



The official newsletter
of Novelists, Inc.,
a professional organization
of writers of popular fiction



novelists,
inc.

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President's Voice

By Wayne Stinnett



For some of us, the weather has started to warm. My condolences to those in less tropical climes, but warm weather, sand, sun, and surf are my callings. I've actually worn flip-flops to work for three straight days now. Spring is my favorite time of year, and every year I count down the minutes to the vernal equinox. The days are now getting longer, allowing more chores to be accomplished in the yard and on the boat. It's spring cleaning time!

Speaking of chores, and since I'm always keeping my eyes and ears open as to what's happening on the darker side of our business, I was wondering how many of you participate in our monthly chore of keeping the wolves at bay?

Scammers, cheats, and ne'er-do-wells in the publishing world would love to get a toehold into and within NINC. Just yesterday, I read a post on Facebook—on a public page—where a group of writers were trying to create an Indie Guild, where each member would buy every other members' new releases. They had no idea that what they were talking openly about was a violation of most retailers' terms of service on rank manipulation and that these actions could get their accounts removed if found out.

Our membership committee works hard every month, screening applicants, to make sure that only legitimate multi-published career authors are allowed in our ranks. NINC is for career authors, not those who copy and paste or family members who are publishing deceased relatives' backlists.

But sometimes something might slip past the membership committee. That's why NINC has a process of listing new applicant's names in each issue of NINK, so that all y'all can look them over, check them out, do the google-fu-ninja, and root out the bad apples. They're not members yet. Only applicants. Their names are posted for members to review.

As a reminder, NINC rules for membership are as follows:

- The author must have published at least two novels—each at least 30,000 words, and neither is a box set or collection of shorts.
- If those novels are traditionally published, an author has earned at least \$2,000 each from an advance or royalties in any consecutive 12-month period following publication, and as long as one of those titles has been published within the last 5 years.
- If the novels are self published, the author has earned at least \$5,000 each in any consecutive 12-month period following publication, and as long as one of those titles has been published within the last 5 years.

More details can be found here: <https://ninc.com/membership-overview/membership-requirements/>

So, I ask you all to look over this month's list of applicants (and every month's), and please let the membership committee know, via email at membership@ninc.com if something is amiss within 15 days of this issue (which means the 20th of the month). Now repeat after me, "Not on my watch."

Wayne

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](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#).

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/>

Wayne Stinnett writes your typical murder and mayhem in paradise. His characters and plots come from real people and situations he's encountered, fictionalized to protect the guilty.

NINC 2019: Planning for Success

Conference updates

By Alyssa Day



The 2019 Programming Committee is delighted to announce our slate of featured guests for the conference. Stay tuned on social media and in this space: we'll soon be announcing the lineup of workshops. [Register now](#)—it's going to be a great conference! See you at the beach.

We're delighted to announce that we have editors coming who will do workshops, participate in two panels, be part of networking events, and take individual meetings with interested NINC members. (We'll be inviting you later this year to sign up for meetings.) They are **Tom Colgan**, vice president and editorial director at Berkley; **Danielle Marshall**, editorial director with Lake Union Publishing; and **Liz Pelletier**, publisher at Entangled.

Tom Colgan started his career at Berkley in 1985. In those days he worked on everything from the novelization of the movie *ET: The Extraterrestrial* to Westerns. He then spent six years at Avon/Morrow and returned to Berkley as an executive editor in 1996, working with such bestselling authors as Tom Clancy, W.E.B. Griffin, Mark Greaney, and Janet Evanovich.

Danielle Marshall is the editorial director of Lake Union Publishing and notable acquisitions include the #1 Amazon Charts and *USA Today* bestseller *Beneath a Scarlet Sky* by Mark Sullivan, the first of the million-selling Everything Series, *Everything We Keep* by Kerry Lonsdale, and the bestselling Leftie and Agatha Award-winning title, *In Farleigh Field* by Rhys Bowen. She joined Amazon's publishing team in 2012 and helped launch the imprint now known as Lake Union.

Coming out of the dot com era, serial entrepreneur Liz Pelletier channeled her love of romantic fiction and co-founded Entangled Publishing in 2011. Her mission statement was simple: offer authors the highest royalties in the industry, combined with an agile publishing program, intense focus on quality, and market-driven analysis, in an effort to bridge the gap between traditional and self-publishing opportunities. Over the past five years, Entangled has gone from a small start-up to a powerhouse romance publisher, with more than 1200 titles released to date.

Other featured guests include **Carol Saller**, a longtime contributing editor to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and author of *The Subversive Copy Editor*. Her posts on language and writing can be found at *The Subversive Copy Editor* [blog](#), as well as at *CMOS Shop Talk* and the *Lingua Franca* blog. As a creative writer, Saller has written books for all ages of children, mostly recently the YA novel *Eddie's War*.

Sarra Cannon will also be joining us. She's a planning and time management expert and an indie author of more than 25 young adult contemporary fantasy novels, including her bestselling Shadow Demons Saga. Her novels often stem from her own experiences growing up in the small town of Hawkinsville, Georgia, where she learned that being popular always comes at a price and relationships are rarely as simple as they seem.

As the chief storyteller and co-founder of One 3 Creative, **Houston Howard** is a recognized producer, author, speaker and thought leader in the entertainment and branding communities because of his unique and proprietary *transmedia* approach to story. He's advised entities such as Mattel, Disney Imagineering, Reliance Media Works, West Coast Customs, Samuel Goldwyn Films and Harper Collins Publishing, and his two books—*Make Your Story Really Stinkin' Big* and, his latest, *You're Gonna Need a Bigger Story*—have been go-to manuals for creative professionals on how to leverage a variety of media platforms, maximize revenue potential and engage audiences in new and innovative ways.

Chris Fox has written over 20 novels, but is best known among authors for his Write Faster, Write Smarter series. From *5,000 Words Per Hour* to *Plot Gardening* to *Write to Market*, Fox has engineered a road map to take any writer from hobbyist to professional. Chris spent many years in software and data analysis, and has used this model to sell over 300,000 books through Amazon and Audible since 2015.

Other guest include **Mark Dawson**, the bestselling author of the John Milton series and the founder of the Self Publishing Formula, and **Jordyn White**, who has published over a dozen books under two pen names. White co-founded the Idaho Editor and Writers Association and teaches at several writers events, both big and small, and is known for her engaging, insightful presentations.

We'll also have **Alex Newton**, founder of [K-lytics.com](#), a leading provider of book market research. His Genre Reports and Amazon category performance database have brought the power of "Big Data" to the indie publishing world. Alex's research from analyzing millions of books over the last five years has helped thousands of authors to spot opportunities, sell books in attractive market niches, and optimize their book marketing.

Back again are favorites **David Gaughran**, who writes historical fiction and science fiction, and has helped thousands of authors publish their work through his workshops, blog, and writers' books: *Let's Get Digital*, *Strangers to Superfans*, *Amazon Decoded*, and *BookBub Ads Expert*, and **Damon Suede**, who, although new to romance fiction, has been a full-time writer for print, stage, and screen for over two decades.

We also have **Gwen Hernandez**, author of *Scrivener For Dummies*. She helps authors all over the world find the joy in Scrivener through her online courses, in-person workshops, and private training. Gwen has been using Scrivener to write romantic suspense (Men of Steele series) since 2009.

For those of you into forensics, **Geoff Symon** is a 20-year federal forensic investigator whose participation in high-profile cases includes the attacks on September 11, 2001, the war in Iraq, the Space Shuttle Columbia explosion, among countless other cases. He has direct, firsthand experience investigating cases including murder (of all types), suicide, arson, kidnapping, bombings, sexual assault, child exploitation, theft and financial crimes. He has specified and certified training in the collection and preservation of evidence, blood-spatter analysis, autopsies and laboratory techniques. His *Forensics for Fiction* series has become the go-to resource for genre authors.

Finally, I want to recognize those behind the scenes who serve as your programming committee and do all the hard work:

- Tawdra Kandle, assistant chair
- Lisa Hughey, 2nd assistant chair
- Rochelle Paige, sponsorships
- Augusta Blythe, Night Owls
- Victoria Thompson, traditional publishing liaison
- Lou Aronica, advisor
- Mel Jolly, conference coordinator
- Terey Ramin, central coordinator

Alyssa Day is president-elect of NINC.

September 25 - September 29, 2019



Join us for *NINC 2019* to discover the latest strategies and insights, from marketing innovations to high-level craft to running your business as smoothly and effectively as possible.

Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2019-member-registration/>
2019 Conference Assistant/Industry Guest registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/ninc-2019-conference-non-member/>

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

Conference e-list: <https://groups.io/g/BeachNINC2019>

In Their Own Voices: Part Two

Tackling the hard, uncomfortable questions on the road to change

By Trish Milburn



Last month, Part One covered what the #ownvoices movement is, how it started, and why it was necessary in the first place. But as with any sort of move to shake up an established system and ensure that needed change occurs, there has been some pushback, or at the very least some uncomfortable or ill-informed questions posed in discussions about #ownvoices.

We're not all the same

Publishing often parallels society at large and not always in a good way. One can witness discussions or arguments regarding the state of publishing and its representativeness as well as whether elevating marginalized voices takes something away from authors in the majority. Some non-marginalized authors might say, "But we're not all alike either."

