, and Hybrid Publishing? What about linking related ideas—Developing Heroes, Developing Heroines, and Developing Settings as Characters?

That in-person connection

Once your subject matter and structure is clearly defined, decide where to offer your class. Common in-person engagements include writers groups, often sponsored by public libraries or independent bookstores. Local chapters of some national organizations [such as Romance Writers of America (RWA)] also have regular meetings, and many are eager to host speakers.

National conferences such as the [NINC Conference](#), [RWA Nationals](#), or the [SFWA Nebula Conference](#) provide additional opportunities for in-person instruction. Similarly, book festivals may offer writing tracks. Typically, those events have a limited number of slots, and competition to present may be strong. Some require submission of teaching materials nearly a year in

advance of the conference.

Finally, some authors teach writing-related courses through more general education venues such as county extension programs, universities, or museums. These speaking opportunities are typically the most competitive of all; most are reserved for instructors with a proven track record, and some require advanced academic degrees.

Going wide with online communication

Online classes provide instructors the opportunity to reach a large number of students in a variety of locations. Online courses may take many forms—written, audio, or video.

Beginning instructors may feel more comfortable teaching online classes sponsored by established organizations. For example, many RWA chapters offer online classes to both their members and the public at large. The chapter takes care of setting up online classrooms, promoting the class, and receiving tuition.

Other instructors offer online classes directly to students. Those instructors must decide how their classes will be delivered. Options include email, Yahoo Groups or Google Groups, Facebook Secret Groups, Google Hangouts, and custom-created electronic classrooms hosted on the instructor's website or elsewhere. More obscure venues may require more hand-holding of students, helping each class member log in, receive course materials, participate in discussions, etc.

What the market will bear

Each instructor must determine the cost, if any, for every class. Of course, some instructors provide their classes for free. They might be testing new course material or volunteering their time for an organization they support. Some free classes are "loss leaders" for other, fee-based classes.

Some organizations have a tradition of offering relatively inexpensive classes, and they don't allow instructors to vary from their set fees (typically one low price for chapter members and a slightly higher price for non-chapter-member students).

Classes sponsored by a third party may be offered on a flat-fee basis, where instructors receive a one-time payment. Other sponsored classes work on a tuition split, often 50 percent for the sponsoring organization and 50 percent for the instructor. For in-person classes, instructors might also be reimbursed for travel and hotel expenses.

Instructors who work independently set their own prices, but should first review other classes offered on similar topics or to similar groups of students. Many instructors set their standard price relatively high, so they have room to offer one or more discounts and still make a satisfactory profit.

Playing banker

Instructors who offer classes directly to the public must determine how to collect tuition. In-person collection is straightforward. Instructors arrive at the venue with small bills to make change. Some people accept personal checks, although there is a risk that some checks will

bounce. If credit cards are accepted, arrangements should be made for the internet access that is mandatory for payment systems like Square.

Receiving payment for online classes presents a greater challenge for the instructor working alone. Some people use PayPal, providing a direct link to their account and requiring payment before they give access to course materials. This method has the advantage of receiving payment promptly. Some authors, though, maintain PayPal accounts in different names than their students will recognize (e.g. real names as opposed to pen names). Also, some students may become frustrated or concerned if they don't receive course materials immediately upon making a PayPal payment. Instructors may need to monitor their accounts full-time.

As an alternative, instructors can sell course registration through a third party. [Eventbrite](#), for example, allows people to create multiple categories of "tickets" for teaching events (e.g., access to written materials alone, access to live presentations, access to Q&A sessions, and private consultations). Instructors can also create multiple coupons, providing discounts for a range of time periods or for different categories of students (e.g., early bird registrants or NINC members). Eventbrite charges service fees, which can be passed on to ticket-buyers. Be aware these third party vendors hold all funds until after events end, which may create cash-flow challenges, especially for long-running multi-session classes.

What can go wrong will go wrong

Whether you are teaching in person or online, you should prepare back-up options for things that go wrong. For in-person events, prepare written handouts to supplement the online access you expect to have. Request a microphone if you'll be speaking to more than 20 people and keep throat lozenges ready in case the microphone fails. Bring your own supply of fresh water to fend off coughing fits. If you tend to spill food on your clothes, keep a second outfit available.

Similarly, protect against failure in online events. Develop a back-up plan if your primary technology fails, including borrowing or renting a secondary computer. Maintain alternate means of contacting your students, including an email list in case your electronic classroom goes dark. Understand the technology behind your course platform and identify support personnel before your class begins.

Reviewing and protecting against all potential points of failure isn't easy. Nevertheless, time spent structuring a course can be worthwhile in terms of sharing hard-won knowledge, building a reputation, and earning an alternative stream of income from your writing career.

