
Novelists' Ink

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

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January 1997

How Do I Love Thee, Francis Crawford.... Let Me *List* the Ways

I am an inveterate maker of lists.

One application of this penchant, only recently applied and founded on the oldest and simplest of time management advice, i.e., to make a to-do list and follow through on it, has literally revolutionized my life. In a mere six weeks, I wrote and polished the initial draft of my medieval romance, *My Lady Beloved*.

I began this process by getting out my date book, tearing off a few pages from one of those blotters with the dateless calendars, and planning out the next six months. I marked those days when I could not reasonably expect to write, and tried to keep my natural tendency toward optimism in check. I set my sights on three completed drafts in a given year. (I know that's a lot of books, but I'm trying to get my name out there in a big way—see section on listing goals!)

From my study of the calendar pages, I concluded that I needed to write ten pages per day, four days per week, in order to achieve my objective. In my case, that left seven weeks for revisions, promotion, travel and just vegging out—something I do too little of, according to those nearest and dearest.

Now, every evening, I make a to-do list for the next day, including a page quota, a reading program (two chapters from a book on writing, two chapters from a work on history, philosophy, mythology or anything else that might

By
LINDA LAEL MILLER

broaden my horizons in some way), and exercise—which I believe is vital to any writer's success. (But that's a subject for a whole other article.)

I make a point of limiting this list to six items or less for, like any obsessive-compulsive, I tend to defeat myself by setting unrealistic goals and then beating myself up when I fall short.

I also use lists to solve problems, listing ways to improve my health, my relations with family members and employees, etc. Recently, when one of those inevitable professional disappointments struck, I made lists of ways I might make some strides in my career, and I came up with so many dynamite ideas that, in the (continued on page 5)

Harlequin Audit Shows Company's Efficiency

Last year Novelists, Inc. conducted its first audit lottery with a random drawing from titles submitted by members. The winner was a Harlequin title, so CPA Andrew Mitchell traveled to Switzerland to conduct the audit. Although NINC paid for the audit, Mr. Mitchell's client is technically the author of the book, so the report presented here, with the permission of the author, is in the form of a letter to the author from Mr. Mitchell.

Dear Author:

I have examined the books and records of Harlequin Books, S.A. for the purpose of determining the fairness and accuracy of the royalties reported to you of *Harlequin Temptation*, with an original release date in the Spring 1987 through the reporting period ended December 31, 1995.

During the course of my examination, I performed all the tests and procedures which I con- (continued on page 10)

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Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

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Send Address Changes to Central Coordinator

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Looking Forward:

The beginning of a new year is always a good time for evaluating the past and looking toward the future. That's exactly what we're doing in Novelists, Inc. too. Our incoming Board of Directors is full of plans and ideas. Three of our new board members are brand new to the Board and Janice Young Brooks, our Advisory Council Representative, was NINC's founding president who has generously agreed to give us the benefit of her experience.

Since you hear from me every month, I thought it would be a good idea to give the other board members a chance to introduce themselves this month. May I present your 1997 Board of Directors, in their own words:

Treasurer Phyllis DiFrancesco

(serving her second term): As the treasurer for NINC, my main goals are to pay all the bills as quickly as possible, make sure our checkbooks are always in balance and be a resource for the Board regarding our fiscal well-being. This in turn allows the other board members the freedom to be creative, imaginative and productive on your behalf.

Vice President Steve Womack

(new to the board): NINC appealed to me in the first place for two primary reasons. First, it represents all writers in all genres of popular fiction. It doesn't represent writers of only one genre, one gender or one set of narrow interests. Second, NINC is truly an organization of professional writers. One of the biggest current controversies in Mystery Writers of America is the question of affiliate and associate memberships, who now outnumber the professional writers. While having associate and affiliate memberships brings in more dues money, I believe it dilutes the power of the organization in its ability to represent the interests of professional writers. I'm pleased that the founders' vision of NINC was that of an organization that could make a long-term difference in its members' lives.

My own vision of the future of NINC, especially in the next couple of years, is that we have to get the word out to all writers that we exist. I frequently talk to writers who've never heard of NINC. That's something we have to remedy. I envision a day when NINC is equally representative of all genres. And then I think our next step is to move outside our own comfort zone and start working with the other groups in the Authors Coalition. I fantasize about the day when all the AC organizations come together and present a united front to the industry. Maybe then we'll be able to really make a difference in the professional lives of our members in much the same way that the Screenwriters Guild has in the lives of film and television writers.

This Month from the President:

- Looking Forward
- Introducing the 1997 Board of Directors...in their own words
- Reminder: 1997 Dues are Due

"My own vision of the future of NINC...is that we have to get the word out to all writers that we exist." Steve Womack

Secretary Candace Schuler

(new this year): I ran for the NINC Board because I thought it was time to widen my horizons beyond the romance genre and, in the process, learn more about the "business" side of the business I'm in. And what better way to do that than to jump in, feet first? After attending my first NINC Board meeting (as an observer) and my first NINC Conference, I can already see it was a wise decision. I'm going to learn a lot during my term as Secretary.

Newsletter Editor Anne Holmberg

(new this year): With two great assistant editors on board for the first time ever—Kathy Lynn Emerson and Marj Krueger—I'm hoping to keep up with the daunting example that Vicki Lewis Thompson set over the past year. Nothing's firm yet, but we're looking at articles on: electronic rights; how music and video producers established their right to get paid for multiple use of their creations through radio or video rental stores, and how their experience might apply to writers with respect to used-book sales; personal security for writers; protecting ourselves from the physical hazards of writing; a review of the writing business over the past 40 or 50 years to see how times have changed, for better or for worse; alternative sources for insurance for writers and more. Suggestions for articles are always welcome. Volunteers to write articles are even more welcome!

Janice Young Brooks

I'm pleased to be rejoining the Board as this year's Advisory Council Representative. I was one of the five founding members of NINC, served as the first President and then as the Central Coordinator for a couple years. I've also been the person who keeps the database and generates the rosters and labels. So I've never been "out of touch" for more than a few days at a time since the inception of NINC.

