

# N I N K

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## Seeing Red

BY CHERYL LEO, FREELANCE COPY EDITOR

You're on top of your game. Your manuscript left your weary fingertips a month ago with the few revisions requested by your editor, the book is on the publisher's production schedule, and you can almost hear the low hum of the royalty machine.

Then you get your manuscript back from the copy editor, and it looks like a battle scene straight out of *Gladiator*.

My advice to you is this: Take a deep breath, regroup, and try not to kill the messenger. In fact, consider viewing the copy editor as exactly that—a messenger who tells you where at least one reader paused, stumbled, fretted, twitched in confusion, or simply followed publisher orders.

Because I belong to a writers' group and work as a freelance copy editor/proofreader, I hear from both sides of the editorial process. Happily, some authors look at the copy editor-author relationship as mutually beneficial: Writers get cleaner text and copy editors get paid. But many authors view copy editors as a mandatory, unwelcome evil, and they literally and figuratively see red when the marked-up manuscript hits their doorstep.

In the interest of your blood pressure and my self-preservation, the following is one copy editor's perspective and a few suggestions to keep the editing process from becoming a blood sport.

Though undeniably biased, I think copy editors often get a bum rap. Is this because authors expect too little from us or too much? I suspect it's a bit of both. We're told to respect author style and make as few changes as possible. Yet we're also responsible for tracking in the story every character's physical attributes, the time of day or day of the week, quirks of individual character speech, and on which side of town the hero's Aunt Ziggy lives—while ensuring grammar rules are followed, splices and

typos corrected, spellings checked, facts verified, notes to the typesetter clear, word/phrase echoes flagged, and myriad other style points consistent. And we must do so in only one or two passes through a manuscript.

Can you hear the whine?

### Reducing the Red

Keeping the copy editor's job in mind, you can do several things to avoid the carnage on your next manuscript.

Be as "clean" in your writing as possible, paying particular attention to chapters you might have knocked out to make your deadline. This seems like a no-brainer, but enough authors get sloppy, especially toward the end of a manuscript, that it warrants mention. Every time copy editors have to pause to mark a typo, a serial comma, or a missing period, you risk their missing something even more important—like a shift in your protagonist's hair color or the type of jewel in the hilt of your warrior maiden's heirloom dagger.

To make CE alterations easier to bear, understand that many are not *corrections* but simply *changes* required by your house's style. The marks do not imply that you are wrong in your use of the English language, merely out of step with that particular publisher's take on it.

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Address changes may be made on the website.

For members without Internet access,  
send changes to the Central Coordinator.

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## 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. For further information or to recommend eligible writers, contact:

Membership Chair Holly Jacobs  
P.O. Box 11102  
Erie PA 16514-1102  
or email HollyJacobsI@aol.com

### New Applicants:

Nancy Finney, Urbana IL  
Stephanie Tyler, New Rochelle NY  
Maria Hoag, Redlands CA  
Mary Stella, Marathon FL  
Beth Ciotta, Brigantine NJ

### New Members:

Patricia Ryan, Rochester NY  
Diana Ball, Portland OR  
Nancy Jackson, Corvallis OR

## Ninc has room to grow...

Recommend membership to your colleagues. Prospective members may apply online at ninc.com.

Refer members at ninc.com. Go to Members Only, "Member Services" and click "Refer a New Member to Ninc."

Heading to a conference? Take some Ninc brochures. Contact Holly Jacobs at HollyJacobsI@aol.com with your mailing address and the number of brochures wanted and she'll get them out to you asap.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE:

We are randomly surveying 100 Ninc members. If you receive a survey, please answer the nine questions and return the survey to us, as instructed. It's important for all those surveyed to respond.

# Running Away from Home

Those of you with extremely sharp eyes might have noticed there's no address listed for me over there on Page 2. That's not an error; I don't have a home right now, so I have no address.

Your president has run away from home.

I've promised the Board that this is not an effort to move away and leave no forwarding address, tempting as that might be. I *will* have a new address at some point and when I have it, I will share. Honest.

Moving in the middle of my presidential year is...

Challenging? Demented? Suicidal? I haven't quite decided yet.

But it certainly is interesting.

And this isn't just a move, it's a **move**.

After living in the same house for nearly 23 years, I'm houseless. I've also quit my job at the *Washington Post*, which means parting ways with my journalism career of mumble-mumble years. And I'm moving a few states away.

All adjustments.

Once I settle in, my plan is to experiment, and see where my writing takes me. This is a change that's been brewing for a while, with the heat turned up under it by Gin Ellis's death...time no longer seems limitless. I've been needing to get my butt in gear. But as long as I was trying to balance the emotional, time, and creative demands of the job vs. writing, while simultaneously trying to balance the necessary income from job and writing, my choices were limited.

As much as I've loved my home, my yard, my friends, and my life in Arlington, VA, the realities—in other words, money—dictated that I could not stay without *The Other Job*. In order to put my writing in the driver's seat, I had to leave.

I put my house on the market May 13 and settled in to wait. I had girded my loins to endure at least three months to see what, if anything, happened.

Instead, I had an offer within two days and, after negotiations, a signed contract two and a half days after that. Then came inspections, appraisal, estimates, and box-packing. All resulting in no longer having a home address, as of July 16.

The plan is to make that temporary. While my possessions (including way more boxes of books than a sane person would move) are in storage, I will stay with my sister and brother-in-law and house-hunt in Northern Kentucky.

Why Northern Kentucky? Not, as some might speculate, because it's just across the Ohio River from Laura Resnick's Cincinnati home, and thus would concentrate the power structure of Ninc in one area. (In case you haven't noticed, it's not only debatable what power Ninc's "powers that be" have, it's for sure ▶

## Election Notice

**President Elect:** Kasey Michaels

**Secretary:** Charlotte Hubbard

**Treasurer:** Ruth Glick

**Nominating Committee** (listed in alphabetical order—five to be elected):

Linda Barrett  
Edie Claire  
Kathy Garbera  
Lori Handeland  
Julie Leto Klapka  
Kathleen O'Reilly  
Kathy Shay  
Kristine Smith  
Susan Wiggs

As set forth in article IX, Section 4 of the Bylaws, additional nominations may be made in writing if signed by the nominee and at least ten (10) active members who have not signed the nominations of any other person for the same position.

Such nominations must be made by August 15, 2007. Mail all written nominations to Sylvie Kurtz, P.O. Box 702, Milford, NH 03055.

that structure isn't a forté.)

The cost of housing in NoKy makes this life change do-able. It's also about an hour from my sister and brother-in-law. And it's as far south as I could get, while remaining an easy day's drive to my parents and other family in the Chicago area. (Global warming would have to accelerate a whole lot to get me to move back to Northern Illinois.)

