

Novelists' Ink Novelists' Ink Novelists' Ink

Novelists' Ink

February 2005
Vol. 16, No. 2

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

The Art of the Schmooze

BY KELLY MCCLYMER

WARNING: This article contains anecdotes that will be excruciatingly irritating to the gregarious, outgoing, or even sociable. Those without social anxiety read at your own risk.

I'm a shy, retiring person as a rule. I would rather talk about how to cook broccoli than talk up my books. But after seven books released with little fanfare, I realized I needed to change. So, naturally, I turned to my best friend — books — and began to research self-promotion. I could have read about the subject forever. Unfortunately, several of the books pointed out that successful self-promotion requires a good percentage of *doing* in addition to the reading. OK. I had a conference coming up on my schedule. The perfect opportunity to *do*, and thus justify the cost of staying in a hotel, having my food served to me, and hanging out talking about writing twenty-four hours a day.

Gathering a slippery chunk of courage with a difficulty that only another shy person would recognize, I decided to try out a "Kelly-ized" version of the schmooze at the RWA conference in Dallas. There were many good points to this plan: I was already registered, there would be lots of editors and agents to try out drive-by pitches on, and the Dallas Adams Mark has a nice big bar area to hang out, mingle, and chat. The

down sides I tried not to think about: I tend to recognize no one in a crowd (not even my husband), need thirty seconds with a motionless nametag before I can read and process it, and I hate to mingle. I even hate the word *mingle*. Mingle. I always picture people milling about a room making tinkling sounds that make sense to them and make me feel as though I'm on another planet. I don't mind hanging out and chatting, though, so there's another positive. Or so I told myself in preparation for the great schmooze experiment.

PRE-CONFERENCE PREP

Pearl of Wisdom from multiple self-help books:
If you don't ask, you won't receive.

In the Past: I pack everything I own two days before the conference, then a day later take out the clothes that no longer fit and ask the diet gods to relieve me of twenty pounds in twenty-four hours.

My Schmooze Plan: Email editors I want to sell to in order to set up meetings to promote the fabulous new turn my writing is taking. Make bookmarks for the literacy signing. Make business cards to hand out to anyone who looks in my direction. Pack only clothes that fit, are comfortable, and that I don't retch at when I catch sight of myself wearing as I pass the gauntlets of hotel glass.

Reality Happens: I got a rejection the week before conference, had some questions about my agent's support of my new direction,

Continued on page 3 ▶

INSIDE: *President's Voice: Ninc Members Live Longer...2, Bits...5, 6, 10, 15, 16, In Review: Breakthrough Creativity...6, Duo-logue: Career Derailers...7, Crayon on my Keyboard: Go Ahead, Indulge...11, Introducing...12, The Girls in the Basement: What Have You Done for Your Body Today?...13, NYC Conference Update...16*

Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

Advisory Council

Rebecca Brandewyne*	Victoria Thompson
Janice Young Brooks*	Steven Womack
Jasmine Cresswell*	Julie Kistler
Maggie Osborne*	Carla Neggars
Marianne Shock*	Barbara Keiler
Linda Barlow	Pat Rice
Georgia Bockoven	Anne Holmberg
Evan Maxwell	* Founder

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

2004 Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Vicki Lewis Thompson
1536 W. Cool Dr.
Tucson AZ 85704-2141
(520) 297-9308
VLTPENPWR@aol.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Brenda Hiatt Barber
9241 Castle Knoll Blvd.
Indianapolis IN 46250-3484
(317) 849-3356
brendahb@aol.com

SECRETARY: Linda Madl
1734 King's Road
Manhattan KS 66503
(785) 770-9363
linda@lindamadl.com

TREASURER: Ann Josephson
P.O. Box 151596
Tampa FL 33684
(813) 915-0747
annj@tampabay.rr.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Annette Carney
PO Box 33204
Reno NV 89533
(775) 746-1680
annetecarney@sbcglobal.net

ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE:
Barbara Keiler
32 Atkinson Lane
Sudbury MA 01776-1939
Phone: (978) 443-0770
Fax: (978) 443-0775
b.keiler@juno.com

CENTRAL COORDINATOR: David L. Brooks
Novelists, Inc.
P.O. Box 1166
Mission KS 66222-0166
Fax: (913) 432-3132
ninc@kc.rr.com

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

Address changes may be made on the website.
For members without Internet access,
send changes to the Central Coordinator.

Copyright ©2004 by Novelists, Inc. All rights reserved.
No part of this newsletter may be used or reproduced in
any manner without written permission.

President's Voice

NINC MEMBERS LIVE LONGER

A guy by the name of James C. Kaufman studied 1,987 dead writers and discovered that novelists live longer than poets. "Poets peak young," Kaufman told *The New York Times*. "They write alone."

Well, so do I, when I can get away with it. After training Larry not to come home for lunch and shipping the kids off to college so I could have that empty nest everybody talks about, I enjoyed that situation for what seemed like about five minutes. Then Larry decided to retire. 'Nuff said.

Every writer I know craves the chance to be alone, so I'm figuring that's not exactly what Kaufman meant. He's talking about mental isolation. Like when you're wearing this little black cloud over your head and chanting *nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I'm going in the corner to eat worms*. Or write poetry.

I started out my writing life as a poet, so I know whereof I speak. That's poet talk for I know how the cow eats the cabbage. Oh, sure, as a novelist I indulge in brief periods of angst, usually during deadline week.

But as a poet I spent most of my waking hours diving into vats of the stuff. At the risk of embarrassing myself and losing your respect forever, I'll quote a line from something I called "The Sound of Yellow":

*Dotted Swiss shredded into golden rags
too delicate to wipe the tears
of laughter from the cheeks of hysteria.*

Yeah, I know. But at the time I thought it was brilliant.

Fortunately I was saved from pursuing a life of depression and bad poetry by the laws of economics. Poets don't earn squat. In general, novelists earn only minimal squat, as I don't have to remind you, but at least you have a fighting chance that you'll scrape together enough to buy paper and an el cheapo computer. So I became a novelist, little knowing I was extending my life span in the process.

You see, novelists, especially genre novelists like us, can't afford to live in mental isolation. We desperately need each other —for brainstorming, for bitching, for market info and research help. That's why Ninc was founded, and why it continues as a beloved institution. All of those interactions go on regularly at our annual conventions, on Ninclink and in the pages of *Nink*.

If Kaufman is right in his conclusions, the kind of support Ninc provides is exactly why we outlive poets. If you're reading this, you've obviously decided to spend another year with us. Congratulations! What a healthy choice!

*Optimistically yours,
Vicki*

Correction:

Nothing like picking up the newest *NINK* and seeing a mistake with your own name on it! The membership requirements for Ninc are two books published, one of them in the last five years, not both of them in the last five years, as I mistakenly wrote for the “Ninc Volunteers: Unsung Heroes” article.