Members: to obtain a copy of the full minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting, send \$2 plus SASE to the P.O. Box. For an updated copy of the Bylaws, send \$2 plus SASE. For a copy of the Treasurer's Report, send \$1 plus SASE to the P.O. Box.

I've watched the organization grow in size, scope and reputation and am very proud of what it has become. I hope that this year we'll continue and enhance the services and information we provide to all genre fiction writers. We've come a long way, and there's still a terrific journey ahead of us, as well. I look forward to being among the "tour guides."

Reminder: 1997 Dues are Due!

If you haven't sent in your dues for 1997 yet, January 15 is the deadline. Don't miss a single issue of *Novelists' Ink*!

— **Victoria Thompson**

Accountant Needed

NINC requires the services of a professional accountant to keep our books on a monthly basis. The job averages about two hours of work per month. Our treasurer provides all the necessary information. If you are interested in doing a great service for NINC, please send a brief resume and your salary requirements to our treasurer:

Phyllis DiFrancesco

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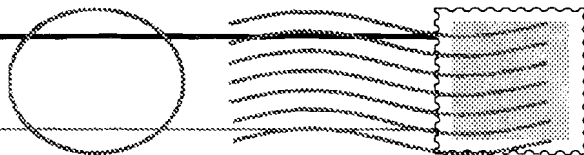
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Mark Your Calendar! ***Annual National Conference*** ***October 16-19, 1997***

As you surely know by now, our annual conference will be held at the Marriott East Side Hotel in New York City on October 16-19, 1997. This will be the most exciting conference we've ever held, and Laura Resnick, our Conference Coordinator, has some truly unique events already planned. You won't want to miss it!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Letters to the Editor is the most important column in our newsletter, since it is the monthly forum in which we can all share our views and express our opinions. Anonymous letters will never be published in NINK. Upon the author's request, signed letters may be published as "Name Withheld." In the interest of fairness and in the belief that more can be accomplished by writers and publishers talking with one another rather than about each other, when a letter addresses the policies of a particular publisher, the house in question may be invited to respond in the same issue. Letters may be edited for length or NINK style. Letters may be sent to the NINK editor via mail, fax or e-mail. See masthead for addresses.

Raindrops Fallin' on Her Bed

Hm. Think we should tell Laura Resnick why it only rained on her bed in Baltimore?

— **Carla Neggers**

Another Self-Promo Dropout

Steve Womack, thankyouthankyouthankyou for coming right out and admitting that self-promotion just might be a waste of time, energy and money.

The last time I attended a mystery conference, I figured that the plane fare, hotel cost, food, dry cleaning, conference fee (why do we pay to be the free entertainment at a fan conference anyway?), taxi fares, tips and assorted other expenses came to about \$1000. With travel and preparation time, I would lose a week's writing. I knew I couldn't directly recoup this in immediate book sales, but thought it might help a little.

I took part in my panel, then went to my signing. There was a line of people waiting! Maybe 30 in all. What a thrill, I thought. Then I discovered that one of them wanted a used book signed, two wanted new paperbacks signed and ALL the rest wanted me to autograph their programs. This struck me then, and now, as tacky, cheap and insulting. I spent \$1000, made 80 cents and came home angry and humiliated.

I'm not opposed to promotion and will happily go absolutely anywhere my publisher sends me. Publisher-generated promotion is, in my view, A Very Good Thing. But I no longer do school talks, autographings that aren't set up by my publisher or book club talks (the last one that invited me to speak wanted me to supply, gratis, copies of the book for them to read—do I look like a cretin?).

And if I attend another fan conference, it will only be because (1) it's a place I'd like to go—St. Paul didn't fall into this category, (2) I have some spare cash and (3) I plan to get together with friends with the benefit of taking the trip expense as a tax deduction. For me, as for most of

us, writing is a business—one I enjoy enormously—but still a business. Any sensible business person has to weigh the expenses (money, writing time and energy expended) against the possible benefits.

— **Jill Churchill**



NINK Notes

Arabesque Titles Optioned

Production begins this month to film four of Kensington Books' Arabesque titles for television. Kensington has contracted with the African Heritage Network and Chuck Fries Productions to option *First Fruits* by Rochelle Alers, *Whispers of Love* by Shirley Hailstock, *Body and Soul* by Felicia Mason and *Forever Yours* by Frances Ray.

The African Heritage Network is the producer and national syndicator of the series *Movie of the Month*, hosted by Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, which is the only movie package offered in national syndication that focuses exclusively on the work of African Americans in the film industry. AHN also produces and syndicates the yearly specials *Miss Collegiate African-American Pageant* and *S.T.O.M.P.*

Fries' television productions include *Small Sacrifices*, starring Farrah Fawcett and Ryan O'Neal; *The Neon Empire*, starring Ray Sharkey and Martin Landau; and *Leona Helmsley: The Queen of Mean*, starring Suzanne Pleshette and Lloyd Bridges. Theatrical features include *The Cat People*, *Flowers in the Attic*, *Out of Bounds*, *Thrashin'*, and most recently, *Screamers*.

RT Awards Correction

Anne Stuart Ohlrogge (Anne Stuart) was inadvertently omitted from the list of award winners at the recent *Romantic Times* convention. She received Reviewers' Choice awards in the categories of Contemporary Romantic Suspense and Historical K.I.S.S. Hero.

Let me *List* the Ways

(Continued from page 1)

end, I was glad the so-called “setback” had happened.

Listing my goals...helps me focus

Listing my goals, in considerable detail, helps me to focus on what I’m trying to accomplish. Right now I’m working on losing weight, buying a vacation hideaway, completing three books by the end of the year and improving my showing in the marketplace.

Beneath each goal, I listed the reasons I wanted to achieve it, the obstacles I would face, the skills I needed to acquire, the people I would need to help me (networking has probably been the most valuable tool I’ve used in recent years), and then I mapped out a plan. Every category required a list.

Too simplistic, I can hear some of you saying. Everybody knows you have to write out your goals, and use a to-do list to get things done.

And that’s true. Just about everybody knows. But surpris-

ingly few people actually *apply* this basic knowledge. It just isn’t enough to have a hazy idea floating around in your head—you’ve got to know exactly what you want; only then will you be able to formulate a plan of action. Contrary to what some self-help gurus would have you believe, wishing doesn’t make it so—not with big, important goals, in any case.