So, now, if all goes according to plan (or within a fudge-factor of according-to-plan), I will be living without The Other Job and without counting on writing income. If the plan fizzles, of course, I could be saying, "Welcome to Wal-Mart." But in the meantime, the muse, rather than the biweekly paycheck, is going to be in charge.

She just better appreciate it after all the boxes I've packed.

Packing has brought revelations. I was tossing out and giving away things with little difficulty...until it came to books. I agonized over each one. The ones I hadn't read (surely that book would reach out and grab me someday, even if it hasn't for the seven years it's been sitting on the shelf) and the ones I had (I really, really liked it, and the itch that only that book can scratch might come again any moment).

The other category that challenged my decision-making was goodies in the file drawers. Intriguing articles, clipped photographs, and file after file of material from various trips. My Throw-It-Out Side screamed that all this stuff could be found on the Internet. The Keep-It Side pointed out that each item brought back memories—the smell, the sight, the *feel* of a place. These tangible files evoked the intangible.

I opened a box of photos, and memories of my first trip to Wyoming poured out like sage-scented vapor that not only surrounded me as I sat there on the floor, but seeped into my pores.

I'd had a free airline ticket and decided to go somewhere I'd never been to before. I ended up in Sheridan, rented a car, and headed across the state. So much of what I saw amazed me, and much of that ended up in more than a dozen books I've set in Wyoming so far. But one particular moment is startlingly clear.

I had driven west out of Powell, out of land lush with irrigation and into a moonscape of alkali ponds and not-of-this-world rock formations. The road threaded between two high jumbles of geology looming above and then curved around a third one as the view opened wide and long to the northwest. And there were the Rockies. Oh, my God, there were the Rockies.

No warming up with foothills, no gentling green as with other mountains I knew, no warning at all.

I pulled over and stared.

Then I turned around and went back and followed the same road around the same curve again. The sight

stopped—then restarted—my heart a second time. And a third. And a fourth.

If I get my heart's desire from this move, that's what it will produce—taking me around a major curve in the highway and opening up a stupendous vista.

But I have to be honest. Even if I knew for absolutely certain that I'd get that result, leaving still would bring pain.

This house has been my home, my haven. Heck, its old wallpaper dust got me started writing. While scraping layer after layer of painted-over wallpaper, a story started poking at me. So I'd type what the voices in my head were saying until they were quiet, then I'd go back to scraping until they rescued me again.

I will so miss sitting on my screen porch talking writing and life with dear friends. I will miss some of the best neighbors ever. I will miss the holly tree I see out the window to the right of my desk, the magnolia I see out the window to the left, and all the green and soaring trees between.

But still—even knowing how much the missing will hurt—I've run away from home.

Because sometimes you have to shake things up. You have to sort out, throw away, re-evaluate what remains. With your belongings, with your writing, with your life.

So here I go, shaken and stirred, heading around the curve.

— Pat McLaughlin

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE NINC SURVEY!

We're counting on 100 of our members to help out Ninc—and it won't hurt one bit.

Ninc volunteers Valerie Taylor and pres-elect Laura Resnick have crafted a random sample survey to help form a snapshot of Ninc members for PR and outreach efforts, as well as helping this and future boards.

To be legit, **all the randomly selected members need to fill out the survey.**

It's just nine multiple-choice questions. It should have arrived by email in July. If you haven't responded, please do so now. Volunteers will follow up by phone to those who received a survey and didn't reply so that we can get the best information possible. Thanks to the selected members for cooperating!

# Making of a Book Video

BY TINA WAINSCOTT

I read with great interest the *NINK* March 2007 article on book videos since I was in the process of making my first one for my July book, *Until the Day You Die*. My friend Vicki Hinze had done one for her *Silhouette Bombshell Body Double* back in 2004, when book videos were a sparkle in the eye of authors looking for an exciting promotional medium. She hooked me up with a friend of hers, William Olsen, who has done films, commercial videos, and two *Book Shorts*®. William formed *Writers-in-Motion*® long before the current boom, but not finding enough interest, he focused elsewhere. Now he was ready to jump into the market again. He and I emailed back and forth, and I immediately knew we were going to be a great team.

The idea of doing a book video was daunting, both in scope and expense. I wanted to do a live-action video, like a movie trailer. That meant coming up with ideas, tone, and those dramatic scenes that would best showcase the book (Read: *TIME*). Live action meant actors, settings, camera equipment, and crew (Read: *MONEY*). But if I was going to do this, I wanted to do it in a big way. One thing that lessened the financial sting was that it's tax-deductible.

Remember how I mentioned feeling as though William and I would be a team? *Team* is the operative word here. We agreed that he and his crew were the experts at making a video, and I was the expert at my book. We pooled our expertise, recognizing that we would have to trust each other to bring the best parts of the project to light. I think it's important to be an active part of the planning process. Before your production company comes up with the first idea, get your vision out there. Once they get going with their vision, it might be harder to change it. This is your project, so have a voice in it.

## The Production Process

First, I had to narrow down the tone and style. What aspects were important to get a sense of the story across?

1. **Type of Story:** Mine is psychological suspense, so



Getting ready for the jogging scene in the park.

it was important to show the villain. What drives your story should also drive your video.

2. **Characters:** I think a hint of characterization is important to snag viewers-turned-readers. The tricky part is to get that across without sacrificing the pace of the video.

3. **Plot/Theme:** I am confused by videos/movie trailers that show images but tell me nothing about the plot. All it might take is a narrator or the characters saying a line or two.

4. **Setting:** Writers make up settings by researching the area, taking pictures, and, at times, making up towns/worlds. Having a setting in a courthouse, a city street, or mansion is easy for us. Not so for the filmmaker. If your producer is local you can help with scene location. Otherwise, they will find the best locations for the project and budget. Some locations, like state parks and county buildings, require a permit, which adds to the cost.

5. **Length:** I'd watched 30-second videos that seemed too short and didn't give enough information, and I'd seen longer videos that felt too long. I decided on two minutes.

Luckily, my setting of New Hampshire and *Writers-in-Motion's* location of Asheville, NC, jibed in terms of scenery. So did the time of year.

I chose a variety of scenes and wrote the

synopsis to give William an idea of the book. I forgot to clarify that I didn't expect him to use *all* of the scenes, and he called me and said, "We'll need fifteen minutes to get all of this in!"

When William sent the first screenplay it was with a warning. Things don't necessarily happen in chronological order in film trailers. What's important is the flow of the images and narrative. Even though I understood the concept, seeing it on paper (and later in the video) was harder for me to digest. This is where you must trust your producer.

Something else you can get away with: changing the actual scene for visual impact/brevity. For example, two separate incidents in my book are combined into one scene. Will readers be annoyed that they didn't read that particular scene in the book? I doubt it.

The team handled other background preparation: equipment being bought and/or rented, locations scouted, timelines crunched.

