

Novelists'

INK

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



THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

(Ed's Note: This is the debut of a new monthly column by Laura Resnick, whose...um...unique, to say the least, opinions on the writing world should prove...well, read it for yourself...)

NOT EXACTLY EAST OF THE HUDSON

NINK: (Pursuing author) Resnick! Resnick! Hey, Laura! Wait up!

RESNICK: (Pausing) Huh?

NINK: (Out of breath) Where's the fire, what's the rush?

RESNICK: You haven't heard? Staples is having a buy-two-get-one-free sale on felt-tip pens.

NINK: My, my, your life really is just one mad gay whirl of action and passion, isn't it?

RESNICK: Hey, I'm a fantasy novelist. I conquer evil on a

daily basis.... Besides, I'm on a tight budget.

NINK: Hmmmm.... (Recalling the last Board meeting) How much are those pens?

RESNICK: What are you doing here, anyhow?

NINK: Ah! We've been looking around for a replacement for Evan Maxwell, and we'd like to invite you to do a monthly column for the newsletter.

RESNICK: A column? (Beaming) Me? Really???

NINK: (Double-checking) Yes, yours was the last name on the list.

RESNICK: Oh.

NINK: We'll pay you a fee commensurate with what you get for your fiction.

RESNICK: Couldn't you make it a living wage?

NINK: We'll look into it, but please keep in mind that we've got less than a thousand readers.

RESNICK: According to my royalty statements, that's still more people than bought my last romance novel.

NINK: No wonder you turned to fantasy.

RESNICK: (Puzzled) Isn't it strange how you can get more fan mail than sales?

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Vancouver, BC: Gem of the Pacific

By JUDY GILL

*Vancouver in the sunlight, Vancouver in the rain,
Vancouver bathed in moonlight, you steal my heart again...*
(From the song that never got finished, by Judy Gill)

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Okay, I was 18, and schmaltzy as all-get-out, but my sentiments were heartfelt.

As I write this, it's early February, and I'm back from spending a night in

the city at my favorite old, funky West End hotel, the Sylvia. From my room, I looked out over English Bay, where freighters lay in the roads waiting their turn to swing out around the peninsula of Stanley Park and sail under Lions Gate Bridge to the various terminals in Burrard Inlet and Coal Harbour. Across the side street from my room, Japanese cherry trees were putting out their first froth of pink blossoms. This is a city in a Temperate Zone. I needed a jacket, but not a winter coat, though the wind nearly blew me away. Next week, I might need a winter coat, but I might just as easily get away with shorts and T-shirt. There's simply no telling. So when you come in October, bring clothing you can layer, especially if you plan to go

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.....THE PRESIDENT'S VOICE

First, a bit of NINC business. Then some fun.

Your board of directors is working hard. Probably too hard! We're getting started on a number of projects and continuing a number of others. I look forward to getting back to you with details on our major outreach campaign...the FAQ the Advocacy Committee is working on covering a range of important issues...the expanding of our ninc.com Web site...the work we're doing on refining and focusing NINC's "image." You can read Zita Christian's column and see that the Vancouver conference is in superb hands. We're off to a great, great start with so many good people working hard on so many important issues. We're on the case.

But right now...right now, let me have some fun.

Let the good times roll...

Shortly before taking on this job, I was having breakfast at Lou's in Hanover, New Hampshire, with my friend Brendan, a native New Yorker and son of Irish immigrants who somehow ended up in exile in northern New England. In between telling me I was crazy and rhapsodizing about Lou's homemade hash, he suggested I adopt a motto for my year as NINC's president. "You need something quick and easy you can fall back on when things get rough. Things will get rough, you know."

So, he told me the story of visiting his great-uncle back in Ireland. Brendan has a lot of stories about his Irish relatives, not all of them as bleak as Frank McCourt's. (Yes, I told him to write them down before *Angela's Ashes*, but did he listen?) This particular Irish uncle was very proud of his success as a horse-trader. Brendan asked him how he got so good at it. The uncle threw an arm over his young nephew's shoulder and said in an Irish brogue that I could never begin to imitate, "My boy, I'll tell you - nobody'll piss up my back and tell me I'm sweatin' I am."

Brendan thought this would be a great motto for me, even if I'm not Irish. I grew up with my Dutch-immigrant father saying things like, "When the blind lead the blind, they both fall in the canal."

Still, I happened to pull out my copy of Ken Atchity's book, *Cajun Household Wisdom*. He had signed it, *Laissez les bon temps roulez*. Let the good times roll. That's it, I thought. Never mind Irish sweatin' and Dutch canals. This slogan of Acadiana appeals to my sense of optimism, and my unvanquished belief in writers, writing, storytelling and the magic that happens when story and reader come together. So, this became my motto. *Laissez les bon temps roulez*.

Of course, I do have those other sayings should the going get rough...

Freeze Out

I was griping to a friend one day when the good times weren't exactly rolling on a personal level, after something had happened that I thought was particularly below the belt, and she told me to write down the experience and put it in the freezer. She said this is a powerful, ritualistic tool that would "freeze out" the negative hold the event had on me. Supposedly it's particularly useful when one feels unfairly treated, vs. an experience that's negative but fair.

Well, funny she should mention this. I just happened to have heard through the vine, so to speak, that some in publishing circles in New York were also practicing this "powerful ritual." The way I heard it from multiple

of the offender and stick it in the freezer. The deal is, they don't want to "freeze out" the negative hold whatever happened had on them—they want to freeze the career of the person who did them wrong. I presume if the perp makes good, they can get out of the freezer. That must be a powerful ritual, too. Going to the freezer and pulling this piece of paper out and letting it warm up. Ah, sweet forgiveness.

I don't know, this kind of makes me want to take a tour of New York freezers, see who's hanging out next to the lima beans. I don't know about anyone else, but I view this as a cautionary tale. It makes me want to strive harder to be fair and professional, even when I'm tempted not to be. I don't like the idea of my name ending up in somebody's freezer.

(I'll borrow here one of Evan Maxwell's wry smiles...this is all in good fun, right?)

And now, the Cheetos Connection

Hard work, natural talent, mind-body-spirit synergy, drive, discipline, a sense of responsibility, most of all a love of storytelling—that's what I've always relied on to get me through the last weeks of writing a book. It seems, however, I've been doing it wrong. Instead, I should rely on Cheetos. That's right. Cheetos. Those salty, orange, crunchy things I didn't even like when I was a kid.

Janet Evanovich is a good friend, one of the hardest-working, most talented writers I know (I think she'd choke if I said she understood anything about mind-body-synergy). Stephanie Plum is her creation and one of my all-time favorite fictional characters. But Stephanie Plum might have packed it in and disappeared into a Trenton sunset with Joe Morelli—or maybe Ranger—by now if not for...you guessed it. If not for Cheetos.

Well, lately Crunchy Cheez Doodles. Janet says she switched because they don't have MSG. One has to have one's junk food standards. When she's on a creative roll—when the juices are flowing and the book's cooking and the end is (or is supposed to be) in sight—she's eating Crunchy Cheez Doodles by the bag. The rest of the year, she eats healthy, gourmet meals. But not when she's on "end time" with a book.

