

# Novelists'



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

## ***A View from the Top*** ***with Claire Zion***

**By OLIVIA RUPPRECHT**

Claire Zion is not only one of the most respected and powerful editors on Publisher's Row, she is also one of the most accessible and approachable. Although she's young, it seems as if her name has been around in this business forever. It's a tough business and signs of wear and tear are frequently evidenced by a certain hardness and cynicism acquired to survive in it by both writers and publishers alike. Claire, however, has somehow managed to maintain a fire in the belly for her chosen profession, emanating enthusiasm, passion, and genuine love for what she does. If she didn't come across as such a seasoned professional, one might think she was fresh out of school.

That would be Yale, where she has a BA in the Humanities. Equally impressive is her professional track record: After working at Warner from 1986 to 1988, a period

in which she acquired Sandra Brown, Jayne Anne Krentz and Barbara Delinsky, Claire went on to specialize in commercial and mass market publishing at Simon and Schuster's Pocket division, followed by the Signet division of Putnam/Penguin. In 1996, back to Warner she went, first as executive editor of romance, then as executive editor managing the mass market list.

About a year ago she was tapped by Lawrence Kirshbaum, Chairman/CEO, Time Warner Trade Publishing, to be a major player in one of their most ambitious undertakings to date.

Yes, Claire's been busy. And since being named Editorial Director for Time Warner's new iPublish venture, she's been busier than ever. Despite her crunch for time, Claire carved out enough for two phone interviews to deliver this exclusive report to the members of Novelists, Inc. Due to space limitations (and some top

**Cont. on Page 7 ▶ ▶ ▶**

## ***WIN-WIN-WIN Negotiating***

**By PATRICIA McLAUGHLIN**

*(Presented by Virginia McLaughlin, founder Delta Concepts, at the 1999 Savannah Conference.)*

### **Also in this Issue:**

Letters to the Editor.....	2
Breaking News .....	6
Vancouver Calls .....	11
Online .....	14
Member News .....	15
The Comely Curmudgeon.....	16
Fast Track .....	20

How many conferences have we all been to with workshop titles like "Improve Your Relationship With Your Agent" or "Your Editor and You—Making it Work"? More often than we can count? Each of those relationships is important, but they are not even half of the story.

Virginia McLaughlin's second session at Novelist Inc.'s Savannah Conference recognized that what we're all dealing with is, in reality, a three-cornered relationship—author-editor-agent—and that it is

exponentially more complicated than one-on-one.

Each of the three corners ideally wants to produce a compelling, successful book in the short-term and an enduring, successful association in the long-term. But each of the three corners sees both that compelling, successful book and that enduring, successful association from a distinct angle. We're like three museum-goers standing around a statue. We know we're all looking at the same thing, but we're not

**Cont. on Page 5 ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶**

## Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

### Advisory Council

Rebecca Brandewyne†	Linda Barlow
Janice Young Brooks†	Georgia Bockoven
Jasmine Cresswell†	Evan Maxwell
Maggie Osborne†	William Bernhardt
Marianne Shock†	Victoria Thompson
† Founder	Steven Womack
	Julie Kistler

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

### 2000 Board of Directors

#### PRESIDENT Carla Neggers

P.O. Box 826  
99 Deer Path Lane  
Quechee VT 05059  
Ph 802-295-1193  
Fax 802-295-8795  
C.Neggers@vermontel.net

#### PRESIDENT-ELECT Barbara Keiler

32 Atkinson Lane  
Sudbury MA 01776-1939  
Ph 978-443-0770  
Fax 978-443-0775  
E-mail: B.KEILER@juno.com

#### SECRETARY Jane Bonander

2548 Sumac Circle  
White Bear Lake MN 55110  
Ph 651-704-9010  
Fax 651-704-9011  
E-mail: JBONANDER@aol.com

#### TREASURER Debbie Gordon

1240 Noonan Drive  
Sacramento CA 95822-2507  
Ph 916-448-1964  
E-mail: DBHIGORDON@aol.com

#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR Terey daly Ramin

2376 Musson Road  
Howell MI 48843-9082  
Ph 517-545-8946  
Fax 810-821-7070  
E-mail: terey@ismi.net

#### ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Georgia Bockoven  
3324 Zircon Dr.  
Rocklin CA 95677-4725  
Ph 916-624-7333  
Fax 916-630-1145  
E-mail: GBOCKOVEN@JPS.NET

#### CENTRAL COORDINATOR David L. Brooks

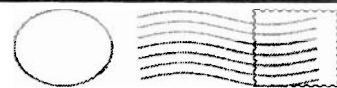
Novelists, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1166  
Mission KS 66222-0166  
E-mail: davidlbrooks@earthlink.net  
Fax: 913-262-2632

Web site: <http://www.ninc.com>

Send Address Changes to Central Coordinator

Copyright ©2000 by Novelists, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission.

## 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.*

### "Ghetto to Ghetto" Column Rings Bell

Thanks to Laura Resnick's recent Comely Curmudgeon column, I had an epiphany. I read with great delight her discussion of the difference between sci-fi and romance genres because I'm struggling with a similar situation. My origins are in romance, but I've switched to writing a mystery series. A wide gulf yawns between the two genres in a similar fashion to what Laura described.

What you wear to conferences is the tip of the iceberg. Sorry, Laura, but I'm one of those people who feels you shouldn't wear jeans to a professional conference.

Apparently, romance writers dress up a lot more than attendees at a mystery conference. I didn't realize why until I read Laura's column. Mystery conferences, like sci-fi conventions, are mostly for fans whereas romance conferences are for writers. To my knowledge, there is no equivalent of National RWA in the mystery genre. *Romantic Times* puts on the only romance-oriented fan conference. When I attended my first Malice Domestic convention, I wore my usual business suits.

Putting forth a professional image is important to me, and apparently it means something to fans also. At the Agatha Awards banquet, a reader sitting at my table said: "Many of the writers here look like they could be the woman next-door, but *you* look like a real author." That made me feel great because it validated my belief that you should dress for success. It's always better to be over-dressed rather than under-dressed in my philosophy. Besides, I sit at my computer in slacks and T-shirts. Who wants to be seen in those at a convention? I'd rather be noticed as "The Author" rather than the ordinary schmo next door. If editors and agents are present, that's another reason to present a professional image.

I was pleasantly surprised by how friendly the fans and other authors were at the Malice conference to a newbie like me. A special thank you to Meg Chittenden for being a sweetheart and introducing me to people she knew, which seemed to be everyone at the gathering! I felt comfortable there, which isn't always the case in the mystery milieu for me. Our local Florida Romance Writers chapter is a close-knit group, but even at other romance chapter meetings I feel the sisterly support and willingness to share that doesn't always come across from mystery writers (with the exception of the friends I met at Malice). Maybe it's because romance involves mostly women, and our conferences focus on helping other writers at all levels of the publishing empire.

Many more mysteries come out in hardcover, are written by men, and are promoted at fan conventions where authors talk about their own books in entertaining, witty fashion instead of aiming to exchange knowledge with other writers. Sisters in Crime sits somewhere in between, putting out a wonderful newsletter

with useful tips. But we don't have a local chapter where I live, so the personal contact is lacking. Since the cohesiveness I seek is absent in our local mystery writers group, I turn to my romance sisters for support.

I realize that I'm approaching the mystery genre with my own expectations from romance. They are two different cultures, like sci-fi and romance. Since I'm relatively new to mysteries, my perceptions might change as I get to know more people in the field, but at least now I can understand my reactions. Thanks, Laura, for your enlightening article!

— **Nancy J. Cohen**

### **More "Comely" Praise**

The Comely Curmudgeon is really starting to grow on me. She takes us "to worlds where we've never been before." I especially liked Laura's take on the differences between the romance and sci-fi cons. I always wondered why Laura had red hair and unusual attire (including one glove—I knew it wasn't Michael Jackson mania, but was afraid to ask) when she and I sat together at an RWA Conference party several years ago. Now I know she was just morphing out of her sci-fi fantasy self. Love ya, Resnick.

(*From a mundane*) — **Karen Harper**

### **On Becoming E-Savvy**

Although I appreciate the mention in Olivia Rupprecht's article concerning e-books, I need to point out that the e-mail address listed for NovelsNow.com was incorrect. Authors who have the rights back to their previously published books can contact me about selling those books online in downloadable format at <nmartin@novelsnow.com>.

The Internet is changing the way publishers do business, and authors must change, too. As a longtime published author, I'm glad NINC is addressing the issues and helping to educate writers. I hope our discussions can be more proactive in Vancouver so that authors can be a force in creating the way books will be distributed online. If we sit back and wait for the dust to settle as this new era in publishing is built, we risk being left out in the cold. I urge all authors to include Internet distribution in their career plans.

We all need to be experts in every facet of our business, no matter how boring or intrusive learning about the Internet may seem as we bear down on our various deadlines or set off on publicity tours. Take the time to learn more. If I can help anyone better understand what's happening around us, feel free to contact me.

— **Nancy Martin**

### **NINC Members Pay Tribute to Late**

#### **Romantic Times Reviewer Melinda Helfer**

(*Ed's Note: as most of you know by now, popular fiction lost one of its best known and most beloved reviewers to a heart attack in late August. NINC members supplied NINC with these tributes that will be passed along to her family. tdr*)

Being [with Melinda when she died], sharing that

experience of passage, was one of the hardest things I've ever done, and I wouldn't have chosen to be anywhere else on earth. It isn't really possible to convey in mere words how bonded we all felt as we stood at Melinda's side and watched her leave us, but to the extent that I'm able, I wanted to share the experience with you. Despite how hard and painful it was to say goodbye to my dear friend in such a tangible, undeniable way, I believe I may find a sort of resolution about this loss that wouldn't be possible otherwise.

