

N I N K

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Those who can, teach.

BY CINDI MYERS

You may have noticed that every third person you meet these days claims to want to be a writer. For every one of these aspiring novelists and short story crafters, there is a course or workshop promising to help them further their dream. And every one of these courses and workshops needs teachers—writers like you who are willing to share knowledge and experience in exchange for a regular paycheck to supplement the erratic payments from publishers.

Whether you are searching for steady long-term income or a quick infusion of cash, teaching can be a rewarding use of your time and talents. Or it can be a frustrating time suck. Knowing your own preferences and limitations can help you find the teaching gig that's right for you.

The Long and Short of It

Teaching can require a years-long commitment or only a few hours of your time. Longer commitments allow teachers to develop lasting relationships with students and can provide a steady, dependable income stream. Short courses are ideal for writers looking to fill time between books or those unfamiliar with teaching who want to test the waters before making a major commitment.

Short courses abound on the web. (See box on page 6 for some venues for short courses.) Generally, an author decides on a topic and proposes it to the online venue. The chapter, website, or organization takes care of advertising the course and registering participants and when it's over they cut a check to the author for a percentage of the profits. Authors commit to

posting lessons or lectures and being available to answer participants' questions and for online discussion.

"I watch for announcements of those chapters who are accepting workshop proposals or look for chapters who at least offer regular classes," says Robyn deHart (*Tempted at Every Turn*), who has taught online courses for several RWA chapters. "Then you can simply email them to see if they are looking for additional teachers. And starting with your own RWA chapter or local writing group is a great way to begin."

Colleen Collins (*Shock Waves*) and her partner, Shawn Kaufman, started out teaching their Writing Pls in Novels class for various writing chapters, but soon decided to launch their own courses, cutting out the middleman.

Not all short-term classes are held online. Julie Ortolon (*Unforgettable*) partnered with a local bookstore to present a six-week course on writing the romance novel. "People were free to take as many or as few classes as they wanted," Julie says. Attendance averaged 15 people, at \$10 per person per class. "So I made \$150 for two hours of hanging out at my favorite

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Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

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

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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 HollyJacobs1@aol.com

New Applicants:

Wendy Roberts, Surrey BC, Canada
Sharron McClellan, Annapolis MD
Kate Rothwell, West Hartford CT
Eve Silver, Thornhill, Ontario, Canada
Karen L. King, Kansas City MO

New Members:

Michael Jasper, Wake Forest NC
Lee Goldberg, Calabasas CA
Catherine Verge, Kingston, Nova Scotia, Canada
Monica McCarty, Piedmont CA

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."

Take Ninc brochures to conferences. Email Holly with your mailing address and requested number of brochures.

Ninc Statement of Principle.

"Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve."

The Cost of NINK

The Board has lately received several queries from members asking us if their annual dues will be reduced because they've switched to electronic delivery of *NINK*.

This is a fair question. After all, if you're no longer paying for printing, paper, or shipping of your *NINK*, then why should your dues still be the same as if you were?

That's a reasonable perspective—and one that I really need to address for *everyone* in Ninc, not just those of you receiving your *NINK* electronically now.

So here's a little math on that subject. (And welcome to *my* world.)

Our *entire* dues revenue does not even meet the cost of publishing *NINK* monthly. For example, in 2007, the cost of producing *NINK* exceeded Ninc's entire dues revenue by about \$8,000. Without our Authors Coalition funding, we'd have to substantially reduce the size and frequency of our newsletter. This is among the reasons that recent Boards have been nagging you so hard to fill out your Authors Coalition surveys.

Moreover, less than 1/3 of what we spent on *NINK* in 2008 was for content. Although we increased *NINK*'s content budget in January 2007, which expense is reflected in the quality and variety of the articles you've been reading in *NINK* since then, more than 2/3 of our current *NINK* budget pays *just* for publishing and shipping the newsletter. (And shipping expenses also rose suddenly in mid-2007, when the United States Postal Service did a comprehensive rates hike.) In fact, production and shipping expenses for *NINK* in 2007—*just* production and shipping, NOT content—nearly equaled Ninc's entire 2007 dues income.

So when you're not paying for the printing and shipping of *NINK* anymore, because you've switched to electronic delivery, you're a hero to the Board and to Ninc. In an ideal word, we'd love to see *NINK* go 100% electronic by tomorrow. However, don't worry. We realize that many of you are attached to the print format—and, indeed, might even abandon Ninc if *NINK* were available *only* electronically. We're not going to take away the print *NINK*; but we do see this as a process whereby, over time, we hope to encourage more and more of you to switch to electronic delivery.

And the reason your dues aren't being reduced, when you do switch over to electronic *NINK* (indeed, even if my prayers come true and 100% of you switch over to electronic *NINK* by tomorrow!) is because the

funds saved on printing and shipping are to be used for other Ninc activities. Such as *NINK*'s *CONTENT*, for example. How about *that*? If you think *NINK* is good now, then imagine how much better we could make it if its size weren't constrained by paper, printing, and shipping costs, and if so a large portion of its budget weren't devoted to those same costs.

Other Ninc activities that also cost money include, for example: running the Ninc website (which we'd like to expand and update, turning into a destination site for readers and a greater resource for members); processing Ninc paperwork all year long; the Ninc Legal Fund; Ninc committees and their activities; the Ninc conference (it's supposed to pay for itself, and some years it does; but no plan is perfect). Additionally, we have a list of projects we want to tackle and member benefits we want to offer—but they aren't possible without money. And some of these items have by now been on the wishlist for several years/Boards in a row.

So we don't equate your dues income (or, indeed, *our* dues income—the Board pays dues, too, and most of us have switched to electronic *NINK* delivery) with printing and shipping *NINK*. We equate printing and shipping *NINK* with a steep expense that prevents us from further improving *NINK* content and from funding other Ninc projects and other member services. When you switch over to electronic delivery of *NINK*, you're not only being eco-friendly, you're also participating in our goal to make Ninc even better, by gradually freeing up dues income for something besides paper, printing, and shipping.