I thought this was just a Janet thing and I wouldn't have to yield to eating Crunchy Cheez Doodles. I mean, my God. I'd love to have Stephanie Plum's doughnut shop down the road, but Cheez Doodles? But when I was at a conference last year, I quietly checked into this phenomenon. And I was stunned at how many wonderful, talented writers got into the crunchy, salty, orange food when they were cooking on a book. They got out the Cheetos, the Cheez Doodles, the Cheese Nips. They said it's the salt and the crunch, but I think there's something in this orange stuff, too.

So there it was. Maybe I was making my writing life harder than it needed to be. Maybe all I'd learned about the creative process was just a bunch of hooey and what I should do is buy a bag of Crunchy Cheez Doodles. So, I did. One of those little individual snack bags. I popped it open. I mean, this stuff is seriously orange. I took them up to my computer, and I ate them. Every single one.

All I got for my efforts was an orange tongue. Maybe it's because I wasn't in "end time." Maybe I need to wait until the second half of the book. Or get a bigger bag. I'll let you know. And meanwhile, you let me know. What's your motto, who's hanging out in your freezer, and come on—do crunchy, salty, orange foods help you write?

— **Carla Neggers**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Plagiarism & NINC

Too often writers—especially unpubbed—toss out accusations. But usually they're groundless and soon prove so. It isn't at all the same as documented fact of infringement. I think it's vital, absolutely vital, for writers' organizations such as NINC to take a strong and public stand on the issue.

If the victim doesn't want a stand taken on his or her particular case, I think wishes should be respected—*unless* it's become public. Once that happens, the complexion changes.

Personally, while I understand the initial reaction to keep the difficulty

private—as that was my first reaction, too—it doesn't work, and it just complicates everything. Plus, this lets the offender off the hook, and keeps the issue underground. After word gets out, if the victim continues to play it down, fine. But there's no reason for others, particularly organizations formed to speak for writers, to do so.

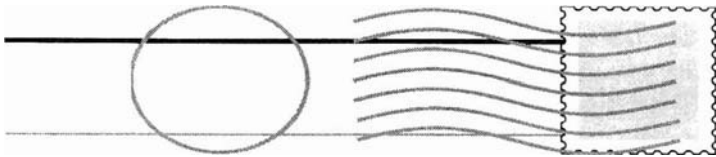
NINC, and other organization for writers, can support the victims of plagiarism by making it clear—loud and clear—that this offense is inexcusable. No exceptions. That it won't be tolerated—no exceptions. And by spelling it out. It's *not* all right to take someone's work you admire

and fiddle with it a bit and decide that makes it yours. To make this clear to the writing community and the publishing community.

Deadline stress, personal problems, writer's block and so on are not acceptable excuses for stealing someone else's words. *It is not* a form of flattery. I can't tell you, just can't tell you, what that does in my gut when people say it to me. It's the same as being told well, your rapist must have thought you were really attractive. Jesus.

Being plagiarized is a violation, and it hits you on every possible level. Professional, personal, emotional. And this idiotic trend to feel sorry for and excuse the

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offender—gee, she was having such a rough time, golly, she's really a nice person, piles the stress and misery onto the victim—especially when this sort of comment comes from an associate.

It takes guts and time and money to pursue a case against your violator. And the emotional weight is enormous. It was the worst two years of my life, and it's never really over. I know exactly what Gina's [Wilkins] going through now, and hate to think of it. In my case it was horribly public—due to Janet's [Dailey] decision to send out a press release the day before RWA in Orlando. And not once during this nightmare did any writers' organization issue a statement decrying plagiarism. Libby [Hall] and others at RWA were incredibly supportive of me on a personal level, and I honestly don't think I'd have gotten through the week intact without them. But there's such a baffling hesitation to take a stand, a public one.

At the same time, some other writers—a very small minority—made sympathetic noises toward Janet—obviously some still do. This hurts, again personally, but it also hurts on a professional plane.

Until we, the writing community, take a strong, public and no-nonsense stand against plagiarism, the publishing community will, I think, continue to downplay it, to keep violation after violation quiet—or attempt to. And the reading community will go on largely in ignorance.

Do you know what it's like for me to be told that there are readers, writers, booksellers who aren't really sure who plagiarized whom? God almighty.

At the time I was in the worst media blitz over this, much of the press joked about it, treated it with amusement or contempt. Romances are all alike, and here's why. Should we as writers, as organizations tolerate this? Or should we make it clear that all areas of writing, including popular genre fiction are legitimate and to be respected?

In my opinion, Janet counted on her fan base, the affection held for her by the romance writing community and the careless attitude of publishers to protect her. Do you think she went public right before RWA by accident? She's done nothing by accident. In a very real sense she got what she was looking for. She was punished, sure, but only because I didn't back down—and not backing down cost me two years, emotional misery and a great deal of money. And even then, within a year of settlement, Harper published her again, sent her on tour, generated media for the book by *using* the plagiarism as a hook. For me, it was like being smacked in the face again. And she's still getting sympathy.

It's long past time to let those who would copy another's work and call it their own know that they won't get away with it. That as writers we condemn this practice. It's time to let the publishers know that if they continue to publish a

plagiarist, we won't be buying the book, and will do what we can to inform booksellers and readers of our stand. It's time for solidarity. [And] if after all this I don't speak out, who will?

— **Nora Roberts**

Ethics: Agent Charges

\$150 Submission Fees

Editor's Note: For another, similar take on plagiarism of a slightly different nature read biographer Marion Meade's "Talk Back" piece "The Secret Plagiarist" in the March 2000 *Brill's Content* at www.brillcontent.com and print editions. Also don't miss one of the accused's, um, "cheeky" responses at the end of the piece. Send thoughtful responses only to "Letters to the Editor," please! <vbg>

Recently a troubling practice by an agent has come to my attention. As it was related to me, the agent agreed to take on a fiction manuscript from a new author, but expected to be paid \$150 for every three submissions in addition to whatever commission might be earned. The author was told that this fee would compensate the agent for time spent on selling the work in this difficult market, and was especially necessary given the likelihood the book might ultimately sell for a small advance.

I found this to be appalling, but in investigating discovered that the Association of Author Representatives is precluded by law from regulating such charges. That, however, does not make it morally right or ethical in my opinion. It seems to me that such a practice violates the most fundamental trust between agent and author — that the agent believes in the work and the long-term abilities of the author, and that the agent believes in his or her own ability to make both an initial sale and a lasting career for the writer. Though this is not a reading fee (which is precluded by the AAR canon of ethics), it doesn't seem to fall very far from that particular tree and sets a dangerous precedent. Such a fee might only apply to a new author now, but what of the midlist author who hasn't had a sale for a while? Will he or she be next? As a journalist once told me regarding developers and urban sprawl, it's not the zoning requests that need to be watched, it's the installation of fire hydrants that precede them.

AAR stresses that no writer should agree to terms from an agent which he or she finds to be egregious, but desperate beginning writers will often agree to anything that might get them one step closer to being published...especially in these difficult times. What to do? I confess that I'm at a loss. However, I am curious about whether this particular practice is isolated to this one agent or has begun spreading. See how your own agent stands on the subject and please share your concerns, if any, with the rest of us and with AAR.

— **Sherryl Woods**

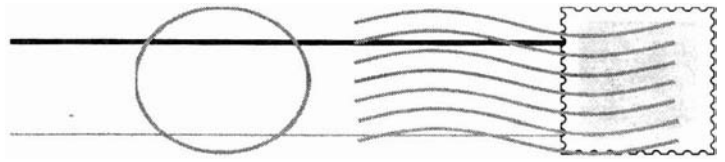
Ed's Note: NINK provided Vicky Bijur, president of AAR, with a copy of Sherryl Woods's letter, and within 24

hours received the following response.