USA Today bestselling author Mindy Klasky learned to read when her parents shoved a book in her hands and told her she could travel anywhere through stories. As a writer, Mindy has traveled through various genres, including light paranormal, hot contemporary romance, and traditional fantasy. In her spare time, Mindy knits, quilts, and tries to tame her to-be-read shelf. Visit Mindy at www.mindyklasky.com.

The Mad Scribbler

Since you asked...

By Laura Resnick



“Unity among the herd makes the lion lie down hungry.”

—African proverb

I just realized with astonishment that the 30th anniversary of my first book sale recently came and went without my even noticing it.

Holy longevity, Batman! I have been a professional writer for *30 freaking years*.

I think I need to lie down for a moment.

Given how many times over the years I have found myself hanging onto my career by my fingernails while dangling over a chasm of existential despair, I am stunned to realize I have been in the business for three decades. Ever since 1988, I have been earning income year after year—and most years, it has been the majority of my income—by *writing*.

I don’t remember the exact date of my first sale anymore. I think I accepted the offer over the phone in February 1988 and signed the contract in March. In any case, I was definitely under contract by May of that year—to Silhouette Books, with a novel called *One Sultry Summer*, subsequently published under the pseudonym Laura Leone in the Desire imprint.

I was 25 years old, living in a *very* basic granny flat above a garage, working several jobs, and I had just upgraded from writing by hand (and then typing my manuscripts on a manual typewriter) to writing on an electric typewriter. I wouldn’t start writing on a computer until my third or fourth book, when I got a hand-me-down DOS computer from my dad, who was upgrading to a newer one.

Also, dinosaurs still roamed the earth.

The following year I joined Novelists, Inc., which was then forming. I’ve been a member since, and I’ve volunteered in NINC in many capacities over the years (including NINC president, for my sins).

These days I volunteer as one of NINC’s two representatives on the Authors Coalition of America (ACA), which is a partnership of 22 organizations comprised of authors, artists,

songwriters, and photographers. Together, our organizations represent nearly 100,000 people. Founded in 1994, ACA formed to collect and distribute copyright holders' share of foreign royalty payments for American works that were being photocopied abroad without reference to rights or ownership.

There are specific rules about how ACA's member organizations may use their shares of these funds—the short version is, the money must be used to benefit an organization's overall membership, not to cover operational expenses. NINC and its members have benefited significantly over the past 24 years from the funds that we've been able to collect as part of this multi-org coalition.

One thing that all these years of being a working writer has certainly taught me is that—at the risk of sounding like a political campaign commercial—we really are stronger together.

Indeed, over the course of my career, I've seen so many examples of this principle. To cite just one, backed by a large group of authors, three women organized against Harlequin Enterprises by filing a class action suit maintaining that Harlequin Enterprises breached a material provision in the class members' book publishing contracts with Harlequin, thereby depriving class members of a portion of the royalties to which they are entitled for the publication by Harlequin of their romance novels as ebooks; the publisher finally agreed to settle after several years. What lone author acting by herself could have gotten Harlequin to pay up?

As time has marched on, along with technology, the Authors Coalition of America has developed an interest in changes in copyright legislation, public policy that affects authors, and the rights of creators. In the most recent ACA policy meeting I attended (a monthly conference call), various member organizations shared information on successful advocacy efforts (such as getting deadbeat publishers to pay) and concerns about intellectual property (such as a new type of rights grab seen in a few contracts lately).

Advocacy against big publishing corporations requires many writers joining forces to face down such leviathans.

So, I am pleased to read in Julie Ortolon's *Nink* column this month that she affirms, as NINC president, our organization's support for a newly forming advocacy initiative, the Indie Author Support Network. The more of us there working toward the same or similar advocacy goals, the better.

Ortolon also writes in this month's president's column, "NINC has a long and established relationship with all ebook retailers. We welcome your input on how we can use those relationships to represent you."

Well, since you *asked...*

I have suggested this before and am now suggesting it again: I urge NINC to negotiate with Amazon to assign a Kindle Direct Publishing service representative (or team of them) to be the direct contact person(s) at KDP for all NINC members.

Yes, I know that some writers have their own KDP contact or Amazon rep. But I don't. Most of the writers I talk to regularly don't have one, either. And *we need someone*.

My usual experiences of communicating with Amazon are frustrating, time-consuming, and unprofessional. To give one example I've cited before, one day a publisher told Amazon

that my self-published ebook edition of an old out-of-print novel, which that house had previously released, was a violation of their licensing rights. So Amazon removed the book and sent me a threatening letter.

However, the publisher was wrong, and I had documents to prove it. (In fact, after I *finally* got the publisher's legal department to communicate with me, they agreed with me that all rights had reverted to me.) Nonetheless, despite my daily sending Amazon my reversion documentation, Amazon wouldn't reinstate my ebook.

My calls and emails to Amazon about this situation kept getting randomly distributed to a long series of various generic, underpaid, hourly wage employees. I never dealt with the same person twice, so every time I tried to resolve this situation, I had to start by explaining it all over from scratch. Which was pointless, as it happens, because none of these first-line-of-defense employees even knew what "reversion" meant, and none of them had the authority to reinstate my ebook.