It is hoped that the Ninc-Tekno collaborative partnership will generate income for Ninc, as well as raise Ninc's profile, provide our members with additional publishing venues, and also attract new members, to help Ninc keep growing. However, you're writers—so I certainly don't have to explain to you why we're not spending money this year on the basis of *supposing* the Ninc-Tekno book projects will generate income. We've merely got a regularly-updated wishlist of projects we hope to implement if/when the relationship earns money for Ninc.

It is also hoped that you'll get better about filling out those Authors Coalition surveys each year, so that we can collect more revenue. So far, at least 11% of you evidently still consider taking one minute to fill

out the form too much trouble, when renewing your annual membership. I estimate that omission—about 65-75 of you *not* filling out the A.C. forms for 2007—cost Ninc several thousand dollars in A.C. revenue. That would have been income, for example, that we could have spent on *NINK* content, or on the website, or the Legal Fund, or other member services. *This* is why we nag you so hard to fill out those surveys.

(And our new A.C. representative, Deb Gordon, will provide a *NINK* article later in the year explaining more to you about what the Authors Coalition is and why we get those funds. It's something most Ninc members don't know much about—and it's actually pretty interesting.)

In any case, no, switching over to electronic delivery of *NINK* will not reduce your dues. But it will gradually improve the quality of your membership, including the

quality of *NINK*. Indeed, we hope to bring enhancements to the electronic version of *NINK* within a year. And *only* to the electronic version. This isn't to punish those of you who stick to print delivery, or to lure you over to the electronic group; it's because we can *afford* to enhance the electronic version, precisely because we don't also have to pay for paper, printing, and shipping on it.

—*Laura Resnick*

NOTE FROM NINK'S PUBLISHER: If you're not convinced yet, note that while this issue was in production the USPS announced a requested rate hike *again*, to take effect in May. Time's a-wasting, and the *NINK* dollars you save by selecting e*NINK* will be money well-spent to make Ninc better than ever.

Letter to the Editor

Early Reading

Hey fellow & sister Nincsters who are reading this on paper, here it is 10 full days before the end of January and I am at this very moment printing out my beautiful, colorful copy of the February *NINK*! And you had to wait for someone to get it to you through rain, snow, sleet, hail, dark of night, or however that goes, while me... well, I'm going to go outside now to my hammock,

lie back and read it cover to cover.

Then, those of us who have elected to get our newsletter as an email attachment will be talking online about the issue why you're still haunting your mailbox waiting, waiting, waiting. So sad! C'mon! Don't be a Luddite. Tick that little box on the Novelists, Inc. members only page and start reading your *NINK* early.

Judy Gill, off to the hammock now.

Those who can, teach

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bookstore on a Saturday morning. The material covered things I know so well, preparation was easy. In fact, I found it a good refresher for myself to get back to basics again. I think I benefitted as much, if not more than the students."

For those ready to teach for a longer period of time, local universities offer the opportunity to be in the classroom every week for a semester or more. Louise Marley (*Airs and Graces*, writing as Toby Bishop) started teaching at her local community college. "I proposed a class to my local community college, and it was accepted," she says. "It was a genre class, science fiction

and fantasy, and I think they were interested because it was a specific subject."

Being new to teaching, Louise found she spent a lot of time in preparing that first course. "The hardest thing is the preparation, making sure you have enough material to fill the class time and to fulfill the students' expectations," she says. "And then I found that each quarter's class would bring different skill sets, so the curriculum I designed was always adapting to the needs and interests of the students."

Online universities need teachers as well as traditional brick and mortar establishments. Lori Wilde (*Once Smitten, Twice Shy*) took a course from Ed2go, which offers a variety of courses through 1600 colleges and universities in English-speaking countries worldwide. "I noticed they didn't have a course on romance writing. I submitted a proposal and they went for it," she says.

Though Lori's parents are both teachers and she was a veteran writer and presenter of conference workshops, she was impressed with the thoroughness of the training she was required to undergo before taking on her first students. "The Ed2go boot camp was six weeks long," she says. "You have to learn their style and method of teaching. It took me four months to develop the 60,000K course." Lori did retain copyright to the course she wrote and when her three-year commitment to Ed2go is up, she is free to take the material elsewhere.

Correspondence courses

Pick up a copy of any writer's magazine and you'll find advertisements for the two largest writing courses in the country—*Writer's Digest* Correspondence School and Long Ridge Writer's Group. Both these organizations have been teaching writers for decades via correspondence courses and both employ published authors as teachers.

G. Miki Hayden (*The Naked Writer*) teaches for *Writer's Digest*. She interviewed someone associated with the course for an article and was invited to teach. *Writer's Digest* has a set curriculum that she follows. She generally has 20 to 30 students at a time, though she has had as many as 80. Students work at their own pace, so she doesn't have 80 people turning in lessons every week.

Carole Bellacera (*Tango's Edge*) has taught for Long Ridge since July of 2004. She currently teaches both the *Breaking Into Print* and *Novel Writing* courses and finds the correspondence format is perfect for her. "I once tried to do a short story class sponsored by my county, but found I absolutely hated dealing with students in a classroom setting," she says. "Long Ridge was the perfect answer for me." Teachers at Long Ridge spend three days at the Long Ridge campus in Connecticut undergoing intensive training, then go through a student teaching phase where they practice on lessons from students who have already completed the Long Ridge curriculum.

Each Long Ridge course has a set number of lessons, which students complete at their own pace. Instructors are paid weekly on a per-lesson basis. Carole has about 200 students, but those students work at their own speed, so lessons trickle in at a manageable pace for the instructor.

Rewards of teaching

Most of the people interviewed for this article were initially drawn to teaching as a source of extra income. "I needed the money," Carole Bellacera says of her decision to teach. "[I had] no book contracts coming in, and I was getting really sick of doing temp work just to pay my bills." Currently, she earns about \$13 an hour teaching for Long Ridge.

Lori Wilde estimates teaching accounts for approximately 20 percent of her income.

"The money for teaching isn't fantastic of course, but I've made it work for me," says G. Miki Hayden.

Robyn de Hart says the short courses she teaches provide "a little extra" and that money is not her primary motivation for teaching.