Melinda's "world"—the people she loved and who loved her... and, as many of you know, there are many of both... were very much in my mind. She touched—and changed—so many lives. She gave of herself to her friends with a generosity and compassion and optimism that was unique among any others I have known or expect to know. Although her body may have been weak, her spirit was indomitable. I feel incredibly blessed to have known her.

Melinda's husband, Tom, asked that contributions be made to the American Heart Association in Melinda's name. On the other hand, cards and notes, remembrances of Melinda, would be most appreciated by the family. They should be sent to Tom Helfer, P.O. Box 1007, Edgewood, MD 21040-1007.

— **Mary Kilchenstein**

I worked with Melinda at RT for a few years before focusing on my fiction work. While I didn't always agree with her (like when she gave me 3s), in my humble opinion she was more objective in her reviews than most in the field. She was a major force in the industry for so many years and a dynamic life force. I don't think anyone else can or will manage the volume of work she did in the romance industry.

— **Sally Hawkes**

I first met Melinda in 1982 or 1983, back in the early days of RT. She was scrupulously fair and honest and one of the most intelligent supporters of the romance genre around. Her death is a loss for all of us.

— **Barbara Bretton**

Though I didn't know Melinda personally, I know what she did for this industry and the people within it and join with all of you who are grieving. My sincerest sympathies to all who knew her well. My heart and thoughts are with you during this painful time.

— **Dawn Reno**

I, too, was saddened by the news of Melinda Helfer's death. She was a true friend of the romance genre, one of its first serious, thoughtful reviewers who encouraged experimentation and new voices. Her perspective and unique expertise will be missed.

— **Jayne Ann Krentz**

Melinda Helfer's mission on this planet, or part of it, at least, must have been to help make the romance community more like a family and less like a cold, unfriendly place. From the time I was a brand new, first time author, she made me feel special, welcome, appreciated. She's been a friend and she will be sorely missed by countless people. But ▶▶▶



she's not really gone, lest we forget. She lives on in a new form, with a new mission. I like to think she's been promoted to Muse.

— **Maggie Shayne**

Melinda was truly the godmother of a lot of authors, especially genre-crossers like myself. I am grateful for the time I was able to spend with her at conventions and on the phone. She was always willing to "consult" and had a brilliant, brilliant mind as well as a very savvy marketing grasp, wrapped up in a warm and encouraging personality. Her enthusiasm for books and writers came out in her separate roles of reviewer, reader and friend to writers. I respected her so much for so many things, and will miss her for the rest of my writing and personal life.

— **Carole Nelson Douglas**

I'm so sorry to hear about Melinda. When we get news like this, we realize what an extended family we all are. Many of us have known each other, or at least been seeing each other at conferences for 10-20 years now. Melinda's loss will be keenly felt by all of us.

— **Teresa Medeiros**

Melinda leaves a big hole for all in this industry. It'll take at least three people to fill it. My prayers are with her family.

— **Ruth Scofield Schmidt**

If Melinda said a book was well-written, you knew her words came from the heart, but were the product of a very sharp mind. She was an exceptional person, and she will be missed.

— **Joan Johnston**

[Melinda's passing] is sad news. I knew Melinda when we both lived in the Dallas area. She was an icon in her own way.

— **Holly Newman**

Melinda's integrity was without question, and her love of the genre far surpassed any normal mortal's. The biggest thrill of my career came from a 10 p.m. phone call from Melinda, which meant it was 1 a.m. where she lived. I'm glad I will have it to savor. And I'm so glad I knew her.

— **Susan Crosby**

Melinda was one the most supportive people we ever met! She'll be greatly missed by both of us. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

— **Nikoo & Jim McGoldrick**

Melinda was a real original, with an incredible breadth of knowledge about authors and books.

— **Julie Kistler**

I was terribly sorry to hear of Melinda Helfer's death. I will certainly miss her—as, I'm sure, will many.

I always valued and benefited from Melinda's wonderful enthusiasm for my writing, as did numerous other writers. Who could even count how many of Melinda's quotes grace the covers of books? She was a fair reviewer and an intelligent voice in genre fiction.

In addition, she was always so delightful to me

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



personally, too. At my first RWA National Conference, Melinda took me to lunch and made me feel welcome in the new world I had entered. At my first *Romantic Times* conference, Melinda drove me around San Antonio for an extended site-seeing tour, showing me lovely places I would otherwise not have a chance to see, while we talked about the business and the genre.

My shifting my career focus more heavily into sf/f has ensured that I haven't been to many romance-genre events in recent years. However, I always knew that Melinda and I would find the time, when we eventually wound up at the same event again, to catch up and have fun together. I'm so sad to know that will never happen now—but at least I know that for me, and probably for many other writers who treasured her warm and enthusiastic presence, she will always be there in spirit.

— **Laura Resnick**

With her warmth, generosity, and CD-Rom memory, Melinda Helfer was one of the most loved people in the romance community. She had a marvelous ability to make an author feel special and cherished. Her passing is a huge loss for all of us.

— **Mary Jo Putney**,  
not sure that words are quite adequate here.

This is what I wrote to the *Beaumont*: I want to say that I think Nancy's suggestion that we name the award The Melinda is perfect.

My first five books were Regencies, and I quietly thanked Melinda for her kind review of the second as I passed by a group she was standing in. She followed me, told me she wanted to tell me something about my book, and proceeded to tell me, comparing it to the first book. I was astounded at her memory, her analysis, and her kindness. I'd had a dog play a large part in the meeting of hero and heroine, and had not taken him to the end of the book, and Melinda wanted me to be careful to tie up any loose ends in future books. She was warm and generous and dear, and I was humbled by her attention and awed by her ability. She was a great inspiration to us all because she cared. We'll miss her.

— **Christina Cordaire Strong**

IMO, Melinda was the best kind of reviewer, one who was sincere with her praise, straightforward with her critiques, always supportive, and one who genuinely loved the genre. Her light burned out way too soon.

— **Pamela Toth**

I had no idea that Melinda had been ill. Like many others, I am truly saddened to learn of her passing. But none of us can escape that inevitable reality and as I reflect on Melinda, I picture her in the great hereafter with her true love—piles and piles of books.

— **Olivia Rupprecht**

# WIN-WIN-WINS

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ **Continued from page 1**

as aware that we're all seeing something different.

So, how do we make this three-headed creature work? How do we reconcile these different points of view?

Hard-nosed winner-take-most negotiating? That might be the way to go when you're dealing with someone you won't be doing business with again—say in buying a house or dickering over a car. But notice those are also situations where value (expressed in dollars) is certainly the primary and sometimes the solitary goal. As Virginia pointed out, in the three-cornered author-editor-agent negotiation there is also that long-term successful association at stake.

Compromise? Compromise has often been touted as the adult way to reconcile differences. In other words, if Adult A wants 1 and Adult B wants 10, then go with 5.5. But Virginia pointed out that with compromise, Adult A and Adult B end up with something *neither* one wanted, while no one gets what they *did* want.

Of course, Adult A could just be reasonable and give me—uh, Adult B—the whole 10 that Adult B wanted in the first place. This is accommodating. It's got some real appeal—if you get to be the accommodated one all the time. But there's a drawback: Even though the *accommodatee* gets to be captain of his/her ship, the accommodating crew is likely to jump ship at the first sign of trouble. And that's if they don't mutiny first.

And, let's face it, in this business how often is the author the *accommodatee*? Even if an author decides the best way to go in this

business is to be an *accommodator* s/he not only has to take whatever the *accommodatees* dish out, but fails to gain respect.

A much more productive approach than hard-nosed compromise or accommodation, Virginia said, is to collaborate. Specifically trying to collaborate on a decision that will give all three parties what they want.

That's Win-Win-Win.

Sounds good, doesn't it?

matter.) But even assuming that we made great strides at knowing and articulating what we want from Virginia's first workshop ("Knowing What You Want—Getting What You Need"), how are we at the other side of communicating—listening?

Virginia took a moment to point out that research has found that we all go from listening to taking action by following what's called the Ladder of Inference. Building from the bottom, the rungs of this ladder are:

- Take in observable data (another person's behavior, their spoken or written words).
- Select data (of their behavior/words, what do we remember and emphasize?)
- Add meaning to selected data
- Make assumptions on the basis of that added meaning
- Draw conclusions based on the assumptions
- Adopt beliefs based on the conclusions
- Act based on the beliefs.

Editors Agents  
Authors

(Especially as long as the Author gets that first "win," right <g>)

Like most good things, though, it's not going to just happen. So, how can we accomplish wins all around?

Start by looking for common ground, for agreement from all three corners.

To find that common ground said Virginia we have to know what would define a win for each of our three corners—authors, agents and editors.

This, of course, is going to require communication. We should be good at this, right? We're wordsmiths who communicate all day every day. Of course, most of the communicating is with a computer screen and, while it might talk back, it doesn't have goals and desires (other than to mangle your manuscript, but that's another

Say Augustine Author meets Edwina Editor for the first time after talking on the phone twice. One of Edwina's comments in a 10-minute conversation is "Oh, you're much taller than I expected." The comment is observable data. Augustine "selects" that data by remembering it, while not selecting that Edwina also said her feet hurt. Augustine adds meaning to the data she has selected by noting that while she is 6-foot-1 and played NCAA basketball, Edwina is 4-7.

Based on that added meaning, Augustine assumes that Edwina is uncomfortable with the disparity in their heights. She draws the conclusion that Edwina's discomfort with the disparity in their heights would translate to discomfort in a working/editing relationship. Based on all this, Augustine believes that Edwina would not view her new proposal warmly. So, acting on that belief, Augustine submits ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



## BREAKING NEWS

COMPILED BY PAMELA BROWNING

### City Girls

Our agents in the field have forwarded more information about the editor-generated Harlequin/Silhouette City Girls books. That's the project that's *not* a romance line but single titles launching in 2001 with four books and continuing with two books a month. They're touted as "coming of age books, starting life in the city, a kind of Bridget Jones meets Sex in the City."