AAR President Responds:

I am writing in response to Sherryl Woods's letter:

As a trade organization of members who compete with each other, the AAR is precluded by well-established antitrust laws from in any way regulating or even influencing how its members charge their clients for their services—in other words, the “price” they charge for their services. This prohibition is designed to prevent a form of “price-fixing” on the part of an organization's members. As a result, AAR members must be free to enter into agreements with their clients for services without any “price” regulation by the



AAR. (At the same time, the law does permit the AAR to prohibit its members from charging reading fees, and the AAR has imposed that prohibition.)

Please note that the AAR Canon of Ethics (available at www.aar-online.org) specifies that any charges an AAR member passes along to a client are subject to the approval of the client.

— **Vicky Bijur, President, AAR**

Gem of the Pacific

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outdoors a lot, which you probably will. (But to be fair, I must warn you: Don't forget a raincoat and umbrella.)

Vancouver has been named by the Human Resources Consultancy, William M. Mercer, as one of the four top cities worldwide for “livability,” sharing the honor with Zurich, Bern and Vienna. Having visited all three, and lived in Vancouver, I can say that I think the Mercer group knows whereof it speaks. Plan to arrive a few days early, and stay a few days late, take in the sights not just of the city, but of the surrounding area.

From downtown, a 45-minute bus ride takes you to Horseshoe Bay in West Vancouver, where you can hop a ferry to Vancouver Island, or the Sunshine Coast, or Bowen Island. You'll be just 90 minutes from Whistler along the scenic Sea to Sky highway. There are also the wide, lush lands of the Fraser Valley waiting to be explored, with mountains to the north and to the east. To the southeast is the cone of Mount Baker in Washington State. Across Georgia Strait, the peaks on Vancouver Island stand tall and often snow-covered. From Tsawwassen (pr. S'wassen) you can take a ferry through the Gulf Islands and Active Pass to Sidney, just outside of Victoria, our Provincial Capital. Or, you can fly from waterfront to waterfront for very little money. It's worth the trip.

Vancouver is a city growing from

the ocean, bounded by mountains and the Fraser River. It's filled with friendly people willing to help, so don't be afraid to ask if you're lost or confused. Just be careful who you ask, and where. Like most major North American cities, there are places it's wise to avoid, even in the daytime. We have our share of druggies and other unfortunates, but most of them confine themselves to the Downtown East Side. Since you have to cross through that area to get from the hotel to Chinatown and Japan Town, both places you really shouldn't miss, I recommend taking a cab. If you're visiting Gastown, the historic site of the original city, don't go south of Water Street. Along that street, and Cordova, you'll find some great restaurants and shops, cobblestone streets, the quaint Gaoler's Mews, a steam-operated clock, and the statue of old “Gassy” Jack for whom Gastown is named.

Of course, the history of the area didn't start there: The Coast Salish have lived here for over 5000 years. You'll be able to see and buy some fine examples of native art.

In 1791, a Spanish sailor, Jose Maria Narvaez sailed into Burrard Inlet, the first European known to do so. He was followed a year later by Captain George Vancouver who claimed the land for Britain while looking in vain for an easy passage to Asia.

In 1827, the Hudson's Bay Company set up a trading post, but settlers weren't encouraged as they'd clear land and drive away fur-bearing animals. In 1858, with the discovery of gold along the Fraser, population ballooned anyway. Logging burgeoned on the shores of Burrard Inlet, and Hastings Mill opened to process the wood. John Deighton, known as Gassy Jack because he talked so much, opened a saloon near the skid road (where logs were skidded into the water for transport), but off Hasting's Mill property, on which liquor was banned. He was so successful that a settlement known as Gastown grew up around his bar. Two years later, it was officially incorporated as the town of Granville. Then, in 1884, the Canadian Pacific Railway declared Coal Harbour its western terminus, leading to rapid development. The general manager of the CPR changed the town's name to Vancouver in 1886, and almost immediately, the place burned down. As part of the rebuilding, the First Narrows Military Reserve was taken over and Stanley Park created. The city grew rapidly after that. By the end of the year, there were nearly 1,000 buildings.

Okay, history lesson over. Those who want more can find it in many places, such as museums, archives and the library, which, while nearly new, and totally modern inside, looks from the outside like a replica of the Parthenon.

So, what, you might ask, does Vancouver have that the average U.S. city lacks? Well, for one thing, Cuban cigars. Um, okay, that ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



BREAKING NEWS

From the Internet Movie Database (www.us.imbd.com): A federal judge in New York has issued a preliminary injunction barring the operators of three New York-based Web sites from continuing to distribute software that allows users to bypass a code barrier incorporated into DVDs to prevent them from being copied. Eight major film studios sought the injunction. Following the judge's action, MPAA president Jack Valenti said, "I think this serves as a wake-up call to anyone who contemplates stealing intellectual property."

As if we didn't have enough competition already... According to a story filed by Associated Press writer Michael Hill, we now have to compete with a computer blueprint named Brutus that, um, creates fictional "stories about lies, self-deception and acts of betrayal." The program's creators have reduced the "complexities of deceit and double-crosses into mathematical equations" Brutus can understand and use to produce 500-word tales that supposedly read very much like human prose. Still, after seven years in development, Brutus remains a limited writer; not only is there that 500-word limit, the only setting it describes is academia and it can only write about betrayal and related acts (hence the name... <VBG>). Should we worry ▶ ▶ ▶

Gem of the Pacific

▶ ▶ ▶ doesn't do it for you? Then, a cheap dollar that makes the U.S. dollar 50% more valuable. And how about Mounties? Not always in Scarlet tunics, despite what faithful viewers of *Due South* might think, but we might be able to spring for a couple just for NINC if we put our minds to it. Maybe at the airport.

When you arrive at Vancouver International Airport, you'll find yourself in the new arrivals/departure area whose centerpiece is an incredible sculpture, Spirit of Haida Gwaii: The Jade Canoe by Bill Reid, a famous native artist whose work is on display worldwide, including Washington, DC. It's surrounded by an amphitheater, which is a great place to sit and wait for friends who might be arriving on another flight and intend to share a limo or taxi with you. There are several services to get you to the hotel. A taxi to downtown costs about \$25, so if you're not sharing, it's cheaper to take the Airporter for \$10. It leaves every 30 minutes and stops at the major downtown hotels. Airlimo provides a flat-rate, 24-hour limo service for about \$30.

Once you arrive at the Waterfront Centre Hotel, after you gaze at the view of the North Shore Mountains dominated by the twin peaks of the Lions, the ships in Coal Harbour, the green forests of Stanley Park, and the seagull that will likely peck at your window hoping for handouts, you might want to explore your immediate surroundings. If you walk a block or so east from the hotel, you'll come to Waterfront Station. There, you can take the SeaBus north across Burrard Inlet to Lonsdale Quay (pr. "key"), where you'll find a wide variety of boutiques, gift-shops, fresh fruit, vegetable and seafood stalls and a bustling atmosphere. When you're finished there, if you still want to explore, take the SeaBus back across the Inlet, buy a 3-zone ticket, go down the escalator and get on the SkyTrain. Contrary to its name, it'll keep you underground until the third stop,

when it comes up in time to let you see the geodesic dome of Science World, well worth visiting.