The benefits of teaching extend beyond a fattened bank account. For Robyn, the chief benefit is "getting front row seats to other writers' light bulb moments. Seeing them get it, understand it, and be able to apply it, that's just pure magic for me."

Carole Bellacera agrees. "The best thing is when you get that special student who has natural storytelling ability (or writing ability if they're writing nonfiction) and they actually listen to your advice," she says. "You see the changes in their subsequent assignments. You know they're actually taking your suggestions and putting them to good use. They get better with each assignment."

"Absolutely the best thing is meeting people who want to write, getting to know them, appreciating the unique gifts they bring to their work," says Louise Marley. "When students progress—one of mine just sold a story to a major sf magazine—I feel as proud as if I'd done it myself!"

Lori Wilde found that her own writing improved as she taught. "My own writing skills have improved exponentially," she said. "I have to fully understand what I am doing in order to explain it."

"I do feel I learned a lot by teaching," G. Miki says. "Teaching allows you to better conceptualize what it is you do."

Teaching also puts a writer's name in front of new readers. "A new class starts every month and right around the start of the class my numbers at Amazon and Barnes and Noble online shoot up," Lori says. "So I can track that the teaching is working to sell books."

Is teaching for you?

While extra money, publicity, and the chance to mentor other writers may have you ready to embark on your own teaching career, consider whether the realities of teaching will mesh with your personality and lifestyle. Teaching requires preparation, and preparation takes time a busy novelist may or may not have. "It isn't something you can do a few minutes here, a few minutes there," Carole says. "You have to devote a fairly significant amount of time on a weekly basis to get the work done. I average between 10-20 hours a week with Long Ridge."

"I tend to do lots of preparation for my classes, spending hours writing out my lectures," Robyn says. "Sometimes I'd love to give just a little more, but because I like the hands-on approach, it can really eat into ▶

my own writing time so I have to be careful when I schedule my classes.”

Especially with long-term teaching commitments, the schedule can be unrelenting.

“Even when you’re on vacation, that packet of assignments doesn’t stop arriving on your doorstep,” Carole says. “Well, they can hold them at the Long Ridge office, but believe me, you’ll get them when you return home—along with the next week’s packet. And if you go off to Italy for three weeks like I did, you return home to three week’s worth of assignments. They never stop. But then again, if you’re working a ‘real’ job, don’t you come back to the office and find an overloaded ‘in’ box? So, really, it’s not all that different from any other kind of work.”

“To let you know it’s not a piece of cake, I have a three-year contract,” Lori says. “I have to monitor the discussion area Monday through Friday and respond within 24 hours. I do have weekends and holidays off, but no vacation unless I want to hire a teaching assistant at my own expense and the TA has to be approved. I take my laptop with me where ever I go.”

In addition to problems juggling time, teaching can bring other frustrations. “The toughest thing, perhaps, is that the new writers all make the same mistakes,” G. Miki says. “I wish I didn’t have to spend so much time repeating information.” This repetition led G. Miki to write *The Naked Writer*, a style book for writers.

“I think the toughest thing about teaching is when you’re dealing with poorly skilled students—the ones that, honestly, don’t have a snowball’s chance in hell of having a successful career in writing,” Carole says. “On one hand, I don’t want to crush their dreams, yet, I always feel a little guilty giving them hope that they can actually make it in the dog-eat-dog world of publishing.”

“The toughest situation I’ve had is dealing with a know-it-all student,” Colleen says. “It’s only happened once, and for the life of me, I couldn’t figure out why this individual was taking the class if he only wanted to try and correct or challenge everything we said. My business partner and I decided to use it as an opportunity to practice *PI Zen* and not let it ruffle us. Eventually, this worked. This individual ended up writing us a glowing review.”

For those who can meet the time demands and focus on the benefits of teaching over the drawbacks, the best place to begin teaching may be locally. “Search for local classes, assess what’s being offered, and develop something unique,” advises Louise Marley.

For someone launching his or her own independent course, Colleen feels a website is a must. “First, identify your audience,” she says. “Then, plan your marketing strategy as you develop your class format/material.”

“Figure out a way you can stand out among the rest of the other instructors,” says Robyn deHart. “What can you bring to the table that’s not already available? There are plenty of workshops out there on characterization and promotion, but if you want to cover popular topics, just find a way to bring something new to the scene.”

For the majority of writers, teaching will never replace writing as either a vocation or a source of income. But for the author who wants to expand his or her skill set, look at the craft with a fresh eye, and earn a little extra income, the answer may lie in the virtual or physical classroom.

Cindi Myers is the editor of NINK. She also teaches for Long Ridge Writers Group. Her most recent release is The Wrong Mr. Right.

Teaching opportunities (a small sampling)

Long Ridge Writers Group <http://www.longridgewritersgroup.com/>

Writer’s Digest School,
Joe Stollenwerk WDWOWADMIN@fwpubs.com

Education to Go <http://www.ed2go.com>

Writers College <http://www.writerscollege.com>

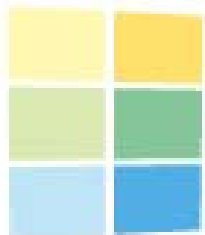
Absolute Write University <http://www.absolutecourses.com>

Course Bridge <http://www.coursebridge.com>

Earthly Charms <http://www.earthlycharms.com>

Online Education.net <http://www.coursecatalog.com/dbpages/courses.asp?SchoolID=513>

RWA Kiss of Death chapter COFFIN
(College of Felony and Intrigue) <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/indexnew.html>



Open A New Window

CREATING & RECOGNIZING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Novelists Inc.'08 in NYC

Clyde...in a Chicken Suit...in NYC

Okay, where is it? I've got my packing list. I've checked off "uncomfortable lady-shoes." I've lined up my years-past-their-sale-date mascara and blush and other makeup normally stuffed in the back of the drawer. I've got my personal supply of packets of Don't-Try-To-Tell-Me-This-Stuff-Really-Tastes-Like-Sugar.

So where the hell did I put my chicken suit?