For example, despite the fact that I am white and thus in the majority, I could say that I'm not the same as other white authors who have a different background. My perspective is that of an author who grew up in rural poverty in the South and who was educated in an average public school, which is much different from that of a fellow white author who grew up in privilege in New York City and attended an elite private school. However, making this type of argument misses the point of the #ownvoices movement entirely.

Author [Jordan Summers](#) said she would agree that, in the above example, the authors are not the same *class* of people. However, she believes these "We're not all the same" types of assertions are often made to marginalized authors to mask the non-marginalized author's discomfort.

Take my example. Summers said, "Those two do not have the same socioeconomic culture or educational background. In this country, class differences don't come up in conversation as often as they do in the UK. That doesn't mean they don't exist here. But if you dressed a well-educated New Yorker and a poor, rural Southerner in the same clothes, not many people would be able to tell the difference between them unless they spoke. The same cannot be said for most marginalized people. They do not have the luxury of being able to hide what makes them marginalized."

Author [LaShawn Vasser](#) agreed. “Because the marginalized author must always adapt to the mainstream, I can see their point of view from their point of view. They are saying that their experiences are different from someone else’s experience. The challenge becomes when mainstream authors don’t realize they are still within the mainstream. Upon realization, I would ask the question: Can they see the point of view of the marginalized?”

Think about it this way. Audrey Hepburn as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* could change her class by changing her clothing and her speaking. If an African American actress had filled the role, even when her clothes and speaking would change, she still would have been marginalized by the time period because of the color of her skin.

Author [Nicki Salcedo](#) agrees that we aren’t all the same, but the issue is that the range of white voices have been heard, but the range of voices from people of color have not.

“It’s not about taking away anyone’s piece of the pie,” author [Priscilla Oliveras](#) said. “It’s about more individuals, especially diverse individuals, getting an equal serving, the same as everyone else. We all have interesting stories to tell. I want us all to have the opportunity to share them with readers.”

A chilling effect?

In some of the discussions I read, which prompted this article series, the question came up of a potential chilling effect on the types of stories and characters that majority authors are “allowed” to write.

In order to reflect the real world and to help in the representation of that real world in fiction, some demographic-majority authors might want to include characters from marginalized communities. However, some of these authors expressed concern that an online mob mentality might attack them for writing characters that are outside of their personal experience, that it might be seen as them trying to latch on to the current drive for more diversity in fiction—that they would be doing it for personal gain. They’re afraid it’s a damned if you do, damned if you don’t situation that stifles creativity.

The authors interviewed for this series universally said authors should write the stories and characters they are called to write, but that it’s important to do your research and to not fall back on stereotypes. Author [Laurie Alice Eakes](#) suggested getting someone from the marginalized group to read your story to eliminate as many faux pas as possible.

“Write stories that reflect the real world,” Summers said “They are needed now more than ever. The more writers who include diversity, the more ‘normal’ it becomes. If you have to ask for forgiveness afterward, so be it, but don’t ever ask for permission to write the stories you want to write.”

Salcedo suggested that it’s possible some authors feeling stifled in this situation might be authors writing marginalized characters for the wrong reasons.

“Do what is right for the story, not for the political climate,” she said. “Do what’s in your heart.”

But what happens when well-meaning authors make mistakes and online criticism hits a fever pitch?

“The #ownvoices authors have had to conform in order to be heard and seen,” Summers said. “If they didn’t and were lucky enough to get a book deal, nine times out of 10 their books were segregated. I think the #ownvoices movement has made readers more conscious of authenticity. Readers now analyze the books they’re reading to see if they have a ring of truth. This analysis is perhaps more critical than it should be, but as readers, that’s their right.”

“I don’t personally fault well-meaning authors for trying to be inclusive,” Vasser said. “But I do fault agents, publishers, booksellers and professional organizations for putting them in positions to be on the frontlines to take the hits from readers and authors. Instead of reaching out to mainstream authors for more diverse work, how about reaching out to those diverse groups of writers and adding them to the ‘circle.’ Be genuinely inclusive. Don’t miss an opportunity to gain some insight that research can’t provide.”

Shelf space

One valid concern is that in the push for more diversity in stories, sometimes publishers still show a non-marginalized bias—whether intentional or not—by elevating stories with marginalized characters written by non-marginalized writers at the expense of similar stories written by marginalized writers.

“The issue isn’t with the writers but with the publishers who would rather take a story from a white writer over buying a book from a writer of color who is better,” Salcedo said. “Honestly, the issue is in who is buying and selling the books. Marginalized writers are not given the same opportunity.”

Vasser agreed frustration comes when mainstream authors are celebrated for writing stories that are identified with marginalized communities, and writers from those same marginalized communities haven’t been afforded the same opportunities, even though they are writing about the same things.

“It feels as if you’ve accepted the culture without accepting the people the work is written about,” she said.

Marginalized authors do recognize that non-marginalized authors are very often allies in the push for more stories being told from the #ownvoices perspective.

“White/non-marginalized authors are not in control of who publishers elevate,” Summers said. “If that were the case, their own careers would be skyrocketing. Even if all white/non-marginalized authors stopped writing marginalized characters tomorrow, there is absolutely no guarantee that any publisher would buy a book by a marginalized writer. The gatekeepers’ buying habits reflect their own biases and the biases of distributors. Until corporate bias is addressed, things won’t change.”

Watch for the final installment of this series next month, “In Their Own Voices, Part Three: Addressing Cultural Appropriation and Whether It Applies to Fiction.”

Trish Milburn is the author of more than 40 titles of romance and young adult fiction for Harlequin, Penguin, Bell Bridge Books, Tule as well as via indie publishing. When she’s not writing, she enjoys reading (duh), visiting museums, attending fan cons, cosplaying and indulging in her new love for Korean dramas and pop music.

C.H.A.N.G.E. and Every Writer

By Melanie Stiles



Ask any number of your writer friends if there is something they could change about the mechanics of their writing career and most (if not all) will respond with a yes. So, as writers, why don't we take action, instead of merely thinking about it? The answer tends to be as varied as the tasks. In the end, many writers are more than tempted to give up and remain in the status quo.

Change almost never takes place instantly. Real change is usually accomplished through a series of gradual, purposeful actions. The beautiful thing about change is that even one small adjustment contains the possibility for a myriad of beneficial outcomes. So whether you view change with a fair amount of chagrin, or embrace change as eagerly as a leaf is carried on the autumn wind, by engaging with a few minor examinations that require minimum effort, you can move forward into the C.H.A.N.G.E. you need today.

C = Community

When it comes to our money, most of us look for competitive interest rates on credit cards. We want to pay the lowest cost for the greatest amount of insurance, and we want the best sale price on major purchases. But when it comes to our communities, we tend not to give them a second thought. If we have fully incorporated a person into our writing life, they are apt to be there for the duration. If we accumulate enough folks, we simply don't have room for more. People are definitely not as interchangeable as credit cards, but writers can do themselves a great disservice if they do not periodically take stock of their own community. We tend to travel in genre herds, aligning ourselves with those who speak our lingo. That's great for critiquing particular projects or for shoring up our comfort zones, but it's not always conducive to expanding our writing horizons. Branching out can offer new opportunities. Writing communities should support several basic areas; it's rare that one group does it all. For example, if you haven't already, consider adding the following:

- *A Social Media Partner* – When it comes to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all of the other outlets on the web, it hardly matters whether the writer you connect with writes in the same genre. If a writer likes to post more than you do, he/she is a community treasure trove for you! A simple weekly telephone appointment can change the nature of your own social media presence as you trade information or navigate mutual chores.
- *A Marketing Partner* – Marketing partners do not necessarily have to be other writers. Successful sales people make great connections, as they are innovative and often gregarious about thinking outside of the proverbial box. As writers, we can always use a fresh approach that differs from what we already know about.

Adding and subtracting community, when done deliberately, can push us to the next career level.

H = Habits

We generally recognize when someone else practices habits that are different from ours. This can create a silent message that winds its way through our brain saying, *“I wouldn’t do it like that.”* Interestingly, most of us never consider a secondary message, the one that says, *“But, is his/her way better?”* Consider performing a short, three-question survey. Ask questions, of other writers, that relate to areas in which you deem yourself most entrenched. Examples might include:

- How do you maintain a consistent word count?
- What does your social media management look like?
- What is your most successful marketing tactic?
-

These simple inquiries can often encourage us to make small habit changes that can lead to greater productivity.

A = Attitude

Winston Churchill said, *“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”* It seems to be true for an army of writers such as J.K. Rowling, Dr. Seuss, John Grisham and Madeleine L’Engle, who never let multiple rejections stop them. To make mental adjustments in our attitudes, it’s often necessary to redefine or reframe our challenges. We have to believe and accept that there are no dead ends, only redirections that move us one step closer to our goals. In the end, attitudes are always a choice. Contemplate writers who have traveled before you and what their lives could have been like if they had quit.

N = New routines

Let’s face it. The evolution of new apps, software, computers and most everything related to writing and publishing, is traveling at exponential speeds. By organizing our learning endeavors so that they are both purposeful and scheduled, we can increase our skillsets

gradually and successfully. We already have a lot on our plates, so pacing is primary. Try attending seminars or participating in online classes with a partner. Having a study buddy automatically increases consistency. There will always be something new on the horizon, so why not make our educational experiences as pleasurable as we can?

G = Goal centered activities

The average American now spends a little over five hours a day watching television (www.bls.gov) and a little less than one-half hour thinking. In order to ascertain whether or not an activity truly supports our goals, we will have to exceed this sad, thinking statistic. Taking the time to simply ponder or daydream about the end result of a project carves out an imaginary path to its completion. By mentally plotting our way, we can easily see what fits and what is irrelevant to its success.