If you stay on the train, you'll eventually soar up and over the Fraser River. There are several stations on the south side of the River, the last one being in the old town of Whalley. Taking this little trip (the train goes from Waterfront Station to Whalley in 39 minutes) will give you a good overview of the city and suburbs, not to mention several backyards, balconies and some pretty tacky rooftops. There, you'll have to debark and buy another ticket for the return trip.

Coming back, try getting off at either New Westminster Station or Columbia Station, and visiting Westminster Quay, which is similar to Lonsdale Quay, but with different shops and amenities. Seafood restaurants, pleasant river walks or possibly a river excursion might suit you.

If shopping's your thing, Metrotown Station gives access to a large mall where Chapters bookstore is a big attraction. Or you can get off at Granville Station, and visit Pacific Centre, an understreet mall that angles around for several blocks. Even better, go to Granville Island. Detrain at the Science World/Stadium Station and take the False Creek Ferry to the island for arts, crafts, galleries, fine dining and ambience galore. It's a people-place, not too touristy, busy with marine activity and rich in history and culture. There are bookstores there, too.

Vancouver is a very cosmopolitan city with strong representation by many different ethnic groups, a happy fact that provides us with a rich blend of restaurants, languages, manners of dress and colors of skin. Whether you stay close to the hotel or get out and explore, you'll find plenty to hold your interest. Whatever way you chose to enjoy Vancouver and its environs, know you'll be welcomed warmly wherever you go.

See you there!

Judy Gill has lived most of her life in or around the city of Vancouver and loves it dearly. Several of her nearly 40 contemporary romances have been set in the area.



THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

NINK: Well, we think we can guarantee you'll get neither here.

RESNICK: Gee, that's a load off my mind. But I have some concerns...

NINK: Never fear. The rumors of Evan's complete mental breakdown from deadline pressure and hate mail are greatly exaggerated.

RESNICK: That's a relief —

NINK: Nor did Alberto Vitale really send a hit squad after him.

RESNICK: Nonetheless, I can't do what Evan did.

NINK: Marry Ann and father children?

RESNICK: No, that's not what —

NINK: Grow a beard?

RESNICK: Um, no.... Is that a problem?

NINK: We were hoping....

RESNICK: No facial hair.

NINK: But —

RESNICK: Sorry, it's a dealbreaker. A girl's got to have her standards.

NINK: Have it your way.

RESNICK: Thanks. But I was thinking more specifically in terms of the column. I can't do what Evan did in his column.

NINK: Piss people off? Nonsense! We have ample proof that you can.

RESNICK: You're thinking of that editor who called NINK demanding apologies and retractions

for something I wrote in *NINK*?

NINK: (*Checking notes*) Are you sure there was only the one?

RESNICK: To return to the point —

NINK: You have a point?

RESNICK: Evan commented in an intelligent and informed way on publishing business matters, legislation, major industry news...

NINK: And?

RESNICK: And I can't do that. I don't understand that stuff! I usually didn't understand it even after Evan explained it! I don't even know what "anti-trust" means! (*Growing hysterical*) "Business French" was the only part of my languages degree I nearly flunked. I mean, I even did okay with Dante in the original — well, no, I was bored to tears, if you want to know the truth.... But what I'm saying is, I can't interpret the Harper-Avon situation and comment on its ramifications! I have no idea how the Time/Warner-AOL merger might affect publishing! And don't even get me started on the Web. I didn't even know what an URL was until two months ago! Before that, I thought it had something to do with horseshoes. I can't possibly —

NINK: Wait — wait! You thought that we expected you — you, Laura Resnick — to comment intelligently on publishing news the way Evan did? (*Wild laughter*) You thought we wanted you — YOU! — to.... to... (*Gasping for air*) No, it's too precious for words! Wait till Neggers hears about this!



BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ that we're about to be put out of business by "gifted" software? Probably not — at least for awhile — since Brutus's creators can't seem to turn the good side of things into a mathematical equation the blueprint can understand. Which means, according to the program's architects, that "first-rate storytelling will always be the sole province of human masters."

And thank God for that!

Trivia: Did you know that the best-selling book *Coming of Age in Samoa* by Margaret Mead was named the 20th century's worst nonfiction?

Pat Holt, of Holt Uncensored, reports that Amazon.com's most formidable opponent online will be Wal-Mart's online division, a separate company called Wal-Mart.com. The new company will soon move to Silicon Valley and aim for "nothing less than rapid domination of online sales of

everything from books and CDs to toys and appliances," the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported last week.

Worst Case Scenarios

The *Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook* by Josh Piven and David Borogenicht is a reference guide for how to survive dramatic predicaments published by Chronicle Books. Predicaments include such situations as a bad guy chasing you to a roof's edge three stories up. Your only escape is to plummet into the garbage Dumpster directly



THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

▶ ▶ ▶

RESNICK: Um...

NINK: (Fresh peal of laughter)

RESNICK: (A tad impatient) So you're not asking me to replace Evan?

NINK: No one can replace Evan, least of all y—

RESNICK: So what *do* you want from me?

NINK: Well, we've got to do something with all that blank space he left behind.

RESNICK: I see.

NINK: So we're offering you an opinion column.

RESNICK: Just... write my opinions on stuff?

NINK: We would, of course, prefer if it were marginally related to being a professional writer.

RESNICK: (*Disappointed*) So that whole diatribe I've been scribbling about my downstairs neighbor, the serial killer, is out?

NINK: 'Fraid so. (*Pause*) Um.... Your downstairs neighbor is a serial killer?

RESNICK: What other explanation could there be for a guy who's so shy he turns pale and trembles when I say hello, yet plays acid rock at 3 a.m. loud enough to wake the dead? A guy who has a day job, yet regularly comes and goes on mysterious errands in the middle of the night? I know about this, because he slams his front door so hard that artwork falls off my walls. I thought the place was haunted until I figured out that it was *his* doing.

NINK: Uh-huh. Right. Well. As fascinating as that is, it's really not the sort of material we're looking for.

RESNICK: What are you looking for?

NINK: Oh, commentary on the world of writers and writing, from your unique perspective.

RESNICK: You mean, like: Publishers are pirates, rapists and thieves?

NINK: We might need to check with the Board before printing *that*.

RESNICK: Well, I could explain that that's really a quote from my mother, who's been married to a writer for 38 years.

NINK: Note to self: Talk to Advisory Council.

RESNICK: Or I could write about computers.

NINK: Computers?

RESNICK: Yeah. You know. Something like this:
It is the opinion of this writer that if we want user-friendly, self-explanatory computer programs and equipment with which to write our books, if we want equipment which works the first time we unpack and use it, if we want packaging which clearly denotes compatibility

or lack thereof before we spend half a year's earnings on additional equipment (such as printers, modems and monitors), if we want service people who can actually repair the equipment and an industry which keeps repair parts available for more than six months after manufacturing a product, if we want —

NINK: Are you *ever* going to end that sentence?

RESNICK: (*Gathering steam*)

We have been pushed to the wall! We have been used and abused, only to be thrown aside like so much cyber-trash, for too long! Man the barricades! Storm the headquarters of the major hardware and software manufacturers! We will not rest, we will not give in, we will not show mercy until someone invents a word-processing program which can be learned and used proficiently within 48 hours of purchase! Until they sell us modems which work! Until writers everywhere have printers that talk to their software!