Sorry about hitting the false note <g>

Cheers, Lillian

*E-moved lately?
Remember to update your
email address at the Ninc
website.*

The Art of the Schmooze

Continued from page 1 ▶

and decided that drive-by schmoozing could begin at the Chicklit writers’ cocktail party. To alleviate my guilt at this cowardice, I did email someone whose schmoozing I admire and ask her to meet with me to give me some tips. She not only agreed, but she generously invited me to be her guest at the Ballantine cocktail party (Thanks, Shirley!). Packed just three dresses I didn’t wear at conference and a few sets of workout clothes that didn’t get used because I only went to the gym three times instead of the planned seven.

Lesson for the Future: Hmmm. Asking for a little schmooze mentoring got me invited to a publisher party. Maybe asking my dream editors for a quick meeting would have been okay. The worst they could have said was no. And I’m used to that! Also, no matter how much I say I’m going to work out, I’m not. Schmoozing requires late evening work, and I need my 8 hours of sleep in order to be coherent the next day.

TEST THE WATERS

Pearl of Wisdom from self-help advice: *Market yourself widely to improve your odds.*

In the Past: I leave marketing to my agent. I go to sessions that spotlight editors in the hopes that I will recognize my soul mate editor, our eyes will meet, and she/he will telepathically make an offer I can’t refuse. If I accidentally sit at an editor’s table at lunch, I freeze up, say nothing, and concentrate on eating everything put in front of me without dribbling.

My Schmooze Plan: Although I am convinced I am taking a fabulous new turn with my writing, I’m not ex-

actly sure which editors will be interested. That’s the problem when you’re trying to push the boundaries. I vow to test the waters of my new book to find just the right editor for the story of a stay-at-home mom who gets a dangerous taste of the pampered life when she signs up to be a mystery shopper. *ACCOMPANYING VISUAL:* Me, dressed smartly, with makeup to hide my wrinkles and bags from any editors who are looking for youth and beauty in their authors. I meet fabulous editor #1 in the (a) hallway, (b) bar, (c) bathroom, whereupon I smile like a beauty queen and thrust out my hand and deliver the absolutely perfect (and brief) pitch. Said editor pulls a contract from her bag and demands that I sign on the dotted line or she will lose her job. Being tender-hearted I cannot refuse. My agent will understand, as soon as she sees all the zeros.

Reality Happens: I go to the chicklit writers’ cocktail party, my first schmooze opportunity, where editors and agents have RSVPed. I schmooze my heart out, talk to everyone who comes near me, sidle my way into conversations, and generally refuse to feel anxious despite the crowd by following the advice to get out of my head and into my skin. I even smile although I cannot tell if anyone notices that I’m smiling, which is often a problem for me. But as soon as the thought occurs, I kick it out of my head. I’m smiling, that’s what counts. I do not talk to a single editor or agent (it’s dark and hard to read name-tags). But I talk to lots of people, and I win two books and a tiny blue teddy bear. Life is sweet.

Feeling as though I can schmooze the world, I attend my first publisher session in order to see what my dream editor looks like, so that I can arrange a casual drive-by pitch. As soon as I leave the session, I ▶

The Art of the Schmooze

forget what the editor looked like. I sense short-term memory problems are going to be a challenge. I sit at a lunch table full of interesting writers, read their nametags, and talk about writing. I forget their names as soon as I've gone up to my room to brush my teeth (but I have a card from one of them. Unfortunately, I left my own cards in my suitcase). Short-term memory lapse is definitely going to be a black-creped banner draping my great schmooze experiment.

Lesson for the Future: Getting out of my head is good (thank you, Yoga goddesses). Pack lots of Gingko-Biloba.

MAINTAINING A SCHMOOZE ATTITUDE

Pearl of Wisdom from he-without-a-legacy-of-Catholic-guilt: *Let failures go and look ahead to next opportunity.*

In the Past: As soon as I'd done something un-schmoozelike, I would obsess over it and fall deep into a gloom best nurtured behind the shade of a potted palm, or in a dark, incense-ridden confessional. If someone spoke to me, my tongue would twist before any words came out to prevent yet another communication failure. I would sit at lunch and at workshops surrounded by friends who knew me. Safety, security, and anonymity were my bywords.

My Schmooze Plan: No matter what happens, spinach in the teeth, or a banana peel fall, I will deal with it, forget it, and carry on to the next schmooze opportunity.

Reality Happens: With the name Ellen Edwards fixed in my mind (and no face to go with it), I went to the NAL session and tried a mini-stalking experiment. The plan is to follow Ellen from the room after the session is over and arrange to oh so casually bump into her. There is only one hitch to my smooth transition to stalkerhood. The editors are trapped at the speaker table by a swarm of eager writers. I while away time with a trip to the ladies' room. Ellen finally emerges from the workshop, and I jubilantly recognize her since she hasn't had time to change her clothes or her hair or her expression. She goes into the ladies' room. I do not follow, though for a brief moment I am tempted. I now understand why some would-be authors slide their manuscripts under the stall door. There's something to be said for trapping over hunting any day.

Ellen emerges from the ladies' room, and still I recognize her. Life is good. But I don't want to stop her so near the ladies' room since that would look a little too

much like stalking. I walk briskly in her wake, only to be foiled by several of her colleagues who stop her for a quick consultation. I continue to move briskly past her, until I realize I'm walking into a dead end wall of windows. I do an about face, with only a few muttered imprecations and take the escalator down a level. I pull out my cover art award ballot and vote on my favorite covers as I keep an eye on the escalator. After I've voted, I run into someone I know and talk to her. She does not comment on the fact that I keep checking the escalator area. At last, Ellen-less, I decide that stalking is not my forte. Besides, I've forgotten what Ellen looks like and she may very well have brushed past me at any point in the last ten minutes.

Lesson for the Future: Arrange ahead for an appointment, or just be brazen and go up and pitch in swarm fashion.

VARY THE TECHNIQUE

Pearl of Wisdom from multiple sources, including Dr. Phil: *If one approach doesn't work, try another.*

In the Past: My technique was simple: if I don't look at anyone else, they won't look at me. All the mind-numbing repetition of playing peek-a-boo with an infant, except no giggles.

My Schmooze Plan: Walk up to any editor in sight and introduce myself. Make a witty comment based on the situation, if mind does not go blank. Pitch only when appropriate so as not to be subject of What Not to Do at Conference in future workshop of said editor.

Reality Happens: Short-term memory problem interferes with editor recognition. However, at Harlequin's RDI session, I eschew stalking for swarming the editor table at the end of the session. I smile, thrust out my hand, and introduce myself to Margaret Marbury, thanking her for her kind rejection of an older project of mine (the one that set me back just before conference). There is a line behind me, I can feel the eyes boring into the back of my head. I do not do my drive-by pitch, but I do tell her I've asked my agent to send my new project to her. I start to stutter, her eyes glaze over, I smile again (although I don't know if she could tell) and give the next in line behind me a turn. In six conferences, I have never been so bold. I feel successful. (True schmoozers are no doubt groaning, but I trust that those like me, the kind to duck and hide when an editor approaches, fully appreciate the depth of this success).

