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

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BOOKSENSE (Or a reasonable facsimile)

BY VELLA MUNN

Please, please tell me you know what www.Booksense.com is? What's that blank look in the back row, the shrug from the aisle seat? All right already, here's the scoop in 25 words or less—BookSense, affiliated with the American Booksellers' Association, is the independent booksellers' response to chain and/or online bookstores—and a united effort to remain in business.

Of course it's a lot more complex than that and, in my opinion, worthy of a serious look by Ninc members—particularly those who now link their websites with Amazon, B&N, etc.

I initially became intrigued by the energy surrounding BookSense when I attended a regional booksellers' trade show and sat in on a workshop

designed to bring ABA bookstore owners up-to-date. My fellow participants were much more knowledgeable about the program, concept, project, whatever, than I was, but even as I struggled to comprehend some of the terms being bandied about, I knew something important was taking place.

In short, the owners of the mama/papa bookstores that were

once all writers, readers, and publishers had again had reason to believe they might survive after all. A way to hold their own against the "megs" was being developed, and they were, or could, become part of it.

Background time

According to ABA figures, nearly half of the "indies" in business in 1994 no longer are. While the

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NEVER AGAIN, NEW YORK

Authorship for no fun and no profit

BY FRED MOODY

Whenever an author tries some new experiment in electronic publication and distribution to readers, publishers weigh in complacently with the news that their services are indispensable. Writers, they say, need the clout publishers can bring; they need book design, money, and marketing. Electronic self-publishing and distribution will never happen!

They're wrong. Having spent seven years, over the course of two book projects, alternately enduring the support of publishing conglomer-

ates and hearing fellow authors' tales of woe, I am here to tell you that publishers are in for a shock. It is true that this form of publishing and distribution has some serious problems to solve before it can be a viable business. But authors have stored up so much enraged aggrievance that that alone could propel electronic publishing and distribution into being, with enough energy left over to fill California's electricity needs forever.

Entering publishing hell

Here, then, is the evidence, in the form of my

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Novelists, Inc.

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Advisory Council

Rebecca Brandewyne†	Georgia Bockoven
Janice Young Brooks†	Evan Maxwell
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Linda Barlow	Julie Kistler
† Founder	Carla Neggers

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

2001 Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Barbara Keiler
32 Atkinson Lane
Sudbury, MA 01776-1939
Ph: (978) 443-0770
Fax: (978) 443-0775
b.keiler@juno.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Pat Rice
4100 Kingswood Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
Ph: (704) 341-7478
Fax: (704) 341-6195
Price100@aol.com

SECRETARY: Kathy Chwedyk
1215 Fairmont Court
Algonquin, IL 60102-1946
Ph: (847) 658-0732
KChwed@aol.com

TREASURER: Linda Kay West
204 Chaucer Lane
Mandeville, LA 70448
Ph: (985) 674-9298
Fax: (985) 674-0109
l.k.west@worldnet.att.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Pamela Browning
7025 Quail Hill Road
Charlotte, NC 28210
Ph: (704) 643-6930
Fax: Same as above, phone first
write2pam@aol.com

ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE:
Georgia Bockoven
3324 Zircon Dr.
Rocklin, CA 95677-4725
Ph: (916) 624-7333
Fax: (916) 630-1145
gbockoven@jps.net

CENTRAL COORDINATOR: David L. Brooks
Novelists, Inc.
P.O. Box 1166
Mission, KS 66222-0166
Fax: (913) 262-2632
novelists@earthlink.net

Website: <http://www.ninc.com>

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THE PRESIDENT'S VOICE.....

Ninc is your organization.

The last time I stated that in my column, I was encouraging you to send me your suggestions for how to make Ninc stronger, more effective, and more responsive to the needs of its members. This time I'm viewing it in another context: Ninc remains strong, effective, and responsive thanks to the contributions of many of its members.

You may not realize how much Ninc work is performed by volunteers who receive little beyond the gratitude of the board and the knowledge that they've contributed something worthwhile to an organization they care about. I hesitate to name names, because I'm desperately afraid I'll omit someone. But I'd like to thank the members through whose efforts Ninc continues to roll along:

Julie Kistler stepped in at the last minute to chair this year's Nominating Committee. Julie took on the job even though she was already a co-chair (with Victoria Thompson) of the Conference Siting Committee and a moderator on the Ninlink. I was able to relieve her of her Ninlink responsibility by wooing Lorraine Heath (who also writes *NINK's* Online column) to assist Brenda Hiatt Barber and Patricia de la Fuente as link moderators. Brenda is also the chair of the Internet Committee, collaborating with our webmaster to keep our website up-to-date and useful.

Kathy Lynn Emerson is in charge of the Membership Committee, working with President-Elect Pat Rice on our new membership drive and helping to process member applications. They also designed our new brochure with input from Sandy Huseby, who handles our printing jobs. Founding Mother Janice Young Brooks maintains and updates our roster and monitors countless other administrative details. Diane Chamberlain is in charge of membership retention, contacting members with reminders to send in their dues when they've neglected to do so.

Kay Hooper is the chair of the Advocacy Committee. Ronn Kaiser is researching the legal aspects of non-profit advocacy so that Ninc will know how far we can go in advocating for our authors without jeopardizing our non-profit status. Judy Gill is overseeing a project to compile articles from the *NINK* archives into a book. Conference coordinator Terey daly Ramin has a staff of volunteers laboring to make this year's conference the best yet. I don't know who all her assistants are, but I do know they're working hard.

Not every initiative pans out. Not every seed we plant winds up producing fruit. Some seeds spread runners beneath the surface, invisible to us but with the potential to sprout in the future. Some fail to take root—but not for lack of effort by these wonderful volunteers.

In September, we will be voting on a new slate of officers and a new Nominating Committee. Volunteers all, willing to sacrifice precious writing time to the Ninc family, these people embody the noble concept articulated by John F. Kennedy: they don't sit around asking what Ninc is doing for them, but instead roll up their sleeves and ask what they can do for Ninc.

They—and every other volunteer whose name I might have inadvertently left out, and all those who declined to volunteer this year only because they've volunteered so many times in the past—deserve our gratitude.

Also deserving of Ninc's gratitude is the family of mystery writer and Ninc member Elizabeth Daniels Squire, who passed away in February. The Squires family has made a donation to the Ninc Benevolent Fund in Elizabeth's honor. Their generosity is deeply appreciated.

— **Barbara Keiler**

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BOOKSENSE

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *Continued from page 1*

owners of many of the remaining stores were consumed with keeping their heads above water, the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association broached the idea of having everyone (or as many as they could convince) band together. The Book Sense concept was conceived by Addison, a San Francisco-based branding and communications company that surveyed NCIBA members and collected material. As a result, they identified five key attributes about indies: knowledge, commitment to community, passion, personality, and character.

Formed in 1999, the nonprofit, wholly owned subsidiary which is the e-commerce arm of ABA is designed to raise consumer awareness about the value of the independent bookseller.

Enter Len Vlahos. Although BookSense's director has been with the ABA for going on nine years, before that he toured with his rock band Woofing Cookies and worked for an Internet marketing company as well as several bookstores. His motto is, "the perfect is the enemy of the good," not that anyone knows what that means.

Along with his other hats, Len has been the contact man with his bookstore clients and the media, which means he took the heat when BookSense's official launch date was delayed and delayed again. Much of the delay was due to the challenge of providing retailers with the freedom to design individualized sites while ensuring a uniform and efficient shopping experience throughout the system; in other words, a personalized front end backed by a centralized database, search function, etc.