Lest you mistakenly think that City Girls is meant to mirror the thrilling lives that H/S editors are leading in New York, I hasten to add that City Girls can reside in any big city. So there.

City Girls is open to pubs and unpubs. Requested length is 100,000 words. Books can be written in first or third person, present or past tense. The tone is described as "light with humor, witty." Unlike romances, the books won't focus on Mr. Right but rather on the travails encountered with all the Mr. Wrongs (City Churls?) on the way to Mr. Right. They want a satisfying ending, not necessarily in the arms of Mr. Right, but at least away from the Churls.

Suggested elements include roommates from hell, local hangouts, life on the fast track or temping and trying to get started in the business world, and matchmaking moms. The Girl can struggle with anything "realistic," and she can have sex with Churls, all the while wielding sharp, sassy dialogue. Like she really could? While she's having sex with Churls? Weren't these books

▶ ▶ ▶

## WIN-WIN-WIN

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ her proposal to Piddly Publisher instead of Edwina Editor's Mega Media House.

Note that from the time Edwina spoke the words, "Oh, you're much taller than I expected," until Augustine sent her proposal to Piddly Pub, *everything* took place in Augustine's mind.

Those rungs that take place in our minds are called a reflexive cycle, because how we select and add meaning to data is based on beliefs we already hold.

And naturally our selection and meaning-adding will tend to reinforce those beliefs—otherwise known as a self-fulfilling prophecy. It's human nature that once we have figured out something, we want to be right about it; the Ladder of Inference lets us ensure that we're right (at least in our own minds) even when we're wrong.

Having armed us with this new self-awareness, Virginia suggested we break up into small groups to brainstorm what "Wins" would be for each of the three corners (agents, authors, editors). She had an instant revolt on her hands. None of us wanted to miss out on anything being said. (Could it be that one important element of "Win" for authors is to not be shut out of the information loop?)

Being accustomed to dealing with recalcitrant CEOs, Virginia was unfazed, and she asked us to list what we would consider Wins for an author in a contract-negotiating situation, while she wrote them on a flip chart.

*Money, creative freedom, a sense of building a foundation for further sales, respect, promotional efforts, larger print run, a sense of building a name/career, timely publication date* were among the items that soon had the Author's corner of the paper brimming over.

Next, Virginia focused on the

Wins for an agent—and she couldn't have asked for a better example of the ladder of inference at work as authors gave their views of what agents wanted, until the lone brave agent in the crowd, Steve Axelrod, forced us all to back down several rungs on the ladder.

This workshop spotted the tip of an iceberg that hadn't been apparent or clearly articulated before—Authors, Editors and Agents are a community. We each have separate goals, but

we also have overriding common goals. We would all benefit by much more exploration of this community and how we can better work together to make each effort Win-Win-Win. **NINK**

Editors Agents  
Authors

## 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

Deborah B Matthews, Montgomery AL  
Karen Harbaugh, Auburn WA

### New Members

Joan Kilby, Frankston, Victoria, AUS  
Kathleen F. Williams (Kate Stevenson),  
Boulder CO

**NINC has room to grow...  
recommend membership to  
your colleagues.**



# VIEW FROM THE TOP: ZION

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ Continued from page 1

secret info) not everything is covered in the following. However, Claire will be a significant and visible presence at the upcoming NINC conference in Vancouver. She'll be handing out information packages on iPublish, giving a group presentation, and looks forward to candid discussions with interested members.

And now, without further ado, heere's Claire!

**Novelists, Inc.:** *Before we get to the nuts and bolts of what iPublish is all about, could you give us some background information on how the whole idea began?*

**Claire Zion:** It was Larry Kirshbaum's idea, though where he came up with such an amazing concept, I don't know. He's a true visionary in publishing and has steered the Time Warner Trade Publishing ship through some rocky waters for more than two decades. So many changes have occurred in our business, but through it all he's continued to search for ways to continue growing our market.

**NINC:** *And breaking into electronic publishing with iPublish was the next logical step in that growth?*

**CZ:** I think you could say that. It was never a question of "should we do this?" but "when do we do this?" We did our research and a lot of soul searching before deciding to jump in with a staff that's totally dedicated to growing the electronic book industry. E-books are a great idea and they'll take off. What no one knows is how long before it happens. Will there be enough people buying them in the next year to create a viable market, or will it take ten years? We can't predict the future.

**NINC:** *If you had to hazard a guess...?*

**CZ:** Personally, I think a lot of people will be reading electronically before the end of 2001. But I'm about as enthusiastic about this market as

you can be. More sober estimates are that the eBooks will be a significant part of the business within about three years. We know that during this time it's inevitable that mistakes will be made in such a nascent and chaotic marketplace. Our goal is to help define what that marketplace is ultimately going to be.

**NINC:** *You mentioned a dedicated staff. Can you elaborate on that?*

**CZ:** A dedicated staff is one thing that sets us apart from other major publishers entering the industry. Instead of having to do a balancing act with print pub duties, the staff of iPublish works strictly on the e-book end of the business. We believe that's necessary for us to learn what kind of books are uniquely suited to eBook publication, and offer the consumer more than they can get from a print book.

**NINC:** *How many staff members do you have?*

**CZ:** I think we're getting close to twenty, but I have trouble keeping track. Greg Voynow, the Senior Vice President and General Manager who has been overseeing the birth of iPublish with me, says we're growing faster than a Catholic family (laughs).

**NINC:** *So, who are some of your iPublish siblings?*

**CZ:** Greg and I did a lot of the initial planning and development with Larry. Marco Spinar is Manager of Strategic Planning and Operations. Hilary Liftin is Director of Electronic Business Development. I'm Editorial Director, and my staff of editors includes Laura Cifelli, who specializes in romance and women's fiction titles; Paul Witcover, who handles science fiction and fantasy for us; Susanna Einstein, who does both mystery and general fiction; Jessica Papin, who handles nonfiction as well as inspirational fiction and nonfiction; and Zach Schisgal does our business titles.

**NINC:** *When you* ▶ ▶ ▶



## BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ supposed to be "realistic?"

Acquiring editors: Joan Golan (NY), Birgit Davis-Todd (Toronto), Samantha Bell (London), Tessa Shapcott (London).

### Book Sales

Book Industry Study Group Trends 2000 forecasts that total book sales will increase 5.2% in this year to an estimated \$24.71 billion. If the forecast pans out, it will better the 4.3% growth rate posted in 1999.

The huge demand for Harry Potter titles will cause the greatest gain in sales, which will be in the children's segment—10.2% to \$1.9 billion this year, led by an 11.0% increase in hardcover sales to \$1.18 billion. Children's paperback sales are projected to rise 6.8% to \$705.6 million. Potter titles are expected to lure shoppers into bookstores, increasing sales of a wide range of children's titles.

The study projects that total revenues in the adult category will increase 3.5% to nearly \$5 billion. BISG expects a 5.0% gain to \$2.07 billion in trade paperbacks. Growth in adult hardcover sales will increase at 3.2% to \$2.91 billion. With its lower price point and growing number of titles, the trade paperback segment has consistently outgained the hardcover side, a trend that is expected to continue over the next five years.

Sales in the mass-market paperback category are expected to rebound this year, increasing 5.1% to \$1.47 billion after falling 7.3% in 1999. This is still short of the \$1.55 billion mark set in 1996. However, the study is hopeful that given more effective distribution and better promotion at ▶ ▶ ▶



## BREAKING NEWS

superstores, sales of mass-market paperbacks will grow slowly through 2004.

Competition from online retailers has slowed the growth of book clubs, with sales up only 3.7% in 1999; growth is expected to slow again to 3.3% in 2000 with total revenues hitting almost \$1.3 billion. Book clubs are in a transitional phase as they look for ways to compete with e-retailers, and annual growth rates of less than 4% are predicted for the next five years.

Mail order is the only segment expected to have a sales decline in 2000, with sales estimated to fall 10.2% to \$370.6 million. Many publishers consider the mail-order format to be outmoded though viable for a limited number of companies. The college segment is forecast to have the second largest sales increase in 2000 with sales up 8.1% to \$3.38 billion. Expanding enrollment augmented by \$\$\$ from state coffers is expected to result in a 5.6% increase in elhi sales this year to \$3.61 billion. But elhi sales are up 27% in the first half of 2000, so growth could well exceed expectations. Sales in the university press category are expected to increase 4.8% to \$431.5 million, while sales of religion books are projected to be up 3.6% to \$1.26 billion.

BISG predicts that over the next five years, book sales will grow at a 5.1% compound annual growth rate with sales topping \$30 billion in 2004.

### **"Survivor" Survives**

After the "Survivor" show's season finale, you may have thought you'd seen the last of those oddballs who signed on for a month or so of driving each other nuts on a desert island in

## VIEW FROM THE TOP: ZION

took this new position, it wasn't announced right away was it?

**CZ:** No! It was all top secret while we were in the planning stages last year and rumors even started circulating that I'd been fired, which was fun. But since I was sworn to silence I couldn't tell anyone. That was tough, especially when it was all so exciting.

**NINC:** *Now that the cat's out of the bag, why don't you fill us in on what makes iPublish such an exciting and different concept in electronic publishing?*

**CZ:** I really think we've got a business plan that offers the best of what traditional print publishers and new eBook start ups have to offer to this marketplace. On one hand, like other print publishers our goal is to offer distribution for our titles at every eBook retailer and on every eBook reading platform that we consider secure. That's following the model of what a big publisher does in the print world—get a book on sale in as many places as possible. Many of the new eBook publishing companies aren't offering that kind of universal and agnostic distribution. But the advantage of the new eBook publishers is that they have associated websites, which is something we will also be offering. We believe the website will serve as a lightning rod for our whole publishing program. It's what I call the "There There"—meaning, it's a place people can go to see our books, browse their content, talk to other readers about them, as well as make submissions of their own and talk to other writers and our editors, to see if they can get published. It's not just a publishing program, it's meant to serve as a writing community.