Lesson for the Future: Editors don't bite. But the people in line behind you may.

DON'T WAIT FOR PERMISSION

Pearl of Wisdom from schmoozers everywhere:
Better to ask forgiveness than permission.

In the Past: I once was dragged by a friend to a publisher's private suite for drinks with editors. I spent the entire hour sitting in a chair, tense as a strung bow, saying not a word, and certain any moment they were going to turn to me and say Get out! You don't belong here!

My Schmooze Plan: Under no circumstances am I to stand alone in a crowd nursing a glass of wine and looking as though I am trying to become one with the carpeting.

Reality Happens: At the publishing party, a kind soul (Thanks again, Shirley!) invited me to attend as her guest, I froze for just a moment as the noise of the room hit me. It was a small room in an older hotel whose name I promptly forgot before I even learned it. There were people. Intimidating people who looked like they knew what they were doing. I hugged my pink L.L. Bean giveaway bag closer and stood nervously by as my friend introduced me around. For a moment I was in danger of becoming one with the carpet, and then I took a deep breath and began to shout greetings and questions and strain to hear the answers so that I wouldn't always have to shriek, "What?" in response. After a while, I even traversed the room on my own, leaving the orbit of my natural schmoozer friend, although I checked periodically to see how it was that she managed to keep moving about talking to people. I came to the conclusion that she (a) does not have my short-term memory problem and (b) knows everyone on the planet.

Lesson for the Future: When the party is loud, as

many cocktail parties tend to be, it is necessary to (a) project, simplify, and enunciate; and (b) bring breath mints to counter wine breath when you are forced to shout into someone's proffered ear.

To those of you who don't think I took nearly enough chances, all I can say is, baby steps are better than standing still. To those of you who are thinking you could never do what I did, here's my secret; I stopped thinking about me and used three simple techniques to get out of my own head: (1) whenever I started worrying that I had a seed stuck between my teeth, or wine breath, or was too stupid to live, I stopped, took a few deep breaths, and consciously relaxed; (2) I repeated what the person I was talking to was saying (silently, so as not to annoy the dickens out of her) instead of trying to come up with something witty to reply to what she hadn't yet finished saying; and (3) I concentrated on the moment, rather than my past or future mistakes. I could never have imagined how much more I enjoyed myself using these techniques.

I'm already preparing for my next conference experience (by sitting quietly in my office and writing in solitude and peace. Conferences are great creativity enhancers for me). I can't say what I'll dare to try next. Could be something startling, like a singing pitch. If only I could stay in key.

Kelly McClymer is the author of the Once Upon A Fairy Tale historical romance series from Zebra, and is currently taking a left turn to try to fit into the chicklit market with a mommylit book based on her life, with all the boring bits jazzed up considerably.

Bits'n'Pieces

Direct Sales Talk— From the Experienced to the Newbies

► David Shanks, Penguin USA CEO announced that the online sales operation have been satisfactory in the first year and is coming close to anticipated sales. A majority of the most popular titles online have not been the bestsellers at the brick-and-mortar stores. New functions for the online site are also in the works with a priority on helping readers with suggestions on what to buy.

► Amazon.com claims to have the busiest season ever with books and electronics at the top. They also say they set a one-day record of 2.8 million orders, but won't say exactly which day it was. At the same time Smith Barney Citigroup downgraded Amazon stock

from Buy to Hold. The reason is that Amazon had increased competition from increased sales by the other retailers on the web.

► "In the year ahead I will report to you on our progress with these initiatives, which, in time, may include direct sales online of our books to readers as a complement to our existing sales channels."

Peter Olsen, Random House Dec. 2004

Downloading AudioBooks

MediaBay and MSN is encouraging HarperCollins to provide downloadable editions from the extensive HarperAudio and Caedmon audiobook lists through MediaBay's new service. Offerings would be available through MSN Music as well as the upcoming Larry King's Online Audiobook and Entertainment Club, launching sometime in the next six months. HarperCollins is the first audiobook publisher to sign with MediaBay but other deals are in the works.

Bits Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Breakthrough Creativity

By Lynne C. Levesque

REVIEW BY JANELLE CLAIRE SCHNEIDER

I love reading anything about creativity. I also love reading anything about personality. So, when I saw this book, which links creativity to the Myers-Briggs Personality Indicators, it seemed irresistible. (For a quick overview of MBTI, check out www.personalitypages.com or www.personalitypathways.com/type_inventory.html#Inventory)

What I found, though, is that “creativity” means something different to this author than it means to me. I think of artistic creativity: writing, painting, quilting, cooking, etc. Her research is in the area of corporate creativity, which I think of as “problem solving.”

As I read her profiles of the eight “creative talents,” it seemed to me that only one of those “talents” described the writer personality. Perhaps not so coincidentally, that talent is the one linked to my MBTI profile. Aware of the limitations of my own perspective, I asked for help on the Ninc listserv. Several brave souls volunteered to give me their feedback, as well as a few writer-friends in other places. The results surprised me.

First of all, I learned that there are writers who are extroverts. In this context, extrovert and introvert describe the setting in which we find personal regeneration. Most of the writers I know love solitude. But there are a few for whom people interaction recharges their batteries.

Thus, I learned that one doesn’t have to be a “Poet” or a “Visionary,” to use Levesque’s terminology, to be a writer. A Pilot, an Adventurer, and an Explorer can also be storytellers.

I found the feedback in the area of “Enhancing Creative Talent” to be most interesting. In her book, Levesque has a section for each talent type called “Enhancing Creative Talent.” In my questionnaire to my respondents, I asked how many of them would benefit from the suggestions given for their personality type. Almost every respondent gave an emphatic NO to at least one of the suggestions. Not being a psychoanalyst, I wouldn’t hazard a guess as to whether this indicates that the suggestion was just wrong for that person, or whether that suggestion directly addressed an area of personal weakness.

The other area which I found intriguing was the re-

sponse to this question: Is creativity your shelter from stress, or does stress interfere with your creativity? I couldn’t find a pattern to the responses. Two extroverts answered my questionnaire. One said she needs stress to be creative, and the other said stress makes her want to go interact with people, which means the writing doesn’t get done.

The answers among introverts were just as varied. Of those who find creativity to be a refuge from stress, some said crafty-type creativity works that way, but not writing. Others said stress enhances their writing.

I found this book much more useful as a reference tool, rather than a learning text. It’s not on my “recommend to every writer I meet” list; however, I will likely buy my own copy to use in developing my fictional characters. The weaknesses of the various traits gave me lots of ideas for plots twists.

Those who like to analyze would probably enjoy at least skimming through this book. Those who prefer to “go with the flow” in general, or “write by the seat of the pants” while at the keyboard would likely find it a crashing bore.

My conclusion is, *vive la difference!* ■

Bits'n'Pieces

Who’s Hot?