Ah, you're smiling. Sure, you are. You're smiling because, like so many of us introvert types who hide in our writerly caves and own more pairs of pajamas than dress slacks—as at least we get to wear the pajamas (often all day)—you're looking forward to the fantastic conference line-up, but are dreading like Grim Death the fact that we have to, gasp, *mingle*.

We have to remember names. Like our own, for starters. We have to actually say "Hi!" to People We Do Not Know (not to mention those few show-offs who actually remember us and greet us by name). And, for me, thank God I don't have to navigate an airport terminal on my own this year ... as I once walked into an airport restroom and turned the wrong way coming back out again, nearly missing my plane. I can make anyone feel competent by comparison.

Me, I travel with Keepers. Really great pals, who only snicker behind their hands when I don't remember names, faces, or even what city I'm in at the moment. You will rarely see me alone in the hallways of the Affinia Manhattan ... and if you do, please help me, because I'm undoubtedly lost. But speak up, because I probably won't hear you, either.

And you thought you had problems. Ha!

Not to appear to be piling-on here, but there's also the subject of eyesight, of badges. The guys in charge have promised me, THE PRINT WILL BE VERY LARGE. I'll be the judge of that!

So what's an introvert to do? Stay home? Pass on the conference? Miss all those great speakers, the fantastic line-up of workshops, the Editor and Agent Roundtables?

Yeah, like that's productive in today's tight marketplace

No! We will go! We will persevere! We will conquer! We will smile, and say "hi!" and act like we aren't cringing in our uncomfortable shoes.

And why can we do this? Simple. We can because We Are Not Alone. We will be surrounded by people just like us—probably the only other people in the universe who know how we feel. Because writers are different. We probably aren't normal, either, but at least we get to *feel* normal when among like-creatures.

Or, as my mother once said, "Thank God you're published ... now I can tell people you're not nuts, but just eccentric."

You've read (I hope) my "sell jobs" these last few months. I know you want to come to New York, be a part of the Open A New Window conference. You can go online and check out the workshops, all that good stuff, one more time.

Because now, for my last column, I'm telling you: do not be afraid to mingle, fellow chickens. Ninc is here to help!

Thursday night our Fearless Leader is



opening the Ninc president's suite to all conference attendees (ask for "Laura Resnick's room" at the front desk). There will be snacks and sodas. There will be friendly if not known faces to welcome you, get you registered, slap a name tag WITH LARGE PRINT in your trembling hands. There will be fun stickers with which to decorate these badges ... or anything else you might decide needs embellishment.

There will be sign-up sheets to pair you up for lunch and/or dinner with volunteer hostesses who will go along for Dutch Treat meals where we can all get to know each other. Alcoholic beverages are highly recommended ...

Aren't arriving until Friday? Never fear, Ninc is still

here! Just come up to the conference registration table and throw yourself on our mercies. We know, we understand ... but, no, gosh, we probably don't remember your name. See? Don't you feel at home already?

So come on, there's still time. Put faces to the names you know from Ninlink. Sign up, come to New York, take you and your career out for a productive airing in the city that never sleeps, the city where publishing lives.

If it makes it any easier, if I can find it, I'll be the one in the chicken suit. And I answer to "Clyde," mostly because that's what my kids and grandkids have learned to answer to, as I forget their names from time to time, too

Kasey Michaels, Ninc President-Elect

Drumroll, please...

We've got a real Destination City for Ninc's 2009 conference—Saint Louis, Missouri. Hub airport with very reasonable fares from almost anywhere, great hotel rates, some of the best restaurants in the country, and a nearly endless array of places to see, things to do. No kidding—we've already checked!

We've got a date. Well, sort of. Can you live with late September—early October of 2009 until we've nailed down the conference hotel? Yeah, you can do that.

We've got plans. Oh, my, do we have plans! If it hasn't been tried yet, we're going to try it. If it hasn't been thought of yet, we're going to think of it. If you've already thought of it—let us in on your idea.

And, if we think you can help ("Many hands make light work," if you'll pardon the bromide), we're going to chase you down and tackle you—so make it easy on all of us and come on board now, join the party, join the fun, be a part of one free and easy, no-holds-barred conference committee—slash—wild ideas gang.

But first things first. We need a name for this conference. You know, like this year's Open A New Window Conference? Nifty name. Now we want one. And the person who comes up with the winning name gets a nice, crisp, 50 dollar bill (okay, so it will be a check).

Send all entries to any of us before May 31, 2008. But if "Meet Me In Saint Louis" is your idea? Well, then we may have to hurt you ...

**Kasey Michaels, President-elect; KCMi@aol.com
Karen Tintori Katz, Conference Co-Chair; KTinti@aol.com
Leslie LaFoy, Conference Co-Chair; llafoy@earthlink.com**

Hello? Hey!

Is there anybody out there?

Ah, there you are! Everybody doing great? Careers on track, too busy to take a deep breath? Not looking for any name promotion and/or a couple of extra bucks?

If so, more power to you. You can move on to the next article, because this one isn't for you.

Unless ...

... unless maybe you still don't quite understand what this Tekno Books deal is all about, how it can help you, how it can help Ninc (which, since you're a member, also helps you—funny how that works out).

Here's the deal.

Ninc has partnered up with Tekno Books. Tekno Books packages books and then beats the bushes looking for a publisher for those books. In short, they do the grunt work. They do this for 25% of the money, because they're nice guys, but they aren't a not-for-profit company.

In its agreement with Ninc, Tekno wants to begin with nonfiction, how-to books about writing; gather some articles from Ninc members, assemble them into a nonfiction How-To, and then hit the pavements to sell the book (or entire series of books!) to a publisher.

Still reading? Good, because it gets better.

In return, the writers get m-o-n-e-y; 50% of it, including, gasp, royalties. Ninc also gets some m-o-n-e-y; if you've been adding numbers in your head, that's the last 25% (some for the Ninc coffers for member services, some to promote the books so that everyone makes even more money).

The writers get their names out there; exposure. And money. Ninc gets its name out there; exposure. And money.

If there's a downside here, nobody's been able to point it out yet.

Ninc members average something like 16 books in print per member. Some time during our careers, 99 percent of us have written an article for somebody on some facet of writing, the writing life. You got paid, you did it for free, it's now sitting in a drawer after a "one-time-use" deal, whatever.