In Len's words, BookSense isn't about head-to-head competition with the Amazons of the world but a tool to help independents provide 'round-the-clock service to existing customers. Of course, pulling in new customers wouldn't hurt either.

Book Sense has determined that the most loyal book buyers are with book clubs, but the second-most loyal buyers purchase from independent stores. That said, Len admits that, "more than 60 percent of those people are still buying books elsewhere—from chain stores or online." Book Sense intends to change that.

At last count, over 200 ABA members have live BookSense-affiliated websites and, according to Len, that number is growing all the time. In addition, over 1,200 stores participate in the Book Sense marketing program, a collective voice.

The basic design

So what happens when someone goes online and types

in www.Booksense.com, a.k.a. "the hub site"? Of course there's a home page, but you already guessed that, right?

Let's say you're a potential customer looking to buy a book. Off the bat, you're asked to type in your zip code, which immediately directs you to the personalized site for the closest BookSense-affiliated independent store. That can be the next best thing to going into your neighborhood shop and having good reads recommended by knowledgeable staff. Depending on the personality, inclination, and time of a given owner, customers can learn about in-store events, reading-group information, local author information, gossip, etc. Also, shopper questions or problems are handled by the target store's staff, not some personally uninvolved "customer service specialist."

But—and here's an exciting part—your shopping isn't limited to that store's inventory. Participating Book Sense stores have a shared database of over one million titles, which certainly expands the search, but it's even better than that. Because all BookSense orders are directed to Baker & Taylor, the customer is actually shopping from B&T's vast inventory, thus bringing the total database to over 2.4 million titles.

Purchases can be either picked up at the neighborhood store or delivered via the mail and packaged as if it came from the store where you shopped. Naturally, the handy-dandy shopping cart is ready and waiting to take your credit card information, and such services as wrapping, personalized cards, and gift certificates are offered.

Extensive free-to-participants beta testing took place before the launch, and the deal offered to stores that sign on ain't shabby, certainly much less than owners would have had to pay if they'd gone it alone. For a \$350 set-up fee plus \$100 per month and a 4.5 percent commission on wholesaler-fulfilled orders, there's support such as the above mentioned shopping cart, web page templates, color schemes, fill-in-the-blanks option pages, news stories, event or calendar themes, the Book Sense 76 picks, and bestseller and national award-winners lists. In the works is a way to connect an already existent store website with BookSense.com. S2N Media is the design team, and their credits include completely redesigning the National Science Foundation website.

BookSense (one word) is the online marketing program of Book Sense (two words), the independent booksellers' collective.

Yes, we found it confusing, too.

— NINK

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BREAKING NEWS

**COMPILED BY
PAMELA BROWNING**

Fight! Fight! For copyright

Patricia Schroeder, president of the American Association of Publishers and formerly of the U.S. Congress, recently told Romance Writers of America president Harold Lowry that members of Congress are under tremendous pressure to loosen copyright laws. She mentioned the recent Napster court case, which we've been following in this column.

Lowry asked Schroeder why American publishers aren't lobbying Congress for better laws. Schroeder replied that she is reluctant to open the copyright issue because there's a possibility that we could actually lose ground, "we" in this case meaning publishers AND authors. (Looks like we're on the same side on this one, folks.)

Right now, even as you read this, Napster fans and others who believe that copyrighted material should be free for the downloading are flooding the offices of Senators Orrin Hatch and Patrick Leahy, co-chairs of the Senate judiciary committee, with thousands of e-mails demanding the loosening of copyright laws.

Making sure our work is protected by adequate copyright laws is crucial. How to fight back? Do what we do best—write!—to your senator or congressman.

You can contact Senators Hatch and Leahy at the addresses below:

Senator Orrin Hatch
104 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
senator_hatch@hatch.senate.gov

Senator Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
senator_leahy@leahy.senate.gov



ULTIMATE GUIDE To BOOKSENSE



Bells and whistles

BookSense took some heat for a "soft" launch without a great deal of fanfare, but apparently that was part of the plan. After the birthing pains endured because of the program's "logistical complexity" and a commitment to incorporate suggestions from the beta stores, what now exists is a cross between a mega-store and a co-operative with a single, high-profile Internet presence acting as an umbrella for hundreds of individual bookstores and their home pages.

What might make a writer wonder whether or how to climb onboard are: "honest and insightful reviews on books of all genres," news of various authors, and announcements about the latest new releases. Readers can participate by entering the monthly Reader's Review contest, and the ABA recently announced that the Book Sense awards have been expanded from two categories to four, now covering fiction, adult nonfiction, children's literature, and children's illustrated books.

In addition, there are links to VERY INTERESTING PEOPLE (wish I knew how those writer interviews are selected), DAILY PICKS (five titles per week), STAFF PICKS, and EXPERT'S CORNER (reflecting a particular bookseller's expertise) in the READ UP! section. You can sign up for a monthly newsletter at <http://www.BookSense.com/sweepstakes/>

When I contacted Len by e-mail, he sent me the following: "The main thrust of our marketing effort is really an effort done on behalf of the whole Book Sense brand. BookSense.com is just one facet of the overall branding campaign, which also includes a Weekly Bestseller List (based on sales

from more than 350 stores across America) published in over 30 media outlets, (*PW Daily* is one and includes exclusive On The Rise books) a book recommendation list called the Book Sense 76 (titles personally recommended by booksellers), and a national gift-certificate program through which you can purchase a gift certificate at any Book Sense store and redeem it at any other Book Sense store.

The national branding effort has included ads in *New Yorker*, *Smithsonian*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and a heavy flight of ads on National Public Radio. In addition, we've done some direct-to-consumer e-mail marketing on behalf of BookSense.com. Having said all that, we feel the true strength of our promotional efforts does happen at the store level."

This isn't Amazon

What doesn't BookSense offer? To put it in broad terms, it isn't as "content rich" as Amazon. There are no blue-light specials offering used books, no toys, music, auctions, sales rankings, and fewer publisher ads, no "personalized" suggestions offered repeat customers. However, searches can be made by author, title, or subject.

After having read several articles comparing BookSense with other online bookstores, I felt compelled to ask Len why reader reviews aren't proliferating the way they have at Amazon. His response: "We're going to greatly expand the number of reviews we offer on many of our titles. We will not, however, offer the option to review a book. We feel that customer reviews, while interesting, lack credibility. We want our reviews to have the full weight and meaningfulness one would expect of a review en-

dorsed by an independent bookseller." I'll buy that, since BookSense is about and supported by the indies.

There's been criticism that book prices don't match the discounts sometimes offered at Amazon, but shipping costs are nearly identical. Perhaps customers will discount the difference because they're committed to supporting their community's business. As Linda Stivala, owner of Gansovoort House Books in Little Falls, New York said, "Bookstores are the identity of the community. We feature local titles, promote local authors, and contribute to the towns we live in. If you lose that, you lose a lot. If being online helps stores like mine increase business, then it's a very good thing."

Where do writers come in?

That question, I've discovered, occurred to the think-tankers behind Book Sense, which is why an affiliate program has been developed. As Len put it, "BookSense.com is VERY interested in encouraging authors to join the BookSense.com affiliate program. Through this program, authors can provide people visiting their websites the opportunity to purchase books using BookSense.com as the back-end fulfillment. Any purchase made by a customer originating at a participating author's website will be supporting Book Sense stores in the process, further strengthening the already important bonds between writers and independent bookstores." Len admitted they were still trying to determine the best way to get the word out to writers. (Hmm, perhaps I merit a kickback as a result of this article?)