Publishers Weekly taps the ten young editors they think are among the many worth watching and listening to now and in the year ahead: Viking Penguin’s Molly Stern, Riverhead’s Sean McDonald, Little, Brown’s Geoff Shandler, Scholastic’s David Levithan, Bloomsbury’s Gillian Blake, Harper’s Tim Duggan, Knopf Books for Young Readers’ Nancy Hinkel, Broadway’s Becky Cole, Crown’s Chris Jackson, and Soft Skull’s Richard Nash.

New Year Shift

Michael Stearns is leaving Harcourt for Harper Children’s Books to be editorial director and foreign acquisitions manager. One of the lines he will head has had recent success with works like Lemony Snicket and *The Princess Diaries*.

Duo-logue

Career Derailers that Keep the Wheels from Spinning

Pat: This Duo-logue will be a variation on past editions. Instead of exchanging views on a topic with a fellow Novelists, Inc. member, I'll be discussing an issue with Virginia McLaughlin, my sister-in-law, and a professional facilitator, consultant, and coach. Those of you who were at the Savannah conference might remember her session making us prioritize our desires then aiming us toward achieving them and a fascinating session focusing on the three-pointed relationship among authors, agents, and editors.

This time I want Virginia to tell me/us more about a risk she's identified to me as career "derailers." I suspect many of us have had the feeling our career was coming off the rails at one time or another. And I sure would like to know what might have shoved me off track at those times.

So, what's a career derail, Virginia?

Virginia: A derail can be any of a number of tendencies that generally work for us—keep us chugging down the track from point A to point B—but then, suddenly, we find ourselves sitting out in the middle of a corn field wondering what on earth happened. These are tendencies such as being overly cautious or volatile. In fact, a psychologist, Robert Hogan, PhD, did more than 30 years of extensive research on this phenomenon and identified 11 characteristics that he called "derailers" because they can cause such disruption in relationships, careers, and organizations. I draw on his work quite often when I work with executives as a coach to alert them to potential vulnerabilities.

Pat: If I have this straight, those characteristics aren't bad in and of themselves, right? Instead, these derailers are good attributes gone wrong. What makes that happen?

Virginia: Derailers are with us all the time, usually not causing us much trouble. All healthy adults

have them to some extent. In fact they might even be the extension of characteristics that have worked for us in the past. We've come to depend on those characteristics to accomplish what we want. When they become derailers is when they not only stop accomplishing what we want, but create obstacles. What generally triggers them is stress. When we get under stress, our derailers raise their ugly heads and start to undermine our best intentions.

Pat: Ah, yes, stress. Authors know a little about that. So stress is like steroids and derailers are characteristics undergoing 'roid rage, huh?

Virginia: An interesting way of looking at it...

And the problem with these derailers is that they cause us real problems. They can burn our bridges. They can keep people from being close to us. They can keep us stuck, keep others from seeing our value, and alienate people. And all these undermine our own self-esteem.

They play havoc not only with career, but also with friendships and family.

Pat: That's scary. Okay, what are these derailers?

Virginia: Well, here's the list. Most people have several derailers, so don't be surprised if a few seem familiar...

Pat: Who? Me?

Virginia: (Ignoring that interruption):

Volatile: Lots of energy and enthusiasm, but mood shifts are sudden and unpredictable. Neither you nor those around you can anticipate your reactions, which might be explosive or dark. So people walk around wondering who's "in" today.

Distrustful: You see yourself as alert to others' hidden agendas, but others experience you as argumentative, skeptical, suspicious, critical. You tend to focus on the negatives, and because you're reluctant to trust others, others aren't trustful of you. ▶

Duo-logue

► *Overly Cautious:* Prudent and thorough to the extreme, you miss opportunities as a result of acting too late. This derailer often signals a fear of making a mistake.

Aloof: You like to keep your distance from others. You see it as professional reserve. However, during stressful times, you're likely to withdraw – to pull back – just when people need to hear from you and know what you're thinking. You can come across as cold and uncaring.

Passive Resistant: This is about saying you agree, but then turning around and doing what you want. There's a disconnect between your words and what you're really willing and intending to do. This can undermine others' trust in you.

Arrogant: Arrogance is confidence taken to the extreme. You're right and everyone else is wrong. People with this derailer are particularly vulnerable because they can be so convinced of their own abilities that they're intolerant of contradicting views. They stop learning.

Mischievous: This derailer is tricky. You are charming and personable, but you also act impulsively. You project the impression that rules don't quite apply to you. And this can make people around you feel at risk and get you into all sorts of trouble. Just think about a recent past president....

Melodramatic: You always grab the center of attention – everything that happens to you is bigger than life. Whatever happens – to anyone – you bring it back to being all about you. You constantly bring the spotlight back on you and you can suck the air right out of the room for everyone else.

Eccentric: Seen as creative, but also unpredictable, unfocused, and different for the sake of being different. Might not be taken seriously because of an inability to concentrate and execute on all of your ideas.

Perfectionist: Enormous time, energy, and attention go into making sure that every little thing is done exactly right. You drive yourself into the ground, and everyone else around you crazy.

Pleaser: You want to win the popularity contest, so you'll do whatever is necessary to please those whose opinion matters to you. Wanting people to like you means you'll be reluctant to deal with the

tough people issues or stand up for yourself.

That's quite a list, isn't it?

Pat: It is. And I think I've done every one of those a time or two. Plus, I can see several that resonate with what I hear from lots of fellow writers. But before we talk about that, I have another question.

I notice that in several of them there seems to be a disconnect between the way the derailee might be thinking about himself or herself and the way someone else will view the derailee.

So, how does someone know if he or she has a derailer that pops up during stress?

Virginia: That's a tough one. No one gets up in the morning, looks in the mirror and says, "I think I'll put on my derailers today!" It's hard for us to recognize these traits in ourselves, and, because we don't see them, it's hard to manage them. In many organizations, leaders regularly get 360-degree feedback (feedback from many perspectives: peers, boss, people they supervise, customers) that tells them what they're doing right and hints at their derailers. Even then, it's hard for people to accept these potential vulnerabilities that are so deeply rooted in their histories.

However, someone who works alone (as writers do) doesn't have access to formal 360-degree feedback. If you work alone, you have to be alert to patterns you see – either in messages you get from others or in reoccurring themes in your life – that may indicate derailing tendencies.

Pat: Can you give us examples? What sort of patterns or messages from, say, an editor or agent might an author get that would indicate a writer was derailing him or herself?

Virginia: First of all it's important to keep in mind that the reason we pay attention to these derailers is so people can recognize their potential vulnerabilities and mitigate the negative consequences. It's not to root out any possible minor flaws (and, boy, don't we all have plenty of those.) But almost everyone has at least a couple of these major risk factors lurking in the background, waiting to spring on you when stress hits. And given full sway, the derailing behavior adds to the stress. That causes more trouble. So the key is to:

Understand your personal ones

Be alert to the signs that they might be kicking in
Work to lessen the stressful situation

And do what you can do to manage the derailing behavior – which we can talk about later.