Asheville happens to be a great place to film, because a lot of filming activity is in the area, and the actors aren't unionized. I had only two actors in my

budget: the heroine and the villain. I sent William descriptions, knowing that finding actors who fit those exactly would be unlikely. I knew I would have to leave my vision of my characters behind. Once William found my actors, though, it wasn't as hard as I thought it would be.

To keep in budget, we had one day to film the entire video. Being on the Writers-In-Motion "set" was a fantastic experience. I got to see the behind-the-scenes action, give input, and meet all of the people who were putting so much into this project. Plus I have great pictures to put on my website. The most exciting part was watching scenes from my book come to life. I also got to make a cameo appearance. My friend and I are walking out of the courthouse as Maggie is going in. The courthouse was closed, so I reasoned that our presence would make it look like a regular day. And, heck, I just wanted to be in the video.

After the wrap up and much work on their end putting everything together, next came the editing process. Except there was a minor problem. We had so much great material that the video length was coming in at over four and a half minutes. I watched the first version and was blown away. It didn't feel long. But one part halted the forward momentum of the suspense: the romantic part. I wanted to convey the romantic element, and hint that the hero has a secret. Still, it didn't seem to fit. So, as in our books when we must eagle-eye a scene we love, I suggested that we cut that part. The production team loved the idea, and we were all amazed at how cutting those thirty seconds shot the "train out of the station," as William put it.

With the video in the final stage I plunged into marketing, gathering information on everything book video: where to post it, how to market it. This was going to be fun promo, but it was still going to be a lot of work. If I hoped to get the most from my investment I had to get the video out there for the world to see. Writers-in-Motion was going to post it in several locations, but I wanted to saturate the Internet.

## The Marketing Process

**When?** Send it out too early and you'll dilute enthusiasm. People will forget or give up looking for your book at the stores. Too late, and you'll miss that opportunity for momentum or your books will already be off the shelves.

Sheila Clover English, CEO of Circle of Seven Productions, says, "The timing of a video is key to the promotional success of the campaign in relation to the book release. A video should not be released prior to pre-order status being available."

As it turns out, the When is a three-pronged

### Links to Videos:

#### Live Action

Tina Waincott: [tinawaincott.com](http://tinawaincott.com)

Vicki Hinze: [vickihinze.com](http://vickihinze.com)

Sue Kearney: [susankearney.com](http://susankearney.com)

#### Mix of Photos/Footage

Michele Albert: [inkalicious.com/avalon/](http://inkalicious.com/avalon/)

Kayla Perrin: [youtube.com:80/watch?v=zG0wk8bt-gg](http://youtube.com:80/watch?v=zG0wk8bt-gg)

Alyson Noel: [cosproductions.com/videos/flymetothemoon.htm](http://cosproductions.com/videos/flymetothemoon.htm)

#### Author Interviews

Lisa Gardner: [lisagardner.com/hidden\\_video.htm](http://lisagardner.com/hidden_video.htm)

Tami Hoag: [expandedbooks.com/qtvideo.php?bookid=24](http://expandedbooks.com/qtvideo.php?bookid=24)

Barbara Delinsky: [expandedbooks.com/qtvideo.php?bookid=166](http://expandedbooks.com/qtvideo.php?bookid=166)

#### A Few Video Companies

Writers-in-Motion: [writersinmotion.com](http://writersinmotion.com)

Circle of Seven Productions: [cosproductions.com](http://cosproductions.com)

Scrap Fairy Designs: [myspace.com/scrapfairydesigns](http://myspace.com/scrapfairydesigns)

VidLit Productions: [vidlit.com](http://vidlit.com)

Pizzazzy Productions: [pizzazzyproductions.com](http://pizzazzyproductions.com)

Stonecreek Media: [stonecreekmedia.com](http://stonecreekmedia.com)

Expanded Books: [expandedbooks.com](http://expandedbooks.com)

approach. First, you want the video available to bookstore buyers when they are placing their orders. So, three months out, I posted the video on a hidden page at my website with a link for Booksellers/Press on the main page. I gave that link to booksellers, my publisher, and anyone else who wanted/needed to see it.

Second, as Vicki Hinze says, “Online postings [to blogs, etc.] align with the book being available for pre-order and include links to buy the book.”

Third: “Notice to readers [your newsletter, etc.] should coincide with the street date—to spur sales the week the book is actually on the shelves.”

English also had a great idea: post a teaser about the video coming before it’s available, as well as talk it up on your blog.

Sue Kearney, who has made three videos, agreed with the above timing. “However, I do put the video up early on my website for fans curious about upcoming books.”

English had other ideas, too: “You may want to time the release with other promotional endeavors so that it packs a bigger punch. For example, release the video the day an online ad for your book starts. A simple tag of *Watch the video!* at the end of your ad can send more people to your site.”

And, in fact, you’ll want to put that kind of line on every piece of promo you do, including post cards, bookmarks, and your email signature.

**Where?** Putting it on your website only reaches people who are already readers. You want to reach people who have never heard of you.

Your video production company should post it to several sites for you. Ask what services are included in your package. Writers-in-Motion posts the link to ten sites. Circle of Seven Productions includes various marketing packages to their clients, and they recently began offering one for non-clients as well.

Vicki Hinze did a mass mailing of DVDs to distributors and independents who could run them in store (point of sale) and to all libraries that serve over 100,000. She ran the video at signings and at conferences where she did workshops. She sent disks to RWA chapters that included a “Secrets Every Writer Should Know” lecture.

Blogs seem to be a great place to post your link. Just pop in, plant your blurb, and pop off. Of course, it’s better if they are blogs you regularly visit anyway. Find anything that’s related to your book, including book and writing blogs. You are only limited by the time and effort you are willing to put forth. Don’t be afraid to ask friends and family to drop a link for you, too.

See the sidebar for a basic list. By the time this article appears, there will probably be even more places to post videos.

I think the most important thing is to plan in advance of the book’s release. Keep in mind, though, that blog discussions now will be stale by the time you are ready to post, so don’t get too far ahead.

Another way to use your book video...sell it to Hollywood, baby! Curtis Brown agent Elizabeth Sheinkman used a five-minute video that author Rupert Isaacson made and landed a seven-figure deal.

## Types of Videos

### Live Action Videos

I did live-action because I wanted the sense of drama and excitement that only dramatic scenes could give the viewer.

Sue Kearney did one, “because I thought it was something different.”