101 Wishes

I *have* had some spooky experiences with smaller endeavors, though. After reading *The Aladdin Factor*, I wrote out the recommended list of 101 wishes, and some of them were pretty off-the-wall. I wanted to see Princess Diana, and when I wrote that down, I figured there wasn’t a chance in you-know-where that it would happen, even though I live in central London for part of the year.

Sure enough, one day I was walking down the street, on my way to the post office, when I noticed a hubbub in front of one of the local custom lingerie places. You guessed it—there she was, live and in person. I rushed to the drug store, bought a disposable camera and waited on the sidewalk for my moment of greatness. The Princess left the shop and I got a great picture to prove the tale. Several other items on the wish list came through in similarly coincidental ways.

A silly objective? True. But it was a wonderful experience, one I will never forget.

I use lists in plotting books as well, sometimes starting with nothing but a concept or a couple of characters looking for a place to express themselves. I always start with a yellow legal pad and a handful of Sanford Espresso extra-fine tip pens, asking myself, *What are twenty things that could happen in this book?*

I don’t judge the answers—that’s important. You’ll stem the flow of creativity if you weigh each idea as though the fate of the rain forests depended upon it. In the beginning, it’s quantity over quality.

As you get better and better at this technique, you’ll be amazed by the results.

The same technique serves when I’m stuck somewhere in the middle of the story, or in a particular chapter.

I do a lot of public speaking, and my first step in preparing a speech is to make just such a list of the things I want to get across during my talk. Now that I’ve had some practice with this, I often come up with 25, 30 or even more ideas.

Are they all usable? Of course not. But I get past the surface stuff and into areas of thought I would otherwise have missed.

The uses of this technique are virtually endless, and will apply to any segment of life. My friend Debbie Macomber and I use the method to brainstorm, and recently we met over my dining room table to come up with stories to pitch to Hollywood, three for her, three for me. And while neither of us has racked up a sale—yet—the agent who represents us both was pleased with our ideas and is actively marketing them.

Another favorite trick—and the reason for the title of this article—is my Fantastic Hero List. In my opinion, the best hero I’ve ever had the pleasure to come across in a book is Francis Crawford of Lymond, created by Scottish author Dorothy Dunnnett, and featured in the six glorious historical novels referred to as the Lymond Series. (Ask any librarian.)

Because I happen to write romances, an intriguing, memorable hero is a necessity. I simply asked myself, *What are twenty things that make Francis Crawford fabulous?* The answers, for me at least, are a recipe for a better hero.

The same process, of course, could (and should) be applied to heroines, villains, secondary characters, settings. Again, the applications are unlimited.

Too often, in genre fiction at least, we encounter a green monster phenomenon. A book comes out,

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You’ll stem the flow of creativity if you weigh each idea as though the fate of the rain forests depended upon it.

Let Me *List* the Ways

(Continued from page 5)

makes every bestseller list in the universe and goes into a bejillion printings. The author's advances skyrocket—in short, everything we would like to have happen to us happens to them.

It's only human to feel a little jealous, at first anyway, but too often we snipe at that writer, maybe just in our own minds, maybe to our friends. Maybe, God forbid, on the Internet. We say or think things like, *So-and-so isn't even that good of a writer...I could do better than that, any*

day...It's all in who you know...Some people get all the breaks...on and on, ad nauseam. (If you're wondering why that ignoble list came so readily to my mind, it's because I'm guilty of the same infantile, counterproductive mish-mash.)

There is a better and more constructive list we could make, on paper and in our minds.

The best hero I've ever had the pleasure to come across in a book is Francis Crawford of Lymond.

My policy, when I feel like this about a fellow author and his/her novel, is to buy that self-same book, sit down and read it with as little rancor as I can, and then write a positive, detailed list of *what made the story work*. No fair dwelling on the negative stuff—whatever we might like to tell ourselves, if a book sells, it's because that writer did something very right. Something the readers liked. Doesn't it make more sense to find out what that something is and use the knowledge to improve our own work in any way we can?

Bibliography of my life

I like to keep a list of the books I read, a sort of bibliography of my life, not only because I derive a sense of accomplishment from wading, however slowly, through a fairly daunting personal reading program, but because at some point I plan to compile a suggested reading list to use as a handout when I do speeches and workshops.

I list places I want to visit, in the U.S. and abroad. It constantly surprises me how often a chance will arise, seemingly out of nowhere, to visit a city or country I have noted, but there's no magic to the phenomenon. When we set goals, and list them, we are more alert to the opportunities that are all around us. We pick up on things that are said, articles in magazines and newspapers, classes at the community center, etc. It's the same principle as buying a new car and suddenly seeing the same make, model and color everywhere, or being pregnant and noticing that everyone else in the world seems to be expecting as well. The cars and the maternity smocks were there all the time,

of course; we notice because our interest has focused our attention.

One of my own objectives, lately, has been to increase my public speaking schedule, and thus become known to more people outside my usual milieu of romance writers and readers. Because I was conscious of this, and had written it down, I was (and am) watching and listening for material on giving seminars, workshops and speeches. I like people, I enjoy speaking and I have plenty to say, but I have neither the time nor the knowledge to secure the bookings I would need to achieve my aims.

The answer to my dilemma came in several forms. I hired a publicist, following Debbie Macomber's lead, and she is working to obtain speaking engagements, but the more dramatic result of my decision came when I learned that a woman who works upstairs books seminars for a living! I asked for her help, and she has agreed to contact markets all over the United States, in return for a commission. Had I not been *focused* on this particular endeavor, however, the idea of approaching my professional "neighbor" would probably never have occurred to me.

List-making can...motivate

List-making can serve to motivate, as well. Although I love exercise once I've started, making myself begin is usually difficult. I solved this problem by listing the reasons I want to exercise—the usual ones, such as health and longevity, while certainly worthwhile, were not enough to compel me onto that treadmill. What did?

1) Stamina—I've mapped out an ambitious strategy for achieving my goals, and I'm going to need strength to see it through. Also, I spend a lot of time running through airports and meeting with book sellers, buyers, etc., and those things, while pleasurable for me, are also **physically** and emotionally demanding.