But before we go there, you asked for examples. So... let's take the first derailer – and one of the more

visible to others — Volatility. You'll recognize this is one of yours by your mood swings. One day (or minute) you're excited over a project and the next you're totally discouraged, thinking that it will never work. People let you down a lot and you let them know it. (You're thinking you have the right to your disappointment — and you do — but your disappointment happens often and vociferously.) As a result, you won't be alerted to bad news or get true feedback because people around you are walking on egg shells, worrying about your reaction. You may lose the very support system — agents, editors, friends, colleagues, family — that you need in order to be successful in your writing and your life.

Perfectionism is another one I see fairly often. This one goes beyond just having high standards and wanting things to go right. It's about fretting over the smallest details, not accepting alternative ways of getting to the goal, not trusting others to do things "well enough." If you have this derailer you've probably gotten feedback from others that you micromanage. You've also probably experienced its energy drain. This derailer takes so much energy: energy to notice and care about the "nits"; energy to get others to do things the way you want them done; energy worrying about how to approach people who haven't done something up to your standards. If they would only do it your way! (Which, of course, is the right way.) So if you're often in battles with an editor (...woe to you if your editor also has this derailer...), if you seek help and then redo the efforts of the other person, or if others just let you do it because they get frustrated having you take over anyway, this might be a risk factor for you.

And the danger, then, is that this derailer keeps you from seeing the greater opportunities, taking risks, engaging others in your efforts, and husbanding your energy for the major battles.

Pat: Okay, that helps make it much clearer. Now, there are a few of these that I can see applying to a lot of writers (myself possibly included). Can we talk about why they might erupt and — most, most important — how to control them?

The ones I would tab as affecting a good percentage of writers include volatility, perfectionist, distrustful, and aloof. Having met quite a few writers, what do you think?

Virginia: You might be right, although I can see them all happening.

The main thing to remember is that these are most likely to cause us trouble when we're under stress. The bad news is that so many people are constantly under stress. And writers have some particular stressors: deadlines, criticism, working alone

(which some people in organizations might see as a great advantage), conflicting needs. In one of our sessions in Savannah we surfaced the conflicting expectations and needs of agents, writers, and editors — and how hard it was for the various parties to first recognize those differences and then deal with them effectively. In that relationship I could see distrust becoming a derailer.

So the first way to control the derailing aspects of these risk factors is to control your stress. Most of us know that we can't control the external situations we encounter, but we can control our inward reactions to them — how we think about our external environment. Once we manage our thoughts, we can begin to manage our actions or reactions. To help us manage ourselves — so much easier said than done — we need to be doing all those things our mothers told us to do: eat right, sleep enough, exercise, get fresh air. I'd add deep breathing, meditating (just a bit helps), and taking time for yourself (I don't know about yours, but my mother never seemed to mention those...).

Pat: I could swear my mother said to eat lots of chocolate.

Virginia: Right, that must be in there somewhere.

Something I didn't mention is that different stresses can trigger different derailers. For example, one of my derailers is "Mischievous." And boredom triggers it. If I get bored — while I'm observing a session, for instance — I have to watch what I say and do, so I don't disturb the process or alienate my colleagues. My mother used to call me a "pot stirrer." Maybe she recognized this tendency early on.

Pat: Okay, avoid stress, ease stress, and stay out of pots you're stirring. Got it. But stress seeps in despite my best efforts. (And sometimes I slip into those pots. Hmm ... maybe I was pushed.)

Virginia: Besides managing your stress levels so the derailers don't even kick in, there are other things you can do to make friends with these tendencies. One technique is to keep a record. Jot down what you think your one or two major vulnerabilities are. Then record how and when they surface and what the negative consequences are to you, to your success, and to the people around you. Just thinking about them, writing about them (...should be a lot easier for you than for the average middle manager in corporate America), and noticing the patterns will help you take control.

Once you've tuned into your derailers, you can take some counter-intuitive measures. For example, if perfectionism is inhibiting you, take action; leave your bed unmade for a week. Note what happened and how you felt. If aloofness is a problem ▶

Duo-logue

▶ and your inclination is to withdraw into a corner when you get that rejection letter, do the opposite. Call the rejecter and talk about it. Send additional ideas. Call a summit of your friends to gripe and then strategize. If being a Pleaser is a vulnerability, chart out your values and priorities and intentionally say “No” to anything that comes your way that doesn’t mesh with those. How did you feel? What were the reactions? What were the consequences?

The key here is not to eliminate these derailers — they’ve been a part of who you are for a long time — but to accept them and manage them smartly.

Pat: Is there a danger of swinging too far on the pendulum and dropping the benefits? Take aloofness, for instance. Writers need to be okay with spending a lot of time alone. If a writer swings too far and becomes a party animal there’s not going to be much writing accomplished.

Virginia: Rarely does a person swing too far to the other side. It’s almost as if there are natural brakes in place to keep you from going completely to the other side. So generally no fear of a melodrama-queen becoming a total wallflower (they may think they’re doing that, but the rest of the world would know that the spotlight was still on that person “being a wallflower.”)

And, yes, these derailers have their genesis in positive characteristics. In fact, the characteristics that generate the derailing behavior may be work-

ing for you most of the time. That’s the insidious part: to know when you’ve hit the tipping point of them causing you difficulties. When does Passion turn to Volatility? Confidence to Arrogance? Cooperation to Pleaser? Individuality to Eccentricity? Watch for the stress...that’s when the derailing aspect is most likely

to pop up.

Bottom line, focus and build on your strengths, and then when you’re under particular stress, watch out for the derailers.

Pat: Is there anywhere we can find out more about these derailers and coping with them?

Virginia: Yes. There’s actually a great new book out called *Why CEOs Fail*. It’s by David Dotlich and Peter Cairo, who focus on the derailers, giving symptoms and strategies.

Pat: I always get the last word. So here it is: Thanks!

Virginia McLaughlin is founder and president of Delta Concepts, Inc. As an executive coach, consultant, and strategic facilitator with 20 years of experience, Virginia has worked with leaders from over 100 countries, including leaders from many Fortune 100 companies. She has taught executive leadership programs and coached senior leaders at Merck, Exxon Mobil, Accenture, Bank of America, Time Warner, Revlon, PG&E Corporation, Washington Mutual, Avon, and Novartis. Virginia draws on expertise in meeting effectiveness, emotional intelligence, conflict management, building high-impact teams, influencing skills, and change management.

Pat McLaughlin has just finished her 22nd book for Silhouette, writing as Patricia McLinn. She continues to edit part time at the Washington Post because her mortgage company insists. You can visit her website at www.PatriciaMcLinn.com.