Vicki Hinze never considered doing anything else. “Mine was the first one out there, so there weren’t choices as there are now. That said, I think any time you can do a mini-movie that encourages people to forget they’re watching a commercial, you’ve got a winning product. That’s far easier to accomplish with live actors.” ▶

### Places to Post Your Video/Link:

- ◆ Send to everyone at your publisher and ask them to forward to the sales reps and marketing personnel (and heck, everyone!). You want them excited about it. Can they post it on their website?
- ◆ Online independent booksellers
- ◆ Chain booksellers’ websites (might be better if approached by your publisher). Be aware of timelines. Borders, for instance, requires 3½ months lead time to approve your video before posting it. (Note: They are revamping their website to include more videos and author links, so check for requirements. As of now, they are limiting the length of videos they’ll post/include in their e-newsletter to 1 minute or less.)
- ◆ Video sites such as YouTube, Google Video, MSN, Grouper, ifilm...more and more keep popping up.
- ◆ Myspace (You’ll have to create a page.)
- ◆ Your book page on Amazon.com
- ◆ [thewriterslife.homestead.com/booktrailerpromotion.html](http://thewriterslife.homestead.com/booktrailerpromotion.html)
- ◆ Any associations you belong to

Some questions those thinking about doing a live-action video might have:

*What if the season in my book doesn't coincide with the season at the filming location?*

I asked William Olsen what he would have done if my book had been set in summer instead of winter (when we filmed). He said, "First, I would have made sure we never saw anyone's breath. Second, avoid trees. Third, sweat...lots of it. A fan in the court room turning in the background, Maggie wiping sweat from her brow, and so on."

*What should I know about locations?*

William says, "Location scouting is fun. You start with the best scenario and then work within your budget. Most people are thrilled to have someone use their house. If you come inside for the day, it usually involves a location fee, sometimes even for exteriors. We budget

### Other Tips:

Google elements that relate to your book: suspense, oil drilling, transsexuality...whatever you can tie in. You could spend weeks on forums, blogs, Yahoo groups, and discussion groups planting info on your book and video—or hire a college student to do it for you.

**Book sites:** Many sites are dedicated to books. Narrowing those down to subgenre will help. Some don't allow you to send information, but they may have a blog or message boards. Plan on joining a lot of forums, though, because some won't allow you to post unless you're a member.

From Michele Albert: "If you do it yourself, make practice videos first and learn to use the effects before making the final video. I'm also going to use videos on my site for purposes other than promoting a single book."

From Vicki Hinze: "Think of the video as a story within a story that goes straight to the emotion to quickly connect with readers/potential buyers. Shop for quality. Those where the quality lacks become not only a waste of money but do more harm than good. The goal is to have the viewer 'think' they're watching a movie and not a commercial. Do that, and you've got a powerful sales tool."

Check with your website provider in advance to see if they can host your video and, if so, what format they want. You can link from communities like YouTube, but their logo will be on the video. On YouTube, they tend to freeze your video at some seemingly random spot in pre-play mode, which can leave an odd image. ▲

well for locations so we don't have to compromise."

*What are the advantages of doing live-action video?*

It is probably the most dramatic, enticing way to get readers to buy your book.

*Disadvantages?*

The cost, and probably a bit more time in planning.

### Mix of Photos/Video

Live-action is only one way to go. Michele Albert made her own video using Microsoft Windows Movie Maker, along with a few related plug-ins. When asked why she decided to do a video, she said, "Because I'm a geek and they're gimmicky in a fun way. I made my own simply because I couldn't afford to hire anyone." Most of us can relate to that.

Michele said, "I did a mix of stock photos and stock video footage because I thought the mix would be more interesting to watch than just image stills."

Sites Michele used were Istockphoto (images and video footage), Studio Cutz (music), Sound Rangers, and Sounddogs (sound fx). Links to these sites can be found on: [monsterkisses.com/log/2007/01/09/report-from-the-trenches-video-ads/](http://monsterkisses.com/log/2007/01/09/report-from-the-trenches-video-ads/)

Here you will learn how to make a video for under \$80.

Many videos use photos, music, and narrative text. Photos include stock, cover art, and author photos. These seem to be the most common and are probably a good compromise if you can't do it yourself and have a limited budget. You can achieve a live-action look by utilizing stock live-action scenes that fit into your story tone and plot.

### Author Interviews

The key to an author interview is to be interesting. You are representing yourself as an author and not just one book. Lisa Gardner had a great idea. She created an interview to show her dark side in a hilarious way.

### Costs

You can spend anywhere from the aforementioned \$80 to the-sky-is-the-limit. (Think well-known actors or sports stars, elaborate sets, etc.) Figure out your parameters and budget and then contact several companies for quotes. You want the best quality for the buck. You can also add author interviews, lectures, and other extras.

### Do They Work?

Well, sure, if we knew the "magic promo item" we'd all be doing it. And in fact, that's what happens with anything that's new and exciting. I can't speak on the success of my video yet, but I asked those who have done videos if they thought it helped. ▶

Cont on page 13 ▶



# Leading a Double Life

I recently announced that I've been leading a double life—that in addition to writing big sexy romance novels as Toni Blake I've also spent the last three and a half years writing erotica as Lacey Alexander.

Now, I'm not the sort of person who generally goes around hiding half of what I'm doing, and I'm not a terribly good keeper of secrets, either. So this has been an interesting road to travel, to say the least.

## How Did This All Start?

Seven category romance novels into my career, my publisher unceremoniously dumped me. So, needless to say, I was devastated and feeling pretty washed up in the romance biz. I was still actively writing romances and my then-agent was trying hard to sell them, but I felt very adrift and as if it was quite possible I would never sell another book.

Over lunch one day, fellow Ninc member Laura Resnick suggested that perhaps I should just try something new—for fun and a sense of freedom, and to possibly help re-establish my confidence. In the summer of 2003, erotic publisher Ellora's Cave was just emerging, becoming known as one of the first e-publishers whose authors were earning more than chickenfeed for their efforts. Since I already wrote very sexy romance, erotica didn't seem like that much of a stretch—and almost as immediately as Laura suggested it, I was intrigued. I decided writing something a bit left of center might be exactly what I needed, and if I sold the book and made a little money in the process, it would be good for my writer's ego.

I also decided I would take a separate pseudonym for this book, which I saw as a one-off thing to help me cope with the major speed bumps my career had hit. Although “sexy romance” and “erotica” might sound like much the same thing, they can be worlds apart and I instantly envisioned my erotica as a very different animal than my Toni Blake books. My sexy romance novels focus on relationship and conflict and emotion, and they just happen to contain a lot of sensuality. Whereas I saw my erotica novels focusing tightly on a woman's erotic adventure and being written in a much more graphic way. Hence, my sexy romance novels are about romance, and my erotica novels are about sex.

So you may be asking: How did you approach this?

Did you buy a bunch of Ellora's Cave books or other erotica novels to study the market? The answer: Um, no. I know that's what we're *supposed* to do when we approach a new market, but I was pretty fed up with trying to fit my work into pre-established markets by then, and I decided I was simply going to sit down and write what I thought constituted good erotica—an erotic fantasy for women—and if it sold, great, and if it didn't, then I'd figure I wasn't meant to write erotica.