2) Weight loss—I've had a weight problem ever since I quit smoking in 1986, and it's slowing me down. It isn't helping my self-esteem, either. I'm ready to solve this problem and go on to other things, and exercise will definitely help. (I've got a picture of Joan Lunden on my refrigerator door—she is my role model not because she lost 50 pounds, but because she's kept the weight off for years—for encouragement.)

3) Ideas. There it is again. That magic word. Exercising increases the flow of oxygen to the brain, and since I've taken up walking on my treadmill five days a week, I've had inspiration to spare—or straw to spin into gold. *NINK*

If a book sells, it's because that writer did something very right.

Browse Our Backlist

N/INK Index

January 1993-December 1996

Reprints of past articles are available for \$2/copy from NINC Central Coordinator Randy Russell, P.O. Box 1166, Mission KS 66222-0166

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Favorite Quotes of 1996

In the dog days of summer I put out the call on Ninclink, NINC's online maillist, for people to tell me their favorite quotes, the ones that get tacked and retacked on the bulletin board. Although I limited everyone to a single quote, not many listened. Apparently we have bulletin boards bristling with quotes. A few quoted other NINC members. A few quoted themselves. Here, to start out your New Year, are the quotes, but in the interest of saving space and being fair, I only allowed one per customer. VLT

ANNE HOLMBERG

I think I did pretty well, considering I started out with nothing but a bunch of blank paper. — Steve Martin

MAGGIE OSBORNE

If I had more time this would be shorter. — Anon.

MARY JO PUTNEY

Writing is like prostitution. First you do it for yourself. Then you do it for a few friends. Then you do it for money. — Moliere

TEREY DALY RAMIN

Writing is so difficult that I often feel that writers, having had their hell on earth, will escape all punishment in the hereafter. — Jessamyn West

DALLAS SCHULZ

*There is more to life than increasing its speed.
— Gandhi*

LAURA DEVRIES

Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right. — Henry Ford

EVELYN ROGERS

*If you can't think what to write, make something up.
— Her aerobics instructor*

DENISE DIETZ WILEY

*Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.
— Jonathan Swift*

VICTORIA THOMPSON

*I hate writing, but I love having written.
— Dorothy Parker*

MADELINE BAKER

If there's a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it. — Toni Morrison

CURTISS ANN MATLOCK

Never, ever give up. A little money helps, but what really gets you through is to never, under any condition, face the facts. — Ruth Gordon

LORI HANDELAND

People who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it. — "Chicken Soup for the Soul"

PATRICIA ROWE

See, Hear, Smell, Taste, Feel. — Herself

JUDY CORSER

*Writers have the largest, most fragile egos in the world.
— Anon.*

CARLA NEGGERS

Tighten your belt and write fast. — Carla's mother

TARA TAYLOR QUINN

Keep your mind on the things you want and off the things you don't want. — "Think and Grow Rich"

JOANN ROSS

*Literature was not born the day a boy crying wolf, wolf came running out of the Neanderthal valley with a big gray wolf on his heels. Literature was born the day a boy came crying wolf, wolf and there was no wolf behind him.
— Vladimir Nabokov*

MEG CHITTENDEN

Many people hear voices when there's nobody there. Some are called mad and are shut up in rooms where they stare at the walls all day. Some are called writers and do pretty much the same thing. — Herself

BETTY LEE DURAN

The faster I write the better my output. If I'm going slow I'm in trouble. It means I'm pushing the words instead of being pulled by them. — Raymond Chandler

ROBIN LEE HATCHER

I prefer dead writers because you don't run into them at parties. — Fran Lebowitz

BRENDA HIATT BARBER

*Today I have 1,440 minutes to invest, spend...or lose.
— Anon.*

ROBYN CARR

Get dressed! — Julie Tetel

PATRICIA MATTHEWS

Trust in God, but tie your camel. — Old Arabic Saying

ELIZABETH THORNTON

People ought to be one of two things: young or dead.
— Dorothy Parker

JACLYN REDING

If I lose faith in myself, who else is there? — Herself

JENNIFER BLAKE

Honey, it ain't how good you are. It's how long you last.
That's what it's all about. — Pearl Bailey

ROBERTA GELLIS

There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at the typewriter and open a vein. — Red Smith

SHARON IHLE

Sometimes I get tired of being creative and just want to do what everybody else is doing. — Anon.

CHRISTY COHEN

You don't commit suicide in the middle of writing the note. — Herbert Gold

DENISE DOMNING

When the urge to exercise hits me, I lie down until it passes. — Mark Twain

BARBARA SAMUEL

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. — Thomas Carlyle

MARILYN PAPPANO

Read, because if you don't read, you can't write, and if you can't write, you're going to have to get a REAL job.
— Linda Ellerbee's grandmother

LAURA RESNICK

Don't tell me how educated you are, tell me how much you have traveled. — Mohammed

CATHY MAXWELL

Literature is mostly about having sex and not much about having children. Life is the other way around. — David Lodge

JUDY GRIFFITH GILL

There is nothing wrong with writing—so long as you do

it in private and wash your hands afterward. — R.A. Heinlein

MARTHA HIX

Never start a vast project with a half-vast idea.
— Evelyn Rogers

KRISTINE ROLOFSON

Sometimes I go about pitying myself
And all the while
I am being carried on great winds across the sky.
— Chippewa Indian

PAT McLAUGHLIN

With the movies I've made, I've always hoped that people will come out of the theater being glad to be a member of the human race. — Jessica Tandy

FRANCINE MANDEVILLE

I believe as I did as a child, that life has meaning, direction and value; that no suffering is lost; that each drop of blood and every tear counts; and that the secret of the world is to be found in St. John's "Deus Caristas est" — "God is Love." — François Mauriac

VICKI LEWIS THOMPSON

Obstacles are placed in our way to determine if we truly wanted something or just thought we did.
— Dr. Harold Smith

SUSAN WIGGS

Money isn't everything, but it does impart a sort of zen-like calm. — Tom Wolfe

BARBARA BRETTON

If writers were good businessmen, they'd have too much sense to be writers. — Irvin S. Cobb

ALYSSE RASMUSSEN

There are none so deaf as those who WILL not hear.
— Victor Hugo

HEATHER MACALLISTER

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork. — Peter de Vries

TERESA HOWARD

Writing's like manure. It ain't worth shit 'til it's spread around. — Anon.