The skinny on the affiliate program is at www.booksense.com/affiliate/. Bundled in with the legalese are a few important points.

1. BookSense.com must be the exclusive bookseller through an author's website.
2. Five day written notice of termination must be given.
3. Links with sites that discriminate or advocate illegal activities will not be allowed.

As for the money issue, referral fees will be paid on the following schedule: 5.5 percent of the first \$50,000 of net proceeds, six percent of the next \$450,000, and seven percent of all additional net proceeds.

Ready to sign up?

Sorry, I'm not going to answer that. I'm not even going to recommend or reveal what I've personally decided. That said, I do encourage and if it were possible would command Ninc members to check out www.BookSense.com and talk to the owners/managers of their closest Book Sense stores. The new kid on the block is doing some exciting things that strike at the heart of what it is to be a writer. **NINK**

Vella Munn began her writing life as a young child, illustrating comic books with the Lone Ranger's horse as the protagonist. Taking that "success" as her cue, she graduated to confessions, nonfiction articles, and has written more than 40 books. Cheyenne Summer is a June hardcover release from Forge, and Soul of the Sacred Earth is out in paperback.

Make Your Mark on NINK

NINK pays for articles (not letters to the editor). For more information or to propose an article, contact editor Pam Browning (see the masthead for contact listing).



BREAKING NEWS

Incredible shrinking Toronto Star

Torstar, the Toronto-based parent company of Harlequin/Silhouette and the *Toronto Star* newspaper as well as other media venues, revealed an abysmal financial picture early this year. But despite a first-quarter loss from continuing operations of \$2.7 million (compared with a profit of \$17.2 million a year earlier), David Galloway, Torstar's head honcho, claimed that he is in no hurry to merge or acquire.

Whereupon *The Globe and Mail*, one of the *Toronto Star's* competitors, reported that "some media experts" believe that Torstar, in fact, is for sale. The "experts" cited "rumours" that three or four of Torstar's five controlling families "are ready to take the money and run."

Torstar has recently slapped a Band-Aid on its wounds by dumping its loser children's division, and the company has said it might sell or spin off its highly successful Harlequin books subsidiary.

Eric Reguly, writing in *The Globe and Mail*, says, "Unloading Harlequin makes sense for two reasons: It doesn't fit with a company in the news business, and the 'walking-around money' delivered to Torstar's five families from that sale might whet their appetite for more, which the sale of the whole company would deliver."

Amazon customer disloyalty

Amazon.com's stock dropped four percent to just above \$16 a share in May after a Prudential analyst told clients that he had become "increasingly concerned" about the loyalty of amazon.com's customer base.





BREAKING NEWS



Mark Rowen, the analyst, wrote that "what management understandably leaves out of its press releases is that Amazon is losing customers almost as fast as it adds them." He repeated an earlier sell recommendation.

Amazon spokesperson Bill Curry said that a company survey showed that "the single biggest reason [customers] haven't come back...is that they haven't needed anything from us."

Publishing mambo

Avon Books changed their fax number to (212) 207-7759.

Harlequin Books-Canada reports changes to acquisition editors: Wanda Ottewell and Susan Pezzack have joined Harlequin as associate editors and will acquire for the Temptation, Duets, and Blaze lines. Althea Spiridon is editorial assistant of special projects. Karen Whynot has joined Harlequin Books as editorial assistant, special projects and Superromance.

At MIRA Books, Valerie Gray has signed on as editor.

Jenna Felice, of the TOR/Forge romance editorial staff, died unexpectedly of asthma-related illness. Queries and proposals for science and fantasy titles may be sent to Patrick Nielsen Hayden; queries and proposals for general fiction of all sorts may be sent to William Smith.

At Random House, SVP and Deputy Director of Sales David Naggar has been promoted to director of sales, and S.Y. Chi has been named president.

Annik LaFarge is returning as senior editor at Crown Publishing for nonfiction in business, personal finance, and current events.

How not to write a book

A district court judge in Atlanta recently issued a temporary restraining order preventing Houghton Mifflin from further publication ▶ ▶ ▶

NEVER AGAIN, NEW YORK



Continued from page 5

own story—a story as common, alas, as it is entertaining.

The troubles and warnings began the day I signed my first contract with my first publisher, Viking Penguin (now Penguin Putnam, more or less). My editor called to say she "was putting the first installment through" of my advance. I took a leave from my job, started working on my book (eventually entitled *I Sing the Body Electronic*), and waited... and waited...and waited for the check to arrive. Days passed. Weeks passed.

Calls to my editor went unanswered and unreturned. I called my agent, who comfortlessly assured me that this was business as usual. "If your life depends on a publisher paying you," he said with a gruesome laugh, "you will die."

I was soon to learn the amazing array of tricks all publishers employ to delay payment to authors. If payment is due upon acceptance of a portion of a manuscript, they can: a) delay acknowledging receipt of the manuscript; b) delay accepting the manuscript on one pretext or another; c) report that they are "putting payment through," then drop out of sight and sound; d) all of the above. My editors over the years always settled on option d).

When your lifestyle depends on a publisher's paying you, you find yourself slipping by degrees into an excruciating disconnection between image and reality. There is a widespread perception in the world outside publishing that authors are well-paid and highly respected in the publishing world. Your neighbors have a Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous view of the sort of life you lead, their image distorted by *People* magazine features on writers of the Stephen King/Anne Rice ilk.

So while you are trying to keep up appearances, telling your neighbors constantly that work on the book is going well, you also are constantly begging the family dentist and legions of other creditors for mercy while your kids are back in the house bleating, "Why isn't there any food in the refrigerator?" After dark, your trash collection having ceased over nonpayment of your bill, you are sneaking down your street on the night each week the neighborhood puts its trash out, stuffing a little bit of your garbage into each neighbor's trash can.

Ain't authorhood glamorous.

Bizarre becomes believable

It fell to my brother Pat, during the writing of *The Visionary Position*, my second New-York-published book, to strong-arm money out of my editor at Random House. Pat, who owned a bookstore at the time, wrote to Random House president Alberto Vitale explaining that he was writing a check to me for the amount he owed Random House because he heard the publisher was having trouble paying me. There must have been subsequent rumblings in the corporation, for my check from Random House arrived within days, along with a letter from my editor saying that she hoped this "cleared up any misunderstanding" I might be having about her. This would be the single joyful moment, aside from the time spent on actual writing, that I can remember from the New York phase of my life.

At first I thought it was just me. But during one particularly long cashless stretch, I went to my neighborhood American Marine Bank and explained my "situation." I thought I was telling a bizarre and unbelievable story to my banker, but she just smiled knowingly, explained

the kind of loan she could offer me, then said, "We do this quite often for authors, you know."

If it were just money shenanigans, I could have endured. But it seems that everything a publisher does is calculated to make authors feel like publishers are in the game not to sell books but to demoralize writers.

The day I finished my first manuscript was one of the happiest days in my life. I excitedly left voice mail with my editor alerting her that the book would be coming by Federal Express (at my expense, it bears noting) the next day, then shipped it off. Then I waited...and waited...and waited for acknowledgment of its receipt.