My title was unavailable for weeks because of this nonsense. The solution was to get my former publisher's legal department (*finally!*) to write to Amazon to withdraw their objection to my ebook; and that was a time-consuming nuisance, too, since the publishing house was every bit as committed to ignoring me as Amazon was.

I cling to the belief that all of us could resolve situations like that much more efficiently, and with much less hair pulling, if we dealt with one person (or one set of people?) consistently at KDP, and if that person was aware of what NINC is and that its members are experienced professionals. Oh, and here's a crazy thought! It would also help if our KDP contact(s) knew something about publishing and rights.

Even less complicated problems than "they won't let my ebook be published" become such headaches due to my having no specific contact or rep to deal with at KDP. For example, I misunderstood the instructions the first time I posted an ebook for pre-order sales on Amazon, so I selected the wrong date. Then Amazon automatically locked down the book, preventing any changes, so that I couldn't fix my mistake.

Imagine the sanity of having a name and number I could call to say, "I screwed up when entering the publication date. Can you please get this unlocked so I can fix it?" And that person would be responsive, recognizing that as a NINC member, I should be treated seriously.

Also, isn't everyone tired of the silly hoops you have to jump through to make an ebook available for free on Amazon in time to coordinate with advertising and promotions? Wouldn't it be great if we had a NINC-specific rep whom we could contact to say, "I am a NINC member, and I want to make this book available free on the following dates" and be accommodated promptly?

When you get a letter from Amazon damning you to the fifth circle of hell because they're hysterically convinced you've Done A Bad Thing, or when an organized group of trolls leave 20 one-star reviews on your book in a single day because they're enraged about your latest Tweet, or when you discover someone is plagiarizing your work on Amazon, or putting your name on books you didn't write (ex. for reasons we've never figured out, I was once listed for weeks on Amazon as co-author of my friend David Coe's novels)... In these and so many other scenarios, what a time-saving relief it would be to know exactly who to contact to start resolving the

problem.

It would be beneficial to have a NINC-specific rep at the other major book retailers, too, for all the same reasons. Whether a problem arises at iBooks, BN.com, Kobo, or other major vendors, it would be great to get prompt, competent help for a professional problem upon contacting a specific person and saying, "I'm a NINC member."

In case you missed her mentioning it, Laura Resnick has been selling books for 30 damn years.

September 26 - September 30, 2018



Join us for *NINC 2018: Craft Your Perfect Career* to discover the latest strategies and insights, from marketing innovations to high-level craft to running your business as smoothly and effectively as possible.

As the publishing world continues to evolve, so must the careers of successful novelists. Whether your business model is being hands-on with all aspects of your career or partnering with a team to allow you to focus on writing, authors have more options than ever.

In September 2018, come discover the latest tools, maximize your publishing relationships, hone effective strategies, exploit opportunities, and rocket your career to the next level!

Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/>

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Hotel information: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/conference-hotel/>

Membership Benefits

Need industry intel, software, or legal help? We've got you covered.

Are you taking advantage of all your member benefits?

As a NINC member, your benefits include industry discounts, newsletter and website articles, professional services directory, networking opportunities, and more.

We've compiled all of these—which you can also find on our website—into this list as a helpful reminder.

Networking

The email list for Novelists, Inc. members: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/NINCLINK/info>

Join our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/>

We offer a critique/brainstorming group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NINKcritique>

Follow NINC on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Novelists_Inc

Conference 2018: Craft Your Perfect Career

Conference information: <https://ninc.com/conferences/about-the-ninc-conference/>

Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/>

Conference Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Ninc2018/>

Yahoo e-loop: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/BeachNINC2018/info>

Newsletter

Propose an article: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/propose-an-article/>

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Newsletter archives: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/news-archive/>

Best of Nink in paperback: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/best-of-nink/>

Website (you must be logged in to access these services)

Legal Fund: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/legal-fund/>

Pro Services Directory: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/pro-services-directory/>

Sample Letters: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/sample-letters/>

Articles & Links: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/>

Welcome Packet: http://ninc.com/system/assets/uploads/2017/01/2017_New_Member_Welcome_Packet-public.pdf

Member discounts

NINC members are eligible for certain professional discounts. A complete listing of these can be found at <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/member-freebies-discounts/>.

Volunteer

One of the greatest benefits of NINC is the opportunity to volunteer your talents to benefit other members—which pays incredible and unexpected dividends in networking and knowledge. Learn more about volunteer opportunities here: <https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/>

Open positions include:

- Social Media Committee
- Tweet Team
- Recruiting New Members
- 2018 Conference Promoter
- 2018 Conference Reporter
- Anything!



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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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:
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 - Laura Hayden (conference communications)
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Central Coordinator

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Address changes may be made on the website.

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