Bits'n'Pieces

Publishing Responds to Tsunami

Imago, the English-language printer in Singapore sent its 14 member staff and their families to Thailand for the holidays. There were five fatalities in the group. The company has stayed open and has created a site where readers can send wishes and condolences

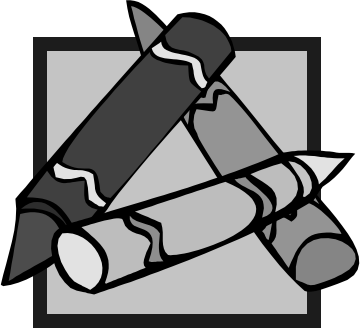
Viacom has pledged a half-million-dollar contribution to the Red Cross and will match

employee donations up to another half million.

Travel publisher **Lonely Planet** has created a Missing Persons branch of its popular Thorn Tree bulletin boards (and eliminated the need for users to register). While some are general inquiries about hotels and other properties, others are very specific asking about relatives missing since the tragedy. The company has also started a Found Person branch. Some are general inquiries, about hotel operators and the like, but others are painfully specific. The company has since started a Found Persons branch.

The Harry N. Abrams company will be making donations to Architecture for Humanity.

Crayon on my Keyboard



Go Ahead, Indulge

BY JANELLE CLARE SCHNEIDER

My name is Janelle, and I am a magazine-aholic.

I'm also a writer who hopes to one day be earning enough money to support my habit. (A rejection letter received the day before Christmas Eve makes that goal seem further off than ever!)

Now, before you envision my children buried under toppling piles of magazines, let me assure you that I don't buy every magazine I see. In fact, there are only about half a dozen that I do buy. (And no, I don't shoplift the others.)

Where my addiction becomes evident is around the 20th of the month, when I've read the current issue of my chosen 'zines, but the new issues aren't yet available. And if a crisis, such as oh say, both children suffering some dire illness, prevents me from acquiring the newest issue, a full fledged panic attack ensues. I actually look forward to acquiring medication for my children since my pharmacist has a truly wonderful selection of magazines.

You're wondering what this has to do with writing.

One of my beloved magazines provides the link. An article in the latest issue states that "guilty pleasures" are necessary to our lives. We're not talking voyeurism here, just those little things we do for ourselves that serve no purpose other than making us feel good. For some, it's a daily dose of dark chocolate. For others, it's a periodic soak in a bubble bath. You know what yours is. Now you know what mine is.

According to this article, the most important part of this "guilty pleasure" is to stop feeling guilty about it. So what that it has 300 calories per bite, or doesn't benefit anyone else in the family other than you. Next time you indulge, take a deep breath and truly indulge. Savor the experience. Memorize the sensory details. Revel in the feeling of being totally worth the richness of this experience.

Still don't see the connection?

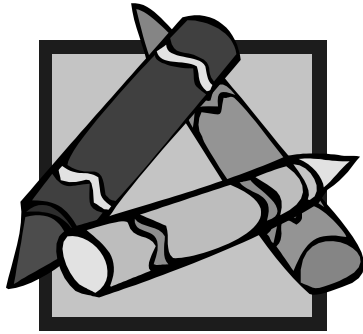
I believe "guilty pleasures" are vital to our creativity. The Girls in the Basement, as Barbara Samuel calls them, (love that name!), thrive on these legitimate indulgences. Personal pampering not only feeds the Girls; it also lets them know we're listening for whatever they want to send up to us.

I buy at least two, and sometimes more, quilting magazines every other month. (I remain ticked off that they don't publish more frequently, or at least stagger their publishing schedules so it's not feast-or-famine.) They're bleeping expensive, too. But they nourish me.

I am a novice quilter. Working with fabric and design grounds me, somehow. I utterly adore color in any form. Quilting gives me the sense of being about to touch and manipulate color. Expressing myself in a nonverbal format even eases my writing struggles. An hour or two in my sewing room often provides as much inspiration for my story as does a nice, long nap.

Browsing a quilting magazine is the next best thing. I love to see the newest fabric lines, the creations of various veteran quilters, the cute little projects I could put together for the upcoming season if only I could find my sewing machine under the pile of mending. I also love the feel of the glossy pages between my fingers, the smell of a newly opened issue (provided it doesn't have an obnoxious "sample" which necessitates hanging the magazine over the clothesline to let it air out), the anticipation of feasting my eyes on color, pattern, and the output of others' imaginations.

My other favorite is a women's magazine, crammed full of thoughtful articles, hilarious musings, and pictures of what people with more money than I can dream of buy when they browse stores I've never heard of. This one honestly provides mental stimulation. I love reading about issues which are important to other women, ▶



▶ particularly when another woman's struggle provides me with an "aha!" moment. I love this magazine so much that my husband knows if he can get to the newsstand before I do and purchase it for me, he's just earned himself Major Points.

When I bring home a new magazine, I can hear my Muse purring. (I don't know what sound your Muse makes when he/she is happy, but mine purrs.) Feasting my eyes on those pages may not result in a plot point for my current story, but it does feed my soul. Instead of feeling depleted by the demands of motherhood, marriage to an often-absent engineer spouse, and the frustrations of my writing career, I feel wealthy.

My world expands beyond the disappointment of that wretched rejection letter and the avalanche of laundry needing to be washed or folded or put away. I feel part of a larger whole, a participant in The World, if you will. Since I'm desperately hoping one day The World will rush en masse to buy my latest creative effort, a sense of connection to that collective keeps me in touch with my dream.

Inevitably, by the time I reach the final page, I feel revved up to face my stories again. I feel ready to create.

There's no better feeling in the universe! (Don't tell my husband I said that.) ■

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 15 days of this NINK issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of Ninc:

New Applicants:

Kimberly Bahnsen (*Kylie Brant*), Charles City, IA
 Wendy Ferguson (*Wendy Douglas*), Anchorage, AK
 Diana Pharoah Francis, Dillon, MT
 Yasmine Galenorn (*India Ink*), Bellevue WA
 Mary Glazer (*Mary Lennox*), Blue Creek, OH
 Bonnie Hamre, Spokane WA
 Jackie Hyman (*Jacqueline Diamond, Jackie Diamond Hyman*)
 Brea, CA
 Karla Massey (*Diane Whiteside*), Centreville, VA
 Jeffery McClanahan, (*Anna Jeffrey, Dixie Cash*),
 Granbury TX
 Kim Jacobs (*Maddie James, Kim Whalen*) Versailles, KY
 Jamie Sobrato, Fort Irwin, CA

New Members:

Shelley Bates (*Shannon Hollis*), Redwood Estates CA
 Anna DePalo, New York NY
 Barbara Einstein (*Barbara Gale*), Brooklyn NY
 Debbie Federici (*Cheyenne McCray*), Mesa AZ
 Bobby Hutchinson, Vancouver, Canada
 Tony Karayianni (*Tori Carrington*), Toledo OH
 Liz Maverick, Sherman Oaks CA
 Stephanie Rowe, Beaverton OR
 Susan Sutherland (*Susan Stephens*), Prestbury,
 Cheshire, UK
 Nancy Robard Thompson (*Elizabeth Robards*), Orlando FL
 Susan Vaughan, Saint George ME

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

Stay in Touch with Ninc online.

