

NINK

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Considering a Journey Down the Inspirational Path?

BY DEBBY MAYNE

Over the past fifteen years, Christian fiction has exploded, creating quite a buzz in the publishing arena. While demand for the general market has ebbed and flowed, authors of God-focused books have been steadily employed keeping up with voracious readers who can't get enough of books with faith as the key element to the story.

Prairie romances and books geared toward a younger audience took the lead in this massive genre, but ever since the "Left Behind" series made such a splash, crossing over into the general market, readers' awareness has been sharpened, and they want more. This has led to a broadening of the market to include suspense, mystery, science fiction, fantasy, and of course romance.

Almost all subjects are open; however, the topic has to be handled with a Christian worldview. As in all fiction, the characters must seem real, and readers have to be able to identify with them. The "Left Behind" series, a set of apocalyptic fiction novels written by Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, has been immensely successful and stimulated a faith-based reading frenzy in both the general and the CBA market.

The faith element must be an integral part of the story, not a general market story with Christianity thrown in. The most successful CBA books have characters whose stories couldn't be told without showing their relationship with God. In *Redeeming Love*, Francine Rivers writes about a troubled young woman who is forced into prostitution, and through prayer and faith, she comes to terms with her past and gives her life to the Lord. Frank Peretti's books spare no emotion or gritty, gut-wrenching detail as he deals with the trials of spiritual warfare. Cami Tang writes fiction featuring Asian-American characters who are deeply immersed in their culture but still have universal women's issues, which include worldly concerns tugging at their faith. Trish Perry takes her readers on a fun, light romp with extraordinary stories about ordinary Christian women. Authors Kim Vogel Sawyer and Shelley Shepard Gray give readers a look into the lives of faithful Mennonite and Amish women. With a PhD in physics, Randy Ingermanson claims his books are at "the intersection of Faith Avenue and Science Boulevard."

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Not only are Christian fiction books available in traditional Christian bookstores, these books can be found in Barnes & Noble, Borders, Walmart, and Costco. This ever-increasing level of distribution brings the faith-based market closer to the mainstream, with some of the lines blurring between them. With fewer restraints on what is acceptable in the inspirational market, we're likely to eventually see the books side-by-side on bookstore shelves.

What does this mean for authors? For those who have the desire to write Christian fiction, almost anything that works in the general market will work in CBA—that

Continued on page 5 ▶

Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

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For members without Internet access,
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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
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New Applicants:

Greg Herren, New Orleans LA

New Members:

Edith Bruce, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Michele Scott, San Diego CA

Ninc has room to grow...

Recommend membership to *your* colleagues.

Prospective members may apply online at

<http://www.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 Pari Taichert with your mailing address and

requested number of booklets.

ptaichert@comcast.net

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 Inspirational Path

Continued from page 1 ▶ is, as long as the faith element plays a lead role in the story.

Chip MacGregor has been involved in the publishing world for more than three decades as an editor, publisher for Time-Warner Book Group, author, and agent. “For the past five years, the fastest growing element in all of publishing has been Christian fiction,” states MacGregor, “but it will soon start moving much more slowly. Because of the economy, we can expect to see some more practical books take the lead—money management, job searches, getting by in tough times, etc. In terms of growth, I also think we’ll see more romance, spiritual journey books, e-books, and celebrity-driven books.”

As in the general market, Christian publishing has experienced a slow-down, even to the point of layoffs in some of the larger houses. However, this isn’t all bad news, since some of the downturn is due to the correction of an over-zealous program. In spite of what appears to be bleak news, writers are still receiving contracts.

“Call me an optimist, but I prefer to believe there will always be opportunities for great novels,” says Barbara Scott, Senior Acquisitions Editor of Fiction at Abingdon Press. “Growth can be good, but growth needs to be driven by the demand to exceed last year’s profitability. It may be a good thing to get back to basics and stop chasing the next ‘hot’ trend. By the time an author writes a book and gets it to market, that fad will have waned, and we’ll be on to something else. Authors need to be ahead of the curve.” She goes on to say that people who write for the general market can successfully cross over to a CBA house. “Here’s the secret,” Scott says. “Ask yourself about your own faith walk. You can’t fake a loving relationship with God. That doesn’t mean your books need to be trite and full of churchy messages—far from it. This market wants authentic stories with characters they can love.”

Not all Christian-inspired stories fall under the CBA label. When asked about crossing over from the general to the CBA market, Danielle Egan-Miller, President of Brown & Miller Literary Associates, says good writers absolutely can do so. “There is more opportunity than ever in the general market for authors writing really good fiction with Christian elements, with ‘really good’ being the key requirement. *PW* ran an article in late November about several major NYC houses that have upcoming books with Christian undertones scheduled for release from their mainstream, commercial imprints, even if their company also has a faith-oriented imprint. These must be well crafted books with characters who address faith or have spiritual lives organic to the story.”