Ten days later, New York called. "This is Federal Express in Manhattan," the voice said. "We have to send your package back because the address on it is incorrect, and the recipient won't return our phone calls telling us where to deliver it." It turned out that my publisher had moved while I was working on my book, had never told me, and that my editor had returned none of the FedEx representative's daily calls.

Nine months and one editor later, my new editor sent me a copy of the galley proofs sent out to reviewers, distributors, and bookstores in advance of publication. "First printing: 50,000," the cover read. I called him and expressed astonished gratification at the size of the printing—tremendously large for first-time authors. He laughed. "Welcome to the world of publishing," he said, "all lies and mendacity! We always say we're printing two or three times as many copies as we're actually printing so that bookstores will get excited about the book."

Baffling bumbling

With publishers, if it's not malfeasance and mendacity, it's baffling incompetence. Manuscripts, written and stored on computers, have to be submitted on paper so they can be

rekeyed into computers. Authors are sent on tours that make no sense and sell no books. Between the extra hours they have to spend reproof-reading retyped books, and the infinite hours they waste on weird tour stops, writers are left with the indelible conviction that publishers consider their time worthless.

This was brought home with particular clarity to me during a book tour that found me sitting disconsolate and alone in the bookstore of a poverty-stricken black college where you probably could count the number of students who could afford computers on the fingers of one hand. Not the ideal audience for a book about Microsoft. Only one student approached the entire two hours I sat there. "Don't got no computer!" he said, outraged. "Don't got no CD-ROM! Why the hell do I need this book?"

For authors in the publishing world, a new demoralizing experience is always just around the corner. Within days of the first printing of *I Sing the Body Electronic*, the chain bookstores—Borders, Barnes & Noble—began reordering and reordering and reordering. The book was into its third printing less than a month after publication, causing tremendous excitement in my inexperienced heart.

Then came the returns—in such massive numbers that my publisher ended up selling fewer copies than had been printed on the first run. Chain stores routinely order in massive quantities because they want to avoid any risk of being caught by surprise without copies in stock, in the unlikely event that a book with no promotional or advertising support might catch on with readers. Publishers know this. But since they are even more willing to be degraded by chain stores than authors are by publishers, they happily fill stores' orders even though they know full well that the books will be returned unsold. If only they would tell authors.....

Okay, so my book bombed. But it had been a critical success, so I naively assumed that my ▶▶▶



BREAKING NEWS

▶▶▶ and distribution of a novel retelling *Gone With The Wind* from a slave's perspective.

Trustees for the estate of GWTW author Margaret Mitchell claimed that Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* infringes the Mitchell copyright. Houghton Mifflin countered that the work is a parody of GWTW and therefore within the realm of legal fair use.

Martin Garbus, attorney for the Mitchell Trust, told *Publisher's Weekly*, "The judge found unabated piracy, that this book is a sequel and has nothing to do with parody or satire."

"We care about copyright," said Wendy Strothman, executive VP and publisher of Houghton Mifflin. "The Mitchell Trust can't ban ridicule or criticism of their work."

Judge Charles A. Pannell ruled against Houghton Mifflin and Randall on virtually every legal issue, describing the work as "unabated piracy" because the Randall novel uses well-known and copyrightable characters from *Gone With The Wind* along with the "physical attributes, mannerisms and the distinct features that Ms. Mitchell used to describe them."

Bard too boring

Censorship happens, but usually not for this reason. The South African province of Gauteng has banned Shakespeare for being too boring.

How to sell lots of books, maybe

Sun Tzu's 2,500-year-old *The Art of War* jumped into the top 20 in Amazon sales rankings after being discussed on an episode of the TV program *The Sopranos*. But somehow a mention of Marcel Proust's seven-volume *The Remembrance of Things Past* in the show's season opener escaped the same result. ▶▶▶



BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ Vintage's three-volume paperback edition trails at a distant #4,641.

Possible reason? Check above item.

Keyword: Boring.

Amicus brief

Random House recently sued RosettaBooks, a new e-book publisher, claiming infringement of its book-publishing rights after Rosetta licensed e-book rights to classic novels from William Styron, Kurt Vonnegut, and Robert Parker, all of whom had entered standard book publishing contracts with a Random House imprint in the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s. Since e-technology didn't exist at that time, those contracts didn't mention electronic rights or e-books.

Random House argues that the traditional right to "print, publish, and sell the Work in book form," which appears in countless book contracts still in force, includes the right to exploit the Work in e-book form.

On April 13, the Authors Guild and the Association of Authors' Representatives combined forces to submit an amicus brief to the court, arguing that Random House's claim is wrong and harmful to authors and the reading public.

The brief says in part, "At stake is the fundamental interpretation of book contracts, documents which carefully and explicitly define the rights and formats that are being licensed to a publisher and clearly spell out the royalties to be paid for the exploitation of these rights."

You can read the entire brief at the Authors Guild website: www.authorsguild.org.

Pamela Browning is editor of NINK and has published short fiction and nonfiction as well as books for adults and teenagers. Please send items for Breaking News to her at write2pam@aol.com

NEVER AGAIN, NEW YORK

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *Continued from page 5*

publisher would attribute its commercial failure to its marketing department rather than to my abilities as an author. I proposed a second book to my editor, who rejected it in short order with a curt, "You could write the best book in the world on this subject, and no one would ever know it." I like to think, in light of subsequent events with a different publisher, that that is true. It also is the most comforting thing a New York editor ever said to me.

The series of events that followed with my second publisher were remarkably similar to what had happened to me first time around, only worse, more demoralizing, less explicable, and over a longer span of time. Suffice to say that by the time the book, entitled *The Visionary Position* and now available on your nearest remainder table, came out, I was so sick of it that I had doubts about recommending it to readers.

And even worse!

The last two straws were laid on my back late in 1999. I received e-mail from a man in China telling me how much he enjoyed reading the Chinese translation of *I Sing the Body Electronic*. Since I had no idea there was a Chinese translation, this was more surprising than gratifying. Thinking that it might be a pirated translation, I asked if he could send me a copy. He obliged. "Published by arrangement with Viking Penguin," it said on the copyright page. I subsequently dredged up news of a Polish translation on the Internet.

Note to self: To payment-avoidance options a) through d), add option e): Hide foreign-rights sales from authors.

After I finished *The Visionary Position*, my editor at Random

House, for reasons I still don't understand, asked me what I wanted to do next. I told him about wanting to write about cancer research from the perspectives of researchers, doctors, patients, and insurers. "That sounds like something we'd really be interested in," he said. "Write me a proposal." Two years ago, I did. And I'm still waiting... and waiting...and waiting for an answer.

Now that I have forsworn ever working with a New York publisher again, I have moved through grief and anger to some new place beyond bafflement. I could never understand why an industry would treat its most important workers—those who supply it with the goods it sells to make its money—so abominably. I used to attribute it to the kind of resentment business people in all arts industries feel toward "talent" or "content providers" or "creative people," as we are variously termed by publishers.

But I think now it is more that the publishing industry is run by astonishingly clueless people. Looked at in the context of their other business decisions, the treatment of authors isn't all that remarkable. When you have experienced the colossal financial and psychological waste of a book tour, or been through the endless gantlet of inexplicable business decisions publishers make every day, you begin to understand why they treat authors the way they do: They just don't know any better. **NINK**

Fred Moody is the author of books about Microsoft, virtual reality and the Seattle Seahawks. This article originally appeared in the Seattle Times and is reprinted with permission of the author.