CAROLYN GREENE

Our creativity is our gift from God. Our use of it is our gift to God. — Julia Cameron

Harlequin Audit Shows Efficiency

(Continued from page 1)

sidered necessary given the circumstances. Based upon my testwork, it does not appear as though the royalty statements submitted to you are materially misstated. In fact, the only actual quantifiable misstatement which I discovered was in the amount of \$46.89, which I will discuss later.

I am aware that my conduct of the examination has a dual purpose. The primary function is to test and analyze the royalty reporting to determine the accuracy thereof. A secondary purpose is to inform you (and the members of

Novelists, Inc.) of some of the specifics involved in performing this examination. You and I have previously discussed much of these matters. However, I will reiterate some of my comments here so that you may present them to the membership of Novelists, Inc. as you see fit.

The following are some, but not necessarily all, of the procedures involved in

performing the examination:

1. Read the publishing contract to abstract pertinent information (e.g. royalty rate, payment terms, break levels, etc.),
2. Verify the royalty rates on the statement to the contract and recompute the extensions and footings on the royalty statements to determine mathematical integrity and accuracy,
3. Agree the information shown on the royalty statements to the publisher's internal records,
4. Verify accuracy of foreign exchange rates used and the respective currency conversion calculations,
5. Agree the information from the publisher's internal record keeping to the information provided by the sublicensees from all territories on a quarterly basis to determine its accuracy and completeness,
6. Trace payments made by sublicensees to the publisher with respect to sales,
7. Read sublicense agreements and agree periodic reporting by sublicensee to agreement and publisher's internal books and records,
8. Review reserve provisions in the contract and test royalty reporting records (i.e. levels of sales and date since publication) to ensure the publisher's adherence to the contract,
9. Independently confirm specific publication information with sublicensees and third party printers,

10. Obtain representation letters from both the publisher and the sublicensees regarding specific information,
11. Analyze "returns" information submitted by sublicensees to the publisher,
12. Inquiry of current inventory levels where possible and analysis thereof.

I mentioned earlier that I discovered a small error in the royalties previously reported to you. Harlequin Enterprises, B.V. entered into a sublicense agreement with Editora Nova Cultural LTDA, Sao Paulo, Brazil on January 1, 1987. The agreement licensed the publication of *Harlequin Temptation* in the Portuguese language worldwide for a period of five years. The fee for this license was \$1000 for a manuscript of up to 200 pages and \$1500 if the book ran in excess of 200 pages. The agreement also called for a payment toward plant costs (e.g. type, artwork, photography, etc.) of \$500. The moneys were due one month following publication.

On April 8, 1987, Editora Nova Cultural LTDA remitted payment to Harlequin in the amount of \$1500. After deducting \$500 for plant costs, and 25% value-added tax, there was a balance remaining of \$750, which was distributed 50% to you and 50% to Harlequin in accordance with your contract. On September 9, 1987, Editora Nova Cultural LTDA remitted a second payment in the amount of \$500. This was presumably due to the length of the manuscript being in excess of 200 pages although no supporting correspondence accompanied this amount. The manifest applied \$125 to additional plant costs and \$375 to license fees. The license fees were properly credited to you in accordance with your contract terms. The application of the additional plant costs was incorrect as this had been satisfied by the original \$500 allocation. However, Harlequin processed these moneys as reflected on the manifest. I brought this to the attention of Harlequin management and, after conducting the appropriate research, they agreed to credit you with 50% of \$93.75 (\$125 less the value-added tax) or \$46.89. They also offered and added appropriate interest on this underpayment from September 1987, and this appears in your current royalty statement.

I was pleased to find that the records were so complete given the length of time that had passed since the initial publication date. I did, however, encounter that some of the third-party printers had since destroyed their detailed records from that time. This did not affect my ability to properly perform the examination.

I have summarized, in Appendix A, the detailed activity history by Territory of the title, which should be self-explanatory. If you have any questions, then please feel free to call.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my services.
Very truly yours,

Andrew A. Mitchell

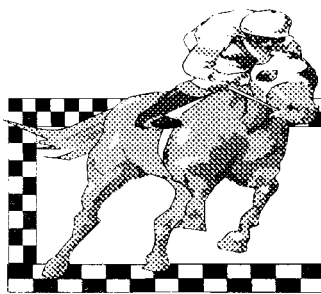
The only actual quantifiable misstatement which I discovered was in the amount of \$46.89 ...[Harlequin] offered and added appropriate interest on this underpayment.