E = Extending the vision

No writing career is complete if it doesn't include the acknowledgment of the people in our surroundings. We must extend our knowledge, time, and pens to include helping those who are new to the writing journey. It is our way of repaying those who were there for us.

By tweaking the things that we already do right, we can effectively hone our lifestyles to increase our maximum productivity. As we apply the components of the C.H.A.N.G.E. acronym at least twice a year, we can create a lifestyle overview that quickly ascertains what is missing, what we need to let go of and what is going well.

Melanie Stiles is an award-winning author and life coach who has accumulated hundreds of bylines in various publications. She has authored three books specifically for writers and frequently speaks at conferences. She offers writing-related services including editing, ghostwriting, coaching and more.

The Fight for Rights

Getting book rights back can sometimes be a difficult process

By Chéré Coen



When author [Lauren Smith](#) asked for her rights back on a book, as detailed in her contract when the book ran its course, things didn't move as smoothly as she anticipated.

She asked her agent to intervene but since her agent wasn't the person who signed the book deal, the agent quit after the publisher said no. Smith waited another year, then hired an attorney who specialized in intellectual property matters.

"We wrote a letter to my publisher asking for the rights to nine books back," Smith explained. "We received a letter back three months later telling us they weren't ripe for reversion."

When Smith offered the publisher \$1,000 per book, based on what she calculated would be three years' worth of royalty payments, they agreed to sell three books to her, a trilogy.

"When I got an attorney involved and started offering money, then my publisher became much more cooperative," she said. "The trick is to show the publisher you aren't being unreasonable. Give them a reason to want to return the books to you. Yes, this means paying them, but the freedom of knowing you have your books back and can self-publish them and market them much better is completely worth it."

Getting the rights back to published books used to be a simple process. Authors, or their agents or lawyers, would write a "reversion of rights" letter to the publisher once the time lapsed as specified in their contract. If the publisher deemed the author was correct in the assessment to receive rights back, an official letter from the publisher stating as much was generated. From that moment on, the publisher no longer held the rights to the author's intellectual property and the author could choose to do with the book as she or he wished, including self-publishing a print book and/or uploading the title as an ebook.

"From the historical perspective, I fairly easily got all my rights back from Random House and Penguin when they were separate entities, long, long ago," author [Patricia Rice](#) said. "I

waited until the contract date, had my agent notify them, and they sent me pretty pieces of paper. This was back when authors knew the value of e-books but publishers (and agents) were clueless.”

Today, publishers understand the value of ebooks and many hold tight to rights, especially to those of best-selling authors.

“With my last contracts, they did their best to tie up the rights forever and a day,” Rice explained. “Even though my agent did everything possible to make it easier to pry the rights out of their hands, Sourcebooks and Pocket simply stalled. I’m selling maybe one book more a year than the contract allows—according to their statements. And they just keep telling us they’re looking into it (and these are series books to which they only own one or two!). I refuse to deal with traditional publishing any longer under those terms.”

A mixed bag

Not all publishers are difficult. Author [Devyn Quinn](#) sent a letter to the contracts department at Kensington and NAL-Signet and had no issue getting her rights back.

“Matter of fact, I just got a note from Penguin that my final book there would be released shortly,” she said. “It really wasn’t a difficult process at all.”

However, author [Lyn Cote](#) had mixed results, getting the rights back on her Love Inspired titles from Harlequin easily, but mainly because the house wasn’t interested in reissuing them.

“Other authors whose books they still want see them reissued,” she said.

Hachette took two years to send her a reversion letter, Cote said, and Harper Collins has been difficult to work with.

“My HC (Harper Collins) books are a decade old and not selling enough to warrant them to keep the rights for the digital editions,” Cote said. “Whenever I ask for the rights back, I’m told that they are still in print—they just print a few more and leave them in the warehouse. I call that ... not honoring a good faith contract.”

“Some houses are easier than others to work with,” agent [Pamela Ahearn](#) said. “Frankly, if the author is valuable to them, they tend to be harder as they’re making money off them. If they don’t see a lot of value in the author going forward, they’re more amenable to giving up rights.”

Agent or lawyer?

Smith insists a knowledgeable lawyer is key if a publisher is playing hard ball with an author’s book rights.

“I tried an agent at first but it didn’t work,” she said. “Going with an experienced intellectual property attorney was absolutely necessary.”

Ahearn disagrees.

“Frankly, unless the lawyer is knowledgeable about publishing contracts, I think an agent is probably better,” Ahearn said. “I think I would only recommend engaging a lawyer if the publisher is recalcitrant and isn’t abiding by the terms of the contract.”

Ahearn suggests having the rights spelled out at the beginning, when the author-agent is negotiating a contract.

“Publishers are trying to hold onto e-rights longer,” she said. “It’s important for agents to get clauses in contracts that stipulate a minimum number of sales or dollars necessary for the publisher to retain rights.”

Reversion letter

To request your rights back on a book, at a time spelled out in your contract, send a letter to the legal department of your publisher with the list of books, and the contracted date, publishing date and ISBN numbers of each. If there is an agent involved, list the agent who negotiated the contract. You may also wish to include direct language specifying your reversion of rights from your book(s) contract.

Be sure to include information on how the publisher may contact you. Mail by certified letter or registered mail. A good sample follows this article.

Chéré Coen is a freelance food and travel writer who writes novels under the pen name of Cherie Claire. Her latest book is “Ghost Trippin,” the fourth book in the Viola Valentine paranormal mystery series.

The Fight for Rights

Sample letter

Chéré Dastugue Coen

1000 Boudreaux Drive

Lafayette, LA 70503

Cajunromances@yahoo.com (337) XXX-XXXX

Feb. 5, 2019

Attn: Publisher's Legal Department

Publisher Name

Publisher Address

To Whom It May Concern:

I am contacting you for the reversion of rights for the following novels written by me, [YOUR NAME HERE] Chéré Dastugue Coen, pen name Cherie Claire.

The following are the four books that make up my historical series, "The Cajuns."

Emilie by Cherie Claire, published by Kensington, June 2000, ISBN XXXXX.

Rose by Cherie Claire, published by Kensington, November 2000, ISBN XXXXX.

Gabrielle by Cherie Claire, published by Kensington, April 2001, ISBN XXXX.

Delphine by Cherie Claire, published by Kensington, June 2002, ISBN XXXXX.

I am requesting the reversion of rights six months from your receipt of this letter in accordance with the contract provisions.

Following acknowledgment to me of receipt of this notice by registered mail, and in the absence of any other response from the publisher by [DATE], I shall consider that these rights have indeed reverted as of that date. If the publisher should know of any reason why this reversion of rights should not occur as outlined, I respectfully request that the publisher contact me immediately.

If you have questions, please contact me at the address/phone number/email above.

Sincerely,

Chéré Dastugue Coen

CC: AGENT NAME if you have one

Inside Grief

Trauma's impact on writing (or creativity)

By Vella Munn



"It's over. It's finally over."

Those are the words I spoke March 14, 2018, as I knelt on the floor next to my husband's body. Even though he'd only been in hospice for three weeks, I'd long known this moment would come.

What I didn't know was how deeply his death would impact a core part of me—being a writer. Without my being aware, my love of writing was dying. The few words that came from my fingers after that night were without life. Writing ceased to nourish and became a chore. Having some 90 titles under my belt meant nothing. I wanted to do anything—except sit in front of that damned monitor with my empty brain. I couldn't latch onto my characters, didn't care what, if anything, they did. They were strangers—or rather, I was the stranger.

Then I joined a Facebook group of widows, most of them writers. They understood what I barely comprehended, which was I'd fundamentally changed. They shared their own journeys. I believe our openness has helped each of us understand who and what we now are. Hopefully that painful honesty will help other NINC members as they weather life's traumas. Although the Facebook group is focused on widowhood, I believe our comments have wide reach.

The brave woman who started the Facebook conversation that compelled me to propose this article was **Curtiss Ann Matlock**. She wrote, "An awareness came to me that I am not ever going to be the writer I was. I already know I'm not going to be the woman I was—and that's good. We all grow, and boy, have I grown these past five years. I always say I am a much better edition of me now, and I would really be a better wife to Jim.

"But somehow, the fact that I won't be a professional writer like I was had escaped me. I don't want to stress myself with all it takes in today's writer business world. I do want to write, but on my terms. I have finished a book, doing deep rewrites, but it is taking a lot of time. I try to remind myself that I am right where I need to be now. I have to see what sort of writer

woman I'm going to be. All those years I wrote, Jim was there, helping. He encouraged me, talked over plot ideas and details, throwing out an idea now and again. I based my desires around he and I together. It is hard to dream now, to desire much of anything, but I do work at it, and so far, all I truly still desire to do is write. Maybe I will be content to write and publish on my own, or else be content to do a lot of porch sitting."

Vickie Follick said, "When people hear of our loss they do not realize that not only is our life mate gone, but without him I seem to have lost much of my energy, desire, curiosity, one of my closest friends. Sometimes I don't recognize who I am. I am trying to analyze and accept this new me. She seems like a stranger. I hope I discover who she is, what is important to her, and what she is capable of doing and when."