Online.....by Lorraine Heath

Congratulations to Ninc's own Jaclyn Reding for having her website, <http://www.jaclynreding.com/links>, included in *Writer's Digest's* 101 best websites for writers. Way to go, Jac! Your site has been one of my favorites for a long time. The list was in the *Writer's Digest* May 2001 issue.

Agents

Julie Kistler has been working diligently on Ninc's Agent Listing, and the updated version is now ready for review at <http://www.ninc.com>. Once you access the site, you will need to provide your member login and password. If you don't have one, it's a simple process to register and receive one online.

This agent area is invaluable to anyone looking for an agent or anyone who is curious as to which agents represent which type of works. It is divided into five sections:

1. The Big Picture gives an overall description of what you'll find in the Agent Listing as well as general information compiled from Ninc members' responses to the agent questionnaire that was included on the Ninc renewal form.
2. The Ninc Agent's Guide provides a list of questions you should consider asking when searching for an agent.
3. The Association of Agents' Representatives explains AAR, discusses what an agent can do for you, and suggests how to find an agent.
4. The AAR Canon of Ethics.
5. The Ninc Agents Guide lists agents and their clients who are Ninc members. The e-mail addresses are provided for those members who are willing to discuss their agents privately.

Julie hopes "everyone will pop by to see who's got whom (I find it interesting just matching up names to see what kinds of books which agents are handling) and also help me fix any problems. If your name isn't listed under your agent and you want it to be, or if your name *is* listed and you don't want it to be, or (heaven forbid) your name is listed in the wrong place, I hope you'll let me know. I'll be happy to fix it. I'd also love the addresses of any of the agents listed without contact information beneath their name." Julie's e-mail address is: julie@juliekistler.com.

The Market

For a free daily or weekly e-mail update of your Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble ranking, go to <http://www.booksandwriters.com>. The search is done based on the ISBN for the book. The weekly update is e-mailed Sunday morning and reflects the book's ranking

from the previous week and the current week.

From Randy Russell: "What sells at independent bookstores? The BookSense Bestseller Lists are collected from 350 independent bookstores and published online. Go to <http://www.bookweb.org/booksense/bestsellers/> for the complete lists and the previous week's rankings and number of weeks on the list for each book."

Research

From Sherry-Anne Jacobs: In answer to someone's request for research on life during a particular time period, Sherry-Anne responded, "I get a lot of my information about everyday living from the small 32-page *Shire Albums*, a series of books on single topics from life in the past. I've just been using 'Victorian Undertakers' to do the funeral of an upper class character, but I used 'Firegrates and Kitchen Ranges' for the cottage kitchen in the same book. I own about 70 *Shire Albums* and keep buying the new ones. Their main website is <http://www.shirebooks.co.uk>, but the catalog says that in the USA, Parkwest Publications are the agent/distributor at <http://www.parkwestpubs.com>." I did try the Parkwest website (being in the old USA) but was told it was not a good URL...the server might have been down at that particular time. However, when I visited the Shirebooks site, I did discover that most bookstores, online and off, can get copies of the books. I browsed the site, got the titles I was interested in, and then found them at an online store. Searching for the exact title made shopping at the online store easier. Warning: The site is addictive.

From Kathy Lynn Emerson: "I was trying to track down the phase of the moon for the night of the murder in the WIP and didn't come up with this one until the ninth page of listings on [google.com](http://www.google.com), but it's a winner. It takes some fiddling to set the date and the location (it keeps resetting itself to today's date), but the result is a view of the heavens for any date at any time of day in history, even the August 11, 1573 I was after. The moon, by the way, was full, which is perfect for all the people I have out doing things they shouldn't on that fateful night. Anyway, the URL is: <http://www.fourmilab.ch/yoursky/help/controls.html>."

Kathy's post prompted someone to ask about sunrises. Loretta Chase shared Compute Sunrise, Sunset & Twilight For Cities, <http://www.mindspring.com/~cavu/sunset.html>, which—you guessed it—provided this information. Now, you can only go as far back as 1951 and as far forward as 2009, but you can get times around the world.

Hypertext Medieval Glossary,

► ► ►

Online.....

►►►► <http://netserf.cua.edu/glossary/>, claims to be “the largest general medieval glossary on the Internet!” The comprehensive and useful site is unique in that it provides links to definitions within definitions. It also provides a citation for each word so you can review the book that provided the definition, and it includes related terms.

firewalls, the software that creates a barrier around your computer to protect it from hackers when you are continually online with DSL or cable, came up on Ninclink. In response, Mary Jo shared her experience.

“After I got cable, I researched fire walls, and one that rated highly in comparison tests was Zone Alarm, and it also has the nice plus of being free.

“My software expert also told me this was his first choice. Certainly I’ve had no trouble with it. I think the URL is **zonealarm.com**—if not, a search engine could find it for you fast if you want to check it out.”

Just for Fun

Visit Phone Spell, <http://www.phonespell.org>, type in your phone number, and receive a combination of mnemonics.

Share your Sites

If you discover sites that you think would be of interest to Novelists’ Inc. members, please e-mail me at LorraineHe@aol.com.

Publication	Website
<i>Affaire de Coeur</i>	http://www.affairedecoeur.com
All About Romance	http://www.likesbooks.com
<i>BookPage</i>	http://www.bookpage.com
Bookbug on the Web	http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/8078/home.html
<i>Gothic Journal</i>	http://GothicJournal.com/
Literary Times	http://www.tlt.com
Romance Reader	http://www.theromancereader.com
Romance Reader on the Run	http://home.swbell.net/monica01/index.html
Romancing the Web	http://www.romanceweb.com
<i>Romantic Times</i>	http://www.romantictimes.com
Sci-Fi Romance	http://members.aol.com/sfreditor/index.htm
Siren Books Online Bookstore	http://www.sirenbooks.com
Under the Covers	http://www.silcom.com/~manatee/utc.html

Promotion

All of the sites in the above chart review books. They also offer a variety of other features including bulletin boards, e-zines, and links to author pages.

Children’s Writers

Children’s Publishers’ Submission Guidelines Online, <http://www.signaleader.com/childrens-writers/>, has an alphabetized list of children’s publishers’ submission guidelines.

Firewalls

From Mary Jo Putney: The topic of

Controlling Your Listserve Preferences through E-Mail	
Subscribe	NINCLINK-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Unsubscribe	NINCLINK-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com
Switch to Digest	NINCLINK-digest@yahoogroups.com
Switch to Individual Mail	NINCLINK-normal@yahoogroups.com
No-Mail	NINCLINK-nomail@yahoogroups.com
Moderators: If You Have Questions, E-Mail:	
Brenda Hiatt-Barber	BrendaHB@aol.com
Patricia de la Fuente	Patricia@hiline.net
Lorraine Heath	LorraineHe@aol.com

Reding's site one of "101 Best"

Jaclyn Reding's website was included in *Writer's Digest's* "101 Best Websites for Writers" in the May, 2001, issue of the magazine. The URL is: <http://www.jaclynreding.com/links>.

"The links section of my website began as a way for me to simply keep track of my favorite sites on the 'Net. I decided to make it available to anyone else who might be interested, asked for visitors to share their favorite links, and it grew into a site that is now indexed into well over a dozen different categories."

Authors may send her their website URL's by e-mailing links@jaclynreding.com or clicking on the "ADD A SITE" links.

Harper's book in top five

The Tidal Poole, the second book in Karen Harper's historical mystery series, *The Queen Elizabeth I*

Mysteries, has been selected by *Library Journal* as one of the "Best Genre Books of the Year." It is listed in the top five mysteries of 2000.