Three days after I sent the book to Ellora's Cave, they bought it, and I became Lacey Alexander (Lacey is my mother's poodle's name and Alexander puts me at the top of alphabetical lists.) And through the magic of electronic publishing, the book was released a mere three months later.

What happened then is what still surprises me most about my erotica career. The book sold. And sold. And sold. Which pretty much meant it would be silly not to write another one. Or two. So one book became a trilogy—which I'm proud to say still continues to sell well in both e-book form and print. Still more erotica books came after those. So without quite meaning to, I suddenly had a new career as an erotica writer.

## Maintaining the Secret

A funny thing happened to me on the way to my erotica career. Literally a week or two after Ellora's Cave bought my first Lacey Alexander book, my agent sold my first Toni Blake single title novel to Warner Books. (I had told my agent about my foray into erotica and she chose not to represent it, which was fine with me.) So whereas one day I had no career to speak of, very soon after, I had two. Strange business, this, and I can only conclude that my career stars must have chosen to align in November 2003.

When the Warner contract arrived, the non-compete clause had to be amended to give me permission to write erotica as Lacey Alexander, and the amendment stated that I must make “best efforts” to keep my identity secret. I will admit it surprised me that Warner cared about this, but I didn't argue since I'd already decided to keep it quiet myself for two reasons.

First, I'd written a pretty “out there” book compared to my sexy Toni Blake romances. What I refer to as “women's erotica” or “romantic erotica” is all over ▶

the shelves now, but back then, it was something of a new frontier. At the time, I worried that the extremities of my Lacey books might honestly turn Toni Blake readers off, and I failed to see the potential of a cross-over market.

The second reason blurs the lines between professional and personal. I had, early in my career, made Toni Blake a person who's pretty easy to find. Despite safeguards I tried to put in place later, anyone handy with Google can probably track down my phone number and address if they try—it's simply hard to hide yourself in this brave new Internet world. And given the nature of Lacey's work (extreme, graphic, and kinky sex) I didn't want to make *her* that easy to find. So as long as I kept Lacey's identity a secret, I didn't have to worry much about creepy male readers stalking me (and yes, Lacey does occasionally get email from creepy male readers, who are always *convinced* the books are autobiographical, by the way).

And so Warner gave me a *third* reason, a contractual obligation, and that one was far quicker and easier to explain when necessary, so I relied on it a lot in the early Lacey days.

However, keeping a secret, even when it's your own, is not always as easy as it sounds. What can I say? I'm a sharer. So I *had* to tell *some* people—my closest friends, my husband, my mother (although I made the books sound very boring to her so she wouldn't want to read them). And as time passed, I slowly found myself breaking my own rule and telling other people, too—writer friends. Because as the erotica became a bigger and bigger part of my two-pronged career, it was simply difficult to talk about writing and the industry without including it.

And to compound that mistake, I soon began to forget *who* I'd told *what*. So the secret began to leak out over time, more in some circles than others. Imagine my shock when I was attending the 2005 *Romantic Times* conference and a number of readers rushed up to ask if I was Lacey Alexander. (To which I replied, "Keep it down, would ya?") And recently a reviewer informed me that she considered it the "the worst kept secret ever."

### **"Coming Out of the Closet"**

So you're probably wondering why, after all this, I revealed my secret.

Simple, really. It just got too exhausting to keep.

I'd been toying with the idea of outing myself for a year or so, but what really helped me make the decision was when Lacey (yes, it's just easier to refer to my other self in the third person sometimes) sold to NAL. I knew that I wanted to promote the NAL books harder than I'd promoted the previous ones—suddenly the Lacey side of my career seemed like a bigger concern. And I

knew it would be difficult to promote effectively while continuing to keep my identity under wraps. In fact, I knew booksellers and readers would be more interested in trying a Lacey book if they knew Lacey was Toni Blake. (And yes, I realize that contradicts my earlier thought that there was no cross-over market, but times change—pretty quickly these days.)

As luck would have it, my first Lacey book from NAL was due out in May of this year, right before the release of a Toni Blake book from Avon in June and a Toni Blake Avon re-issue in July. So the timing just seemed a little too serendipitous to pass up. In fact, I even got *Romantic Times Bookclub* to give me half a page to make the announcement myself. And friends at Squawk Radio invited me to follow up on that with a day of guest-blogging there. And the moment I knew the May issue of *RT*—where I outted myself—was hitting mailboxes, I also made a series of announcements at online reader hangouts. So even though it felt a little nerve-racking to my usually conservative self to stand up and say, "Yes, I am the writer of all those very sexually extreme and graphic books," I got to orchestrate it the way I wanted to.

What I learned when I "came out" was pretty shocking. First, an amazing number of Toni readers were already reading Lacey and seemed utterly delighted to find out we were one and the same person. I, frankly, had not seen that coming and it was a lovely surprise. And second, in the current publishing climate where erotica has become so mainstream, there's actually no longer much of a reason to keep it a secret if that's what you write. What was considered a bit taboo just a few years ago now, simply, is *not*. And that's a nice shift from my viewpoint.

### **The Downsides of the Double Life**

1. Keeping the secret is hard. If you really want to keep it a secret, you simply have to lie a lot. I felt forced to lie to many a reader and reviewer, especially those who read both Toni Blake and Lacey Alexander books. And if you tell people—anyone, even people who seem totally committed to keeping your secret—you then officially have to worry about the news trickling out.

2. You have to maintain separate email accounts, and you have to remember which person you are when *answering* that email. If you belong to Yahoogroups, that means setting up a separate Yahoogroup account, as well. When it comes to email and communicating online, it's all a matter of remembering who you're supposed to be at any given moment.

3. You have to do twice as much promo. *Truly* twice as much—because if you're keeping it a secret, there is *zero* cross promotion between your names; with the new name, starting from scratch. So I pay for and main-

tain two entirely separate, unrelated websites, and I am constantly thinking about the best ways to promote both names, each of which I feel benefits from different *kinds* of promotion. Meaning I don't just do everything twice—I do entirely different things for Toni than I do for Lacey. So there's a lot of added expense with two names—and it can be quite a time drain, sometimes to the point of being overwhelming.

As for the different ways I promote Toni versus Lacey—for Toni books, I simply do more. These books are my first love, and frankly, despite all the erotica in the marketplace right now, I feel a straight romance book has a lot more competition—as in all of women's fiction. For Toni, I go the routes most romance authors go: among them advertising in the RWA publication *Romance Sells*, looking for opportunities to write articles for *Romantic Times* or the *Romance Writers Report*, guest-blogging, having bookmarks made, doing mailings to booksellers who have expressed interest in my books, doing booksignings, etc.