Visit the website at www.ninc.com. Join the never-ending e-conversation—for members only—by joining Ninclink. If you have questions, email moderator Brenda Hiatt Barber at BrendaHB@aol.com

Controlling Your Listserve Preferences through Email:

Subscribe	NINCLINK-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Unsubscribe	NINCLINK-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com
Switch to Digest	NINCLINK-digest@yahoogroups.com
Switch to Individual	NINCLINK-normal@yahoogroups.com
No-Mail	NINCLINK-nomail@yahoogroups.com



The Care and Feeding of the Girls in the Basement . . .

BY BARBARA SAMUEL

What have you done for your body today?

Remember Roberta's Rules For Better Living? Eat, sleep, take a daily constitutional?

Time to check in. How are you doing on those basic cornerstones? Are you eating healthy food most of the time: many colors, lots of nutrition, close as possible to nature's way? Are you sleeping enough? Have you found a form of exercise you like and can do three or four times a week? Have you figured out a bad habit you'd like to clip or change or give up?

Hi, my name is Barbara, and I'm a caffeine and sugar junkie. The good news is, I made it through the entire year of 2004 without a jolt of nicotine (apart from the odd trip into a bar to breathe deeply), and I've learned to do all kinds of new things physically which are fun and are making me feel better. Bad news: I'm still a sugar addict and my coffee and tea consumption will keep small nations afloat for many years to come.

I also have some brutal deadlines. I *want* them, you understand, I chose them. After a long period of writing v-e-r-y slowly, and perhaps expending creativity in other areas of my life besides writing, I suddenly awakened to a house crowded with characters, ideas, visions, snippets, voices. Having been a writer now for a fairly long time, I did recognize what one must do at such fertile times: write.

The long hours at the computer are, however, very hard on the body. Like many writers, I have a tendency to live in my mind and imagination, and it's all too easy to fall into my pet bad habits of too much caffeine, nibbling on things like Bottle Caps candy, too many meals eaten while I check email or answer phone calls from family members (message #4 from grandmother today, spoken in frail old lady voice, "Well, I sure would like to hear your voice again one of these days..."). I am tempted to skip the exercise because I'm tired. I sometimes want to drink an extra bottle of ale or have some cookies at the end of the day because I "deserve" it for working so hard. I sometimes stay up too late talking on the phone or in instant messenger because I haven't had any down time all day.

Which then only means I'm tired in the morning. Which means I won't enjoy doing the pages I need to get done, and the work itself will feel much harder and I'll wonder if I was nuts to come up with this schedule (all on my own!).

But there are all those characters, sitting around the house, waiting for their chance to get on stage, and there are a couple more story ideas in the wings, waiting their turn, and what writers do is WRITE, after all, so write is what I'll do. There is also quite a



the Girls in the Basement . . .

▶ lot of travel on the schedule, all of it great for filling the well, and renewing my brain and offering something back to the universe... but it takes time, too.

The past week, I hit the wall of physical exhaustion. And once again, I had to remember: the mind is not an entity by itself. I have a body, too. I must care for it, not in some groaning, mommy-don't-make me way, but in a loving, generous way. I need to nurture it, this housing for the girls and my mind, the same way I'd tend a precious child. I need to be asking, regularly, clearly, gently, "What have you done for your body today?"

It's all simple stuff, which is why it often gets neglected. It seems too obvious to be valid or useful: eat right, drink plenty of water, get some exercise and plenty of sleep, and leave stimulants and depressants alone as much as possible.

Duh, right? But, really, we all need to remember it all the time. It's like the Great Secret of Writing. Aspiring writers want it to be more, something else, something easier, but we all know the truth: sit down and write.

Caring for the physical body that holds our brains and imaginations upright is much the same.

In this realm, I know I'm a bit of a nag, but I see too many of my friends and colleagues nursing injuries and bad health and developing health issues that can be helped by good nutrition and movement. And while I've always been an outdoors kind of girl, partly because I grew up in the great weather in Colorado, and partly because I was blessed with good genes, and because I was raised in the era when mothers said, "Do NOT turn on that television! Go outside and get some fresh air!" and you could actually do that —get on your bike and ride down to the river and it was relatively safe and clean, I don't expect everyone to be that physical.

But I do continue my quest to see us taking care of ourselves better, day by day. Job #1 is to move your body. One thing at a time. Whatever you pick is a good thing to choose.

Early in my writing career, I experienced several episodes of an excruciating back condition. When I was ten years old, I slipped down a hill, and twisted, yanked, whatever, my lower back. It healed, but it's my weak spot, and it's easily aggravated by any number of things: serious stress, too many hours at the computer, a bad chair, a long flight. There were times during those

flare-ups that I couldn't sit, stand, or lie down. After experimenting with a number of therapies, including drugs, massage, and chiropractors, I learned that walking regularly would keep it at bay for the most part (not perfectly, but most of the time).

The happy side effect was to recognize that walking makes me feel clearer, saner, less tangled up in details. A good walk blows the cobwebs out of my brain, eases the tension in neck, shoulders, back, gets my lungs moving again after being squished all day. (Check your posture next time you're at the computer and I bet you'll see what I mean.) Often, you don't know how bad you've been feeling until you start to feel great. Walking was an illumination like that for me.

I would also like to make the case for yoga. I've practiced off and on for a decade or more, but have become more devoted over the past two years—mainly because I found out it helped me sleep.

There are a lot of misconceptions about yoga. There are many forms, but in general, no, it doesn't require a slim young body twisting into pretzel shapes. It can be done by the middle aged, the ancient, the plump, the very fat, the infirm, the weak. (Naturally anyone with an ongoing health problem needs to clear a new program with her physician.) The very gentle brands of yoga are appropriate for almost anyone, and the stretching can ease tension in the tight muscles of necks, shoulders, arms. Look around for a short, modified program on DVD or inquire at your local health club or yoga studio for classes for beginners. Even many adult-education programs have yoga classes now, and don't be afraid to go if you don't have a perfect body. I never been to a class that had only perfect young lithe things in there. (*I was there, after all!*)

Maybe you don't walk because you have asthma and it's aggravated by going outside, and you don't like yoga because you have back problems. What can you do? There is bound to be something. Swim, dance, bowl. Flip around the exercise channels on cable and see what there is. There are very frail old ladies at my gym lifting very low weights, walking at 1.5 miles per hour on the treadmill —but honey, they're there every day. If they can do it, I'm sure there's something you can do.

Now, to eating. For several weeks, I've been reading *The Joy Diet*, by Martha Beck. It's not a book about what to eat or how to lose weight or diet or anything like that. It's a regime for the mind and spirit with ten steps that sound simple and are both illuminating and sometimes difficult. I highly recommend the book and have, in fact, been buying it for friends. Unlike many teachers or psychologists penning self-help for the masses, Beck is an excellent writer, with a warm and earthy tone I find disarming.