**NINC:** *Can you tell us what the website will be like?*

**CZ:** iPublish.com is actually divided into three areas: iRead, iWrite, and iLearn. The iLearn program isn't

creative writing 101, but a place to openly discuss the business of writing and help people learn how they can participate in it. We'll have lectures from established authors on the art of their craft, live chats for exchanging ideas and questions, an archive of instructional materials for self-study. And we'll have in-house experts openly discussing the science of publishing, sharing secrets of successful packaging, publicity and promotional efforts. They'll also provide information on things like royalty reporting, contract negotiations, and distribution practices, both on-and-off line.

**NINC:** *Sounds like something both the novice and the professional could get something out of. What about iWrite?*

**CZ:** I think iWrite is the most exciting aspect of the site. It's the place writers can go to make submissions to us directly. And it's the place we'll go to see what people like reading, which in turn will inform the decisions we make about what to publish. Think about it, until now publishers have had to "guess" what people want to read. And as open-minded as we might try to be, our opinions and decisions about selecting material to publish are unavoidably subjective. Now that can all change. We'll be giving our attention to what readers tell us they like, rather than to what we think they should prefer.

**NINC:** *That is exciting. Tell us more about iWrite.*

**CZ:** iWrite is also unique in that we're actively forming a community of writers, readers, and editors who can explore the kinds of formats and ideas that are best suited to Web publication. The Internet is a new medium for writing, and we think it's going to change the message.

**NINC:** *Since there's bound to be a ton of submissions, how will you handle them all and how will you know who should make the cut?*



**CZ:** The way it's set up is that a writer who wants to submit work has to first critique three other submissions—about fifteen pages each—and provide feedback by rating and reviewing these new works. So they go on and they read and rate each other. They get valuable feedback. It's a community of writers helping each other and letting us know what they like most in that community. The material that's rated the highest gets kicked up to the editorial staff for evaluation of the entire manuscript.

If the writing's really good then we'll help get it in its best possible form and select it for publication. That means we'll offer it for sale both at eBook retailers all over the Internet and on the iPublish site itself in the iRead program—which is also where we place our offerings from established authors. The selections that generate a positive public response might then be considered for print publication.

**NINC:** *Do established authors have to go through the same process?*

**CZ:** Not necessarily. We'll look at submissions from agents and consider work from authors we know for the iRead site. We're interested in original material and backlist re-prints from print authors.

**NINC:** *Time Warner has the rep of being a pretty tough nut to crack into. Do you foresee iPublish opening doors to writers when the same material might be rejected via traditional means of submission?*

**CZ:** This is my whole reason for getting involved, why I've worked harder this past year than I've ever worked in my life. I *love* to discover authors and help develop their potential. I love working with inventive, creative books. And I hate having to turn down great books because "Oh, too bad, we just acquired a culinary murder mystery," or "It's too regional" or "Too different, can't take a risk on that," the list goes on. Now I can buy them all because I can reach profitable sales

levels, for the author and for us, by marketing to niche communities of interest. Not every book we publish has to be a huge, national bestseller. Instead, it can be a really good book that will sell to people who like that particular kind of book. If I get a compelling story that's, say, a soap opera space sci-fi, I can snap it up and give readers a chance at something they'd never find on a regular bookstore shelf.

**NINC:** *Are you saying the story actually comes before marketing considerations?*

**CZ:** With iPublish, the thing that matters most is The Book. I've had the best time being able to contact writers whose work I really wanted but had to turn down because it wasn't deemed commercial enough or whatever. Now I can give those books and those authors an opportunity with iPublish. I don't have to play favorites here or decide who should be the big budget haves and who gets the dregs because they're a have not. The beauty of the Internet is that we can connect books with the communities of interest—that's web talk for "people"—who will like them.

**NINC:** *With such a drastic departure from print publishing, won't the method of distribution need to be different as well?*

**CZ:** The way the print world works to satisfy the economic system of print distribution is to always be looking for "The Big Hit." But in e-books we're really looking for different books that niche markets will like a lot. When readers visit our website, they can explore our inventory in a personal way, they can tell us what kinds of books they want to read and we can lead them to everything of that type that we have available. Of course we'll have all the titles we print publish, but in addition we'll be able to offer them things they could never find in a brick-and-mortar store. Besides less traditional books, short stories and novellas, we'll also have series of portal biz books—condensed ▶ ▶ ▶



## BREAKING NEWS

hopes of winning a million dollars, but here they come again ad infinitum, ad nauseum. That's what happens when you have a blockbuster CBS-TV series.

Contentville, the online store operated by Steve Brill, publisher of *Brill's Content*, has launched its e-book store with three exclusive titles, including *Survivor: The Ultimate Game*, an official companion tell-all to the series. The complete text costs \$10.46. TV Books published a trade paperback of *Survivor* in September.

### Lightning Strikes Again

Lightning Source, Ingram's print on demand and e-publishing unit, and Versaware, an Israeli and New York e-publishing service, have entered into a "long term strategic alliance" to provide an expanded offering of digital services. The alliance comes in the wake of both firms recently agreeing to prepare tens of thousands of titles from major book publishers for digital fulfillment in a variety of formats.

Versaware runs a high volume facility in India for converting digital files, and now they will provide digital conversion to Lightning Source clients. Lightning Source will in turn service Versaware clients with its POD technology.

Sol Rosenberg, cofounder of Versaware, told PW Daily, "We'll be working with Lightning Source on other delivery and content management technologies that we'll announce later."

### Dot.commentary

It was supposed to be a winner, poised to compete with online retail giant Amazon.com. But Barnes&Noble.com is ▶ ▶ ▶



## BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ chalking up as a loser so far.

Barnes & Noble, Inc., which owns 40% of the online retailer, was hurt by a \$17.9 million net loss on its investment in Barnes & Noble.com. B&N reports a net loss of \$8.6 million on sales of \$924 million in the second quarter ended July 29. In the same period a year ago, the company had a net profit of \$23.5 million.

The company was also wounded by net interest expenses of \$13.3 million compared to \$5 million a year ago. B&N's loss on B&N.com in the second quarter of 1999 was \$6.5 million. Sales for the company as a whole rose 27.1% from \$727 million in the second quarter of 1999 with sales in traditional bookstores strong, particularly in children's books and bargain books. Note: Harry Potter books sold 500,000 copies in B&N stores.

### Dot.controversy

Maybe it's happened to you. You tried to register your domain name and found that it was already taken. Well, that's something you have in common with a publisher. Yes! You *can* have things in common with a publisher!

Penguin Putnam is the publisher with the problem. They've got this author named Katie Tarbox, and she wrote a book called *Katie.com*. But there's this British mom named Katie Jones, and she owns a chat room also titled—guess what—Katie.com. She's owned the domain name since 1996.

So when *Katie.com: My Story* was published last April, Jones's chat room was buried in an avalanche of e-mails, and she had to shut down her site. Jones is now ▶ ▶ ▶

## VIEW FROM THE TOP: ZION

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ versions of print business titles, formatted for reading on a personal reading device or a laptop.

**NINC:** *Perfect for the busy executive with a few hours to kill on a plane?*

**CZ:** Exactly.

**NINC:** *Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, aren't you a little concerned about competitors "borrowing" some of your great ideas?*

**CZ:** We're not afraid of the competition. We need the competition. We can't grow this business by ourselves. For it to really succeed two things have to happen: Quality work has to be available to the consumer. And, the personal reading devices have to get better. Gemstar and Microsoft have made a huge investment to advance the electronic book market. We need our print competitors to explore it, too.

**NINC:** *Then you're not worried about authors launching their own websites and cutting the publisher out of the picture.*

**CZ:** One thing I've learned since working in the electronic book arena is that this world is much more complicated than the print world. I used to worry that authors could launch their own websites and do away with us, but I don't worry about it anymore.

Only Stephen King and maybe ten others have the kind of brand name that will attract readers directly to their site, and even they need a lot of publicity or expensive advertising to get the public's attention. And fulfilling electronic book orders is not the seamless process people seem to think, as many retailers in other industries found out last Christmas. Frankly, it's the same choice authors face in considering self-publishing in the print world.

An author can go it alone, but it's

a lot of work. And most writers prefer to spend the bulk of their time actually writing. However, anyone who wants to sell their work from their own site is certainly entitled to do so. If that's their choice, I wish them luck.

**NINC:** *You say that as if they'll need it.*

**CZ:** Publishing an eBook isn't that simple. It's much more difficult than publishing a print book. With a print book you don't have to deal with the process of encryption and setting up files, or mounting infrastructure to get it to the consumer efficiently and elegantly. And then there's the marketing and promotion challenge, which the publisher also takes on in the labyrinth world of the web.

**NINC:** *What about cost?*

**CZ:** Once distribution and infrastructure are set up and in place, the efficiencies will be huge—no printing or shipping costs. But then we have distribution fees, which are costly, and encryption services to protect the work from hackers. It's naïve to think that eBooks are immensely cheaper to produce than print books. Yes, they are cheaper, but not immensely so and everyone is fighting over who gets what. We feel the extra money should be divided more evenly between the parties involved.

**NINC:** *And what does iPublish consider fair compensation, pay-wise?*

**CZ:** (Groans) That always strikes me as a sort of personal question, like someone asking me how much I make on my paycheck. It's an individual thing that's between the people involved.

**NINC:** *Writers don't appreciate strangers asking them how much they make on their books, either. But, just between you and our membership, could you whisper in our ears what kind of e-royalties iPublish might pay in general?*

**CZ:** I can't give you an exact

amount in print and one reason is because things happen and change so fast with the Internet itself, that amount can fluctuate. What I can tell you is that we have good terms. I'll be happy to discuss the subject in Vancouver and provide more concrete answers there.