For Lacey, up until recently, it was a different ballgame. Why? Because e-book authors work their butts off promoting, because they feel they *must* if anyone is going to buy their book. So they have collectively created a vast network of opportunities for online promotions which readers really seem to respond to. Thus, for Lacey, I have mainly done free promo like posting excerpts on message boards, chatting online a bit at the EC readers loop, sponsoring contests through e-book-friendly websites, and taking part in inexpensive group ads in *Romantic Times*, which allowed my e-books to be reviewed there, which resulted in two Top Picks and two Reviewer's Choice Award nominations, which I exploited the hell out of.

Recently, when Lacey sold to NAL, I did start doing more traditional promo for her.

The main mistake I made with Lacey was that of short-sightedness, of viewing it as a one-book deal and not expecting it to take off. If I'd had any idea where it would lead, I wouldn't have been scrambling to throw together an inferior website a couple of books into Lacey's career, and I wouldn't have said in my author bio (which I actually thought very few people would see), "Lacey Alexander is the pseudonym of an award-winning

author whose romance novels have been published by Harlequin and Kensington." (I give myself a big "Duh!" on that.) And I would have tried harder to be more discriminating about who I told.

## The Upsides of the Double Life

1. Having a secret is, frankly, kind of fun. You get to feel a bit like a double agent.

2. Starting out in a genre which interested me, but frankly, made me nervous, I feel the anonymity really allowed me to write things I never would have otherwise. And I feel that making my erotica somewhat extreme and envelope-pushing is exactly what has made it a success. The double life really allowed me to almost feel like someone else when I sat down to write a Lacey book—a person with total freedom to follow my characters to any kinky, extreme place they wanted to go.

3. Albeit one more unplanned part of this whole double-life experiment, the very act of recently outing myself has provided me with the means for quite a bit of free cross-promotion. And like I said, I was totally wrong about that aspect of things—in addition to having discovered my personas have a ton of readers in common, I also get lots of email from Toni Blake readers who have dashed out to buy Lacey books and vice versa. Lesson learned.

## In the End...

I feel amazingly fortunate. What I expected to be a tiny side road in my career has turned into a busy highway running parallel with my Toni Blake work at the moment.

Keeping my Lacey identity a secret was at once fun and stressful, but having now "come out," I feel relaxed and relieved that it's behind me.

Of course, now I have to hope I don't get stalkers. But realistically, I'm figuring there are so many erotica authors for creepy men to choose from these days that this lowers my odds exponentially (knock on wood). Ah, the risks we take in this crazy business, all with the wish that we can keep building and growing and selling, and ultimately just being able to share our work—hopefully for a profit. ▲

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## Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

**Schulhafer Leaves Kensington to Start New Enterprise:** Joan Schulhafer Publishing and Media Consulting has opened in Clifton N.J. The new firm will specialize in strategic planning, creation of online content, and marketing campaigns for authors and publishers. Schulhafer intends to target certain genres and look for new media opportunities. Contact listed as mjschulhafer@aol.com.



## WRITING is TAXING

BY DIANE O'BRIEN KELLY

For a given tax year, the due dates for estimated tax payments are generally the 15th of April, June, September, and January of the following year. Unfortunately, given the uncertain timing of advances and royalty payments, it can be difficult for an author to juggle tax payments along with all of the other bills that have piled up since that last check from the publisher.

If you find yourself facing an underpayment penalty come tax time, don't despair. You may be able to get that pesky underpayment penalty waived.

An underpayment penalty is computed on Form 2210 and may apply if:

- (1) You owe more than \$1,000.00 in tax with your return, or
- (2) You didn't pay in the appropriate amount with each estimated tax payment, even if you owe little or no tax with your return.

### Avoiding the Penalty

Luckily, there are several ways to avoid the underpayment penalty. The IRS will not impose a penalty, even if you owe more than \$1,000.00 with your return, if any of the following are true:

- (1) You paid in amounts during the year, through either estimated tax payments or withholding, totaling:
  - (a) 100% of the tax for the immediately preceding tax year if your adjusted gross income for that tax year was \$150,000.00 or less if you filed a married joint return or \$75,000.00 or less if you filed a married separate or single return; or
  - (b) 110% of the tax for the immediately preceding tax year if your adjusted gross income for that tax year was more than \$150,000.00 if you filed a married joint return or more than \$75,000.00 if you filed a married separate or single return.

- (2) The balance of the tax owed with your return is 10% or less of the total tax liability for the year or, in other words, you paid in 90% or more of the tax owed

## Underpaid and Overwhelmed

for the tax year being reported.

(3) You paid in the appropriate amounts due with each estimated tax payment as determined under the optional "Annualized Income Installment Method," computed on Schedule AI of Form 2210. Under this method, which is designed to reduce penalties on those who do not receive income evenly throughout the year, the income and deductions are allocated to each period based on actual events that occurred only through the end of each estimated tax period. Thus, if a writer receives a huge advance during the fourth estimated tax period, he won't be expected to pay the related tax until that fourth period. To let the IRS know you are entitled to this exception, you must file Form 2210, check box C in Part II, and include a computed Schedule AI.

### Requesting a Waiver

Even if you owe a penalty and don't fall within one of the above exceptions, you still may be able to get the penalty waived. Believe it or not, the IRS sometimes shows compassion for us taxpayers.

Generally, the IRS may waive the penalty if you failed to make a payment because of a casualty, disaster, or other unusual circumstance and it would be inequitable to impose the penalty on you. The IRS may also waive the penalty if you became disabled during the tax year or are over the age of 62 and retired during the tax year, have reasonable cause for not making the payment, and did not willfully neglect to make the payment.

To request a waiver of the entire penalty, you must check Box A on Part II of the Form 2210. If you are requesting a waiver of the entire penalty, you don't even have to compute it. To request a partial waiver, check Box B. But why not go all the way? If you request only a partial waiver, you have to compute the penalty.

Whether you request that all or only part of your penalty be waived, you must attach a statement explaining why the IRS should grant you a waiver. This is where your writing skills will come in handy. Statements such as "The dog ate my estimated tax form" or "I was on a

deadline” aren’t likely to get your penalties waived, but an advance or royalties received at an unexpected time or in amounts much higher than anticipated (lucky you!) just might. In my experience, the IRS is fairly generous

with waivers so long as a taxpayer doesn’t make underpayment a habit.

**Got a tax question for Diane? E-mail her at [Diane@dianeobrienkelly.com](mailto:Diane@dianeobrienkelly.com).**

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## Making a Book Video

*Continued from page 8* ▶

For Vicki Hinze, “The book sold out. It was first in a series and I do think it helped brand the series. Reader and bookseller feedback increased significantly.” When asked what she would have done differently, she said, “I would have coordinated the timing better across the board.”

Michele Albert said, “I don’t think it made a huge difference, but since it cost me under \$100 to make the videos—one long, one short—I feel it was worth the effort. And I had fun putting them together; it was far less excruciating than doing a booksigning.”