Which means I can hear her. Your mileage may

vary, of course. It's that voice business — what speaks to me might not speak to you. But it might.

Anyway, the final step in the Joy Diet is called Feasting. It's a principle that calls for you to bring festivity and a feast-ful attitude to your daily life, in meals, in treating yourself. It's another way to be conscious, present in the moment, participating in the life you are living as the moments of it speed by. Instead of unconsciously downing say... a couple of slices of toast while reading email, feasting means choosing food you'd love to eat and sitting down to enjoy it.

This morning, I decided to try it — instead of the peanut butter toast that's my usual workday breakfast, I asked my body what sounded good, and we gazed around the kitchen together. What would constitute a feast-ful breakfast? Ah— an egg sounded lovely, with a piece of sunflower and millet bread, all crunchy and grainy, with some butter. Oh, and let's add a grapefruit. No, no, a *broiled* grapefruit, with a little butter and sugar on top. Excellent. And a fresh cup of coffee, with sugar and milk.

I set the table in the dining room with my blue glass dishes. Sun streamed in through the windows. White candlesticks in geometric crystal candleholders shone against the dark blue wall. The grapefruit was deep rosy red, the egg perfectly cooked. I opened the thin skin over the yolk to reveal that luscious deep orange-gold into which I could dip the toast. (Behind me, two dogs sat alertly, blinking and not daring to whine, even with that faint, subvocal sound, because they know if I cook an egg, they'll get the whites).

The whole ritual, cooking the food, setting the table, sitting down to eat, cleaning up afterward, took about twenty minutes, maybe twenty-five, and then I came to my office, sat down, and started writing, feeling well-tended, well-nourished, the sort of person who takes good care of her girls, so they take care of her. I feasted for breakfast. How lovely!

And not only a feast, but a healthy one (more or less) — trusting the rule of lots of color, there was red and brown and yellow and white. There are lots of vitamins, minerals and fiber in whole grain bread and the grapefruit. Eggs are, ounce for ounce, powerhouses of nutrition. You see I still indulged my sugar fetish, and coffee, but it's very *good* coffee. I made a point of it.

You might say, "Well, but I'm *busy*. I must take my meals at the computer." Yes, well, me, too. What I've been noticing is that I'm not really achieving much when I eat at my desk. I'll doodle through some emails, check Amazon.com numbers, think more about work, etc. Getting up from the computer, walking out of my office, to the kitchen to fix a meal — whatever it is— and eating it somewhere else doesn't take that much time. If I read the newspaper or listen to some music I like while I eat lunch, then I'm genuinely resting my mind, and will return to the work refreshed.

Now to a little nap. That rest period we used to take after lunch in nursery school. That pause that gives you space and peace. With such a rigorous schedule, I'm not always able to fit in naps and exercise in every single day, but I try. More often than not, it's a choice between one or the other. I've been choosing exercise more often than naps, but there are days my body says, "Oh, please can we just go lie down!" and in the spirit of doing some thing nice for it every day, I say, "Okay, let's go lie down."

Now we've written a column, my body and I. It's nearly lunch time and we're thinking maybe some tuna salad—and a little piece of Godiva chocolate after—yes. Lovely.

What have you done for your body today? Check in. See what it's saying. Give it a little extra rest or nutrition or exercise for a few days and see what happens.

Barbara Samuel's website is www.barbarasamuel.com

Bits'n'Pieces

Bloomsbury Expands by Walker Purchase

Bloomsbury Publishing acquired Walker Publishing Company in Dec. 2004. Walker will operate as a division of Bloomsbury's U.S. subsidiary, Bloomsbury USA; Walker president and publisher George Gibson will report to Karen Rinaldi, Bloomsbury USA publisher.

Walker, which publishes about 60 titles annually, both adult and children's, is expected to balance Bloomsbury's nonfiction list and give access to the school and library market. Walker will keep its space on Fifth Avenue, although Bloomsbury is located in the Flatiron Building.

[The day after the acquisition Bloomsbury announced it will publish the sixth Harry Potter book in the UK.]

Bookstores & Tsunami Relief

Lemuria in Jackson, Miss., signed on as a sponsor for a January 12 benefit for disaster victims being organized by the Jackson Free Press.

Book Passage in Corte Madera and San Francisco, is co-sponsoring a fundraising dinner later this month for the tsunami victims.

The Learned Owl Book Shop in Hudson, Ohio, is giving a free copy of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* & guaranteed front of the line rights on July 16 to the first 20 patrons that write a \$200 check to the American Red Cross's Tsunami Relief Fund. The owner will continue to take \$200 checks for a place in line and donate \$176 to the American Red Cross.



Graphic by Laura

Just a brief reminder:

The Novelists, Inc
15th Annual
Conference
will be in New
York City at the

Crowne Plaza Hotel on Times Square
April 7-8-9, 2005

Member Registration (after Dec 15): \$315
Industry Registration (after Dec 15): \$195

Register online: www.ninc.com

Crowne Plaza Hotel Room Rates:
Single/Double: \$209 per night
Additional Occupants: \$20

Reservations to be handled individually.
You must be registered for the conference
in order to get the specially reduced Ninc rate

Call the Crowne Plaza at:
1-800-243-6969 (from US only)
1-212-977-4000 (outside US)
or visit their website at

www.manhattan.crowneplaza.com/nycmh/index.shtml

Need a roommate? After you've registered,
Contact Eve Gaddy at egaddy@cox-internet.com
Please put "Roommates" in the subject line.

For up-to-the-minute information:
Check the website: www.ninc.com
or contact Ken Casper, the conference coordinator,
at littleoaks@juno.com
or Susan Gable, the conference registrar,
at sgable@susangable.com

Murder in the Grove Boise Idaho June 10-11

Interested in a conference for fans and writers of mystery, thrillers and romantic suspense? The Popular Fiction Assn. of Idaho and Partners in Crime are sponsoring Guest of Honor Carolyn Hart, Special Guest Ridley Pearson, plus agents, editors, forensic experts, and much more. Also included is a contest for writers not published in mystery fiction with a deadline of Feb. 28, 2005 for contest submissions. Information at www.murderinthegrove.com

Readers Vote on Man Booker Award 2005

The award is £60,000 and is open to authors who have published fiction in English or whose work is

Bits'n'Pieces

available in English. An online people's choice database will be part of the selection process. Online participants can also track the judging process. A shortlist will be announced in early 2005 with the final winner revealed sometime later.

NJ Romance Writers Looking for Speakers

Put Your Heart in a Book Conference is planned for Oct. 7-8, 2005 at the Woodbridge Sheraton in Woodbridge, NJ.

If you are interested in speaking, please forward your information to either Deb Mullins, NJRW President, at debmulman@aol.com or Rayna Vause, 2005 NJRW Conference Chair at rvause@earthlink.net.



a publication of 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