APPENDIX A

Sales History of *Harlequin Temptation* from Publication through July 1996

Territory	Language	Market	Format	Gross Units	Returns	Net Units	Royalty Earned	% Sell-Through	Cover Price* (US\$)
USA	English	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	134,769	79,904	54,865	\$7,406.78	40.71%	\$2.25
USA	English	Retail	PB MM 1st Reprint	60,268	33,052	27,216	5,862.32	45.16%	3.59
USA	English	Direct	PB Mass Mkt	49,398	3,099	46,299	3,125.19	93.73%	2.25
USA	English	Direct	PB MM 1st Reprint	21,728	445	21,283	2,292.94	97.95%	3.59
USA	English	Direct	PB MM 2nd Reprint	25,711	1,217	24,494	2,716.18	95.27%	3.59
USA	English	Direct	PB MM 3rd Reprint	13,671	1,391	12,280	1,714.90	89.83%	3.99
Canada	English	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	18,554	10,397	8,157	804.73	43.96%	1.92
Canada	English	Retail	PB MM 1st Reprint	6,551	4,114	2,437	415.83	37.20%	2.91
Canada	English	Direct	PB Mass Mkt	9,053	1,455	7,598	374.17	83.93%	1.86
Canada	English	Direct	PB MM 1st Reprint	2,576	61	2,515	204.98	97.63%	2.64
Canada	English	Direct	PB MM 2nd Reprint	2,573	135	2,438	217.90	94.75%	2.91
Canada	English	Direct	PB MM 3rd Reprint	1,176	108	1,068	123.85	90.82%	3.28
United Kingdom	English	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	40,127	19,221	20,906	1,325.35	52.10%	2.01
UK	English	Retail	Hardbound	406	43	363	121.67	89.41%	12.34
UK	English	Direct	PB Mass Mkt	4,000	0	4,000	125.47	100.00%	1.95
Australia	English	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	12,481	6,599	5,882	319.79	47.13%	2.07
Australia	English	Direct	PB Mass Mkt	1,602	160	1,442	38.60	90.01%	1.78
Australia	English	Remainder	PB Mass Mkt	823	240	583	7.03	70.84%	0.37
Belgium/Lux.	Dutch	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	5,000	3,125	1,875	66.07	37.50%	1.87
Holland	Dutch	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	17,458	7,219	10,239	308.48	58.65%	1.60
Sweden	Swedish	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	13,650	6,801	6,849	261.03	50.18%	2.02
Sweden	Swedish	Direct	PB Mass Mkt	1,071	8	1,063	19.95	99.25%	2.02
Finland	Finnish	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	5,106	2,601	2,505	174.58	49.06%	3.25
Norway	Norwegian	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	10,000	5,501	4,499	258.55	44.99%	2.68
Germany	German	Retail	PB Mass Mkt	138,410	74,687	63,723	1,664.85	46.04%	1.53
Brazil	Portuguese	Retail	Digest	0	0	0	515.62	N/A	N/A
Denmark	Danish	Retail	Digest	6,848	0	6,848	324.37	100.00%	1.57
			SUB-TOTAL	603,010	261,583	341,427	\$30,791.18		
			Audit Adjustment	0	0	0	46.89		
			TOTAL	603,010	261,583	341,427	\$30,838.07		

* The latest conversion of foreign currency to US\$. This does not represent an average or consistent price



The Fast Track

Compiled by **MARILYN PAPPANO**

NINC Members on the USA Today List

The Fast Track is a monthly report on Novelists, Inc. members on the *USA Today* top 150 bestseller list. (A letter "n" after the position indicates that the

title is new on the list that week.) Members should send **Marilyn Pappano** a postcard alerting her to upcoming books, especially those in multi-author anthologies, which are often listed by last names only. Alternately, Marilyn's phone/fax number is 918-227-1608, fax 918-227-1601 or online: **pappanor@gorilla.net**. Internet surfers can read and retrieve the list with this magic formula: 1. Enter the World Wide Web via this address: <http://www.usatoday.com> 2. At *USA Today*'s homepage, click on the purple "Life" button in the *USA Today* masthead. Once in the Life section, click on the purple "Books" button in that masthead to go to the bookpage. Click, in turn, on two blue entry lines to see the top 1-50 list and the next 51-150 titles. You can also access year-to-date bestsellers by category. Save or print out the file. Look for your name or those of your friends, and track the stars!

Member	Title	Nov 6	Nov 13	Nov 20	Nov 27
Trisha Alexander	<i>A Baby for Rebecca</i>		122n		
Jennifer Blake, et al	<i>A Joyous Season</i>	130			
Sandra Brown	<i>Breakfast in Bed</i>		77n	64	98
Clive Cussler	<i>Shock Wave</i>			21n	8
Jude Deveraux, Andrea Kane, Judith McNaught, et al	<i>A Gift of Love (Anth.)</i>	73	100		
Linda Howard, Debbie Macomber, et al	<i>Christmas Kisses (Anth.)</i>	37	59	137	
Jayne Ann Krentz	<i>Witchcraft</i>	138			
Edith Layton, Patricia Rice, et al	<i>A Regency Christmas Feast (Anth.)</i>	147			
Susan Mallery	<i>Holly and Mistletoe</i>		147n		
Judith McNaught	<i>Remember When</i>			19n	28
Linda Lael Miller	<i>Tonight & Always</i>	109			
Mary Jo Putney	<i>River of Fire</i>		110		
Nora Roberts	<i>From the Heart</i>	66	108		
Nora Roberts	<i>Megan's Mate</i>	89			
Nora Roberts	<i>The Calhoun Women</i>				89n
Diana Whitney	<i>Barefoot Bride</i>		146n		

Correction: Pamela Morsi's *The Love Charm* was inadvertently omitted from the October "Fast Track" listings. It placed at #209 on October 13 and #133 on October 20.



I'd like to start this month's column by thanking the people who've sent me online news tidbits—I just wish there were more of them! Please, everyone, if you run across an especially useful web site or hear of (or come up with) a great way to use the Internet to your advantage as a writer, let me know about it!

Pamela Johnson sent a couple of great ideas: One suggestion that might help other Mac users who are looking for ISPs is to call their local retailer who specializes in selling Macs. That's what I did. It saved time and I knew right away who had the best price and easiest access. Have you tried checking with the computer labs at universities or colleges in your area? They might know of ISPs that aren't advertised.

And, from Jaclyn Reding: I've put up a web page, a listing, really, of links for romance writers and readers. On it are links to authors' home pages, bestsellers' lists, publishers, research sites, search engines, etc. If any authors would like to have a link to their web sites included, please e-mail me your URL with a short descriptive to include with your name that will let visitors to the site know what you write or have written. (Something like "Author of Time Travel and Historical Romance.") If you'd like to check the site out first, it is located at:

<http://www.inficad.com/~jacreding/romlinks.html>
(e-mail jacreding@inficad.com).

Something else for authors is a new WebRing available for romance authors. Information is at http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8623/Authors_Ring.html for anyone who has a website and wants to join. A WebRing is a series of interconnected websites with a common theme. Each one has a link to the next one. The theory is that folks with an interest in, say, romance authors, will follow the links from site to site, eventually visiting every site in the ring. (This came from author Val Taylor, who isn't even a NINC member yet.)

This will be old news to people already on America Online, but the new unlimited usage plan has (as of early December) resulted in a predictable jamming of access lines. Busy signals abound and frustration is mounting. Here's hoping that once the novelty wears off and AOL adds all of the new lines they've promised (maybe by the end of January?) things will be running smoothly again. In a similar vein, phone companies are now lobbying for a new "modem tax"—something we may want to keep an eye on!