Mica Stone confessed, "I recently went through CEs on the first thing I've finished in ages, but this is also the first thing I have written since losing Walt last December. It's only a novella, 23K words in an ongoing series, but I could not be prouder of myself, and I know Walt is, too. I'm excited about what I have in the queue to write, but I will never write to a publisher's deadline again. I can write. But it has to be for me, what I want to say, no editor telling me I can't. Completely my terms!"

Selena Robins admitted, "I have not even tried to write and finish my works in progress even though David made me promise I wouldn't give it up and get back into it. I will eventually, and my local author friends are always organizing plotluck get-togethers, or texting me asking me to critique. I know they are trying to nudge me back into the writing world, but right now, I don't have the passion I once had. I hope it comes back."

Mary Anne Bignell Wilson weathered other close losses before her husband died, but they didn't fully prepare her. She said, "I was struck by that lack of enthusiasm day after day, that altering of who you are deep inside. I cared for both my father and mother who passed two years apart, then for my mother-in-law who passed three years later. I loved them all, completely, and it was hard at first when they weren't there, but I could keep going on because my husband, Tom, was there for me no matter what. Then Tom was gone, and my life altered. Some mornings I'd wake up and wonder who I was going to be that day. I truly want to write again. I need to write. After almost 50 books, I don't know how not to write. Some days are better than others, but it hit me there is no one telling me I can do anything I want to do, that he's there for me, no matter what, who'll hold my hand when I just plain can't do it and know enough not to say a thing to me. I won't be the same, no matter what, but I truly hope I might be better in some ways than I was or am now, no matter how life changes."

Deb Stover also dealt with more than her husband's illness. "I have struggled deeply with writing since my husband died. I was also very ill—and recently diagnosed—with a chronic illness that almost killed me before he died. And I had a book under contract. It was an important one, new publisher, new direction, etc. My husband's cancer came out of remission at the time I was so ill. It was a nightmare. Agent and editor agreed to take my book off the schedule until I was 'ready.' I was diagnosed with Addison's Disease and my husband's cancer was deemed terminal almost simultaneously. My treatment saved my life just in time to help him end his. Three years later, I told my editor if she didn't give me a deadline I would never finish that book. We came up with one, I met it, cover art came, reviews were gorgeous. Since

then, I've managed nothing but reissues and one new novella. I'm trying to write the third book in my *Mulligan* series, but the energy is gone. My muse is there, but the strength I once had—the endurance—is gone."

Linda Wisdom is finding what works for her. "I have to write under my terms. For now I write longhand. Mom passed away seven years ago, but I feel as if I'd just emotionally and physically recovered when Bob had his craniotomy the night before Thanksgiving almost two years ago. It's one day at a time. Every night I make a list on what I hope to do the following day. If I can mark off half, I'm happy."

Justine Davis offered this advice based on her experience. "Quit worrying about getting better, just get through the day. Sometimes it's all you can do to get through the next minute. There's no measuring chart for this. You are where you are. As for writing, there's a huge difference between writing about this kind of brutal, personal reality and fiction, even deeply felt fiction. While I'm writing (and this was especially true in the beginning) I am living in that world and sometimes coming out of it and back to my shattered reality was the hardest thing in the world to do. I think that's why so many of my characters have suffered such loss. I no longer know how to write about a life without it."

One common thread I realized was that I should give myself some slack. What once gave my life focus and meaning sometimes feels like this great, cold mountain I have to climb. A dear writer friend whose husband died four years ago following a ten-year long illness told me she wasn't going to make the third extension on her contract. Her doctor told her she had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Maybe that happens when writers are in crises, creative PTSD. (P.S. my friend made her deadline.)

Because I needed broader perspective, I asked for *Nink* columnist **Denise Agnew's** observations. She responded: "PTSD can be caused by the trauma of death, violence, or natural disaster. Many times a writer won't realize how much a trauma has influenced them unless it is an obvious thing such as writer's block. If a writer encounters a block after experiencing violence or natural disaster, the writer might not recognize the block is a PTSD reaction. Grief causes most writers to encounter a bout of block. How long it lasts is individual. After some recovery time, an author may find their writing has changed. Perhaps they'll choose a different genre. Maybe they'll discover their characters will experience death, violence, or natural disaster. I advise authors to consider genre change or character challenges as a form of therapy and healing. It's a method that has to feel correct and right for the individual. Time, though, may help the writer find their writing again and find a lasting healing."

Vella Munn's tax return has identified her as a writer for decades. As a result, she no longer has any other marketable skills. She's had north of 90 mostly fiction books published but is most likely to pontificate about the biography she wrote about her grandfather, another writer. The mother of two sons and grandmother to four, she'll never leave Oregon.

Social Media That Works

Worth your time

By Heather Villa



When you write a novel, you have a specific readership in mind. Your approach to social media should be the same. Readers, eager to know the characters in your novel, are also interested in knowing you. Plus, you have another audience—other writers curious about your craft. To become social online, you need to know your fan base is already active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest. It's not necessary to have accounts on every channel, but you should become acquainted with various platforms in order to decide which one (or two) works for you. If you remember the real purpose of social media, which is to be social, your fans will find you. Build your audience by knowing where and how to post content.

Become visible

[Hootsuite](#), a leader in social media management, reports that the average engagement rate for Facebook posts is 4.2 percent. For the most popular social media platform with more than 2.2 billion reported monthly users, the percentage is surprising. That's why having a strategy is important.

Copywriter [Rose Womelsdorf](#) suggests when it comes to social media become an observer and look at what resonates with people.

As a novelist, you're already an observer. If you have a social media account, take a moment to look at your posts and notice which ones have the most likes and comments. You'll probably find your most popular posts are ones that include pictures of real faces, not stock photographs. Leave the perfectly edited version of your creativity for your novel.

Your strategy shouldn't focus on getting more followers or likes, but rather making meaningful connections.

Create connections

Instead of worrying about metrics or algorithms, focus on ways to make connections online and even in real life (IRL). Begin by thinking about what your audience wants to know.

[Neil Gaiman](#) engages with fans on Facebook by sharing links to writing-related articles and posting about influential people in his life and social justice. He seems to take a quality over quantity approach to the content he posts. He also creates public events on Facebook to announce his upcoming events. Creating a public event for your next book signing is worth your time because the event will be included in your region's local event section, shareable by anyone.

Be real

Many authors have fled to Instagram, which is owned by Facebook. While the largest percentage of Instagram users are between the ages of 18-24, don't worry if your target audience falls outside of that age range because it's the fastest growing platform with more than one billion users. The site isn't limited to photographs. Many writers adore Instagram because it serves as a mini blog.

Elizabeth Gilbert regularly posts candid photos on Instagram at [@elizabeth_gilbert_writer](#). She seldom promotes her latest book. Usually, she posts about the people in her life and causes dear to her heart and seems to follow the 80/20 rule, which means a majority of the posts educate or entertain her audience more than promote herself.

When creating an Instagram post, only the first 125 characters of your written content will show up below the image. Treat the limited visible text as a hook. Once someone clicks on your post, the remaining text, up to 2,075 characters, will be visible. While you may include a link to a website within a post, the hyperlink will not work. An unwritten Instagram rule is to limit your posts to two per day. Unlike Facebook where some people frequently post and repost, Instagram is different in that the images can't be copied or a post can't be shared from one user to another. Instagram is visual in nature because the grid-like images form an ongoing pattern. [Planoly](#) is a helpful tool used to plan layout designs and schedule posts. Lastly, you have the option to set Instagram to automatically post to your Facebook feed. However, keep in mind your followers may not want to see or read the exact same content across your platforms.

Remember the hashtag

Don't worry that Twitter's posts are limited to 280 characters because, like Facebook, users may share links from other social media platforms. Plus, posts can be retweeted by others. When hashtags are included in a post, the content becomes searchable. The benefit of a hashtag is to help promote something. Hashtags included in a post are beneficial because people can follow or search a specific hashtag—even if they don't follow you. Some people follow hashtags. If you post about your new mystery novel, you might want to include the following hashtags: #novel #newrelease #booksigning #fiction #mystery #author. If you have a writing tip to share, include #writetip like K.M. Weiland often does here on Twitter: [@KMWeiland](#). Also, hashtags aren't limited to Twitter. You may also create your own hashtag.

Tell a story

Think about what resonates with people. Since you're a novelist, you already know that people love a good story. Maybe that's why a post in the form of a video is a popular way to connect. Stories are quite popular on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Keep in mind that stories aren't limited to videos and disappear within twenty-four hours. If you want to really impress people with your vulnerability, stream a live video. The benefit of going live on Instagram or Facebook is that your followers will be notified—and hopefully watch and engage with you via the comment section. You still may post videos to a regular Facebook, Instagram, or even Twitter post.

Pin away

Pinterest is described as a virtual corkboard. Images are pinned to various categories. [Shana Galan](#) arranges her Pinterest boards to feature her novels, others' books, Victorian-era themed images, and more. Pinterest users may pin content from other users. The users that follow you will be notified of your new pins. Keep in mind that your followers will expect to see original pins that you create, which could include a popular line from your novel. If you'd like to create your own pin, then check out [Canva](#), an easy-to-use design tool. In fact, Canva may be used across all social media platforms.

Final tips

- Use the same handle on all of your social media accounts. Consider using your name or pen name so you are easily found.
- Each platform mentioned above includes an area in the bio or about section to link your website or podcast.
- Decide one or two social media accounts that work for you and post new content at least three times a week.
- Don't worry about whether you should post content in the morning, afternoon, or evening. The idea is to regularly share what you're doing.