As to what Michele would do differently, she said, “There’s a learning curve. I would make sure the next one is between 30 to 60 seconds long. I’d try for catchier blurbage.”

Sue Kearney wasn’t so sure. “The first time I used a trailer, my book made the *USA Today* list. I had huge numbers of hits on my site—however, I cannot say for certain if those hits brought me book sales. I did two more trailers and though I believe each trailer got better, my hits went down. I believe it’s because so many authors are now doing trailers that it’s no longer unique.” Her regret? That she didn’t do them sooner, when they were unique.

Are videos already overdone? I asked William at Writers-in-Motion. “I believe all visual products available and in development are not only unique but just beginning to take their position in the marketing enhancement of books.

“One day very soon, publishers will be putting DVDs in book jackets with author interviews and trailers. It’s all just beginning. Book Shorts® bring a visual generation to the written word.

“I’ve actually talked to kids who are reading because they saw a book trailer! This could become a major tool for the publishing industry to help an entire generation cross over to books from films.”

Already feeling the pressure to jump on the book video bandwagon? Pretty soon we’ll be hearing the warning: *You’ve got to do a book video!* Just like we heard, *You’ve got to have a website!*

Like any type of promo, it’s something that should feel right to you. What one author has success with another might not. Follow your budget and your instincts and decide for yourself. Even though promotion is the business side of our lives, we must still follow our instincts and listen to our heart.

*Tina Waincott is the best selling author of 13 suspense books for St. Martin’s Press.*

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## Business Briefs

**ISBN Has Serious Number Change:** International ISBN Agency has announced the 979 prefix will probably be given out by mid 2008. The country that will receive the 979 prefix hasn’t been designated, but this new prefix will affect more than the country with that number. After the 979 prefixes are put into play, there will no longer be 10-digit equivalents for 13-digit ISBNs. This is to avoid duplication and confusion in ordering. For more detailed information: U.S. ISBN Agency [isbn-san@bowker.com](mailto:isbn-san@bowker.com); Book Industry Study Group’s comprehensive ISBN-13 website [bisg.org/isbn-13/index.html](http://bisg.org/isbn-13/index.html).

**Google Unveils Escrow Plan:** The latest move from Google in its dealings with the Committee on Institutional Cooperation concerns the copyright of the books that the 12 libraries have in their collections. The titles in question will be held “in escrow” on a special server until such time as the title becomes public domain or a special agreement gives the library permission to make public a digital copy. The exception will be two libraries in the CIC that have a preexisting contract with Google—Michigan and Wisconsin. There will undoubtedly be more discussion on this issue.

**Kensington Signs On for More Erotica:** Kensington will be publishing 12 books annually in trade or mass market from Samhain Publishing’s 300 title backlist, starting in the summer of 2008. This deal will cover various sub-rights on e-books from Samhain as well as exclusive print rights. Samhain’s Christina Brashear says readers have been asking for the option of both digital and traditional formats.

# Seeing Red

Continued from page 1 ▶

Do you know the dictionary your publisher or particular imprint follows? All dictionaries are not created equal, and you can bet the copy editor has been instructed to adhere to a specific edition. For example, Dorchester and New American Library use *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition. Also, many publishers require that copy editors mark for the first spelling or verb conjugation listed in the dictionary, no matter how odd those forms may sound to you. Keep this in mind when “towards” is changed to “toward,” or “had gotten” to “had got.” Also, houses publishing books primarily for American readers will demand American spellings—“traveled” versus “travelled” or “theater” versus “theatre.” Ditto for British houses.

Have you requested a copy of your publisher's in-house style guide? Though book publishers use one or more references such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*, Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, or *Words into Type*, almost always they also adopt house style rules to reconcile differences among references and to set which one takes precedence over the others. For example, Webster's (11th) lists “bloodred” as one word and Chicago style calls for two. If you know which takes precedence according to house guidelines, you'll better understand much of that color on your pages.

Okay, so you aren't going to go out and buy, and then read through, one of these stylebooks. Just know the company that writes your copy editor's paycheck decides whether “uncle” in “my uncle Bob” had to be lowercased or whether you get to keep the hyphen in “emerald-green eyes.”

Spellings aside, I see some mistakes made across the board that a little brush up on the author's part can correct:

- Learn when to use the subjunctive mood: “If the body was found, the newspapers would have a heyday.” *But*, “If he were a donkey, he would drive better.” The first case outlines a real condition. The second expresses a state contrary to fact. Some publishers allow the author to ignore the subjunctive mood altogether, but if you do use it, be consistent throughout the book.
- If your house style allows you the choice of using the serial comma, either use it throughout or don't. If you are inconsistent, the copy editor will choose for you.
- If “then”—which is not a coordinating conjunction—links two complete sentences, use a semicolon or a period between the sentences. Some houses will choose the semicolon for you if you do not address this.
- Watch your placement of “only”: “He had only

eaten the apple” means something quite different from “He had eaten only the apple.” In the first case, I wonder what else he would have done with the apple.

## Maintaining Your Style

One of the biggest complaints I hear from authors is that the copy editor monkeyed with their dialogue. This is a touchy area, and your experienced copy editors know it. They aren't trying to tick you off or channeling their egos through their colored pencils. Really. Look at marks on dialogue this way: *Something* made the copy editor pause at that spot and take notice. Granted, the copy editor might not be familiar with a certain regional expression. Or, he corrects for grammar when you intentionally went for a “street” feel. Maybe he just doesn't get what the character is saying. But perhaps that part of the dialogue could be made better. Changes tell you only what the copy editor *thought* your character was trying to say. If the suggestions are off base, then perhaps other readers will misread that spot of dialogue as well.

To maintain perspective and keep teeth-gnashing to a minimum, remember that the copy editor likely does not have the benefit of your research or your unique life experiences. Few people know about medieval warfare, legal jargon, toddler eating habits, *and* deep-sea hydrothermal vents, and yet your novel might draw on knowledge of all four. So, consider submitting with your manuscript a sheet of facts or style notes. It could detail any unusual spellings or expressions, facts that you have already verified, and terms that might be unfamiliar to the average reader. Such information is especially important if your novel incorporates techno lingo, is set in a specific historical period, centers around a specialty field, or targets a narrow age group.

I've found these sheets even more helpful than the Internet when a book is set in a real city with a combination of real and fictional sites. Trying to determine whether a restaurant name is imaginary or merely misspelled, for example, I can bang my head against my computer monitor before querying, or I can check the author's handy-dandy fact sheet.

Style notes are a perfect place to voice your personal preferences, by the way. Hate colons? Adamant that contractions be used only in dialogue? Well, simply state so.