**NINC:** *Fair enough. Now let's move on to another issue writers are concerned about: Reversion of rights. Given the archival nature of electronic publishing, just when would a work be considered out of print and the rights revert back to the author?*

**CZ:** That's another subject I'll speak more frankly about at the upcoming conference. I'll say this much now. We think it's time to move away from the old definition of an active title being based on copies "in print." Rather, the issue is, how much revenue is this title generating for the publisher and the author, in any format in which it might be offered?

If the publisher is succeeding in exploiting the title to generate acceptable earnings for the author, then they should be able to retain the rights. If the publisher is no longer achieving earnings with a title in all the various markets and formats that are now available, the author should be able to get the rights back and see if they can do better elsewhere.

**NINC:** *Are you concerned about hackers eating into the profits for both publisher and writer alike?*

**CZ:** There is that concern for all e-publishers, but we've taken a very aggressive stance against Internet piracy. We've brought in Reciprocal, who's the global leader in digital rights management, and it's their job to vigorously protect our online assets. iPublish will take every step necessary to ensure the safe and proper delivery of intellectual property from us to the consumer.

**NINC:** *iPublish really starts rolling in the first quarter of next year but you already have a line up of titles currently available, with more to come. Who are some of your launch authors?*

**CZ:** We published our first list in September 2000, and we'll be releasing a new list every month from now on. September's line up included titles from Sandra Brown, Nicholas Sparks, David Baldacci, and Nelson DeMille. We have original material, e-book exclusives, and in Nelson DeMille's case, we're releasing *The Lion's Game* in eBook form at paperback price two months before the paperback release.

**NINC:** *Do you anticipate any genres to be more popular than others with on-line readers?*

**CZ:** This is interesting. We did a lot of research, finding out who was buying what. The common thought might be that sci-fi readers would be more inclined to purchase eBooks because they're into techno stuff, but what we discovered was that out of the top ten slots for the best selling online books, most were romances.

**NINC:** *That's encouraging news to romance authors. Should they, or any other authors, wish to submit material, does it have to be in electronic format?*

**CZ:** Yes. If it's a back-list title that the author doesn't have on disk, I would suggest they take it to some place like Kinko's and have it scanned, which isn't too expensive. Then they just need to proof read it so that it matches the print edition in every detail.

**NINC:** *You've been very generous with your time and answers, Claire. Until we see you in Vancouver, any last words you'd like to leave us with?*

**CZ:** With iPublish we want to redefine the role of the publisher in this electronic space. That means many things, not the least of which is an enhanced relationship with writers. It's time to challenge what hasn't worked in the past and create a new future for books. Print publishing is very subjective; now the tables will turn.

*Olivia Rupprecht's next reporting duties will be where else?—in Vancouver.*



## BREAKING NEWS

contemplating suing Penguin for damages, claiming invasion of privacy.

Penguin attorneys say that Jones's case has no merit. Jones maintains that she learned that Penguin's *Katie.com* was originally titled *girl.com*, but, presumably because *girl.com* is a pornographic site, it was changed. Jones says that action "shows, to me, an awareness on your part that naming the book after a domain name was significant. It's a shame you didn't consider the significance your actions would have on me."

The U.S. has anti-cybersquatter legislation designed to protect companies from trademark infringement. Britain does not. Though it's too soon to tell what the fate of *Katie.com* will be, Ms. Jones's story has generated plenty of publicity, some of it, no doubt, for *girl.com*.

### Hacker Whacker Judge

Eric Corley operates a hacker Web site. He posted the DeCSS code that decrypts DVD movies. But due to a major legal victory scored by the motion picture industry, he won't be doing that anymore. A judge recently made permanent an injunction barring Corley from posting the code or linking to other sites that do.

Judge Lewis Kaplan dismissed the free-speech arguments of Corley's defense as being "entirely without merit." Kaplan wrote in his decision, "Computer code is not purely expressive any more than the assassination of a political figure is purely a political statement." He added: "There is little room for doubting that broad dissemination of DeCSS threatens ultimately to injure or destroy (the) plaintiffs' ability to



## BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ distribute copyrighted products on DVDs."

However, the *San Jose Mercury* observed, "The software the Motion Picture Association of America wants banned can still be found using standard Internet search tools."

### Authors Guild Sues

The Authors Guild and seven authors filed a lawsuit against five major database providers, claiming massive electronic infringement for unauthorized use of thousands of freelance writers' articles dating to 1978. The authors' articles and book excerpts in newspapers and magazines now appear without their consent in databases that make the works available electronically for substantial usage or subscription fees. The lawsuit seeks class action status.

If you've written articles that are included on these online databases, how do you learn about it? And how can you participate in the lawsuit? The Authors Guild provides the following information: Searching databases to determine whether your works appear is a bit tricky. Some are costly, others require you to provide a credit card (though sometimes you only pay if you actually download the article), some require a trip to the library. Here's the rundown:

**Nexis**—You can register to get one day's worth of unlimited Nexis service online for \$69 (at [www.lexis-nexis.com](http://www.lexis-nexis.com)).

**Dow Jones Reuters**—You can get access to the Dow Jones Reuters site at some public and university libraries (in New York City, visit the Science, Industry and Business branch of the New York

*Continued on page 17* ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

## MEMBER NEWS.....

### She's Everywhere!

Eva Rutland was all over the news in early August. On August 5, the African American Online Writers Guild presented Eva with its first-ever "Gold Pen Lifetime Achievement Award" at the group's inaugural Reunion and Conference, citing Eva's work to help break the color barrier in publishing. The meeting, attended by some 300 writers who first started networking online, was held in Eva's native Atlanta.

On August 6, a mini-bio of Eva appeared in the "Soul Corner" feature of the Sunday comic strip "Wee Pals," a comic strip by Morrie Turner that features a multiethnic cast of kids and always ends with a panel profiling an individual whose accomplishments make him or her a good role model, the focus is on Eva. The brief bio makes mention of a variety of adversities she has overcome in her long and accomplished life, and it particularly singles out her wonderful new book, *No Crystal Stair*, the saga of a black family from the Depression to the present.

And on August 7, the Atlanta Constitution ran a long interview with her entitled "All About Eva."

Rutland, now a great-grandmother, started writing as a young mother in the 1950s, publishing non-fiction articles in such national magazines as *Redbook*, *Woman's Day*, and *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Her books include *No Crystal Stair*, a semi-autobiographical novel from Mira; a novella in *Sisters* (HarperCollins), an anthology nominated for an NAACP Image Award; and *Almost a Wife* (Harlequin Romances), which is out now.

Check out the cover of *No Crystal Stair* for a photo of Eva at 19. You'll see why she was considered one of Atlanta's most beautiful debutantes. She once remarked, "It was lucky I went blind" (some 30 years ago),

because otherwise, "I would have been so busy being a grandmama, I never would have found time to write my novels"—23, at last count. Her friends in Sacramento and throughout the country consider her a role model as a mother, a writer, and a human being.

### Eppie Winner

Shirley Parenteau reports that her children's book, *Blue Hand, Blue Cloth*, won the Eppie in its category at the EPIC (Electronically Published Internet Connection) conference held in Omaha, Nebraska August 25-27.

"I didn't expect to win and am totally thrilled," Parenteau said. "This was the first EPIC conference and the first Eppies awarded which makes it especially meaningful. The conference was wonderful with positive energy sizzling throughout and everyone welcoming and enthusiastic."

The next EPIC conference will be held in the Seattle area in March, 2002.

### The Word from Dawn

Word Museum has now "published" an interview with Dawn Reno online—perfect timing since she had four new books out in September. The url for the interview is <http://www.wordmuseum/interviews>.

Reno's new books are *The Unofficial Guide to Ebay and Online Auctions* from Macmillan/IDG; *Foxglove*, an adventure/thriller from Bookmice; *After Always*, a young adult novel from Avid Press; and *A Tale From Lavallah*, a completely interactive and illustrated children's fantasy from BooksOnScreen.

### Spotlight on Shirley

Fran Baker's author interview with Shirley Hailstock is scheduled to appear in the November issue of *Today's Librarian*.

*Continued on page 15* ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶





# **VANCOUVER CALLS:**

## ***A Time to Fiddle and a Time to Plow***

I was raised on my Grampa's wisdom. Sometimes, after burning up his bow at a lively Saturday night square dance, he'd turn to his toe-tapping wife, give a bragging-rights grin, and say, "Some men can fiddle. Others have to plow." Truth was, no matter how good a fiddler Grampa was—and he was *good*—he still had to plow.

During this past year, I've had numerous occasions to talk about NINC, whether in the pursuit of speakers or sponsors, or simply bending the ears of friends and family about my upcoming trip to Vancouver. In one of those ear-bending conversations, I claimed a few bragging rights and dropped the names of some other NINC members—the *big* names, the *NY Times* bestseller names, the movie deal names, the gazillion-books-published names. It felt good to link myself with such success. Of course, in those same conversations, I admitted that while the average number of books published per member is 17, I can't claim to have published half of that, or even half of half.

Then one day, the obvious hit me. The big-time writers don't have someone else writing for them. Nor do those writers who are prolific but haven't hit the *Times* list yet. They all have to settle down in front of the computer, just like I do.

They all have to pluck words one at a time, just like I do. Because while they may also be excellent speakers, writers, negotiators, teachers, etc., what each one wants to be is a writer. I thought of my Grampa. The real reason he had to plow was because he liked being a farmer. He *wanted* to be a farmer, not a fiddler.

What does that have to do with

the Vancouver conference? Everything. We all know there are other writers' conferences vying for our time and money. Some entice with fans and booksellers, or unpublished writers who value our expertise. Some conferences lure with awards. A NINC conference doesn't offer any of that. Instead, NINC promises up-to-the-minute information about our market, industry networking, sincere celebration, and honest, unvarnished personal accounts of how to succeed as well as survive. So, while it's fun to fiddle with fans, when it comes to bringing in a harvest, hang with the folks who know how to plow.