Remember that being successful on social media means following others too. Have you recently liked or shared a [Novelists, Inc.](#) Facebook post? Ignore negative comments, always, and know that there's no shame in hiring a social media manager.

Heather Villa is a former cartographer and told stories with maps before becoming a professional writer six years ago. Say hello to her on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#): @Heathervilla1

Networking: Are We Doing It Right?

Using contests as a networking tool

By Michele Dunaway



This is the third feature for Nink in which we will discuss the various ways authors can and do network for mutual benefit. If you have a topic you'd like to see discussed or if you'd like to volunteer to write about a topic, please email: ninkeditor@gmail.com. See the Feb. 2019 and the March 2019 issues for the first two articles.

I like contests. Raffles. Lottery tickets (mostly the scratcher kind). Trivia nights. You name it. Contests are fun, and I was hooked from the first time I did a cakewalk during an elementary school carnival and went home with a prize. While I've never won big bucks, once I did win a pretty nice vacuum cleaner by spending \$10 in a raffle that benefited a cat rescue.

As authors, contests can be two-fold. Used to promote your books, contests can be one way to reach and interact with readers. However, by also participating in contests yourself, by either entering your books or your works-in-progress, authors can get feedback from both readers and other authors. In fact, both types of contests are a unique form of networking, and to use them well, there are tricks to the trade.

Holding reader contests

While indies can manipulate prices or put up perma-freebies, authors under a traditional contract have other considerations. Two of the first things to know about networking through contests are: (1) put as much or as little into it as you want, and (2) there's no one correct way to do it.

Since author [Anne Gracie's](#) publisher doesn't provide her with e-copies to give away, she uses print books that she gives away as contest prizes.

"When I do giveaways, it's usually as a guest author on a blog somewhere. As my publisher doesn't give me e-books, I always have to give print books away. The book is either the new one I'm promoting, or the reader's choice of my back copies, which luckily are all still

in print,” Gracie said. “I usually have to post it overseas, so I’ll often order a book from the book depository, which posts books all over the world for free — it’s cheaper than posting my author copies from Australia.”

When promoting, it’s also important to know who you want to participate in the giveaways. NINC doesn’t allow promotion on the listserv, and one reason is because it would get bogged down with people promoting to other authors. And it can be annoying, which is not what you want when networking.

“I hate it when an author constantly flogs their books in author groups,” Gracie said. Gracie’s backlist giveaways run mainly when a new book debuts. “I can also write a short story as a sampler or giveaway, but novellas are restricted by my contract,” she said.

When she does hold a competition, Gracie usually gives people a week or so for the competition. “How I choose the winners varies—mostly it’s random by number, but sometimes I pick a clever or funny answer that I like. I have occasionally joined in some big joint competition, and then I go along with however the organizers have set it up.”

Gracie also said she keeps her contest giveaways more low key.

Wanting to make inroads into KU readership prior to publishing the last book in a series, author [Tara Leigh](#) stepped up her contests.

“I really pushed my publisher to let me use some of the marketing concepts favored by indies—including ARC giveaways and Facebook takeover parties with ebooks as prizes,” she said.

For the ARC giveaways (which are done separately from distributing ARCs to bloggers/reviewers), Leigh uses her own Facebook group: Tara Leigh VIP Reader Group. “I will also ask bloggers and author friends if I can pop into their groups,” Leigh said. “Winners are selected randomly from whoever enters.”

According to Leigh, a Facebook takeover party is when you “take over” someone else’s Facebook group for a set amount of time, usually somewhere between 15 minutes to an hour. “It can be a release party, celebrating an author’s new release. Or it can be a party for a holiday—Halloween, New Year’s, etc. Or even someone’s birthday,” Leigh said. “Each author will post a few times during their designated slot. Some are giveaway posts and others are interactive—This or That, Find Your ___ (elf, romance heroine, cocktail, etc.) Name, where are you from? The idea is to increase your exposure to new readers.”

Doing contests really increased her profile, and her publisher became fully supportive as it saw that her networking strategies online worked.

“I do a Rafflecopter with each new release and participate in Facebook parties often,” Leigh said. “Rafflecopters can be two to four weeks, but most contests/giveaways are just two to three days.”

[Rafflecopter](#) is a website that advertises that it’s “‘mega simple’ to launch and manage a giveaway for any brand, on any website, as much as you want, with no IT help required.” Plans start at \$13 a month and there is a seven-day free trial (but the free trial has restrictions, so read the fine print).

“The great thing about Rafflecopter is that it gives you a link you can post in multiple places—as opposed to running multiple giveaways,” Leigh said. “You can use the same link in

your newsletter as on Facebook or anywhere else, and your readers can share the link with their friends, too.”

Leigh runs the contests with a goal to get new readers and believes her contests turn into sales, although it’s hard to quantify per giveaway. “What I’ve found is that some of my most loyal readers have come from giveaways. They go on to spread the word about me and my books to bloggers and other (paying) readers. At least half my ARC team has come from winning a giveaway and connecting with my books.”

Leigh rarely gives away gift cards, preferring to use ebooks, signed paperbacks and swag. “Sometimes I will create a prize with several signed paperbacks from author friends,” she said. “I’ve also created a few new release baskets with a tote, signed paperback, scarf, piece of costume jewelry, etc.” She’s found the baskets can get hundreds of entries.

“My trad books are provided by my publisher,” Leigh said. “I provide my indie releases. And if I give away an author’s book (if she invited me to celebrate her new release, for example) I will gift her book (by buying it through Amazon) to the winner of my giveaway post.”

Leigh has some networking advice for holding contests, especially for traditionally published authors, which start with asking your publisher for a free download link to be used specifically for giveaways. This includes first asking for an ARC link, so you can do ARC giveaways and then later ask for a link to download the final copy. Without this, Leigh feels you can’t promote much on social media prior to release, and then she said you are buying your own book on Amazon to send—which can be returned for merchandise credit.

“My publisher was reluctant, at first, giving me links with only 20 or so copies at time,” Leigh said. “After realizing that they worked, and that I was getting invited to Facebook parties with big authors and lots of exposure, they were happy I was taking initiative without abusing their trust.”

Also, when networking, one final piece of advice is that networking (attracting new readers and keeping the ones you have) can be summed up in one word: interaction.

“Sure, there are some people that are just looking for free stuff,” Leigh said. “But mostly, readers want to get to know you. They want to see your personality and believe they are supporting an author that they like on a personal level.”

Entering contests yourself for feedback and/or glory

Author [Nancy Herkness](#) uses contests as a marketing strategy. “It’s exposure to new readers—judges are “influencers”—booksellers, librarians, book club participants—who can get the word out to other readers,” she said. “Even if I don’t please all of them enough to final, I might earn one or two new fans. In fact, I know that this has happened in the past because judges have contacted me to tell me so. (Not RITA judges, of course, because that’s against the rules.) Obviously, it’s better to final, but my sense is that the investment isn’t a total bust.”

While contests seem more readily available for romance writers, there are contests that do provide feedback beyond numbers or wins. I’ve entered many of these “submit your first 7,500 words” to get feedback on a new genre I’m testing out. While you have to wait a few months for feedback, contests can be a way to get anonymous feedback. Unlike your freelance editor, who will be honest but wants to keep working with you, you’re getting three raw opinions from

readers who have no idea who you are. Yes, you can get some negative or clueless comments (one of mine said to “keep trying and you’ll be a published author someday”), but it can be worth it.

Author [Nicole Evelina](#) said this about contests, “I recommend those from organizations you know are legitimate, especially those offered by well-known magazines, organizations or review services. When you are evaluating a contest, the two best things you can do are:

1. Look at the books written by previous winners. Are they high quality? How many reviews do they have? What is their Amazon ranking? If they are low quality and not getting any sales, you have to ask yourself how they won and what exactly the point of entering that contest is.
2. Look at what you get if you win. If there is a cash prize or a ribbon/medal/trophy, then you know what at least part of the fee is going toward and that you will get something tangible out of it. (Be wary of contests that make you pay for your trophy, etc.) If all you are getting is a badge for your website or a sticker for your book, question the value. And don’t fall for those who promise to give you lots of press. That is not a reward in and of itself. It is a nice value-add. I would be careful when entering any contest that is sponsored by a marketing or media group, as those tend to be money-making ventures. Run away from any contest that contacts you; those are never legitimate and they are just looking for people to take money from. There are contests that will make anyone who entered a ‘winner.’”

A few networking takeaways from entering contests:

1. Many contests will allow you to send thank-you emails to your judges letting them know that you appreciated their feedback. If you chose to do this, keep the email simple, sweet, and positive.
2. Keep track of the contests you enter. Herkness has a spreadsheet of what she enters. Since many of hers are contests entering published books, she has a five-year rule. “If my books don’t final in a contest five years in a row, I don’t enter that contest again,” she said. “Clearly, either the judges for the contest don’t like my work (because the same people tend to judge every year) or the judging criteria doesn’t fit my books. I try not to beat my head against a brick wall.”

Michele Dunaway is your Nink Editor. Don’t forget to sign up for the conference and come hang out with her this September at the beach. You don’t want to miss out on all the networking and learning opportunities.