Hailstock Finalist for Reader's Choice

Shirley Hailstock's novella, *An Estate of Marriage* in the *Island Magic* anthology published by St. Martin's Press, is a finalist for the National Readers Choice Award. The awards, sponsored by the Oklahoma Romance Writers, will be announced during the Romance Writers of America Conference in New Orleans this July. This is Hailstock's second year in a row as a finalist.

Also, Hailstock's novel, *Opposites Attract*, published by BET Books, made the Top Ten books of the year for the Barclay Gold Awards. This is Hailstock's second year in a row making this list. The Barclay Awards are named after romance writer

Carol Backus (a.k.a. Suzanne Barclay) and awarded by the Low Country Romance Writers.

Ciji Ware Wins Dorothy Parker

Ciji Ware has won the Dorothy Parker Award of Excellence 2001 in the "Classics" category for *Island Of The Swans*, her 1989 bestselling debut novel that was re-issued in 1998 by Fawcett. First place was won by Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind*.

Ware's latest, *A Light On The Veranda*, is a stand-alone sequel to *Midnight On Julia Street*. Both novels are published by Ballantine.

Bouricius wins Muse Medallion

Ann Bouricius's book, *Romeo and Julia* (w/a Annie Kimberlin), recently won the Muse Medallion presented annually by Cat Writers Association to the best cat-themed novel. *Romeo and Julia*, an October, 1999, release, was also a finalist for the Maxwell Award for Fiction presented annually by Dog Writers of America Association for dog-themed novels.

BelleBooks publishes collective novel

Mossy Creek, a collective novel published by BelleBooks—a publishing company formed by several authors including Novelists, Inc., members Sandra Chastain, Virginia Ellis, and Nancy Knight—was released in May.

This is the first in a series the authors like to call Mayberry meets Mitford, where the residents of Mossy Creek tell their stories, interfere in the lives of the other residents, and remain fiercely independent.

"The town motto says it all. 'We ain't going nowhere and don't want to.'" Chastain said. "We intend to become a small publisher, dedicated to publishing southern fiction by women, fiction that the big boys don't always

Cont. on p. 16 ▶ ▶ ▶

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

Pam Binder, Issaquah, WA

Michele Albert (*Michelle Jerott*), Stoughton, WI

Adele Budnick (*Adele Ashworth*), Lake St. Louis, MO

Heather Graham Pozzessere (*Heather Graham, Shannon Drake*), Coral Gables, FL

New Members

Linda L. Crockett (*Linda Lea Castle, Linda Castle*), Farmington, NM

Meg O'Brien, Arlington, WA

Shirley Rogerson (*Shirley Rogers*), Virginia Beach, VA

S. K. McClafferty (*Selina Macpherson*), Kittanning, PA

Ninc has room to grow...recommend membership to your colleagues. Prospective members may apply online at www.ninc.com.



Laura Resnick is

THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

“The Good, the Bad, and the Deeply Weird” (Reader Mail: Part Two)

So what is it about prison inmates? Do they just have a lot of time on their hands? Or is prison where fanatic readers are all doomed to wind up?

Whatever the answer, a lot of writers seem to get reader mail from prisons. As related in Part One of this topic last month, Lynn Flewelling got a letter from a prison inmate accusing her of threatening the fabric of American life with her books. Sandra Detrixhe w/a Cassandra Austin seems to have a genuine following in prisons, having received four letters from prisons in the space of three months, all from different prisons in different states.

Lisa Verge's most ardent fan may be a Nigerian prisoner in Thailand. He's a lifer in Bangkok due to trying to support his many sisters in a way the Thai government didn't like. "After reading my most recent Harlequin," Verge says, "he felt compelled to write [to me]. Not because of the gripping story or the dazzling prose, mind you. [His] letter mentioned that I'd written this particular book while dealing with a cranky infant. He sent me two pages of advice on how to quiet a teething baby." Verge adds that it was darn good advice, too. The next time he wrote to her, it was to complain about discrepancies in a heroine's age.

Let's have more of that good stuff...

However, prison inmates notwithstanding, we all love receiving Good reader mail. Remember when I said last month that my goal is to absorb readers? Well, Lynn Flewelling absorbed a reader in Germany so much that the reader taught herself English so she could read a novel of Flewelling's which wasn't available in German. A reader who was bed-ridden during her pregnancy decided to name the baby after the hero in an Anna Jacobs novel. Another reader who received a reply from Jacobs to her initial letter later told Jacobs that she'd been so thrilled to receive the letter that she'd worn the paper thin folding and unfolding it to share it with friends, shopkeepers, and librarians.

Nora Roberts reports hearing from a former minister who read a number of her books before noticing that her author bio mentioned she'd been inducted into the Romance Hall of Fame: "Shock! Dismay! Acute mortification! He was a guy. He didn't read romance novels. Then he said he pulled himself together and thought about it. If he liked the stories, the style, the work, what difference did it make what it was called? So he's continued to read my books, and even talked

some of his guy friends into doing the same."

I got a letter from someone who, after reading *A Blonde In Africa*, wanted me to know what a good writer I am, and how glad she is that people like me sleep in mosquito-infested swamps and fight off bandits so that armchair travelers like her can share that experience without actually having to get muddy and hurt. Loree Lough received a coupon for Wheaties from a reader who wrote, "I want to be sure you have enough energy to KEEP writing, because I love, love, LOVE your stories!"

Someone discovered a Lorraine Heath novel in the ladies room of a racetrack one day. She became a fan and eventually wrote to tell Heath that she has since turned several of her friends into Heath fans, too. Another writer actually received a dozen yellow roses because of a story she'd written. Cassandra Austin received a letter from a 15-year-old telling her: "...You use your words as the sea uses waves, rise and take a bow in disappearing. The thought becomes poetry and the poetry illuminates the thought." Linda Bartell received an effusive letter from a reader who thought the hero of one of Bartell's novels was so identical to her husband in character, "that I will forever treasure this book."

...and less of the bad stuff

But, hey, if all reader mail were good, would I be writing about it here? Not bloody likely.

Sometimes readers go to considerable trouble and effort to castigate, criticize, belittle, and insult writers. And, no—no one knows why. (If you find out, please let me know.)

Tamar Myers received a four-page letter from a Canadian member of the Monarchist Society castigating her for making a joke about Her Majesty's clothes. He sent a copy of the letter to Buckingham Palace where, he assured Myers, the likes of her will never be invited for tea. (Damn!)

Current Ninc Board member Kathy Chwedyk received a letter from a reader who was shocked—SHOCKED!—by the amount of kissing that occurred in one of her Regencies. Although the novel was, according to Chwedyk, "as pure as the driven snow," the reader described herself as a Jane Austen devotee, which could perhaps account for her sensibilities, if not her sense.

Fantasy novelist Kate Elliot received this charming mis- sive from a reader: "i just finished reading volume three of your crown of stars. please return alains dignity back to him,

he is the sole reason im reading your too long and very boring story.” Happily, Elliot kept her sense of humor upon reading this. Considering that her books are each several hundred thousand words long, that is, as she notes, “a lot of pages to read, considering how ‘boring’ it is!”