## The Power of STET

Some authors see only typeset “galley,” with the copy-editing changes already incorporated. Other houses send authors the original copyedited manuscripts. Either way, the writer usually still has a chance to weigh in on revisions at this point. Both copy editor marks and author responses are reviewed by an overseeing editor, who resolves on-the-page conflicts between the two before sending the copy off to be typeset. A proofreader then compares the typeset

pages against the marked-up manuscript or galleys, ensures all approved changes make it into the final copy, and eyeballs the pages one last time for errors.

Because copy editors *know* the author—or at least the overseeing editor—will have the opportunity to respond to changes and questions, they can mark with little fear. And they will query *anything*, no matter how seemingly trivial, that strikes them as possibly unintentional or in error. Better to ask than have the author be embarrassed by an oversight, right?

Along these lines, don't underestimate the power of "stet." Experienced authors are intimately acquainted with that four-letter word. In fact, I proofread one novel on which the writer had *rubber-stamped* STET over the copyediting marks that didn't sit well with her. I can only imagine how many handwritten "stet" marks preceded that stamp in her career. The point is this: Expect to stet at least some suggested changes and try not to hold a grudge when you do.

### Courtesy Matters

Writers should expect copy editors to be courteous in their queries and should return that courtesy in their responses. Despite the lack of direct communication, remember that authors are not anonymous. Scathing comments in the margin might satisfy a sense of injury over a query or change to your story, but they can work against you. Rarely, if ever, are author comments on a manuscript passed back to the copy editor, but proofreaders at the next stage of the process *do* view author responses. And often a pub-

lisher pulls its copy editors and proofreaders from the same pool of freelancers. The implications? A proofreader who notices nasty-grams directed at a fellow freelancer on one manuscript probably will not accept the next copyediting project that comes down the pike from the same writer. No one likes to wonder if he is going to be bashed—fairly or not—if he accepts a job. In other words, snippy comments can lose "good eyes" for your writing in the long run.

Those of you who already do make every effort to treat the editorial process as a partnership should be applauded. It's a perk that your first readers in the publishing houses often become your first buyers precisely because you conduct yourself professionally—and provide a good read.

A couple of authors have asked me whether thank-you notes to copy editors ever make it our way. Honestly, these are discouragingly rare. I have heard only twice from authors, secondhand from the editors at that, and only after I pointedly asked the editors for feedback. The publishers protect their freelancers from flak, but this habit of stonewalling also blocks praise. However, several editors have mentioned that if they *do* receive notes from their authors, they would be happy to pass them on. Hint, hint.

In a nutshell, copy editors and authors alike could stand to remember they are on the same side, working on the same goal. Isn't seeing a little red now worth seeing a quality product hit the bookshelves later?

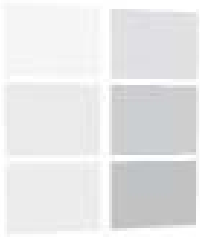
*Cheryl Leo is a freelance copy editor for New American Library and a member of Dallas Area Romance Authors.*

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## Business Briefs

**New Adobe E-Reader Adds More Reader Features:** This new software from Adobe will not only read but will produce and manipulate PDF documents. Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) remains a free download for Windows and Macs. The text will re-size for different size screens and has multiple "drag & drop" capabilities. This will allow readers to organize content with video and multimedia next to text. Social networking functions will provide users with shared text annotations and reading lists online. ADE supports the International Digital Publishing Forum's open standard.

**"NetFlix for Books" Has More Outlets:** Booksfree.com has now been joined by BookSwim.com in offering book rentals online. The new site comes from two grads of the New Jersey Institute of Technology who call this a "book rental library club" with over 150,000 titles (hardback and paper), which is approximately 55,000 more titles than Booksfree, but with no audiobooks. The service went public in mid-May 2007. They also sell used books. New books are purchased from Ingram and used books from Craigslist and Amazon Marketplace and (cringe) garage sales. Booksfree purchases from Ingram. Rental plans range from \$19.99 to \$35.99 a month, sending out three to 11 books to members chosen from 30 fiction and nonfiction categories. The founders claim they would like to begin a revenue-sharing program with publishers, paying the publishers each time a title is rented, but they haven't started any negotiations with publishers.



# Open A New Window

CREATING & RECOGNIZING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Novelists Inc.'08 in NYC

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## March 28-30, 2008 · Affinia Manhattan Early Registration Begins at [ninc.com](http://ninc.com) August 15

*Welcome to controlled chaos...*

(Notice that I've demoted our insanity to a more manageable level)

First, we need a huge round of applause *already* for our core conference committee—Holly Jacobs, Dianne Despain, Melinda Haynes, Vicki Lewis Thompson, Pat Potter, and Susan Gable.

Why? Because without them I would be hairless, wrinkled, and drooling. You'll agree that this is not the ideal representation for our esteemed organization. Although for those in the writing world it could be an everyday description, taking some artistic license, natch. ☺ Our conference committee is planning, and well on the way to finalizing, an exciting and a bit different type of conference for all of you. First, we are running it over the weekend to better manage our NYC costs, and we will be interested in the response we get from guests and attendees. Second, we are providing a number of speakers from outside our fiction and nonfiction publishing world. As we are in NYC we have also reached into the entire entertainment media community, featuring playwrights and episodic TV and soap opera writers. You will also get the latest info updates on the broader publishing market and how you can expand your career in new directions. Plus, you'll meet speakers introducing all of us to the on-fire markets for Young Adult and graphic novels.

As I said, our format is a bit different this year. We are combining two days of discussion from outside experts following with a Ninc-only day on Sunday that is more of a laid-back retreat style of programming featuring some of our top Ninc authors. This is our solution for those of you who enjoy both types of conferences. On

Sunday you can kick back, remove your shoes, and join in the discussions about your career on a personal level, and then finish the conference with Melinda Haynes as the host for the "Money or your Life" game at our Sunday nite-owl session. All I know about this game is that Melinda is gleefully inventing it, and it is being held in my hotel suite. With any luck, I won't get sued!

AND, hint, hint —!!!!!! We are arranging a special guided *Guided Light* backstage production tour on Thursday. One of our featured speakers, Jill Hurst, is a writer and producer there. We are checking details to see if we can set up this event, and the number of people who may be involved. Depending on the number, we may initiate a lottery to determine who will win the tours. So consult your astrology charts, rub your Buddha's tummy, or sacrifice your latest novel to the writing goddess or gods, and do whatever it takes to shine up your luck if soap operas and TV are relevant to your interests. (NOTE: The statement above is not meant to malign any religious preferences, nor was any livestock sacrificed in the writing of this column.) AND, we are hoping to do the same tour thing with a Broadway show, through our contact with our keynote speaker, Theresa Rebeck. *More details to come.*

Our conference space is limited, so when registration opens August 15, you'll want to pop on over to [ninc.com](http://ninc.com) and complete your registration online. A printed form will be available in the September *NINK*, but if at all possible, please register online.

I know it has been said over and over, but—

**YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS CONFERENCE!**

—Lynn Miller

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