An Insider Look at Traditional Publishing

An interview with Eileen Rothschild, St. Martin's Press

By Michele Dunaway



Eileen Rothschild

This is part of the continuing feature for Nink in which NINC members will interview agents, editors, and marketing professionals so that authors can get an in-depth look at how to network with traditional publishing. All questions came from those culled from questions asked on the traditional publishing loop, some verbatim. If you have a house/editor/marketing professional you'd like to see interviewed or if you'd like to volunteer to do an interview, please email: ninkeditor@gmail.com

I had the wonderful privilege of working with Eileen Rothschild on three single-title books for St. Martin's Press (SMP). Rothschild started at Macmillan over 12 years ago, working on math and chemistry textbooks. Since then, with the ultimate goal of finding an audience for fantastic and unique voices, she's held roles in sales and marketing. She has found her true passion in editorial, and one reason is because she fell in love with the excitement of reading a new **special** voice for the first time. As an editor, Rothschild says she uses "the skills learned in my various roles to help create careers."

What follows is my interview with Rothschild. Please note, she is only speaking as an editor at SMP, and these are her opinions and observations from working there. She speaks only about her company in her answers below, and as such, her answers should not be taken as being indicative of all publishing companies/editors or as representative of NINC.

1. How can an author be the best author for their publisher? How can authors be part of that team? How can authors create sustainability in their careers and what steps should an author take for achieving that?

I think the most important part of an author/publisher relationship is communication. Be vocal about what you want out of your career and the relationship. If you are not happy/want to change direction/want more marketing, etc., communicate that. We aren't mind readers and

want you to succeed. Also if you are happy, etc., communicate that also. It is always nice to know when something is working.

2. What are traditional publishers such as St. Martin's Press doing for their midlist and new-to-them authors (anyone other than your NYT/USA Today bestsellers)? What type of house-wide plan and process should authors expect?

I can only speak to what St. Martin's is doing, and we look at each book and author and discuss with the author what would work best for the book. We are constantly pitching retail and e-accounts promotions for our front- and backlist. We are very collaborative and know the market is always changing, so we welcome feedback.

3. How important is an author's social media when choosing to purchase a series or author?

If an author has a huge social media following, that is always a plus, having a ready-made platform to sell to is always nice. *But*, it is the cherry on top. I don't evaluate fiction authors on their social media or lack thereof.

4. Will editors consider purchasing authors who perhaps need new branding (such as a new name) because of low sales? When should the rebranding begin? Before? After the sale?

Yup! I have done this many times. Sometimes it is a new cover direction and story arc, sometimes it is a name change. The most important thing is the story, the rest is strategy. Usually this happens after the sale.

5. One author who has been in publishing nearly 40 years now asked the following question on the NINC loop: "I have seen many 'cycles' in NY—a pub would 'give' an author about six books, to see sell-through growth. Then it was bye-bye. For a while, that number seemed to slip lower before hearing 'don't let the door hit you in the rear on your way out.' Are there now pub houses who really mean it when they say they want to 'build' authors, are 'in this for the long haul?' Or is that all gone? Is that only found now, maybe, in smaller presses? Because, sadly, what worked for an author even as little as five years ago may not work today." If you could address any or all of this, that would be great.

This all really depends and is different in each house. I like to think that at SMP we don't project "don't let the door hit you on the way out." I personally only take on what I absolutely love, and it is the worst part of my job when we don't renew contracts for various reasons. There is no hard or fast rule here. Sometimes sales are lower for a reason, the pub month season could be the wrong fit, the cover direction needs to change, etc., etc. We usually try a few different directions (such as rebranding) if something doesn't work. Yes, we want to build authors' careers but if, say, the author is writing a small town series and after four books the sales aren't growing, we might ask the author to try something else. As an author it is important to be flexible—the market is changing all of the time. Are there instances where we can't renew a contract, yes, but it is not one-size-fits-all. I hope that helps!

6. What does a publisher do for an author in the way of marketing (there's a basic minimum that every book gets and which authors may not even be aware of when they say, "My publisher did nothing for me!")?

There is consumer-facing marketing (ads, social media push, etc.) and there is business-to-business marketing, and I think most authors aren't always aware of what happens behind the scenes. Pitching to accounts, promotion and placement that is usually paid, launching, creating sales materials for sales reps ... the list goes on. Sure, Facebook ads are nice but they rarely move the needle in a meaningful way. The behind-the-scenes stuff leads to wider distribution and hopefully more sales.

7. Besides having a great manuscript, what does an author need to know about switching genres?

I think it is important to know the genre you are switching into and be well read. Whenever there is a new trend, you will see an influx of authors switching genres, which can be great, but you should know how that genre operates.

8. How can an author support their trad-published books in ways that the publisher perhaps can't or won't? What can authors do? What promo works?

I wish I knew what promo really works! It is constantly changing. So it is important to run whatever promo you are thinking about by your marketing team. They might have some insight that could be helpful. And what has worked in the past doesn't always work. Again, the key is to be flexible. One thing that authors can do that is meaningful is to be a part of the community that you are writing in.

9. How does a professional author handle ghosting (never getting a reply) from a potential editor who'd requested a work?

Ah. This is a tough one. And I am guilty of it as I am sure most editors are at some point. I know how frustrating this can be. Ghosting usually implies ill intent, and I think for the most part that isn't the case. Sometimes life just gets in the way and you get inundated. Especially editors that take submissions directly from authors. Our job is so much more than just reading and a lot of us read on off hours and well ... it can become a lot. Not that this is an excuse, but we are human too. It is okay to nicely nudge or say that you feel frustrated. When we are nudged we will respond! Even if it is just to say that we are behind on reading.

10. If you could look into your crystal ball for 2019 and beyond, where do you see the market headed? What trends might be coming? What do readers want more of, and what are readers tired of seeing?

It is already happening, but I see a shift toward lighter stories such as romantic comedies. Readers want joy now more than ever.

11. How has the #ownvoices movement affected publishing in general?

I am going to say the need for diverse books/authors movement as opposed to the #ownvoices movement. It is nuanced, but I believe that the original intent of the hashtag/movement (which was wonderful and well meaning) has warped a bit. The need and call for diverse books and more importantly diverse authors has been wonderful and eye-opening because we have so much further to go as an industry. Every reader deserves to see themselves in stories, and the stories we acquire, as editors, should reflect the world we live in.

12. Tell me all about the exciting things at St. Martin's Press that make it a great company to work with.

I am a big cheerleader for SMP. I love that women hold most of the executive positions; we are a passionate and vocal group. I also love how we are a generalist house; I acquire what I am passionate about and have acquired books in multiple categories such as romance, young adult and non-fiction.

13. Tell me a little bit about why you still love this job after all of these years.

I have worked in publishing for about 12 years and had various jobs. Book people are the best people, and editorial is perfect for me because I get to read for a living and get books into readers' hands.

14. Anything else you think I've missed that NINC members should know?

Whether high fantasy young adult, suspenseful and delicious romance, or heartwarming women's fiction ... and everything in between, I gravitate toward commercial stories with a fabulous hook.

I am actively looking for all areas of romance, commercial women's fiction, and young adult fiction. The kind of story that catches my eye is the one that stays with you long after you finish the last page. The one that makes you fall in love, cry, and jump for joy. Maybe even all at once.



Michele Dunaway's favorite thing as your Nink editor is writing her bio. She hopes you're ready for spring.

An Insider Look at Traditional Publishing: Part II

An interview with Nancy Yost, Nancy Yost Literary Agency

By Victoria Thompson



Nancy Yost

This continues the feature for Nink in which NINC members interview agents, editors, and marketing professionals so that authors can get an in-depth look at how to network with traditional publishing. All questions came from those culled from questions asked on the traditional publishing loop, some verbatim. If you have a house/editor/marketing professional you'd like to see interviewed or if you'd like to volunteer to do an interview, please email: ninkeditor@gmail.com.

Nancy Yost has been my literary agent for 25 years. I first met her when she was my editor for two books at Avon Books back in the day. A few years later, a week after I had signed with a “big name” agency, Nancy called to tell me she was leaving Avon to become an agent. Two years after that, I fired the big name agency (a very sad story) and called Nancy. I left a voicemail that went something like, “I need an agent. Will you take me?” And she did. We have been through just about every kind of publishing experience together, including career death and career re-invention (both mine). Nancy works with a wide variety of writers of commercial fiction, specializing in crime novels; thrillers, mysteries, suspense; historical fiction and historical suspense; and women’s fiction of all kinds. She represents many *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling authors, and looks for complex, engrossing, character- and voice-driven reads. She has a fondness for a good ghost story, Southern fiction, historical fiction, atmosphere, intelligence, humor, and adorable (and not so adorable) animals. Her nonfiction tastes lean to social history and natural science. She has graciously agreed to share her vast publishing experience and answer some of our burning questions.

1. What have you just sold in each genre and what direction do you see that genre heading?

A lot of my clients write long-running series that originally sold years ago. That said, there is still a big audience for these books and presumably other potentially long running series as well. In reference to new sales, contemporary women's fiction is returning but with unusual elements that are less middle-of-the-road and which add a different flavor to the project. Contemporary romances seem to be holding steady. Contemporary suspense seems to favor abjectly failing protagonists. We are seeing a call for writers of color and other voices, but these voices must be authentic. This doesn't mean an author can't write about characters of another race, gender, sexual orientation, et al, but this must be done accurately and well. But a word of caution about writing to trends in general, which is like chasing unicorns. No one really knows what the next trend is until it appears. A big breakout book may be every writer's dream, but it doesn't necessarily create a sustainable readership that will lead to continuing success. Not many authors make the transition from having one successful breakout bestseller to being a consistent bestseller, book after book. What really moves the needle in this business is not something the author can control. An author should, instead, aim for a sustainable career.