A reader wrote to inform Barbara Keiler, “I sure don’t want any more of your books if they are as ‘Boring’ as this one was.” The reader explains that *Barefoot In the Grass* “wasn’t worth reading. It was mostly repeat on every page what they were thinking. Oh well, all you had to do was skip over all the paragraphs & chapters.” The reader is kind enough, however, to add: “The last chapter was ok.”

Fantasy writer Lawrence Watt-Evans shares a letter wherein the reader is convinced he must have read the book before, though the publication date is very recent, because he always knew what the main character was going to do before he did it. Actually, I once got a letter from a reader who was positive she had already read my (then) recently released Silhouette *Upon A Midnight Clear*, because it was all incredibly familiar to her, right down to character names, setting, and specific plot points. However, she assured me, even though I tried to dupe readers by packaging it under a different title and pseudonym the second time around, she had nonetheless enjoyed reading it again. I panicked! I was convinced that somewhere out there was an earlier book by someone which was so similar to mine that, as soon as the author saw mine, she’d sue me. I called my editor... who assured me that writers got letters like this all of the time and I shouldn’t worry about it.

Anyhow, where was I? Oh, yes. Lawrence Watt-Evans’ reader also mentions in the same letter that he started but never finished Watt-Evans’ *Touched By the Gods*, and concludes by writing, “P.S. *The MisenCHANTed Sword* is the only paperback of yours that I haven’t traded for another.”

Are we having fun yet?

Most unexpected of all, of course, are the letters which you, who make your living with your imagination, could never have imagined until you received them.

Some are a bit spooky, such as this letter received by Lynn Flewelling, in which the fan exhorted her to answer him honestly: “Who are you? Not what you do, and what you look like, but who you are. What are you? What I mean by this is what do you think others perceive of you when you meet them. What will you be? What I mean by this is to ask yourself what your ultimate goals are. After finding this out, ask yourself the first two questions, as to the future, and see if what you want is really what you seek.”

Some are flattering, such as a letter Barbara Michaels/Elizabeth Peters passed along to Lillian Stewart Carl in which the reader thought they were one and the same writer. (As a big Michaels/Peters fan myself, I can understand why Lillian was flattered!) And some are endearing. I received a letter from a young person offering to help me develop storylines and write books based on settings from *In Legend*

Born which the reader had particularly liked.

Of course, lots of writers get letters either offering to help them write, or asking them to write the reader’s idea, or asking for help breaking into the business. Cassandra Austin once received a letter asking her to write a novel based on some Civil War letters (written by a woman to her husband and to her son, both of whom were in the army) which the reader had bought at an auction. Austin politely declined, but adds, “I don’t think I successfully explained what a romance is, because he wrote me a second letter explaining that the woman would be the heroine, her husband the hero, etc.” Laura J. Underwood encountered a less patient reader, who had an idea for a book which she wanted Underwood to write and sell for her. When Underwood asked what her “share” in this venture would be, the woman countered, “What do you need to be paid for? You’re already published!”

O, curses and red silk pants!

Jo Beverley hears from readers who think it’s her fault that some of her books are out of print and hard to find. One reader in particular, wrote a comment along the lines of, “Curse you, Jo Beverley, and curse your publishers for your cruelty!” And sometimes people just need to share a little too much. Mary Jo Putney received a vehement rant about how real men are such vile pigs and how much the reader hated it when fictional men were equally bad. Lisa Verge received a letter wherein a reader had experienced a medical emergency which had occurred in one of Verge’s books. “Her husband hadn’t reacted quickly enough, however,” Verge says, “and now she doesn’t trust him. Divorce papers are in the mail.”

Sometimes Close Encounters of the Deeply Weird Kind begin very innocently. Nora Roberts received several letters from a young woman in Nigeria who asked for some books because she had no money and very little access to booksellers. Roberts sent her a couple of books. In retrospect, this was, perhaps, a mistake. “Shortly after, I got a letter from her requesting I buy her a pair of red silk pants, size medium. Good quality, if I didn’t mind, and she’d like them before Christmas. If this was inconvenient, I could just send her a hundred US dollars and she’d take care of the shopping. While I was at it, could I find her a nice Muslim boy?” Apart from the difficulties inherent in finding a nice Muslim boy in rural Maryland, Roberts says she stops short of sending money and men to her readers. (Petty, petty.) So their correspondence ended there.

The black-haired virgin and other weirdos

Nora Roberts has also heard from a reader who apparently contacted many romance writers over the years with the same request she repeatedly made to Roberts: Would the author please consider writing a book with a black-haired virgin heroine and a blond hero? In case anyone couldn’t figure it out without help, she would also regularly ► ► ►



THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

▶▶▶▶ volunteer the information that she had been a black-haired virgin upon her wedding night with her blond husband. Roberts, in particular, heard often from this woman; so if she happened to have written a book which met the ex-virgin's requirements, she'd mention it. She'd invariably get a letter back commenting favorably on the book... and then asking her to write a novel about a black-haired virgin and a blond hero because... well, you know why.

"I got a letter like this every month or so," Roberts says. "Once, I broke, just broke, and deliberately made my heroine an untouched brunette and my hero a blond." Surely, Roberts believed, the reader would be satisfied and leave her alone thereafter. But no good deed goes unpunished, and the requests for more black-haired virgins with blond heroes went on, and on, and on. At one point, the reader became furious with Roberts for not having written a black-haired virgin in far too long and vowed never to buy another Roberts book. About a week later, she wrote an apology to Roberts—she discovered that Roberts had written a black-haired virgin novel which she had missed! Hallelujah! At the end of a rambling apology over this little misunderstanding...yep, you can see it coming, can't you? She asked if Nora would please consider writing a story about a black-haired virgin.

No one has heard from this woman for some time now, and it is generally assumed that her blond husband finally had her committed.

Romance, sf/f, and mystery author Kristine Kathryn Rusch co-wrote a novel with longtime friend Kevin J. Anderson. A reader wrote to her: "I was planning to fly to Oregon to take you out for a nice dinner.

I think we might be compatible. Then I saw your picture with Kevin Anderson [this refers to the jacket photo on their co-authored novel], and since I like his work, too, I don't want to steal his girl." One supposes that Rusch's husband of 15 years appreciates this respect for another man's "girl" even more than Anderson does.

UFOs and angels and demons, oh my

Some of the best mail comes, predictably, as a result of writing about UFOs. After publishing a short story about UFOs, Russell Davis received a letter explaining to him that UFOs aren't aliens at all. No, indeed. They're angels and demons battling in the sky for possession of human souls, and the writer would do well to learn that fact before writing about them again. Anne Marie Winston, after writing a *Silhouette* wherein the hero and heroine are abducted by aliens, received a seven-page letter from a reader who wasn't from "here" (planet Earth).

"She pointed out all the fallacies in my book (like the fact that aliens don't lower a ramp to get us on board—how stupid of me) and explained in great detail how the world would end on December 31 of that year... Those among us—like her—who were really 'planted here' would be taken back while the rest of us poor dopes perished." (Does that mean my New Year's Day brunch will be cancelled?)

All in all, our readers open new vistas and horizons for us, reminding us that, for good or for ill, we are not nearly as alone with our work as we usually feel we are. And for every one of them who makes unreasonable demands or castigates us for mistakes (real or wholly imagined), there are also those whose letters remind us why we write—so that they will read us. **NINK**



In Philly...

Meet these industry honchos...and your colleagues and friends....