NINK: Uh, if we could interject —

RESNICK: No prisoners! No prisoners!

NINK: Not to denigrate your admittedly —

RESNICK: Land! Bread! Peace!

NINK: You have seen waaaay too many David Lean movies, haven't you?

RESNICK: (*Coming down from the heights*) Huh? What?

NINK: Look, if we use the pages of *NINK* to incite violence and mayhem, there's a very real chance that the next conference will take place in a federal prison rather than a waterfront hotel.

RESNICK: That's not so bad. I once stayed in a prison that was actually nicer than many —

NINK: Nonetheless, although we're going to be careful—actually, *very* careful—to ensure that our printed disclaimer adequately absolves *NINK* of any responsibility whatsoever for your unique world view, we must nonetheless adhere to certain standards.

RESNICK: Such as?

NINK: No manning. No storming.

RESNICK: And no prisoners?

NINK: No comment.

RESNICK: So if I were to suggest locking all IRS agents in their offices and forcing them to listen to '70s disco music until they stopped persecuting honest, tax-paying writers like me with threatening letters, letters which they send solely because of their own defective record-keeping —

NINK: Then we'd be obliged to take extreme action, Laura.

RESNICK: What's that?

NINK: The details are classified, but if you had ever seen the results, you would pray for a career

of novelizing old *Beach Party* movies rather than endure such a fate.

RESNICK: That sounds pretty bad.

NINK: Including the movies *without* Frankie and Annette.

RESNICK: Wow.

NINK: So remember: Controversy is good. Lawsuits are bad.

RESNICK: Are you sure Evan knew this?

NINK: He learned it.

RESNICK: Oh?

NINK: But not before he *begged* us to let him novelize *How to Stuff A Wild Bikini*.

RESNICK: Good God!

NINK: And that's all I'm saying on the subject.

RESNICK: I had no idea!

NINK: We kept it quiet.

RESNICK: Was he... Was he a tough nut to crack?

NINK: Don't even go there, Resnick.

RESNICK: But —

NINK: You're making a good name for yourself in sf/f, aren't you?

RESNICK: (*Blushing modestly*) Well...

NINK: Did you know there was a *Beach Party* movie with space aliens in it?

RESNICK: No! No, please! I've heard enough! I'll be good! I'll cooperate!

NINK: We knew we could count on you.

RESNICK: You can, I swear you can.

NINK: Just make that monthly deadline, don't try to skimp on your word-count with fancy formatting, and we'll get along fine.

RESNICK: Skimp on word-count with formatting? Me?

NINK: Nothing slips by us, Resnick. Nothing.

RESNICK: Well, then, I only have one other concern.

NINK: Make it snappy. You've already filled nine ms pages with all this double-spacing.

RESNICK: I really don't feel comfortable calling the column anything that remotely resembles "East of the Hudson." Except for a few lunches in Midtown, my whole experience of this business has been from west of the Hudson.

NINK: We're way ahead of you, kid. We're going to call you "The Comely Curmudgeon."

RESNICK: Ooooh! I like it! (*Beaming*) You really think I'm comely?

NINK: No, but sex sells.

RESNICK: (*Deflated*) Yeah, that's what my first three publishers kept telling me.

NINK: What does the current one tell you?

RESNICK: "Write faster."

NINK: Oh, yeah. Epic fantasy. Hard life, huh?

RESNICK: You can't imagine. I actually disappeared one day beneath an avalanche of my first 42 chapters. They found me there three days later, pinned between an evil sorcerer and a bloodthirsty warrior.

NINK: No wonder you have that frayed, crazed, tormented look.

RESNICK: No, I got *that* chairing the NINC conference in '97.

NINK: And now you're coming back on board once again.

RESNICK: "The Comely Curmudgeon." I guess so.

NINK: Slow learner, aren't you?

RESNICK: That's what my first three publishers kept telling me.

— End (*Not really...The CC's just gettin' started!*) —



BREAKING NEWS

below. Now what? Jump straight down and aim to land on your back. The authors and publisher are soliciting suggestions for future scenarios. If you've got any ideas to share, go to www.worstcasescenarios.com and have at it!

According to an article from Reuters, ten movie companies

and three broadcasters filed suit against the Canadian company iCraveTV.com for sending copyrighted programs over the World Wide Web without permission. This looks like only the beginning of the legal battles between new media and old. Canada has far more liberal laws governing copyright protection of TV shows, which iCraveTV says allow its programming, including some U.S. channels. As this could significantly affect intellectual property laws, we'll keep you posted as much as possible as the suit progresses.

Upcoming in *NINK*:

An article from the Booksellers' POV
Update on Distributorships
E-serializations
Why Your Publisher May Need
Younger Writers
The Mergers a Year Later
Resnick takes on the Post Office
Opinions...And much more!

And in closing...the Gretna, Louisiana City Council voted 4-0 in favor of allowing revelers to throw women's panties from carnival floats. Just thought you'd all like to know. **tdr**

Vancouver Calls



WORDS OF WISDOM

"Prior planning prevents poor performance."

Twenty years ago, I heard the CEO of an international insurance company say those words to his daughter. I've repeated them myself over the years. The alliteration is fun. The meaning is real. I use them now because prior planning can mean a record-breaking turnout for the Vancouver conference.

By now, you've received the preliminary conference brochure. In it, I touched on the information a non-Canadian will need to enter Canada. Here are the official details.

Entry Requirements: What do I need?

Citizens of the United States must carry proof of citizenship to enter/exit Canada and the United States. A passport is strongly recommended. If you do not possess a passport and would like to apply for one, allow approximately eight weeks for processing. Alternatively, proof of citizenship may be supplied using a certified (raised seal) copy of your birth certificate along with a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license. Please note: a driver's license alone is not acceptable.

As my German grandmother used to say, "You can put your mittens in the oven, but that doesn't make them biscuits."

Vancouver: Can I get there from here?

Yes. All major domestic and international airlines serve the Vancouver International Airport, which is located about 30 minutes from the Waterfront Centre Hotel, site of the conference. NINC has negotiated a discount with Canadian Airlines for conference attendees. Please call Mountain State Travel for information and arrangements using the discount on the airfare.

A shuttle service, the Vancouver Airporter, departs from the airport every 15 minutes to the Waterfront Centre and other downtown hotels. The fare is \$10 Canadian ("CAD") one way or \$17 CAD round-trip. Airlimo, a super-stretch limousine service, is available at the airport. The super-stretch holds a maximum of seven people. A trip to downtown Vancouver costs \$29 CAD. Taxi rates are \$2.10 CAD at flag drop and \$1.20 CAD for each additional kilometre.

I can't afford to fly to Vancouver.

Depending on your point of departure, the fare to Seattle can be considerably lower than the fare to Vancouver. The Seattle Sea-Tac airport is a mere 139 miles south of Vancouver, a scenic, three-hour bus ride. Think deluxe motor coach. The fare from the airport will be in the vicinity of \$65 round-trip. Mountain State Travel can make all the arrangements for you.

Please note: The Canadian Airlines discount applies to trans-border flights only and cannot be used for flights to Seattle.

But I don't like to fly.