2. How can authors create sustainability in their careers and what steps should an author take for achieving that?

The true answer to this question is simple and basic: be a polished writer who maintains quality in your work year after year and book after book. Put your writing first, not social media. Turn in your books on time. Don't wildly stray from who your readers are and what they expect from you. You are not going to reinvent your career with one book or one new hook. Slow and steady wins the race. You can certainly address specific and timely issues in your work, but do so within the context of what you already do well and what your readers love and expect.

3. What are some career busters or mistakes that traditionally published authors may not even know they are making?

One mistake authors often make is forgetting to put the writing first, which is easy to do in this internet age. Once again, don't waste time on social media and don't write your term paper the night before it's due. Respect the writing and give the work the time and attention it needs. Writing is your job, and you should treat it like that. Everyone else in the publishing industry has made it a job. The writer must be a professional, too. Be honest with yourself. Are you writing or not?

Another common mistake that authors often make is choosing a topic that is of interest mainly to them. An obscure historical event or a topic of limited appeal that the author finds fascinating sometimes actually makes the book smaller. Step back and pretend to be a reader and ask what is in this book that would interest me if I hadn't done the research? Don't stifle your creativity, but keep in mind that readers will mainly remember the storyline and the characters. The human issues are more important than bits of history or details of some industry, so always put them first.

4. How important is an author's social media presence to selling a book or series?

Not as important as you think. I've never lost a sale because the author didn't have a social media presence. What *is* important is a good website. It should feature the covers of books, buy links, a page for reviews, and a page listing all your titles with interesting, *brief* plot summaries. Have a list of your books in order if you have a series. Lots of industry people will go to the website to check out your work, including film people. A potential publisher will look at your website to make sure it's professional.

5. Will editors consider purchasing authors who perhaps need new branding (such as a new name) because of low sales? What can an author do to facilitate this?

The real answer to this question is one writers hate hearing: write a really good book. Truthfully, if you are staying in the same genre, you may find it difficult to sell again. You can increase your chances by making your book more relevant. Think about what will make the new book stand out. A good book will sell if there is a need for that particular one, so you need to figure out how to meet that need.

6. Besides having a great manuscript, what does an author need to know about switching genres?

Writing a great manuscript is pretty much it, but be sure you know and understand the new genre and are writing to it. Respect the new genre and the work that goes into it, and read a lot of books in it before trying your hand. Also, respect the readers of that genre and their expectations. You are essentially training for a different job. Learn the ropes and the tropes.

7. How can an author support their trad-published books in ways that the publisher perhaps can't or won't? Have your authors had success with any particular marketing technique?

Have a presence on Goodreads. Read books like yours and comment (positively) on them. Participate in conversational forums. Become part of the community. Make sure your website is a place people want to visit. Newsletters are nice, but only if you can be consistent. Don't always make it about "me and my books." Share things like lists of favorite things or recipes or pictures of your pets or lovely sunsets. Make it seem personal without actually violating your privacy. If all you ever do is say, "Buy my books!"—that's shilling, not marketing.

8. What is the purpose of the morals clause in our contracts?

To protect the publisher from financial loss through lawsuits. In today's world, someone's personal behavior can become public in an instant, so an author who behaves despicably in their private life can make it impossible for a publisher to sell their book. This clause protects the publisher from some of the financial repercussions if this happens.

9. Foreign, audio and subsidiary rights—when to keep them, when to let them go.

Keep them, keep them, keep them, and if you didn't keep them, try to get them reverted. Audio rights have become particularly important as audio books have become more affordable and available, so they can be quite lucrative. That said, the big publishers will insist on retaining them in practically every instance. The only exception is if publishers are in a bidding war for your work, one of them might sweeten the deal by letting you keep subsidiary rights to tip the scale in their favor.

10. How does a professional author go about finding a new agent? Should this be different in some way from a newbie looking for a first agent?

The difference is that you now know other writers and can talk to them about who represents them and get recommendations and even references, which will help. But it's still the same process. You will submit your work and wait to hear back, just like you did the first time. You can also meet people at conferences, like you did the first time, but you'll have a bit more credibility than the unpublished writers. A prospective agent will want to know your numbers and if you are staying in the same lane or trying something new.

11. How does a professional author handle ghosting (never getting a reply) from a potential agent?

First of all, are they really ghosting you? Everything in publishing moves slowly, and agents are incredibly busy (at least the agents you want to represent you should be!). Maybe it is just taking a long time for the agent to get to your stuff. Did they reply at all? Do you know if they actually got it? Have you checked back after the specified time limit to see if they have had a chance to look at it? If you've made allowances for all of this and are now sure the agent is just not replying, it is probably either because they have nothing to say or do not want to represent you and don't want to come out and say it. You can't make them love you, so move on. You don't want to work with that person anyway.

12. Anything else you think I've missed that NINC members should know?

Writing is a job. Try to separate the emotion from the business. This is difficult to do, but so vitally important. You need to be able to step outside yourself and the book, separate from the creative process, and look at the book as an object. Be objective, because that is how a publisher will look at it. Does it fit the list? Do I like the voice? Is it compelling? Is it too similar to other things? These are only some of the other factors affecting the sale besides your writing. This is a business. It isn't personal, no matter what it feels like to the writer.

Communication is very important. Don't be afraid to ask the questions you want to ask and to be clear about what you want. Some clients feel they need to justify why they have a right to ask a question—at length—before actually asking it. You don't need to do this. Just ask. And do ask. Don't hold back. An agent always appreciates a straightforward question and less drama.

Finally, stick with it and keep growing.

13. Tell me a little bit about why you still love this job after all of these years.

The people, the challenges, the reading, because there is always something new and always something new to learn. The people who write books and publish books are the best people in the world. I want to be part of that community. Also, it's *books*, for heaven's sake. What's not to love?



Victoria Thompson is the bestselling author of the Edgar ® and Agatha Award-nominated *Gaslight Mystery Series* and the Sue Grafton Memorial Award-nominated *Counterfeit Lady Series*. Her latest books are *Murder on Trinity Place* and *City of Secrets*, both from Berkley. She currently teaches in the master's program for writing popular fiction at Seton Hill University. She lives in Illinois with her husband and a very spoiled little dog.

Unearthing Hidden Clues About Your Creativity:

Goals & Fears, Part 5

By Denise A. Agnew



Since December, I've discussed the process of discovering hidden clues to what may impede your creativity. This month I'm focusing on how standard goals may not be enough to make you happy, and how fear can influence and impair your creativity. In Part One of the series, I asked you to thoroughly answer several questions, so if you want to see the full list, check out the December 2018 issue of *Nink* in the members-only section.

The questions we are exploring this month are:

1. What are your writing goals?
2. Are you afraid to examine your own fears and use them in your writing?

Goals: Are they materialistic?

When I asked you to consider your writing goals, you may have said things like:

- Write X number of novels in 2019.
- Increase royalty gains in 2019 by X amount.
- Engage more with readers on social media.
- Build a larger mailing list for a newsletter.
- Attend X number of conferences this year.

Did these goals, which are all extrinsic, leave you feeling excited and eager to write? If they did, congratulations. These types of goals can be productive for many writers. Yet some people will find that after several years of writing, goals such as the ones above leave them unmotivated. Goals that are centered primarily on materialistic gains can leave a writer believing that they've failed. Even if you do reach goals like those listed above, you could find yourself drained and unhappy.

Materialistic goals are often society- and culture-driven and fixated on a bottom line. The bottom line changes over time. What if you don't reach one of the monetary type of goals listed above? If a writer misses a materialistic goal, they often question their competence. You might be tempted to write down the same goals for 2020 and decide you should work harder. The work-harder theory might be what some writers need to do, but it isn't always lack of industriousness that causes trouble. I've encountered writers who've accomplished all of the above goals and still ended the year with a sense of emptiness. Lack of fulfillment often happens when a writer creates a to-do-list of "should" goals rather than meaningful goals based on their own intuition and passion.

After a sufficient amount of time, materialistic goals can become so ingrained in a writer they can't recall what made them happy about writing in the first place.

Goals: Make them personal and meaningful

Intrinsic goals that are meaningful to you are much more likely to feel significant rather than generic. They are personal goals that fuel your deepest needs. Some examples:

- Write XYZ special project, which I'm dying to create before any other books in my queue.
- Write the screenplay that has been percolating in my head for 10 years.
- Write the big book I've always wanted to create but was too scared to try.
- I yearn to write about X, Y and Z.

These goals are personal, and if accomplished, have a much bigger chance of creating lasting personal satisfaction in your creative world.

Change your goal mindset

As a creativity coach, I've seen the results of writers relying exclusively on extrinsic or materialist goal setting. Some of the things that happen include:

- The writer is on a never-ending treadmill of wanting more. The goal post gets moved and the writer endlessly chases it.
- The writer reaches a high level of fame, money and recognition and discovers they're still unhappy.

If a writer is entrenched in years of materialistic goal-setting, how do they switch to a more intrinsic mindset? Consider these ideas:

- Recall the beginning of your writing career. What made you excited about writing a story? How did that enthusiasm morph into a bottom-line mentality? If you have a journal, this might be a good place to record your thoughts and feelings. Go deep. Spend some time writing in it and don't be afraid to say what you really think about your writing career and the goals you've had in the past.