One last thing about my Grampa. One August morning, I'd gotten up before dawn so I could join him for breakfast, though he never was one to talk much. Only the day before, I had overheard my parents discussing the current drought, particularly my dad's vehement words about never regretting the day he turned his back on the farm and joined the Navy. I was nine, maybe ten. Wanting Grampa to see how astute a Virginia girl could be about South Dakota farming, I told him he was wasting his time plowing dust.

He had been rolling a toothpick between his teeth. Now, he held it steady, clamped down on it in a way that made the veins in his neck stand out. He pushed his chair back from the kitchen table and stood up. "Well, girl, that's how things are now. Ain't necessarily how they'll be tomorrow." With that, he pulled up his suspenders and headed back to the field.

**The list of agents and editors who are coming to Vancouver is growing. As of September 11, you can expect to see the following:**

- \* Evan Fogelman / The Fogelman Literary Agency
- \* Sarah Gallick / Literary Guild / Bookspan
- \* Eileen Hutton / Brilliance Audiobooks
- \* Damaris Rowland / Damaris Rowland Agency
- \* Charles Schlessiger / Brandt & Brandt
- \* Kate Seaver / Dorchester
- \* Shauna Summers / Ballantine
- \* Isabel Swift / Harlequin
- \* Nita Taublib / Bantam
- \* Leslie Wainger / Silhouette
- \* Marsha Zinberg / Harlequin

**NINC Members: If your agent (and/or editor) is coming to NINC and is not listed here, please email me as soon as possible. Thanks.**  
[zita-christian@worldnet.att.net](mailto:zita-christian@worldnet.att.net)

**— Zita Christian  
Vancouver  
Conference Coordinator**

# Online.....

Twenty-three million domains are registered. *Whois.net* at **whois.net** provides you with information regarding the ownership of domain names. You can type in a domain name and you will discover to whom it belongs. You will also be told that individual's address and phone number, as well as the information for the administrator of the site. This information can be useful if you discover that a domain name you wish to use is unavailable. This site provides you with

## ON WRITING

*The Writers Digest* now has an archive set up for all its online e-zines at **www.writersdigest.com/newsarchive**.

## CRIME AND MYSTERY WRITERS

*Zeno's Forensics* at **forensic.to/** offers information on "forensic science, forensic medicine, and forensic psychology."

For links to other forensics sites visit *Weblinks* at **home.netcom.com/~forensic/weblinks.html**.

*Remailer List* at **www.publius.net/rlist.html** claims many legitimate reasons exist for a person to want to send e-mail anonymously. And indeed there may be, but when I learned of this site, it seemed a tool that a character might use to create mischief. Total anonymity is not guaranteed, but I could not help but wonder if some of the porn e-mail I receive with no return address originated at a site such as this one.

## FANTASY WRITERS

The *Wandering Troll* at **thetroll.net/troll.htm** is designed to appeal to writers, poets, and artists of fantasy. The site has stories, serials, artwork, columns, and links to other sites of interest.

## RESEARCH

This month Terry shares a wonderful site with us. *Map Collection 1544 to 1999* at **lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/**

**gmdhtml/gmdhome.html** provides maps on cities and towns, military campaigns, social growth, and other areas of interest. You can also order reproductions.

*Find Articles* at **www.findarticles.com** is useful if you are trying to locate magazine articles. The site references articles from over 300 magazines, many major publications.

Writers have long realized that genealogy provides a treasure trove of information. At *Ancestry* at **www.ancestry.com**, you can find information on marriages in Virginia from 1851-1900, 1889 directories from Helena, Washington, and obituaries in several states for several years. Other databases are also available.

The Bible Browser at **goon.stg.brown.edu/bible\_browser/pbeasy.shtml** allows you to input a specific biblical passage or to search for passages that contain a par-

### Research Sites at a Glance

<i>American-British/British-American Dictionary</i>	<b>www.peak.org/~jeremy/dictionary/dict.html</b>
<i>American-English/English-American Translation Guide</i>	<b>www.accomodata.co.uk/amlish.htm</b>
<i>Ask Me (Experts answer questions)</i>	<b>www.askme.com</b>
<i>Brit Speak</i>	<b>pages.prodigy.com/NY/NYC/britspk/main.html</b>
<i>Civil War</i>	<b>reenact.org/home/wbts.html</b>
<i>FInd Law</i>	<b>www.findlaw.com/</b>
<i>Internet Medieval Sourcebook</i>	<b>www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html</b>
<i>Maritime History Virtual Archives</i>	<b>pc-78-120.udac.se:8001/WWW/Nautica/Nautica.html</b>
<i>Online Medical Dictionary</i>	<b>www.graylab.ac.uk/omd/index.html</b>
<i>Roots Web (Genealogy)</i>	<b>www.rootsweb.com/</b>
<i>Ships of the American Revolution</i>	<b>www.cronab.demon.co.uk/br.htm</b>
<i>Spell Maker (love spells, etc.)</i>	<b>hometown.aol.com/vaudou/spelmakr.htm</b>
<i>Witch's Brew offers magic spells</i>	<b>www.witchs-brew.com</b>
<i>Ye Olde English Sayings</i>	<b>www.rootsweb.com/~genepool/sayings.htm</b>

the contact information so you can determine if the owner is willing to transfer the site to you. However, I found it disconcerting when I typed in the names of NINC members to discover their personal addresses and phone numbers were readily available. Perhaps I'm simply paranoid, but I'm not comfortable providing such easy access to personal information. I know many of us use post office boxes, yet this site lists street addresses when available. You might want to take a peek to ensure the information being given with the click of a mouse is what you want the world to know. The site also explains domains and how to set up your website.

*Yahoo! How-To* at **howto.yahoo.com** offers many Web tutorials for both the inexperienced and the experienced web surfer. Tips on researching the web are provided as well as other articles that provide information to help you make the most of your time on the Internet.

tical word or phrase.

*The Kansas Collection* at [www.cc.ukans.edu/carrie/kancoll/](http://www.cc.ukans.edu/carrie/kancoll/) is an interesting collection of books, letters, diaries, and photographs that cover a variety of historical topics including orphan trains, Buffalo Bill Cody, other heroes and villains, and William G. Cutler's histories first published in 1883. Browse it when you have time to indulge in an interesting look at history.

## PROMOTION

*The Word Museum* at [www.wordmuseum.com](http://www.wordmuseum.com) enjoys interviewing authors. To be interviewed, e-mail [wordmuseum@wordmuseum.com](mailto:wordmuseum@wordmuseum.com). You can also send them announcements about upcoming releases.

## FOR BUSINESS AND PLEASURE

Terey also shares with us *Foreign Word* at [www.foreignword.com/](http://www.foreignword.com/). The site offers translations in 58 languages and 1001 glossaries links. Terey adds, "This site could be really fun. The 'proz' answer your question, then you get to pick the winner and award KudoZ points at a portion of this site. It's wonderful and hysterical all at the same time. I just had one of my book titles translated from the Dutch..."

A feel good site is *GreaterGood.com* at [www.greatergood.com](http://www.greatergood.com). When you register at the site, a portion of your

purchases at online stores will go to a charity of your choice. L L Bean, Office Max, and REI are just a few of the sponsors. Check it out for guilt free shopping.

The results of the *Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest*, which is hosted by San Jose State University, are posted at [www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/2000PR.htm](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/english/2000PR.htm).

## Controlling Your Listserve Preferences at a Glance

Subscribe	<a href="mailto:NINCLINK-subscribe@egroups.com">NINCLINK-subscribe@egroups.com</a>
Unsubscribe	<a href="mailto:NINCLINK-unsubscribe@egroups.com">NINCLINK-unsubscribe@egroups.com</a>
No-Mail	<a href="mailto:NINCLINK-nomail@egroups.com">NINCLINK-nomail@egroups.com</a>

## NOVELISTS' INC. LISTSERVE

If you want to know more about the Ninclink, you can go to [www.egroups.com/group/NINCLINK](http://www.egroups.com/group/NINCLINK). At the site, you can subscribe and set your preferences (digest, individual posts, etc.).

If you have questions, you can e-mail one of the three moderators—

- Brenda Hiatt-Barber ([BrendaHB@aol.com](mailto:BrendaHB@aol.com))
- Patricia de la Fuente ([Patricia@hilene.net](mailto:Patricia@hilene.net))
- Julie Kistler ([julie@juliekistler.com](mailto:julie@juliekistler.com)).

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](mailto:LorraineHe@aol.com))

## MEMBER NEWS.....

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ Continued from page 12

### Riding Right Along

Chris Strong has received word from her editor, Gail Fortune, that her novel, *The Night the Stars Fell* by Christina Kingston, will be the Jove Romance Lead for April 2001. She also writes as Christine Cordaire.

### Early Show Appearance

Julie Beard recently appeared on CBS-TV's "The Early Show." She had been scheduled to appear the first day of the RWA conference via satellite in Washington, D.C., but the Concorde plane crashed and she got bumped. Two weeks later, her publisher, Macmillan, flew her out to New York and CBS put her up in a hotel.

"We talked about my new how-to book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting Your Romance Published*," Beard said. "The producer and I planned for an hour on the phone, so there were no nasty questions or surprises. It went very well. I talked about how to get a romance published and generally praised the romance industry overall."

Please send news for this column to Kathy Chwedyk at [KChwed@aol.com](mailto:KChwed@aol.com) or 1215 Fairmont Court, Algonquin, IL 60102.