Maybe you've written enough of these articles to publish your own How-to book. Hey, go for it! Or maybe you have three articles, or a dozen. Now is the

time to dust those puppies off, and send them to nincnonfiction@aol.com. Recycle those pearls of wisdom, and get paid to do it. Or write something new, 800 to 5000 words.

We're starting with nonfiction, but will be moving into fiction anthologies once we get our feet wet. There's gold in them-thar hills, folks, and it's time Ninc tapped into a vein.

You "don't write on spec." Well, bully for you ... you're the one who probably should have stopped reading when you were warned. You don't have any articles tucked into a drawer somewhere? So, write one. There have been posts on Ninlink that ran more than 800 words—this isn't an onerous task. Hell, this article you're reading is 800 words, and only took an hour or so to write (which might explain any lapses in grammar ... but you get the point).

Money. Money for you, money for Ninc (the organization you love, the organization that hasn't raised dues in many years or forced you to go to an electronic newsletter ... although you really would like the latter!).

There are lots of plans in the works to celebrate the members of Ninc, give members more bang for their dues buck. Help them with name exposure, showcase their new books, websites; it's a long list of "what we want to do for Ninc members."

But wishing never made anything "so." Income from sales for how-to books and anthologies not only helps the individual members who contribute to them, but also Ninc. To fund new projects. To sustain those in progress. To keep dues and conferences affordable, and to pack *NINK* and the conferences with "can't miss this" excitement.

Or did you think all of this was possible with smoke and mirrors and maybe an eye of newt? No, didn't think so.

Deadline is April 1 to have these articles dusted off, polished up, written from scratch—whatever needs to be done. Then it's Tekno's ball game, assembling, sorting, peddling the project around town. Very little work on your end, good chances for success at the other end.

This is win-win, folks. And the only way you can't win is to not play ...

Kasey Michaels



WRITING is TAXING

Kermit the Frog got it right. It's not easy being green. But being green can save you some green when it comes to taxes. Now that's a convenient truth!

Tax Credit for Hybrid Cars. Not only is driving a hybrid car good for Mother Earth, it may also qualify you for a tax credit.

If you buy a new hybrid vehicle, you may be entitled to a tax credit ranging up to several thousand dollars. Used vehicles do not qualify, unfortunately, so there's no need to stop by Easy Eddie's Pre-Owned Auto Emporium. Leased vehicles qualify for the credit but the bad news is the leasing company gets the credit, not you. However, if you plan to lease a hybrid vehicle, you may be able to negotiate a lower lease rate by pointing out that the leasing company is entitled to a tax credit on the vehicle, which lowers their cost. Slick, huh?

You are entitled to the credit whether you use the car for business purposes only, personal purposes only, or, like many writers, a combination of business and personal purposes. The form for claiming the credit is Form 8910 "Alternative Motor Vehicle Credit." If you use the car for business purposes, such as driving to a book signing for that bestseller you just released, you will also need to file Form 3800 "General Business Credit" to claim the pro-rated portion of the credit that relates to your business use of the car. The total amount of the credit will then flow from the Forms 8910 and 3800 to Line 55 of your Form 1040. Forms are available on the IRS website, www.irs.gov.

Here's where the gears grind. Sadly, the credit won't last forever. Under current tax law, the credit for buying a hybrid car starts to phase out after a particular automaker sells its 60,000th hybrid vehicle. Given the popularity of these vehicles, some of the credits have already begun to phase out. For example, model year 2008 Honda Civic Hybrid CVT's, though not eligible for a full credit, will get 50% of the credit (\$1,050) if purchased between January 1, 2008 and June 30, 2008 and 25% of the credit (\$525) if purchased between July 1,

It's Not Easy Being Green (But It Might Save You Some Taxes)

2008 and December 31, 2008. The date of purchase determines how much credit you are entitled to, so it's better to buy sooner rather than later in order to maximize your allowable credit.

To find out if the new hybrid vehicle you're considering qualifies for a credit, ask your dealer. If the car qualifies, the manufacturer will provide you with documentation certifying that the vehicle qualifies for the credit and the amount of the credit allowed. Be sure to retain the certification with your other tax records in case the IRS comes snooping around.

Residential Energy Credits. Now that we've discussed that hybrid car in your driveway, let's move into your home (nice segue, huh?). If you installed any of the following energy-efficient items in your home during 2006 or 2007, you may be entitled to a tax credit: insulation systems, exterior windows or skylights, exterior doors, solar panels, solar water heating equipment, fuel cell power plants, and metal roofs that meet certain applicable requirements. Solar power systems used to heat pools or hot tubs do not qualify. What a bunch of party poopers! The credit ranges from ten percent to 30 percent depending on the item installed, and may be subject to further limitations beyond the scope of this article. The form for claiming this credit is Form 5695 "Residential Energy Credits." The instructions for the form provide the complicated, convoluted details about the credit if you would like further information.

If you added any of these items to your home in 2006 or 2007 and didn't realize you were eligible to claim a credit (who knew!), it's not too late to take advantage of the tax savings. You can request a tax refund up to three years after the due date of a return. You'll need to file an amended return (Form 1040X) to claim your refund.

Got a tax question for Diane? E-mail her at Diane@dianeobrienkelly.com. Your question might be addressed in an upcoming issue. For further tax tips, check out the "Tax Tidbits" page on Diane's website, <http://www.dianeobrienkelly.com>.

Half Full, Half Empty, All Crazy-Making

Dear Annette: I have difficulty enjoying success. Even when things are going well, I keep expecting the worst. Why can't I enjoy what I've worked so hard to obtain?

The Continual Pessimist

Dear Pessimist: It sounds like you *do* enjoy your success... you're just worried that it'll evaporate. If we could just get the anxiety out of the way, you'd be free to bask in your triumphs. *Why* you're worried holds the key. Are you worried about real possibilities, or phantom stresses you've convinced yourself are coming down the road?