Some web sites of interest, picked up from the Ninc-link mail list, include a couple of comprehensive, FAST search engines: <http://www.cyber411.com/search/> and <http://www.search.com> as well as another online bookstore, BookStacks, at: <http://www.books.com> (are those

last two easy to remember or what?).

Speaking of the mail list (don't I always?), we're up to a whopping 173 subscribers at this writing. More interesting topics have been covered this past month than I have room to list, but a few of the highlights include: the apparent downward trend in royalty rates at several publishers; an update on Zebra's "Precious Gems" and "Dollar Books" programs; how publishers "weed out" authors; foreign markets and royalty rates; cover blurbs and "teasers"; varying editorial policies; getting your rights back to out-of-print books and how book prices are impacting midlist books. Remember, to subscribe, just send an e-mail to: ninclink-d-request@cue.com with nothing (or a period) in the subject box and the word *subscribe* in the message box, with YOUR name (as it appears in the NINC roster) and your e-mail address below that.

While I'm on the subject, I thought I'd post a few of the more useful Ninclink commands here, so you'd have them handy for future reference:

To Retrieve from Archive digest #25:

E-Mail Address: ninclink-d-request@cue.com

Message Area: get latest/25

To Retrieve for Archive using Key Word:

E-Mail Address: ninclink-d-request@cue.com

Message Area: find latest/keyword

To Retrieve contents of Archive:

E-Mail Address: ninclink-d-request@cue.com

Message Area: show latest/keyword

Don't forget to check the NINC web site frequently, since it's being updated all the time. "The Next Page," listing NINC members' upcoming books, which used to be included in *NINK*, is now on the web page. To have your books listed, just e-mail Neff Rotter at neff@sfo.com with your titles, publishers and release dates. "Nonliners," you don't have to be online to participate, just send the same info to Neff via Fax: 415-661-5703 or snail mail: Neff Rotter, 190 Belgrave Ave., San Francisco CA 94117-4228.

And don't forget to send any and all cyber-news of interest to me at BrendaHB@aol.com! That'll do it for this month. See you online!

— Brenda Hiatt Barber :)

"Turn aside your dream and it will come back to you again. Get willing to follow it again and a second mysterious door will swing open." Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*



EAST OF THE HUDSON

What a Novel Idea

One of America's more successful romance writers pointed out a *Publishers Weekly* piece that I had missed during my little nap of the last month or so.

The piece tried to make sense out of the changes that have taken place in the last year in the romance genre and in mass-market publishing. Reporter Suzanne Mantell noted the obvious: Lots of change, a shrinkage of the middle of the list, more emphasis on bestsellers, on bestsellers' backlists and on packaging that combines bestsellers with (hopefully) rising stars in anthologies.

The consolidation of independent distributors will probably accelerate those trends, Mantell says. There will be less diversity in merchandiser buys, less space for the so-called "midlist."

On the other hand, the stars will continue to do well, very well.

Not very comforting, I'm afraid, for those of us who labor in the trenches without having achieved stardom. On the other hand, there was an interesting suggestion from Chip Crowl, an Ingram buyer.

Crowl said that if readers can't find romance authors they want to read in the supermarkets and drug stores, they may well end up invading another venue, the independent bookstore.

"If customers can't find certain titles at the ID outlets, they can be won over to bookstores. Here's a real opportunity for independents (bookstores) to build a broader customer base."

An outrageously logical idea, no? Bookstores starting to stock books that large numbers of people actually *want* to buy?

Naw, never happen. Not in a million years.

(No, the break didn't improve my temper. Thanks for asking, though.)

United Consolidated, Inc. PLC

Does anybody know who's publishing whom nowadays?

I thought I had the scorecard straight when up comes Pearson P.L.C. of the U.K. to purchase Putnam Berkley Group of the U.S. from MCA.

Got that? Okay, I'll translate.

Pearson (don't ask me what P.L.C. stands for) is a London firm which already owns Viking Penguin, the American publishing firm, and which bought Putnam Berkley, another American publishing firm. The latter had become extraneous, or excess baggage, or whatever, when Edgar

Bronfman, the Seagram's chieftain, purchased MCA from the Japanese. (Young Edgar likes movies better than books. He doesn't have to move his lips so much.)

Still with me? Great! The Putnam sale had been brewing for some time but it was just concluded for a cool \$336 million.

Or was that pounds? Never mind.

What all this really means, according to both buyer and seller, is nothing. No changes, no shifts in emphasis. Phyllis Grann will be president of the combined companies instead of chairman of Putnam and will report to the new chairman of the combined companies. (Have I lost you yet?) Other than the fact that the folks who sold Putnam will be megabucks richer, we're assured that no real changes will be made, everyone who used to run a company or an imprint or a coffeepot still will do so, and they all lived happily ever after.

To which I say, "Oscar Mayer."

Embedded in that cool corporate press release is, as usual, good news and bad. First, Phyllis Grann is a very smart businesswoman and a good publisher. She will probably make the most of the natural synergy between Penguin's traditional strong backlist and Putnam's very strong frontlist, the day-to-day bestsellers. That's okay, too, since two profitable publishers will continue to operate.

But the bad news is they won't really be two profitable publishers. They will be one, just under the skin.

Publishing conglomerations like this one inevitably lead to a shrinking of potential outlets. Sure, sure, the corporate bosses claim that the divisions will be separate and will compete but it never really happens. Corporate arms do not compete against one another, not in the long run and not fiercely. Competition means throats get cut and blood gets spilled. That doesn't happen between different branches of the same conglomerate unless you're talking about a power struggle rather than a product struggle.

In the end, an author or agent will have a choice: send the proposal to Viking or NAL, or send it to Putnam or Riverhead.

Arms of corporations don't compete against themselves in an auction. They never have, they never will. That sort of activity just isn't good for the bottom line.

So, the middle gets a little softer.

On the other hand, I kind of like one aspect of the new arrangement. There's something appropriate about Phyllis Grann becoming a top executive of the entertainment giant that also owns Madame Tussaud's wax museum.

(Oh, well, I never had any hope of selling a book to



EAST OF THE HUDSON

can take a joke.)