- Put into effect intrinsic goals that are unique to your desires and spend less time examining how other authors accomplish fame and fortune. This doesn't mean you won't ever examine how other writers do things or learn more about craft. What it means is spending more time on your personal satisfaction and less thinking there is always a better way to do things "out there."
- Ignore naysayers who say there is only one right way to design a writing career. We can all think of writers who have fantastic and satisfying careers who did it "their way."
- Use your intuition and pay attention to it. When it tells you that following advice (whether it be agent, editor, publisher or well-meaning friends) isn't a good idea, listen to your intuition. Most of the time it isn't going to lead you down the wrong path.

Writers who set intrinsic goals have a much greater chance of accomplishing lasting creativity.

Examining fear and using it

All of that discussion about goals could have generated a lot of fear inside you, right? (Such as fear of not making it big in the writing world, or fear of failing in life in general.) Even if this discussion didn't send you running out of the room screaming in terror, it might have the knock-on effect of helping you create rich characters.

Fear can be a tremendous boost to your creativity. I'm not speaking about fear that strangles your ability to finish a novel. No, I'm talking about your personal fears of the big, bad world outside of your home, and those you harbor about yourself. You don't have to write thrillers, horror novels, or even mysteries to find a rich world for your creativity if you explore what you fear. Many a mainstream, literary or romance novel has bloomed after a writer examined a terrible, "what if?" By not confronting those fears and injecting them into our work, we miss opportunities to exorcise personal demons and design excellent fiction. Things to consider when using your own fears:

- Facing demons along with your characters is a personal therapy that manifests on the page and creates new scenarios and juicy fodder for tortured characters.
- If you went through a trying time or experienced fear, how can psychological trauma give you deeper, richer characters?
- You may not choose to use personal fears literally with a character, but your own experiences can give you a jumping-off point.

Before you write your next book, ask yourself how your own fears can enrich your writing life.

Next month we'll tackle the following two questions:

1. *Are you afraid to touch on and explore deeper/controversial topics?*
2. *Do you let people (strangers or not) shame you into not writing?*

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.

The Mad Scribbler

Walking Away

By Laura Resnick



“Anyone with talent should leave at once.”

—Tyrone Guthrie, theatrical director

A food writer I know called me for advice. She had published several cookbooks over the years and had a literary agent, but publishing was not her world, and she wasn't familiar with its rules and customs. She told me she was feeling extremely stressed by her contractual commitment to deliver a new cookbook to a publisher, and she wanted to know if there was any way to get out of the deal. Her husband's health was declining, and she wanted to focus fully on her family now, not work on the book her publisher was expecting. She didn't want to push back the deadline; she just wanted this obligation out of her life. Was there a way to do that?

There was, of course, a very straightforward and appropriate way. I advised her to offer to repay the advance money she had already received—the signing advance—and ask the publisher to cancel the contract.

I explained that, in doing so, she'd probably have to repay out of her own pocket the portion of the advance that her agent had kept. An agent's commission, which is normally a percentage of the author's earnings, has a tendency to transform magically into a non-refundable fee when things go wrong. The publisher would understandably want the entire signing advance paid back, not just the author's share, and agents often balk at returning their 15 percent.

My friend was very relieved. She could comfortably afford to repay the entire advance, so she notified her agent of her decision. Soon thereafter, the contract was canceled by mutual agreement, without any drama or hard feelings.

As long as an author can return to the publisher all monies that have so far been paid for an unwritten/undelivered book, a publisher is almost always willing to cancel the deal—mostly because they realize that if the author doesn't want to write the book (indeed, if the author is so disinclined to write it that the author will *give back the money*), there's no way they're ever getting that book. So, they might as well at least get their money back.

This is also how authors sometimes cancel contracts after they deliver a book which then flounders in the editorial department for one reason or another. Unfortunately, this is so common I can think of many such instances.

One writer I know, for example, had her lawyer nudge an editor after she'd already waited nearly 18 months for the editor to read and set a publication date for her delivered MS. The editor responded to the lawyer with a long, *long*, whiny letter insisting there was no possible way of knowing when that MS might get read, let alone published. (Perhaps a tendency to spend time on excruciatingly verbose letters complaining to strangers might be one reason for the delay? I'm just guessing, of course.) Suspecting the book might not get published anytime this century, the exasperated writer bought back the rights and walked away.

(I know that publisher. Eighteen months is not an unusually long wait there for an editor to respond to an under-contract manuscript. Don't even get me started.)

To give another example, sometimes an editor dislikes the delivered manuscript and refuses to accept it for publication. After editor and writer go back and forth about the material for weeks or months—a process that sometimes includes multiple rewrites that the editor still refuses to approve or publish—it becomes clear that this will never work out.

One of the most common reasons authors encounter such an obstacle is that, because of the usual musical chairs in the publishing world, the editor who offered the writer the contract has since left the company, so now the writer is delivering the completed manuscript to another editor—one who has no interest in fulfilling the publishing commitments made by their predecessor. The writer has been “orphaned” at that house, and this editor shoves said writer off a cliff (so to speak) by refusing to accept the contracted book, thereby damaging the writer's career and earnings without conscience or apology.

(This happened to me very early in my career, and that editor, who refused even to *read* my delivered manuscript, kept saying things to me like, “I don't know what to tell you,” and, “I don't know what you want me to say,” both of which phrases I believe people should be jailed for using.)

Alternately, sometimes things go south with the editor who actually offered you the contract. I know a depressing number of writers who submitted a proposal, sold it, delivered exactly the book they had proposed (I can confirm this in at least three instances where I read both the proposal and the manuscript), but the editor says, “This isn't the book I thought you'd write.” Perhaps the editor also says your book is “crap,” “unsalvageable,” “a piece of sh*t,” and/or “unpublishable”—these are all direct quotes from editors about projects that were subsequently published elsewhere.

When you encounter deal-breaking editorial problems like these, if you want to abandon the publisher *and* the project (maybe you never want to see it again, or maybe you don't think it's viable anywhere but this house, etc.), you can just walk away and hope they don't ask for their money back. Sometimes they don't. As one editor said to me, “Publishers know that writers never have the money.” But sometimes they do want repayment—and will even sue you for it. If a writer can't repay the full advance, the writer can negotiate with the publisher to accept a smaller sum, one the author *can* pay. And there is at least one case where an author (actress Joan Collins) counter-sued and won after Random House sued her to get back the

advance for two delivered novels they had declined to publish. The court ordered the publisher to pay *more* money to Ms. Collins, rather than requiring her to repay the signing advance.

However, if you want to salvage the publishing relationship, an obvious solution to editorial balking is to propose writing a replacement book, in exchange for getting all rights back to the book the house declines to publish. I know of a number of instances where this has worked, albeit sometimes because the author is then reassigned to a different editor. Then you're free to market the returned book elsewhere without having to repay the money or lose your current publisher.

And it's worth getting those rights back. There are numerous instances where the "unpublishable" book subsequently sold to another house, often for a good advance and occasionally for an even *better* advance than the original deal.

If you don't have the cash to buy back your book and writing a replacement book isn't a viable option, you can fall back on the "first proceeds" clause in your contract. It's a clause that covers this situation, allowing you to market the book elsewhere and requiring you to repay the publisher out of the first proceeds you receive (the signing advance) elsewhere for the book. If your contract doesn't contain such a clause for some reason, then a *rational* publisher will agree to an amendment or rider stipulating this arrangement, since it's a means for them to recover the signing advance they paid for a book they no longer want.

Altered life circumstances, bad publishing relationships, and "unacceptable" manuscripts are all common reasons that writers buy their way out of publishing commitments, and it's rare for a publisher to balk at canceling a contract in exchange for repayment.

Rare—but not entirely unknown. One reason a publisher might resist a buyback is if they think they're being treated unfairly—such as, if a writer is trying to buy back books from them because she has been offered more money for those titles elsewhere. Publishers particularly tend to dislike that gambit if they published the author as an unknown, the risk paid off, and the work is getting attention. From the publisher's perspective, an author buying back books in those circumstances to get a bigger advance elsewhere isn't acting in good faith. However, even in cases where they'd much rather not cancel the contract, publishers will still typically agree to a buyback, because getting their money repaid is at least better than waiting for books the author won't deliver.

Finally, walking away from a publisher has become more viable in the digital era, of course, because now a book can be guaranteed publication whether or not the author finds another traditional publisher for it. Indeed, many authors no longer even consider submitting a reclaimed manuscript to other houses, but instead buy back their books specifically *to* self-publish them. Moreover, as recounted in "The Fight for Rights" by Chéré Coen in this issue of *Nink*, writers these days also offer to pay publishers to return their rights for *published* books, as well as unpublished manuscripts, because of how the digital age has augmented the monetary value of those rights.

Laura Resnick is the author of novels, short stories, and nonfiction.

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.io/g/NINCLINK>

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

We offer a critique/brainstorming group: <https://groups.io/g/NINKcritique>

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Conference 2019: Planning For Success

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

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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

As described in the March issue of *Nink*, NINC members can use a professional filing service to set up a new entity for free: you pay only the state fees and a shipping & handling fee. See details about this exclusive offer for NINC members from SmallBiz.com, Inc. on the [Member Discounts](#) page.

IngramSpark has updated their offer of free title setup for print, ebook and print/ebook until January 31, 2020. At that time they'll evaluate how often we use it, so by all means, use this nice perk and help us keep the discount! You'll find more information, as well as the code to use, on our [Members Benefits and Discounts](#) page, along with a list of various other professional discounts that are available to NINC members.

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
- 2019 Conference Promoter
- 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.

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

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