Realism vs. Pessimism: Hello-o-o, writing for pay is a tough gig. Editors leave. Lines fold. Publishing houses morph into all-consuming conglomerates interested only in re-publishing Stephen King's entire collected works. And you're worried about the possible downside? No kidding. If you feel like your stress comes mostly from worry about realistic issues that you can identify, take a few minutes to go with those fears. Really. What's the worst thing that could happen if the editor who adores you jumps ship, your line folds, or you never sell another book? Yes, life as you know it would suck rocks for awhile. You bet. And yet, you'd live, right?

Instead of fighting the scary thoughts of destruction and doom when they come up, it's not such a bad idea to go with them once in awhile. When I let those thoughts play out to their logical conclusions, more often than not, I come up with possible solutions to those possible scenarios... and I feel better. If I'm afraid my editor might leave, I can vow to attend more conferences and do more networking, for example. Certainly doable. If I'm afraid the line I'm currently writing for might fold, probably I should explore other options now, right? Again, doable.

Normal, everyday (and did I mention realistic?) fears only create not-normal anxiety when we spend all our energy trying to keep them in the back of the closet. Writing for pay is a pretty darn slippery business. That's just the truth of the matter. Allowing yourself to think through your fears, and problem solve the realistic ones, might go a long way toward helping them dissipate. Then you truly can move on to enjoying what you've got now.

Fading Self Esteem: What if your fears aren't realistic, though? Or you can't stop thinking about them, even after you've done some problem-solving? That's a bit of a harder nut to crack; I'm not going to lie. Still doable, though. Immensely doable. Do you think that you worry more than your colleagues? If so, I'm going to guess the problem may lie with your self esteem. Is it possible that deep down, you don't believe you deserve the success you've achieved?

If it was all luck, then the success that drifted into your life could just as easily drift back out, right? Now *that's* a scary thought. If you suspect that you don't deserve the success you've attained, we've got some work to do. Decades of mostly mind-numbingly boring psychological research into cognition and memory have shown a remarkably robust finding; we tend to have much better memory for facts/figures/scenarios that fit our view of the world than for those that don't. So if you have a sinking feeling that the sky is falling, your brain is literally going to do a better job storing and retaining information that *supports* your belief than information that contradicts it. Seriously. It's a scientific fact.

If you're not so sure your editor really likes your work, you're going to be much more likely to remember that she cut you off sort of abruptly the other day on the phone, than to recall that just the week before she sent you that uber-complimentary email. And then duh—you're going to stress about your continued success. It's a damned reliable vicious cycle, unfortunately. But we can change that. At the risk of getting all touchy-feely on you, affirmations offer a great way to start.

Focusing on the negative is a habit. Habits can be changed. The trick is to go about it the right way. Don't think about ice cream. Don't think about big spoonful of Ben and Jerry's Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough ice cream. Didn't work in the slightest, did it? It won't work for your fears, either. Stop telling yourself to stop worrying.

What we want to do is to replace worry with a focus on the positive. That's where affirmations come in. I don't have space to run through all of the hows and whys here, but there are any number of excellent books on how to create and utilize affirmations out there. It's a deceptively simple concept, but if you follow through, it works. Essentially, what affirmations do is to train your mind to focus on the positive rather than the negative.

Another simple exercise that can help is to vow to notice at least one positive thing about whatever is stressing you out while you're brushing your teeth. I know, I know, but we all do that at least twice a day, and hey, what else are you gonna do while you're brushing? Notice that I'm not suggesting that you try to squash those negative thoughts. It ain't gonna work. Focusing on *not* thinking about them is still thinking about them. We're just going to give them less time in your head by thinking about something else... celery instead of ice cream.

Okay, we'll settle for celery *and* ice cream for a start. Because the more celery you eat, the less ice cream you'll scarf down, ruining your diet... er... career. ▲

2007 Ninc Membership Survey Results

More than a decade ago, Ninc did a membership survey in which we learned valuable information, such as how many novels the average Ninc member had published. We used this information for a number of years in our brochures, our PR, and our Outreach efforts. In an effort to bring this information up-to-date, in 2007 a random sample survey was conducted of 100 Ninc members. The members were asked nine simple questions. Because all 100 members answered, this was felt to be a statistically accurate snapshot of the membership. Here are the results of this survey.

Question 1: In which of the following genres have you published in book-length fiction?

Fantasy/SF.....	9%
Horror	4%
Mainstream	11%
Mystery/Suspense/Thriller	24%
Western	2%
Women's Fiction/Romance.....	93%
Young Adults.....	12%
Other	9%

Other: Children's, Middle Grades, Erotica, Christian, Time Travel, Media Tie-Ins, General List

Question 2: How many of your book-length fiction titles have been published in print format?

Answers ranged from 2 to 90, with a mean of 19.22 and a median of 16.

Question 3: Besides book-length fiction, in what other fields have you made professional sales?

Nonfiction book	18%
Nonfiction article	41%
Short fiction.....	39%
Poetry	11%
Other	10%

Other: Academic book chapter, Plays, TV, Copywriting, Devotionals, Graphic Novels.

Question 4: Which of the following awards have you received?

Agatha	1%
Campbell.....	2%
Edgar.....	2%
Hugo.....	1%
Lambda.....	0%
Nebula.....	1%
Rita.....	10%
Other.....	22%

Other: *Romantic Times*, National Readers Choice, *Christy*, *Affaire de Coeur*, Bookrak, BDalton, Walden, Daphne du Maurier, Holt, Shamus, Homer, IRCC, Sapphire, Dream Realm, Eppie, RIO, Prism, Holt, Foreword, Bookseller's Best, Sigma Delta Chi, Detroit Press Foundation, Paul Horgan.

Question 5: On which of these national bestseller lists have you appeared?

<i>Publishers Weekly</i>	7%
<i>New York Times</i>	9%
<i>USA Today</i>	19%
Waldens.....	32%
Other.....	6%

Other: Locus, CBA, Independent Mystery Booksellers.

Question 6: Are you female or male?

Female.....	96%
Male.....	4%

Question 7: What is your age?