Having It Both Ways

I'm not sure why, but I've always been a little put off by Michael Moore, the writer/film producer who made an ass of himself chasing the president of General Motors around the country with a camera.

Somebody called him Everyman skewering the Corporation, and I ought to enjoy that, but somehow I always felt like he was trying a little too hard to inject himself into the middle of his work.

I felt the same way when I saw his new book, *Downsize This*. He's working real hard to promote the book, and so are some of the booksellers around the country, particularly the Borders chain of superstores.

At least Borders was promoting the book until Moore made an appearance at a superstore in Philadelphia where Borders clerks were campaigning for a union. During that appearance, according to both sides of the dispute, Moore suggested that people who wanted to buy his book go down the street to Rizzoli, another bookstore.

Things went downhill at another Borders in New York, when Moore was told he could sign books only so long as he kept his unionizing mouth shut.

Later, Borders canceled Moore signings altogether, and

Moore announced he was donating the royalties from 1,000 of his books to the drive to unionize Borders employees. That's where things stand now.

I can't figure out who's the bigger fool here, Moore for his outrage or Borders for pushing the book in the first place. Moore wants to sell a ton of books. The way to do that is to push said books in large, corporate-owned bookstores. Large, corporate-owned bookstores want to sell lots of books, so they push books they think will be popular, and what is more popular today than corporation-bashing?

The whole thing is a bit like anti-corporation movies from Fox, Universal, Columbia/Sony and the other members of that Star Chamber known as Hollywood. There is what Hegel might call a dialectic happening here, isn't there?

I'm sure others will have different feelings about this issue and every other one I raise, so have at it. I've signed on for another cycle of these columns and I expect every one of you to fire back at me with all the gusto you can muster.

If you don't, I'll have to start writing really outrageous things, just to see if I can get another rise out of Patty Evans or Julie Tetel.

(You want "Kindly Curmudgeon?" Call Walter Matthau. I don't do "kindly," except to my dog.)

[And I don't have a dog.]

— Evan Maxwell

INTRODUCING...

The following authors have made application for membership in NINC and are now presented by the Membership Committee to the members. If no legitimate objections are lodged with the Membership Committee within 30 days of this NINC issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of NINC:

New Applicants

Helen Bianchin, Queensland Australia

Pam McCutcheon, Colorado Springs CO

Catherine (Casey) Mickle (Casey Claybourne),
Sacramento CA

Michael Sackett, Glen Arm MD

Day Totton Smith (Day Leclair), Buxton NC

Stephen Solomita (David Cray), Pocono Summit PA

Sandy Steen, Plano TX

New Members

William Powell Adams (T.M. Adams), Mountain View CA

Carol Bruce-Thomas (Rachel Vincer, Debra Carroll),
Scarborough, Ont., Canada

Mary Kennedy, Wilmington DE

Barbara Parker, Ft. Lauderdale FL

Stobie Piel, Harpswell ME

Bouquets All Around

It's my last hurrah as *NINK*'s editor, and much as I'd like to ride that ego-wave of pretending I accomplished a year's worth of issues all by myself, it ain't so. Therefore, I'm throwing back the curtain to reveal all the wires and pulleys and the cast of supporting players that made my Wizard of Oz shtick look good.

First and foremost, although Victoria Thompson gave me credit in last month's column for changing *NINK*'s look, she was the catalyst for those changes. Victoria suggested a few things which Sandy Huseby and I proceeded to play with. (Remember that interesting shade of mustard yellow in May? It was a mistake, but some people liked it.)

That brings me to my chief wizard, Sandy Huseby. As our desktop publisher she's an editor's dream—creative, flexible and diligent. Her wicked sense of humor doesn't hurt, either.

My third ace-in-the-hole this year was Laura Resnick. She helped me brainstorm article ideas and then helped find writers for those articles. In addition, she threw some humor into the mix with occasional *Dispatches from the Front*, and came up with our new format for reporting the conference. Although she had no title, she was, in effect, an assistant editor.

Then I had *NINK*'s stalwart columnists, who never failed to deliver on that monthly commitment: President Victoria Thompson, Carole Nelson Douglas with *Fast Track*, Brenda Hiatt Barber with *Online*, and of course, Evan Maxwell with *East of the Hudson*. These columns gave *NINK* its distinctive character and continuity.

The guts of the newsletter came, of course, from the articles, which wouldn't have existed without the cheerful cooperation of the writers (in no particular order): Elaine English, Laura Resnick, Deborah Camp, Pat Warren, Patricia Gardner Evans, Jude Deveraux, Jack Nimersheim, Anne McCaffrey, Christine Flynn, Ethan Ellenberg, Ronn

Kaiser, Paul Rosenzweig, Janice Davis Smith, Victoria Thompson, Linda Lael Miller, Andrew A. Mitchell, Cathie Linz, Susan Anderson, Lawrence Watt-Evans, Rosanne Bittner, Karen Harper, Janice Young Brooks, Libby Hall, Marianne Shock, Connie Laux, Judy Myers, Binnie Syril Braunstein, Mary I. Kilchenstein, Catherine Coulter, Penelope Williamson, Kathy Chwedyk, Steven Womack and Judy E. Corser.

When Robyn Carr first asked if I'd consider taking this job, she promised me I'd find it stimulating and rewarding. She was right. I've made the same promise to the 1997 editor, Anne Holmberg, and her two assistants, Kathy Lynn Emerson and Marj Krueger. Despite the hard work (didn't read many books this year), despite the daunting responsibility (*NINK* is the organization's most visible product), I wouldn't have missed the experience for the world. My deep gratitude to those of you who helped me pull it off. And a Happy New Year to everyone in *NINC*.

Think I'll go read a book.

— Vicki Lewis Thompson

NINC Members Rule

Novelists, Inc. members captured 19 of the top 25 slots in *USA Today*'s list of 1996's top-selling romances compiled through October. Catherine Coulter took three of the spots, as did Nora Roberts and Julie Garwood. Taking up two places were Elizabeth Lowell (Ann Maxwell), Amanda Quick (Jayne Ann Krentz) and Sandra Brown. Other members on the list included Linda Howard, Iris Johansen, Teresa Medeiros and Betina Krahn.

Novelists' Ink

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