*Denise Dietz*

author of *Beat Up a Cookie*, *Footprints, in the Butter*, and the recently completed *Wishing Star*

and

*Gordon K. Aalborg*

author of 20 HQ/M&B romances  
and the recently completed *Poetry in e-Motion*  
*who met on the Internet through Novelists, Inc.*

invite you to share in the celebration of their marriage

*Friday, the Twenty-Seventh of October*

*The Year Two Thousand*

*at Five-Fifteen o'clock*

*at the*

*Novelists, Inc. (NINCLINK) Authors' Conference*

*The Waterfront Centre Hotel*

*Vancouver, BC, Canada*



# THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

## "The Formula...."

One of my closest friends (Freudian slip: I only noticed in the final polish that I'd written "fiends") suggested we go to the park for a picnic one day while the weather was so good. She'd buy the beer, get the food, and bring the children. I'd bring a camera to take great shots of her tykes.

I should probably explain that my friends have a touching but misplaced faith in my abilities with a camera. They see my (admittedly) fabulous photos of places like Tanzania and South Africa and Sicily, and they think, wow, Laura's a really good photographer. They also think I'm being modest, rather than merely honest, when I explain that such places are so incredibly, awe-inspiringly beautiful and naturally photogenic that a five-year-old child with an Instamatic would take extraordinary pictures of them. Every time. It really has nothing to do with me. It doesn't even have anything to do with my camera—which I bought for its durability rather than its artistry.

(In fact, the way you *clean* this camera, a Pentax Zoom 1000, is to dunk it into a river or lake and wipe it off. And, frankly, I love watching people's faces when I do that.)

In any event, charming as my friend Karen's little boys are, it would take a much better photographer than me to make a toddler eating turkey in Cincinnati look anywhere near as good as a bull elephant looks in the glorious scenery of the Ngorongoro Crater. However, the toddler's mother would probably always disagree with that assessment, and Karen seems very pleased with the photos I took that day.

But I digress.

Like many of my "civilian" friends (i.e. people outside our industry), Karen is an avid reader, so we soon got around to talking about books. I figure that Karen is part of a pretty large demographic group of book buyers: a busy career woman in her thirties with small children. Like many such people, her life is too hectic for book-browsing and experimenting with the unknown midlist, so she picks a lot of her reading from bestseller lists. And also like a lot of people in her demographic group, she has read a number of the books recommended by talk-show diva Oprah Winfrey. So, in fact, have many of my other civilian friends. Come to think of it, I'm rare among my non-writing friends in that I *haven't* read any of Oprah's picks.

Oh, wait. I'm lying. I did read *Deep End of the Ocean*—after a romance writer handed me her copy and said, "You've got to read it, because you'll be mystified by the acclaim." I read it, and she was right. It was well-crafted prose about unlikable people in a dreadful situation, with a hard-to-accept story climax that no editor of mine would have ever let

*me* get away with, and a petering-out ending. Sorry, I very rarely pick on another writer's work in public, but I've made an exception in this case. This author out-earns me by a hundred-to-one, so she can probably bear my comments (if someone ever repeats them to her) without becoming suicidal.

Actually, what I remember about that book (which I read in paperback) far more than the *story* was the inside-advertising pages, which chilled me and turned my stomach: novels about missing or dead children. Does this mean that that book's popularity sparked a discernible subgenre of child-tragedy novels? Every time I wonder if there are depths to which even the publishing industry will not sink, I think of those ads in the back of that book and realize that there's no bottom in sight.

Anyhow, apart from that one book which was urged upon me by another writer, I haven't read any of Oprah's picks. By and large, I think Oprah is great for publishing—a hugely influential TV personality getting people to run out and buy novels? Way to go! But, excuse me, why would *I* read what she recommends, for goodness sake? Who the hell is she, after all? Some total stranger whose TV show, on the few occasions I've seen it, strikes me as being (a) always excruciatingly tedious, and (b) often in questionable taste. Even when she has an interesting or appealing guest on there, I've been bored and annoyed. (And believe me, it's pretty hard to make *me* bored and annoyed when Brad Pitt is on my TV screen; but Oprah managed it.) Yeah, yeah, I know, she's one of the most influential women in all of television and I'm in the minority. Oh, well. I'm just not a fan. However, I certainly bear Oprah no malice, and I probably wouldn't have spared her a thought in years if she hadn't affected our industry to such an extent.

Anyhow, there's simply no way I'd base any of my reading selections on the recommendations of a total stranger whose primary profession (her talk show) strikes me as slightly less stimulating and savory than a day spent listening to gossip at a Laundromat.

So it's just one of those things I don't do—part of a list, which gets longer every day: Eating peas. Drinking German wine. Watching Steven Seagal movies. Paying checking account fees. Subscribing to *Playboy*, HBO, or *Sports Illustrated*. Listening to Barbra Streisand records. Peppering my prose with Latin phrases. Collecting stamps. Gargling. Watching Oprah's show. Reading Oprah's recommended books. And so on.

These are all perfectly ordinary things that many normal people do. But I don't, and you can't make me; not unless





## BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ Continued from page 12

death is the only alternative. I don't judge or censure; I just don't do these things.

I don't purposely *avoid* books recommended by Oprah. I'm just mystified by why anyone in the world cares what she reads. (Ah, the power of fame, the passion of fans.) I would be more likely to try a recipe recommended by a bus driver than a novel recommended by any daytime talk show host I've ever seen on TV, including Ms. Winfrey. (Good grief, if I had a neighbor as aggressively sanctimonious, shallow, and intrusive as these talk show hosts, I'd be forced to drown her in the Ohio River for the good of my community.)

I also figure that the frequently depressing nature of Oprah's recommendations makes perfect sense, given her profession. What did I say before? *Unlikable people in dreadful situations*. I think this pretty well covers much of the territory upon which Oprah initially built her tremendous fame, so I'd be surprised if her fictional tastes didn't (at least publicly) reflect this sensibility.

So, there my friend Karen and I sit, talking about books, and she tells me she got fed up with Oprah's recommendations, doesn't bother with them anymore, because—wait for it!—she doesn't like the Oprah “formula.” Her word, not mine.

Well, since I started my career by writing romance novels and endured, for years, the common accusations that romance novels were “unworthy” because they were formulaic, my ears really perked up when an intelligent book buyer used the word “formula” to describe the “worthy” novels Oprah favors—and which, by virtue of Oprah's favor, become wildly successful. So I asked what the formula was.

As described to me, the formula goes something like this: There's a fairly ordinary woman, and her life is probably not in great shape to begin with. She encounters some sort of challenge, and she almost rises to meet it...but then she doesn't. The character sort of peters out and the book sort of fizzles out without anything that really seems like a resolution or a point. It's both dreary and unsatisfying.

This doesn't refer to one book. According to my friend Karen, this generally describes every Oprah pick that she has read, though there may have been minor variations on this pattern. (Come to think of it, this essentially describes the sole Oprah book which I read.)

“My god!” I cried. “That's exactly what I can't stand about so much literary fiction and why I read so little of it! You've just summed it up!” (With a few variations.)

So, okay, yeah, I'm picking on Oprah, I'm picking on the books she likes, and I'm even picking on litfic. (I get to do that because I'm the Curmudgeon and it's my job. *Someone* has to do it, and I got chosen.) Actually, the truth is, I do like some litfic; but my litfic tastes lean towards magic realism, compassionate optimism, and writers who can master the basic beginning-middle-end format of storytelling. Give me a story about someone who doesn't rise to meet a challenge and a storyline which peters out without resolution, and I'll use it as a doorstop. (Indeed, the last such book I read affected me like a form of psychological warfare.)

Having now had my fill of being snide about Oprah, I'll admit that what tickled me most about this conversation with Karen was that an ordinary reader, a typical consumer—someone who wasn't even

Public Library at 34th Street and 5th Avenue), or check the website at [www.factiva.com](http://www.factiva.com).

### **Bell & Howell/Proquest—**

You may be able to search Bell & Howell/Proquest online for free through your public library with a library card. (In New York City, go to [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); click on “Electronic resources,” then click on “ProQuest.”) Proquest doesn't appear to have a means to check their list of works without a subscription.

**Dialog—**You can see if articles are available through Dialog at [www.dialog.com](http://www.dialog.com). Seeing the list of articles is free, but you have to pay to download them.

**Westlaw—**Go to their website ([www.westlaw.com](http://www.westlaw.com)) for access.

Keep copies of all your articles you find available, or otherwise maintain a record of what you discover. You can e-mail the Guild at [staff@authorsguild.org](mailto:staff@authorsguild.org) if you need further information.

### **e-Freebie**

Bestselling author and attorney for victims of child abuse Andrew Vachss has struck a deal with Amazon.com to serialize his first unpublished novel on the Web bookselling site for free. The first chapters appeared on Friday, August 11. The novel, *Bomb Built in Hell*, was written in 1973 and rejected by publishers at the time for being too violent. No print edition is in the works.

### **Harlequin \$\$\$**

Harlequin reports that operating profits were up 33% in the second quarter of the year to \$26.9 million from \$20.2 million reported in 1999. Both ▶ ▶ ▶



## BREAKING NEWS

▶▶▶ the North American and Overseas markets showed profit improvement in the quarter.

North American operating profits grew by \$6.8 million as both the retail and direct-marketing businesses reported higher results. Retail earnings benefited from higher cover prices and the publication of two *New York Times* bestsellers. In 1999 the bestsellers' distribution occurred in the first quarter. Direct marketing profits increased mainly because of the January 2000 price increase. Overseas profits were up \$0.8 million in the quarter due to the favorable pick-up in earnings for the Japanese market.

In 1999, Harlequin's earnings amounted to \$90 million which represented a decline of 4% on 1998, the first fall for 7 years. The decline was in large part due to lower profits in Japan. Harlequin maintains its worldwide leadership in series romance publishing with unit sales of 158 million books in 26 languages in 100 countries.

### Dumpster Diving for Education

A bunch of students at the University of California-Berkeley have been Dumpster diving lately to save books from recycling. So far three Dumpsters worth of books have been hauled to a safe place.