Under 21	0%
21 – 30	5%
31 – 40.....	10%
41 – 50.....	23%
51 – 60.....	45%
61 – 70.....	13%
71 – 80.....	6%
Over 80.....	0%

Question 8: What is your highest level of education attained:

Less than high school/GED ...	0%
High school/GED	11%
Associate's Degree.....	5%
Bachelor's Degree	35%
Master's Degree.....	27%
PhD or other	
doctoral degree.....	10%
Other	13%

Other: Some college, technical school

Question 9: Do you (or could you) support yourself on your current writing income?

Yes.....	22%
Probably Yes	9%
Probably No	17%
No	52%

Many thanks to Ninc member Valerie Taylor, who wrote and administered the survey, and who also collected and tabulated the results! **LR**

The View from Here



BY SUSAN WIGGS

What's up with all the sequels and connected books these days? Check out any recent bestseller list, and you'll find recurring sleuths, spin-off romances, trilogies, epic cycles, thrillers with characters who just can't seem to stay out of trouble. Genre writers and children's authors practically invented the connected or series book, although the tradition can be found as far back as Homer and Chrétien de Troyes.

It's less prevalent in literary-style books, often because the protagonist, beloved or not, dies. Or is already dead. *The Lovely Bones* is an amazing book, but personally, I would rather have a root canal than read *The Lovely Bones 2: The Lovelier Bones*. A follow-up to *The Kite Runner*? Hit me in the head with a hammer, why dontcha? Maybe the best of these books—*To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*—are so complete in and unto themselves they don't need a sequel.

Then there are the authors who are so popular, they continue to publish after the author is dead. J.R.R. Tolkien topped the charts just last year with *The Children of Hurin*, which his son Christopher finished. Poor Ian Fleming is a hundred years old this year, and he's still writing Bond books. He's a ghost with some of the best ghostwriters in the business—John Gardner, Kingsley Amis and Sebastian Faulks. Robert Ludlum, who died in 2002, has been publishing a bestseller or two every year since departing this life. Twenty years after her death, V.C. Andrews is as prolific as ever. I wonder if the recently deceased George MacDonald Fraser will keep going with his bullying, hugely entertaining antihero, Flashman. In my dreams, my post-mortem books are written by authors far better than I.

In genre and commercial books, that thread of connection is becoming the norm rather than the exception. Publishers tend to like series books, because it helps with marketing. They can create a consistent look to signal to readers that there's a new addition to an old favorite. They can build anticipation and schedule the books at regular intervals, accelerating the building of numbers.

The Neverending Story

A lot of us are writing books with continuing threads. It's a natural fit for many of us. Just because you've written "The End" doesn't necessarily mean a story is over. Characters take on a life of their own, and we—and our readers—find ourselves imagining where they are now. It also saves us from the post-partum depression we sometimes suffer once a book is over.

A lot of series start organically, when a writer's story grows beyond the scope of one novel. A secondary character steps onto the page, and you suddenly realize he's on a journey of his own. Maybe you build a world—a

town like Mitford, or Cedar Cove, or some other made-up place that suggests story after story. There might be a workplace—Precinct 87, anyone?—filled with enough situations and characters for book after book. Stories multiply like the mythical hydra—you make a Herculean effort to finish one off, and two more

appear in its place. Readers are drawn to series books. My love affair with series books started when, at the age of nine, I rewrote the ending of *The Yearling* (that kid Jody Baxter was a wicked bad shot) and made up stories about Charlotte's spider babies. I collected books about the Bobbsey Twins, the *Little House* books, even the *Three Musketeers*, although these became more lame as time went on. In contrast, Georgette Heyer actually outdid *These Old Shades* with its spinoff, *The Devil's Cub*. I was recently at a reading by fantasy author Terry Brooks, and in the audience was a guy who had been reading



his Shannara books for 31 years.

Readers tend to get proprietary about the books they love. As far as I know, Annie, the Number-One Fan of *Misery*, is a figment of Stephen King's dark imagination, but readers with that kind of passion do exist. I have no doubt that Laura London, aka Sharon and Tom Curtis, has been fending off shrill cries for Cat's story for decades. Robin McKinley surely has *Sunshine* fans camped out on her doorstep. Elizabeth Lowell hinted at doing a sequel in her medieval series about the character Eric but this reader is still waiting.

Readers are a demanding lot. They want Daisy's story. Or Seth's. Or [fill in name of beloved secondary character here]. They want connected books. They're clamoring for more. They fell in love with something about a book, and they want to revisit the world of the story again and again. They're looking for a familiar story tone or author voice. Small-town settings are a big draw. A small town, where everybody knows everybody else, where there's history and old friendships and rivalries, is a good bet. People yearn for that kind of connection in this fast-paced life.

It's tricky, though. They insist on the comfort of familiarity, yet they want something new and exciting and fresh. Disappoint them at your peril.

Finding a unifying theme is key to creating a successful franchise. A boarding school for wizards, anyone? A family of vampires? How about a mystery that unfolds over the course of many books? Or a highly specialized, dangerous career with Suzanne Brockmann's Troubleshooters. A summer camp, a yarn shop, a quilting circle, or a cooking school. A family like Stephanie Laurens' Cynsters or Jo Beverley's Mallorens. Diana Gabaldon's Jamie

and Claire. The ever-inventive Jayne Ann Krentz created The Arcane Society which bridges her contemporary books with the historical romances by her other self, Amanda Quick. Sometimes the concept for a series is as simple as a character you adore—what's Stephanie Plum up to next?

I once wrote a trilogy about the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which saved me months of research. Instead of researching three separate eras or events for the books, the one big event yielded three stories. And yes, there is a book about Phoebe, who one day will turn my trilogy into a quadrilogy.

How do you know if you've stayed too long at the party? It's a judgment call, like everything else in this business. The three musketeers fizzled (sorry, couldn't resist). Anne of Green Gables tried readers' patience about the fourth or fifth time she straightened out a wayward child. And does Gilbert still love her? (Duh.) Writers walk a tightrope, trying to strike a balance between keeping a series fresh and avoiding repetition and staleness, while not disappointing readers with a big twist or switch. When Elizabeth George killed off a beloved character in her long-running Lynley novels, she found herself explaining the situation on CNN. Dorothy Dunnett was a ruthless killer of characters. J.K. Rowling has declared that there will be no more Harry Potter.