VIA Rail provides transcontinental train service three times a week from Toronto and Montreal via Jasper. BC Rail offers service from North Vancouver via the Whistler Resort area to Lilloet daily and to Prince George on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Amtrak operates between Seattle and Vancouver daily.

Currency: What's the rate of exchange?

Nationwide currency in Canada is the Canadian dollar (CAD). The current exchange rate is \$1.00 USD equals about \$1.44 CAD. The exchange rate fluctuates. All conference attendees will be provided exchange rate information closer to the conference dates.

Do I have to pay taxes?

Right now, Canada has a 7% Goods and Services Tax (GST). Visitors can obtain an instant GST rebate by submitting all GST receipts (up to \$500 CAD) to a participating duty-free shop when they exit Canada. Or visitors may file for a GST refund with Revenue Canada and be reimbursed by mail by check. In addition to the GST, there is a nonrefundable provincial sales tax of 7%.

Duty-Free Shopping: Now that sounds interesting.

Think serious savings on perfume, watches, jewelry and more. One of the advantages to traveling outside the borders of the United States is the privilege of shopping duty free, i.e., without having to pay city, state, provincial, and federal taxes. The savings can be significant.

Visitors returning to the United States have a duty-free allowance of \$400 per person, including one (1) liter of alcohol if you have been out of the country for 48 hours or longer. U.S. residents out of the country less than 48 hours have a duty-free allowance of \$200.

Most important: When you exit Canada, you must declare all purchases made during your stay.

49North16 x 123West07: What's the weather like?

Vancouver has a temperate marine climate all year long. You will want to carry a jacket or coat, as temperatures can cool off rapidly. However, winter temperatures rarely dip below 32F, and the average high temperature in October is 56F.

What else is available in Vancouver?

The brochure says you can walk through emerald rainforests, kayak along the rugged coastline, tee off beneath towering mountains, visit with the whales, view fine art, study historic artifacts, stroll through a market alive with street vendors and musicians. That's all true, but that's not all.

NINC and Mountain State Travel are working on a pre-conference package to include a visit to Victoria and Vancouver Island, traveling aboard the Victoria Clipper from

Seattle to Victoria, and then to Vancouver...and perhaps Whistler Resort. We're also exploring the possibility of including the Northwest Bookfest in Seattle from October 21-22. Look for more information in the next newsletter. In the meantime, if you're interested in such a package, give Kate Dooley a call.

What should I do now?

Contact your local travel agent or Kate Dooley of Mountain State Travel. If Kate isn't available, either Elena Oliverio or Vanessa Richter will be happy to help you. You can reach them at 1-800-344-6602, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. If you call at off-hours, leave a message. One of them will return your call. The fax number is 304-624-6234. Or you can e-mail Kate at KateDooley@aol.com

Conference Fee: How much?

For NINC members, the fee is \$275, or \$250 if your registration is postmarked on or before July 1. The fee includes all catered events and admission to all conference sessions.

For nonmembers (agents, editors and other publishing professionals), the fee is \$75. The fee includes daily continental breakfast, the dessert party on Thursday, the cocktail party on Friday and the President's Reception on Saturday, and admission to all conference sessions with the exception of certain night owl sessions. The \$75 fee does not include the light dinner on Thursday, the luncheon on Friday, or the banquet on Saturday.

For an additional \$95, agents, editors and other publishing professionals can purchase a meal plan that will cover the light dinner on Thursday, the luncheon on Friday and the banquet on Saturday.

The "Spouse Meal Package" is \$160 and covers all catered events.

Tickets for the Friday luncheon only: \$30

Tickets for the Saturday banquet only: \$50

Registration instructions will be provided in the final brochure. It will be mailed to you in early June.

Budget Constraints: I really do want to join everyone in Vancouver, but...

Both of my parents came from large families so I wound

up with a lot of aunts and uncles. I liked all of them but one, my Uncle Ed. When he was sober, Uncle Ed was mean. When he was drunk, he was vicious. He was drunk most of the time. Nevertheless, I learned something from him. Whenever he had emptied both his bottle and his pockets, he'd stumble off to find work, saying as he did, "Fun is fun, but it takes money to buy whiskey."

Yes, but I'll have to spend all that money and travel all that way and use all that vacation time.

I grew up in Virginia, but spent many a summer on my grandparents' ranch in South Dakota. As an adult, I remember a horizon so big it made me dizzy and air so clean I couldn't inhale enough. I remember mornings filled with eggs fresh from the coop, evenings with gospel songs and Grampa's fiddle. And sometimes a night sky quickened by the Northern Lights. But as a teenager, with my Candy Pink fingernails, Aqua Net hairdo, and the latest issue of *Seventeen*, I had nothing good to say about the heat, the wind, the dirt, the snakes, the smell of cows, the squish of manure and that horrid outhouse. Grampa would just shake his head and grumble, "Girl, you'd complain if you was being hanged with a new rope."

I see the light!

Good. Because Vancouver is a city people dream of visiting. The Waterfront Centre Hotel is luxurious. The conference program will be informative, stimulating and inspiring. Agents, editors and other publishing professionals will be at the conference. So will your friends.

But just in case an inkling of doubt returns, keep that preliminary brochure handy so you can read the quote on the cover. It's by H. Jackson Brown, Jr. from "P.S. I Love You" and it's an eye-opener.

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the tradewind in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

That's enough wisdom for now.

— Zita Christian

Vancouver 2000 Coordinator

INTRODUCING.....

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

New Applicants

Valerie Taylor, Cincinnati OH
Mallory Dorn Hart, New York NY
Carolyn Aarsen, Neerlandia
Alberta, Canada
Grace Green, West Vancouver,
BC, Canada

New Members

Elizabeth Boyle, Seattle WA
Terri Brisbin, Berlin NJ
Connie Brockway, Edina MN

We've room for more. Remember, recruiting is a community effort you can share.

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT.....

The Shape of Things To Come

By Ron Montana

I have a telephone answering machine. Now, that may not seem like a revelation of the first magnitude, but it constantly amazes me how some people can live without this 20th-Century marvel of communication progress.

This wonderful invention allows us to decide whom we would like to talk to and when we would like to talk to them. It gives even the lowliest of us a private secretary. It makes our convenience the most important aspect of our telephonic day.

It also, alas, allows us to screen our calls. No one will admit to this antisocial practice, but face it, folks, we all do it to one extent or another. I mean, who wants to talk to a person working his way through computer night school selling tri-color masking tape?

Or to an ex who would just like to 'give it one more try,' or an old buddy who just wants to borrow a hundred for a couple of weeks? No, the answering machine is by far the most unique invention dealing with the rights of privacy since the chastity belt.

But there are trade-offs. As Spencer Tracy said in the film *Inherit the Wind*, "You can have the telephone, but lose privacy and the charm of distance; you may conquer the air, but the birds will lose their wonder and the clouds will smell of gasoline..."

Yes, Spencer was right, but I never really began to realize the role the answering machine plays in recording, even shaping our destiny. Until last week when I received this message on my trusty electronic secretary: "Ron, Lee. I've got to be in San Francisco 'til six for an audition with 'Nash Bridges,' so I may be a little late for play rehearsal."

Here was a message that should have impressed me since it was my play he was going to be late for—and because of a tryout for a major TV show role. Twenty-five years ago I would have written a message like that off as a bad joke. But today it was normal. The point being that the messages we receive chart our progress through life, logging our appointments with destiny, so to speak.