Editors, agents, and publishing professionals already planning to attend are:

Cecilia Oh, New American Library; Damaris Rowland, the Damaris Rowland Agency; Claudia Cross, Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.; Steven Zacharius, Kensington/Zebra; Sarah Gallick; Christine Zika, Berkley; Malle Vallik, Harlequin Web; Jennifer McCord, Northwest Bookfest; our own *NINK* publisher Sandy Huseby; stand-up comic Brian Kiley from the Conan O'Brien show; Susan Race, coach, Personal Growth Systems & author of the book *Succeeding in the Workplace*; Jenny Bent, Harvey Klinger, Inc.; Steve Axelrod, The Axelrod Agency; Ann LaFarge, Kensington/Zebra; Audrey LaFehr, executive editor, Dutton/Signet; Hilary Ross with Dutton/Signet

...with more to come.

Liberty, Futurity



Equity, in Philly

September 6-9, 2001
(the weekend after
Labor Day)

Adam's Mark Hotel
Philadelphia, PA
City Ave. & Monument Rd.

Not Just Any Ol' Writers' Conference

"Thanks so much for asking me to speak at Novelists Inc. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I thought our discussion about media, etc. was a very sharing experience for all involved, which is what makes your conference so much more than just a writers' conference. I thought the conference was one of the best run ones I have been at...Thanks for having the sessions opened...I did not speak at them as often as I now wished I had...some history of the genre and how it was promoted by all involved (publishers, media, and book chains) would have maybe helped some writers understand how some authors were launched. All in all...an enriching experience."

— Jennifer McCord

The above testimonial is not from a Ninc member, but from one of the publishing professionals who attended the Vancouver conference. It's an indication of how far our organization has come in its 12-year history, and how much we've begun to learn—yet still *have* to learn—from the non-Ninc members who attend our conference. As a matter of fact, Jen has promised to return this year to Philly to give us some insights into the very things she wishes she'd thought to prepare to tell us in Vancouver: exactly how the women's fiction horizons so many of us wish to broaden *might* be broadened. That, by itself, should be worth the price of admission!

By the time this issue of *NINK* reaches your doorstep, you should have received your conference brochures. If you haven't already written those checks or put us on your credit cards, do it now! That way you won't be scrabbling through the detritus on your desk the way I was this morning in search of the stuff I to write this column. And yes, I *have* remembered to fill out my own conference registration form—and fax it in. What would the conference be

without the coordinator in attendance?

Right now Pat McLaughlin and I are working together on a roommate match-up service so that those of you signed up for the conference but without roommates can lower your room costs.

So, if you need a roommate, contact Pat McLaughlin (e-mail: PMcLinn@aol.com; phone: 703/237-2543) or Emilie Richards McGee (e-mail: ERMcGee@aol.com; phone: 703/276-0022) with information like smoking/non-smoking preferences, and we'll set you up! (Pat says, "Emilie will take mornings and I'll have the midnight shift <g>.")

I promised you see 'n' do Philly in this issue, but I'm running out of room here. Suffice to say that we've got the Mutter Museum of Physicians on tap to present a historical forensics session as well as to give an exclusive tour of the museum to our membership. The University of Pennsylvania is also available with a major Egyptian artifact exhibit (a "small" version of this was in Chicago recently, but this is the real deal!) Atlantic City is only an hour's drive for those of you interested in gambling; Philadelphia itself has a wide variety of historical tours via trolley or carriage.

In terms of entertainment near the Adam's Mark, there's the Antique Marketplace with more than 80 dealers under one roof. For those planning on a longer stay or bringing family to the conference, golf courses aplenty are available or there are day or half-day trips to Valley Forge, the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, Longwood Gardens, Brandywine and Wyeth Museum. And just behind the hotel is the largest city park in the world featuring America's first zoo, historic mansions, indoor horticulture displays, botanical gardens, and boathouse row. Small boats and bikes are available for rental and there are free live concerts at the outdoor pavilions.

And you thought we were just another conference.

NINK

MEMBER NEWS.....

▶ ▶ ▶ *Cont. from p. 11*

appreciate," she added.

The first book, *Sweet Tea and Jesus Shoes*, was a collection of short stories about growing up in the South.

Whisenand finalist in two competitions

Valerie Hansen Whisenand's novel, *The Troublesome Angel* (w/a Valerie Hansen), a Love Inspired from Steeple Hill, is a finalist for both the 2001 Award of Excellence, Colorado Romance Writers, and the Golden Quill, Phoenix, Desert Rose Chapter.

Her next Love Inspired, *Second Chances*, is a June, 2001 release. The author was previously published with Silhouette Romance as Val Whisenand and with Kensington, NAL, and Berkley as Kasey Adams.

"Mad" Author Article to appear in RT

Carole Bellacera's article, "Diary of a (Slightly) Mad Author on a Bus Book Tour," will appear in the August issue of *Romantic Times*, "which is really cool," she said, "because that month will see the release of my new hardcover, *East Of The Sun, West Of The Moon*, and the mass-market release of *Spotlight*. The article is about the author's ten days

on the Get Caught Reading Romance Tour sponsored by the Chas. Levy Company last fall. Both of Bellacera's novels are published by Forge.

Website correction

A website address was incorrectly reported in last month's Member News item about Lois McMaster Bujold's novel, *A Civil Campaign*, being a finalist for a Nebula award. Those who want to read the sample chapters from Bujold's *The Curse of Chalion* will find them at www.eosbooks.com.

Please send news for this column to Kathy Chwedyk at KChwed@aol.com or 1215 Fairmont Court, Algonquin, IL 60102.

Fast Track.....Compiled by Marilyn Pappano

The Fast Track is a monthly report on Novelists, Inc. members on the USA Today top 150 bestseller list. 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.

USA Today Bestseller List—April 2001

Julie Beard, *Very Truly Yours*, Jove
Sandra Brown, *Standoff*, Warner Vision
Stella Cameron, *7B*, Mira
Catherine Coulter, *Warrior's Song*, Signet
Diane Mott Davidson, *Tough Cookie*, Bantam
Diane Mott Davidson, *Sticks & Scones*, Bantam
Geraldyn Dawson, *The Bad Luck Wedding Night*, Sonnet
Christina Dodd, *Rules of Attraction*, Avon
Patricia Gaffney, *Sweet Everlasting*, Signet
Norah Hess, *Flint*, Dorchester
Judith Ivory, *The Indiscretion*, Avon
Joan Johnston, *The Texan*, Island
Joan Johnston, *Never Tease a Wolf*, Mira
Julie Kenner, *Aphrodite's Kiss*, Love Spell

Stephanie Laurens, *A Season for Scandal*, Harlequin
Kat Martin, *The Secret*, Zebra
Anne McCaffrey, *Pegasus in Space*, Del Rey
Anne McCaffrey, *The Skies of Pern*, Del Rey
Teresa Medeiros, *The Bride and the Beast*, Bantam
Pamela Morsi, Ann Major & Annette Broadrick, *Matters of the Heart*, Silhouette
Amanda Quick, *Wicked Widow*, Bantam
Amanda Quick, *Slightly Shady*, Bantam
Nan Ryan, *The Seduction of Ellen*, Mira
J.D. Robb, *Betrayal in Death*, Berkley
Nora Roberts, *The Villa*, Putnam
Nora Roberts, *The Stanislawski Sisters: Natasha & Rachel*, Silhouette
Nora Roberts, *Carolina Moon*, Jove
Bertrice Small, *The Innocent*, Ivy
Susan Wiggs, *The Firebrand*, Mira
Joan Wolf, *Royal Bride*, Warner

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