Like the characters in a long-running series, we move on. We ride off into the sunset to explore new horizons. See you around, pardner.

Susan Wiggs's neverending Lakeshore Chronicles series is published by Mira Books. Artwork courtesy of her fellow writer Suzanne Selfors, at <http://www.suzanneselfors.com>.

Business Briefs

COMPILED BY SALLY HAWKES

Saletan Replaced Silver at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: The newest senior vice president and publisher for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is Becky Saletan for adult trade books, Trade and Reference Division. She stepped in when Janet Silver left. Saletan will oversee the Houghton and Harcourt Adult Trade and cover both adult lines, trade paperbacks, field guides and cookbooks.

Penguin Canada Regroups: Penguin is the second Canadian publisher to announce major changes in 2008. Although it experienced its first C\$100 million year last year, there are major personnel changes with Barbara Berson leaving. Nicole Winstanley will be executive editor for fiction and will also take on the supervision of the children's division. Penguin will be looking for a new editor to take over commercial fiction which includes crime, thrillers, romance, fantasy, and historical novels.

Webisodes the Next Thing in Major Marketing?: Robin Cook's next book, *Foreign Body* will be launched with a new venture from G.P. Putnam's Sons and Michael Eisner's media company, Vuguru. They are releasing a 50-episode web series – webisodes – as an extended preview to Cook's novel. It will run daily in two-minute episodes for 10 weeks beginning May 27. The webisodes will be available online and for mobile downloads in Putnam's efforts to increase Cook's audience on the web.

Ninc Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY NANCY J. PARRA

Open a New Window Conference Contacts

Please address your general conference questions to conference chair Lynn Miller at lnmiller@parkemedia.com.

Or, for any sort of hotel information, ask Assistant Conference Coordinator Holly Jacobs at HollyJacobs1@aol.com.

Program questions: Program director Dianne Despain at diannedespain@earthlink.net

Night Owl questions: Night Owl Coordinator Melinda Haynes at melindahaynes@comcast.net

When in doubt or not sure, ALL OTHER QUESTIONS, please ask conference chair Lynn Miller at lnmiller@parkemedia.com

Registration, cancellation, refund, and “companion ticket” questions: Registrar Susan Gable at susan@susangable.com

Questions about whether an agent has been invited: Agent Liaison Pat Potter at PaPotter@aol.com

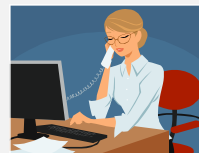
Questions about whether an editor has been invited: Editor Liaison Vicki Lewis Thompson at VLTPENPWR@aol.com

Questions about whether, as a newcomer, you’ll be left alone in humiliated isolation with no one to talk to or befriend you: Hospitality Coordinator Colleen Admirand at chauthor@optonline.net
(You may also find the answers you seek at the conference site at www.ninc.com.)

Volunteer needed to monitor various Bestseller Lists—*NY Times*, *USA Today* and *PW*—and report on Ninc members making the list for e-newsletter bonus pages. The job begins in May, after the new roster is issued in April. Compare the names on the lists with the roster and report to newsletter editor Cindi Myers. Earn fame, fortune, fans...uh, well, maybe just the undying gratitude of said newsletter editor. Contact Cindi at CMyersTex@aol.com

OUTREACH

If you’re interested in a light workload that will make a big contribution, consider joining the Outreach Committee, which is focusing on encouraging more writers to join Ninc. Contact Laura Resnick for more information at LauraNincBox@aol.com.



FYI on the Digital Rights Committee



This year, Ninc’s DRM Committee will be tackling the mare’s nest that is digital rights management, looking for ways to untangle the mess for Ninc authors. We’re looking for long-term, solid solutions that will benefit all of us.

What is digital rights management? The short answer is that it’s the protection of an author’s copyrights in the electronic realm.

The long answer... well, suffice it to say that it’s extensive, including various forms of copy protection,

format protection, and control of any and all electronic distribution of a work.

“Management” can mean a near-draconian lock-down of a digital work, or it can mean that there are no restrictions at all.

We’ll be working this coming year on defining those issues which most affect Ninc’s authors, and finding useful and realistic approaches to protecting our electronic rights.

Want to join us? Please contact committee chair Tricia Adams at triciawriting@gmail.com.

Beginning in April 2008, complimentary issues of *NINK*, which we are delighted to offer to Ninc conference guest speakers, editors, and agents, will be distributed in electronic format to all current and future recipients and print distribution to these industry professionals will cease.

The Annual Ninc Membership Roster

We're trying a new experiment with the Ninc membership roster this year.

The roster is the confidential document you receive every spring from Novelists, Inc. that has the names and addresses of all Ninc members on it.

This year, for the first time, Ninc is distributing the roster electronically. We believe that Ninc members may find the roster harder to lose and easier to use if it's electronic. An e-roster will also be much easier for you to replace or acquire anew, if need be.

Another key advantage is that electronic distribution enables us to make the font-size bigger! Small font-size has been a common complaint about the roster for years; but it's been an unavoidable problem, because of

the cost of producing and distributing the roster in printed format.

And, of course, if you want a hard-copy of the roster, you can simply print it out from the electronic document—with the new larger font-size!

Please note: We can't email the 2008 roster to you if we don't have a valid email address for you. If you have any doubt about our ability to contact you via email, then please log onto <http://www.ninc.com> and update your membership profile with correct and current information.

Finally, for Nincers who want a printed roster, and who can't or don't want to print it themselves from the electronic file they receive, we're also offering a special-order print-version, for a small fee (to cover printing and shipping costs), to members who order it separately. This order form provided in this edition of *NINK* is the only way to get a print edition 2008 roster mailed to you, and April 15 is a firm deadline for Ninc's receipt of your order.

ORDER FORM

For printed copy of the 2008 Ninc Roster
(Only use this form if you wish a printed copy of the roster to be sent to you by mail. Otherwise, you will receive a free copy via email.)

US Members..... \$3 (check only) _____

International Members \$5 (check or credit card) _____

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Address: _____

Credit Card Information (international members only)

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____

Signature _____

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