Follett College Bookstores, the dumper, holds the franchise for the campus bookstore. The books were mostly textbooks, but general books were dumped too. Most of the books were in good condition. Follett was mum about the Dumpsters until a clerk tried to reassure a reporter for the Berkeley paper, the *East Bay Express*, that the trashed items were "foreign books" or "old editions" that ▶▶▶



## THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

▶▶▶

aware (as many readers are not) that the publishing world divides novels into popular fiction and literary fiction—summed up, all on her own and with no nudging or coaching from me, a formula for a sizeable portion of the literary fiction market. You know: the *worthy* fiction, the *important* writers, the segment of our industry who sneer at genre fiction for being (wait for it!) *formulaic*.

This is so cool! (I should have bought the beer!)

I vote that we codify this popular formula of litfic and send it out, in the form of publishers' guidelines, to various writers' organizations, MFA programs, and writing-oriented publications. Sure, the shit will eventually hit the fan—but won't it be *worth* it? Bear with me here:

"The heroine shall be a largely unappealing person with annoying character defects and few, if any, sympathetic qualities. She will meet a challenge during the course of the novel, but it needn't necessarily be one that any average teenager couldn't overcome with a little common sense and some strength of character.

"However, whether the challenge is enormous or trivial, the heroine will not triumph over it, learn from her victory, and go on to lead a rewarding life. This is crucial. Failure to comply will ensure rejection from our imprint. The heroine will, instead, lose focus and direction—but in a sufficiently erudite way, preferably with some symbols and allusions, so that readers are aware that this is worthy fiction that they can be proud to be seen reading on the subway. Ultimately, the story should diffuse into a series of puzzling scenes, which seem to bear no relation to the initial conflict or goal of the novel."

Okay, sure, it's a bit rough, needs some work—but, hey, I doubt Harlequin got a perfect draft of their guidelines on their very first attempt, either.

Anyhow, if I sound a bit cranky (imagine that), perhaps it's because in recent weeks I have (yet again) been approached by several total strangers who've never sold (or even written) a word of fiction, but figure they'll try their hand at writing romance novels, thus making pots of money and getting some professional experience before attempting to achieve fame and validity with a "real" novel.

Gee, color me so impressed with this brilliant career plan. Why did Nora Roberts and Mary Jo Putney never think of that?

Now, however, I, too, have a plan—and I invite all my NINC colleagues to advance it with me. From now on, we'll explain to such aspirants that writing a literary novel, even one worthy enough to be admired by Oprah, is just as easy as grinding out a romance novel (or churning out an sf/f novel, or whipping off a mystery novel), so they shouldn't waste their time with popular fiction, but should instead hasten to learn and master the literary formula. We'll even provide the guidelines (see above). Let's make these people the bane of literary writers for a change!

All in all, I've never really cared whether or not the old saw is true, i.e. that there are no new stories. I've always figured that's one of those "angels on the head of a pin" discussions which makes my head hurt for no fruitful reason—and, anyhow, I'm too busy writing to care. I have always, however, deeply resented the implication that it's only in popular fiction that no new stories exist, whereas literary fiction is full of new and fresh ideas that no one but those ingenious literary writers has ever before thought up.

So it is a pleasure—nay, a sacred duty!—to hereby commit to educating readers, aspiring writers, and talk show hosts about this popular, tried-and-true



## BREAKING NEWS

▶▶▶ “had no wholesale value.” The students have helped themselves to some keepers and plan to distribute the rest to prison literacy projects and the Oakland Public Library.

formula for literary fiction. A truly enterprising person might charge for such valuable information, but I’m generous to a fault, and so I’m determined to give it away. As often as possible. Starting with the very next time I bump into someone who assumes that literary fiction is superior to popular fiction, and that I—a career writer of popular fiction—must undoubtedly agree with this assessment.

Meanwhile, although I would certainly welcome the sales figures of any author who has become a darling of the Oprah set, I can’t actually say that finding my work admired by Oprah would fill me with creative confidence. If nothing else, it is quite clear to me that the experience that Oprah seeks in a novel is not at all the experience which I, as a writer, seek to impart to the reader. Ergo, no, I will never try to get Oprah’s attention for my books, despite how staggering the financial advantages of her attention have proven to be for some authors. Never, that is, unless Oprah starts admiring well-written popular fiction novels wherein flawed-but-appealing protagonists ultimately evince the strength, courage, and resolve needed to triumph over enormous challenges, whatever the cost, and then go on to reap rewarding destinies as a result of their ability to find the heroic within themselves—just as popular fiction postulates, in its way, that every single one of us can do in our own lives.

*Laura Resnick’s latest release is the paperback edition of In Legend Born, a fantasy novel in which everyone gets to meet challenges that would send many litfic characters running for cover and whining about their needs. Her recent romance reissues, written under the pseudonym Laura Leone, include Sleight of Hand, The Bandit King, The Black Sheep, and Ulterior Motives. You can find her on the Web at: [www.sff.net/people/laresnick](http://www.sff.net/people/laresnick).*

### eHarlequin

The National Post online reports that eHarlequin is moving from woman.com to a Toronto based company. The Post says that over the next few months, Organic Inc., an international Internet professional services firm, will move the site’s information and production systems from San Francisco to Toronto, where the site will be hosted by Onyx Software Corp. Analysts suggest that the months before Christmas probably aren’t the best time to be moving a retail site. To learn more, go to the National Post website and search eHarlequin: <http://www.nationalpost.com/financialpost/>

### Revolving Doors

Kathryn Court is the new president of Penguin and publisher of Plume imprints at Viking Penguin. She previously held the position of senior v-p and publisher of Penguin.

Robert Gottlieb has left the William Morris Agency to form his own company, Trident Media Group. A number of William Morris agents and clients have defected to Gottlieb’s group.

Linda Marrow, VP and editorial director of women’s fiction at Pocket Books, is going to Ballantine as VP and editorial director.

### How to Get Money From Used Booksellers, Maybe

The Northern California Independent Booksellers Association has helped push a new bill to the desk of California Governor Gray Davis requiring online retailers with bricks-and-mortar stores in the state to collect sales tax. The bill was passed by the California Assembly on August 31 and awaits the gov’s signature or veto.

In January the NCIBA hired Lenny Goldberg, a full time lobbyist, to find legislators who would support its cause. Soon San Francisco Assemblywoman Carole Migden sponsored a version of the bill, partially written by attorney Bill Petrocelli, co-owner of a bookstore in Corte Madera. The California Retail Association is lobbying in support of the bill.

Collecting sales tax is not a new concept,” said Hut Landon, executive director the NCIBA.

I’m captivated by what I see as a blueprint here. We hire a lobbyist. We find a sympathetic legislator. One of us helps write a bill that provides that we collect royalties from used book sales. The bill gets passed. We collect royalties from used booksellers. “Collecting royalties is not a new concept,” our NINC president will say.

You doubt? But wait... With all the talent and connections we have, this should be do-able with enough dedication and initiative. Only thing is, we’d better get started right away. It might take twenty years or so.

*Pamela Browning is the author of books for Harlequin, Silhouette, Mills & Boon, and Berkley. She is not planning on retiring any time soon, but she would like to be raking in royalties from used bookstores when she does.*

# .....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	Aug 3	Aug 10	Aug 17	Aug 24	Aug 31
Victoria Alexander	<i>The Husband List</i> , Avon		112n	59	70	93
Connie Brockway	<i>The Ravishing One</i> , Dell	149				
Sandra Brown	<i>The Alibi</i> , Warner	242	5	5	6	11
Catherine Coulter	<i>Riptide</i> , Putnam	38	63	81	96	118
Catherine Coulter	<i>The Edge</i> , Jove			17n	17	28
Claire Delacroix	<i>The Countess</i> , Dell			120n	93	
Janet Evanovich	<i>High Five</i> , St. Martin's	68	137			
Janet Evanovich	<i>Hot Six</i> , St. Martin's	75	118			
Janet Evanovich	<i>One for the Money</i> , Harper	99	126	134	98	95
Janet Evanovich	<i>Three to Get Deadly</i> , St. Martin's	119				
Janet Evanovich	<i>Two for the Dough</i> , Pocket	141	134		185	139
Patricia Gaffney	<i>The Saving Graces</i> , Harper/Torch	17	22	21	19	21
Julie Garwood	<i>Heartbreaker</i> , Pocket	72	115			
Linda Howard	<i>A Game of Chance</i> , Silhouette	21n	40	72	107	116
Linda Howard	<i>Mr. Perfect</i> , Pocket	32	54	65	68	73
Iris Johansen	<i>The Killing Game</i> , Bantam	98				
Stephanie Laurens	<i>A Secret Love</i> , Avon	87	140			
Elizabeth Lowell	<i>Outlaw</i> , Mira	134n				
Debbie Macomber	<i>Dakota Home</i> , Mira	22n	27	49	57	62
Debbie Macomber	<i>The Last Two Bachelors</i> , Harlequin	96				
Linda Lael Miller	<i>Megan: The Women of Primrose Creek</i> , Sonnet	231	58	55	84	99
Mary Jo Putney	<i>Wild Child</i> , Ballantine	51	89			
Nora Roberts	<i>Tears of the Moon</i> , Jove	10	20	23	28	38
Nora Roberts	<i>Irish Hearts</i> , Silhouette	28	55	85	91	94
Nora Roberts	<i>River's End</i> , Jove	89	116			
Nora Roberts	<i>Irish Rebel</i> , Silhouette	131				
Nora Roberts	<i>Jewels of the Sun</i> , Jove	147	129	129		205
Sherryl Woods	<i>Angel Mine</i> , Mira	93n	111			

\* et al: indicates that the book was written with other authors who are not members of NINC

CORRECTION: Karen Harper, *Down to the Bone*, Mira, #146 on the list for July 6th

### Novelists' Ink

Novelists, Inc.

*An organization for writers of popular fiction*

P.O. Box 1166

Mission KS 66222-0166

Publishing Services by Huseby Agency, Ltd

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
FARGO ND  
PERMIT #281