They catalog our success or failure. They detail the chain of events that led us inexorably to where we reside today and—if they were to be saved and played back to us—they would serve as a terrifying reminder that we are, at best, mortal beings that time toys with like an IRS auditor with a taxpayer.

To prove this point and validate this theory once and for all, I have painstakingly compiled messages from my answering machine tapes over the last 25 years. Any similarity to persons living or dead is purely purposeful.

1975: "Hey bigshot, this is your mother. When are you gonna get a real job. Writing is no career for a grown man."

"Daddy, we're still shopping. Mom says we'll be home for dinner 'bout six."

"This is the body shop. The rear window for your station wagon is in."

"This is Murray, you remember, your agent. Your book contract's in, and for a first novel, it ain't bad. And no, you're in no position to negotiate sub rights."

1985: "Hey, bigshot, this is your mother. So you got a movie option. Big deal. I hear the bank's looking for loan officers."

"Hey, Dad—mom wants to know if you're coming over for dinner this week."

"Los Gatos Datsun. The air dam for your 280Z just arrived."

"This is Brandy. Pick you up at seven for the party. Bring your toothbrush."

"Murray here, okay, Bantam caved on the movie rights and the other 16 points. Check's in the mail, as they say on your coast."

1990: "Hey, Bigshot, this is your mother. I just caught your television show. Regis wears a tie, in case you didn't know."

"Dad, Mom wants to know if we can spend the week with you while she's in Cabo."

"Custom Campers, your pickup truck shell is installed."

"This is Bambi—like I got the chocolate fudge lotion, y'know..."

"Murray, here—the heavyweight Beverly Hills lawyer called. Says you got the most blatant case of copyright infringement he ever saw and he'll take your case. Looks like you're gonna be my first client earns me 10 percent on a plagiarism suit."

So there it is—history that was made. But, what if we were to extrapolate. What would the future bring based upon what we know has gone before?

2000. "Dad, Jennifer and I would like you to baby-sit the twins Saturday night so we can go out for dinner. How about it?"

"This is Rachel, lover—our reservations are confirmed

for Zurich and London. I'll send my limo for you early Monday morning."

"This is the body shop. We're sorry, but we just can't locate a replacement bumper for a 55 Chevy convertible."

"Murray here—the heavyweight LA attorney says we should be goin' to trial any day now—piece of cake, he says. Keep holding your breath, boob."

"Hey, bigshot, I saw you on that award show. So you got a gold statue. Why don't you get a haircut?"

Which proves, folks, no matter how much things seem to change, they somehow always remain the same.

Ron Montana is the author of seven published science fiction, mystery and mainstream novels. Face in the Snow from Bantam in 1992 was sold to the movies and he adapted it to a film script in 1998. His short stories have appeared in many of the major Science Fiction and Mystery Magazines and hardcover anthologies. He has collaborated on 10 screenplays with Barry Schneider, several of which have been optioned by major producers over the last decade. Recently they sold The Sailmaker for a high six figures. It is due for production in 2000. He has been an Editorial Associate for Writer's Digest Magazine for 12 years and his new novel, Ride A White Zebra, has just become available through amazon.com.

NINC NOTES

Writer's Online Workshops Affiliate Offer

[*Editor's Note:* here's an opportunity to sell your writing skills to a different market entirely — as an instructor, or perhaps by linking sites with *WD*. Contact Erin McCann at the e-dress below for further information. **tdr**]

For over seven decades, *Writer's Digest* has been one of the leading sources of education and inspiration for writers. As we move forward into the 21st century, we are proud to introduce our newest venture: Writer's Online Workshops. These online work-shops combine world-class writing instruction with the convenience of the Internet.

WOW (as we like to call the program) offers the benefits of a traditional workshop — instruction, review and chats — with the immediacy of the Web. We offer 8- to 14-week workshops where professional instructors post weekly lectures and students submit writing assignments for constructive feedback.

As we launch the Writer's Online Workshops, we are currently expanding our presence on the Web via carefully selected affiliates. We believe yours is one of the best writing-related sites on the Web. Therefore, we'd like to invite Novelists, Inc. to participate in the Writer's Online Workshops Affiliate Program. The arrangement would involve you posting a WOW banner ad on your Web site, linking the user to our home page at <http://www.writersonlineworkshops.com>

For providing this banner space, we would compensate Novelists, Inc. with 10% of the enrollment price (up to \$34) for each paid registration we receive through the banner on your site. This commission would be paid on a quarterly basis.

Please let me know if you would be interested in becoming a Writer's Online Workshop Affiliate. We hope that you find our offer acceptable and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Contact: Erin McCann, Marketing Coordinator, Writer's Online Workshops, at ErinM@fwpubs.com

ACCESSING ninclink vs Members-Only at www.ninc.com

There seems to be some confusion over how members gain access to both the ninclink and the members-only areas at www.ninc.com.

If you are not subscribed to NINCLINK and wish to be, send an e-mail to: LISTSERV@PEACH.EASE.LSOFT.COM

In the subject line type in your name AS IT APPEARS ON THE NINC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER (For instance my legal name is Terese daly Ramin, but I appear on the roster as Terey daly Ramin, so that's the name I use for the ninclink.)

In the body of the message write "SUBSCRIBE NINCLINK Your-First-Name Your-Last-Name." If you have any technical problems with the listserve, contact Patricia de la Fuente (patricia@hilene.net) as she handles the technical aspects.

To gain access to the members-only areas at www.ninc.com, on the other hand, go to the site and choose a name or password for yourself and use (remember...<g>) that name or password to access the site whenever you want to. And yes, we have to make it that complex. Those are the rules of computing. (Yeah, yeah, yeah. And as Charles Shultz's characters might say, "thpppt" to that!)

WE PAY FOR ARTICLES

Just a reminder. We do... **tdr**

Recently I was watching a news program that featured a segment on a new publication geared toward capturing Texas history. Since I write Texas historicals, naturally I had an interest in subscribing. Unfortunately, the segment didn't provide that information. What to do? What to do?

I went out to the Internet, accessed the news station's Web site, found a reference to the segment, clicked the icon and found the contact information for the publication. The power of the Internet. What in the world did we do before we had it, when the click of an icon put information at our fingertips?

RESEARCH

The Library of Congress American Memory Project Collection Finder at memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/finder.html is a writer's dream. Name something that you need to locate and you can probably find it here. Collections include railroad maps from 1828-1900, African-American Sheet Music 1850-1920, Northern California Folk Music from the '30s, American Ballroom Dance Instruction Manuals 1490-1920, and the list goes on. It's an incredibly amazing site.

You live in Texas and your characters live in Maine and are going through a divorce. How is divorce handled in Maine? Find out at the Divorce Source at www.divorce-source.com. The information is broken down by state. Forums, chats, experts willing to field questions and books are all available.

At touringtexas.com, you can find The Handbook of Texas Online. This encyclopedia of Texas history, geography and culture has more than 23,000 articles on people,

places, events and historical themes.

Need the route for the pony express? Or the Lewis and Clark expedition? Visit The American West at www.americanwest.com/. Maps are available as well as information on gunslingers, outlaws, pioneer towns, forts — just about anything that deals with the settling of the American West.

In the decade 1900-1909, in the United States, we had 8,000 cars and 10 miles of paved roads. The research librarians at the Kingwood College Library have broken the 20th century into decades and provided information on each decade at The American Cultural History: The Twentieth Century. You can visit the site at www.nhmccd.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decades.html. Now that we've officially moved into the year 2000, perhaps the years at the beginning of the 20th century will be more welcome as settings in our historical novels. This site can provide you with a quick overview of each decade.

The Ultimate Forensic Psychology Database at flash.lakeheadu.ca/~pals/forensics/ is an intriguing site even if you aren't writing a mystery or a suspense novel.

What do angel tears, joy flakes, and orange wedges have in common? They're slang words for

drugs. The Onelook Dictionaries Fast Finder at www.onelook.com/browse.shtml provides specific dictionaries for various topics including drug-related street terms, cockney slang, castle terms, international law and . . . the list goes on. Common phrases and what they refer to are listed. It's a wonderful site to pick up jargon.

The Kent State University Modern and Classical Language Studies Department Terminology Resources at appling.kent.edu/kenTerm/term-source.html provides terms by occupation or interest: art, computers, medicine—again the list is extensive.

PROMOTION

The Free Gallery of Authors' Voices has changed its URL to fregalry.hispeed.com/. If you are not familiar with this site, its owner Fay Zachary provides authors of all genres with a place to expose their work in an unusual format — with a two-minute reading from their works. You provide the audio and read the material yourself. If interested in having a reading at the site, you should contact Fay at fayzachary@home.com.

Word Museum at www.wordmuseum.com is interested in placing author interviews on their site. If you are interested in providing an interview, send an e-mail to wordmuseum@wordmuseum.com.

Add Me! at www.addme.com

JOINING THE LINK

If you are not subscribed to NINCLINK and wish to be, send an e-mail:

To: LISTSERV@PEACH.EASE.LSOFT.COM

Subject: Your-Ninc-Membership-Name (as it appears in the roster)

Body: SUBSCRIBE NINCLINK Your-First-Name Your-Last-Name

If you have any technical problems with the listserve, contact Patricia de la Fuente (patricia@hiline.net) as she handles the technical aspects.

touts itself as the “most popular Web site promotion and submission engine on the planet. In addition to providing an online newsletter, the site lets you submit your Web site to the 30 most popular search engines and directories on the Web.

BUSINESS OF WRITING

As writers, we often have questions about copyright — protecting our own works and respecting the

works of others. What can we use? What do we need permission to use? What falls into the public domain? When a question was posed on Ninclink regarding the right-to-quote laws, Dan McGirt shared with us The United States Copyright Office Web site at www.loc.gov/copyright. The site provides answers to almost any copyright question via general information, frequently asked ques-

tions and publications. It also has information on international copyright and legislation. It also provides links to Federal documents. It's a very interesting and informative site.

If you have sites to share that you think would be of interest to Novelists, Inc. members, please e-mail me.

— **Lorraine Heath**
(LorraineHe@aol.com)

MEMBER News.....

Congratulations to **Steven <g>Womack** on the terrific *New York Times* Crime review of *Dirty Money*. Marilyn Stasio says your guy Harry is “irresistible.” We, of course, couldn't agree more!

Beginning March 1, 2000, NINC member **Fran Baker** will be editing a monthly “News, Reviews and Interviews” column on women's fiction for The Arbor at FictionForest.com. The column will be syndicated through Screaming Media. Fran invites authors to contact her by e-mail at delphibks@aol.com or through FictionForest.com if they wish to submit news or books for review. (FYI, FictionForest.com also reviews mystery, science fiction, fantasy, etc., if authors wish to submit books to those areas.)

Fantastic News from **Sandi Kitt**: “The year is off to an interesting start...an anthology I was in last July has been nominated for an NAACP Image Award! The competition is fierce, but I'm so thrilled to be on the list! I'm flying out to LA in two weeks for the awards presentation, and the taping which will air on FOX TV on April 8. The anthology is *Girlfriends*, from HarperCollins. The premise of the

three novellas is the relationship between black women friends. The theme is a follow-up to an anthology I did with the same two authors in 1996 called *Sisters*, which was published by Signet. It did very well and we wanted to capitalize on the reader interest. The other two authors are Eva Rutland (a long time Regency writer with Harlequin) and Anita Richmond Bunkley, who did four hardcover books with Dutton before going to HarperCollins.

[Editor's Note: Sandi, here's an open invitation to let us know all about everything when you get back! tdr]

Mega Congrats to Australian member **Sherry-Anne Jacobs** whose book *Our Lizzie* (by Anna Jacobs) is No. 9 on the *UK Times*' Bestseller Chart — and No. 10 on the Mail on Sunday list (also UK). This is her first-ever hit on these charts and she is delighted — as are we for her!

Novelists Inc Member Wins 1999 Sapphire Award: The Science Fiction Romance newsletter is pleased to announce the winners of the fifth annual Sapphire Award for the Best Science Fiction Romance of the Year

is *A Civil Campaign*, by **Lois McMaster Bujold**, published by Baen Books. Nominated works could be from any genre, provided that they had a first publication date between December 1998 and November 1999, and that both science fiction and romance were intrinsic to the story. The Science Fiction Romance newsletter is an international forum for the readers and writers of the science fiction romance subgenre, and is distributed monthly to subscribers throughout the world. An electronic edition is available through the Internet. For more information, visit the Web site, <http://members.aol.com/sfreditor/>, or contact Yeep@[aol.com](mailto:yeep@aol.com).

Sarah Gallick has a new Internet serial running at <http://www.Alight.com>

First Lady by **Susan Elizabeth Phillips** is #4 on the NYT list (2/27); *The Cowboy* by **Joan Johnston** is #12 (2/27) (Joan's 1st time on this list!); and *One Wish* by **Linda Lael Miller** hit the list at #9 (the week of 2/20) and again at #13 (the week of 2/27) Congratulations, Susan, Joan and Linda.

.....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. Marilyn's phone number is 918-227-1608, fax 918-227-1601 or online: pappano@ionet.net. Internet surfers can find the list at: <http://www.usatoday.com>.

Members who write under pseudonyms should notify Marilyn at any of the above "addresses" to assure their listing in "Fast Track."

NINC Member	Book Title/Publisher	Jan 6	Jan 13	Jan 20	Jan 27
Sandra Brown	<i>Bittersweet Rain</i> , Warner		14n	12	14
Catherine Coulter	<i>The Courtship</i> , Jove	101n	10	17	21
Julie Garwood	<i>Ransom</i> , Pocket	81			
Heather Graham	<i>Triumph</i> , Signet		153	41	42
Jayne Ann Krentz	<i>Soft Focus</i> , Putnam	40n	82	139	
Jayne Ann Krentz	<i>Eye of the Beholder</i> , Pocket	137n			
Elizabeth Lowell	<i>Reckless Love</i> , Mira		238	98	135
Kat Martin	<i>Silk and Steel</i> , St. Martin's Press	114n	43	57	71
Anne McCaffrey	<i>Nimisha's Ship</i> , Del Rey	193	97	106	122
Julia Quinn	<i>The Duke and I</i> , Avon		59n	43	43
Nora Roberts	<i>The Jewels of the Sun</i> , Jove	19	24	32	30
Nora Roberts, Jill Gregory, Ruth Ryan Langan, Marianne Willman	<i>Once Upon a Star</i> , Jove	122	148		
Anne Marie Winston	<i>The Pregnant Princess</i> , Silhouette				142n

Novelists' Ink

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