Tamela Hancock Murray, agent with Hartline Literary Agency, agrees that authors can make the move from the general market to CBA. “My impression is that writers who cross over usually have had a spiritual epiphany that changed their worldview forever, which compels them to write for CBA,” she says.

What some people don’t realize is that many of the CBA houses are owned by some of the more mainstream publishers. “Zondervan is owned by HarperCollins, Waterbrook by Random House, Howard by Simon & Schuster, Faith-Words by Hachette,” states MacGregor. “CBA still exists as its own entity, but it’s very much part of the publishing mainstream these days.”

He goes on to say that the biggest difference between CBA books and the general market is the concept of redemption. “CBA books continue to present hope: There is a God, we *can* change, the world *can* be a better place, there is meaning to this life.”

Those interested in pursuing publication in one of the CBA houses need to do the same thing they’d do in the general market: research. Read CBA published books and follow the guidelines that can be found on the Internet at each publisher’s main website.

The American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW) began in 2000 under the name American Christian Romance Writers, and changed their name in 2004 in response to the diverse needs of its membership. This group has experienced exponential growth from the initial six founding members to approximately 1,700 in 2009—a reflection of the market demands. For more information about this organization, go to their website: <http://acfw.com>.

Debby Mayne is the author of 16 books and 7 novellas. She has worked as the managing editor of a national health magazine, product information writer for a TV retailer, and freelance copy editor and proofreader for several book publishers. Upcoming releases include Peachtree Dreams—April 2009 and Love Finds You in Treasure Island, Florida—June 2009. Visit her website: <http://debbymayne.com>.

Learn more about it at these leading Inspirational Market websites.... ▶

CBA Publisher Websites:

Abingdon Press – <http://www.abingdonpress.com/>

B&H – <http://bhpublishinggroup.com/>

Barbour – <http://www.barbourbooks.com/>

Bethany House – <http://www.bethanyhouse.com>

Guideposts – <http://www.guideposts.org/>

Harvest House - <http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com/>

Howard – <http://www.howardpublishing.com>

Moody – <http://www.moodypublishers.com>

Multnomah – <http://www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook/>

Revell/Baker – <http://www.bakerpublishinggroup.com>

Steeple Hill – <http://eharlequin.com/>

Summerside Press – <http://summersidepress.com>

Thomas Nelson – <http://thomasnelson.com>

Tyndale House – <http://www.tyndale.com/>

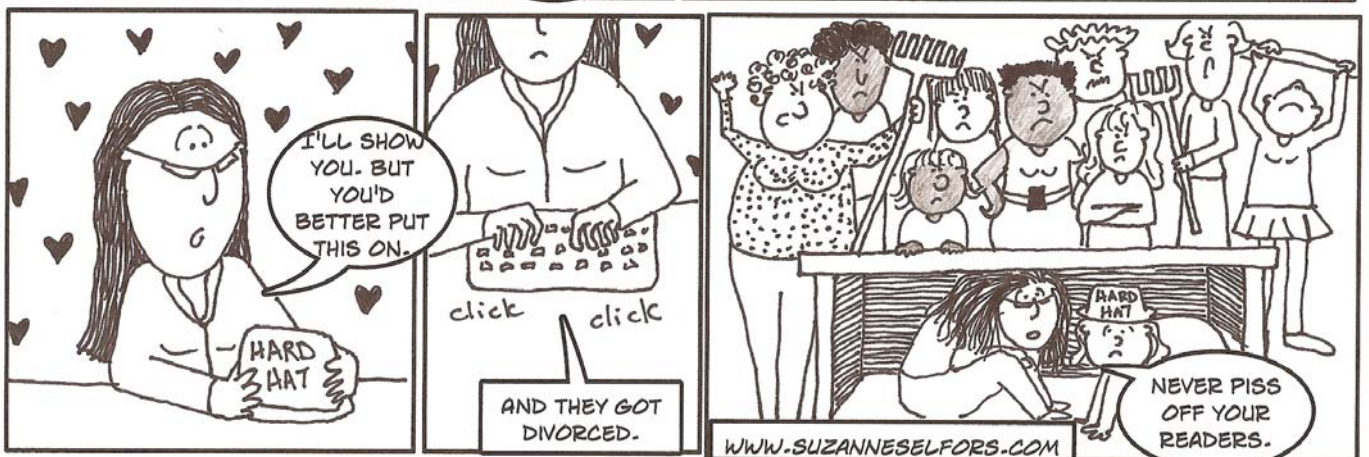
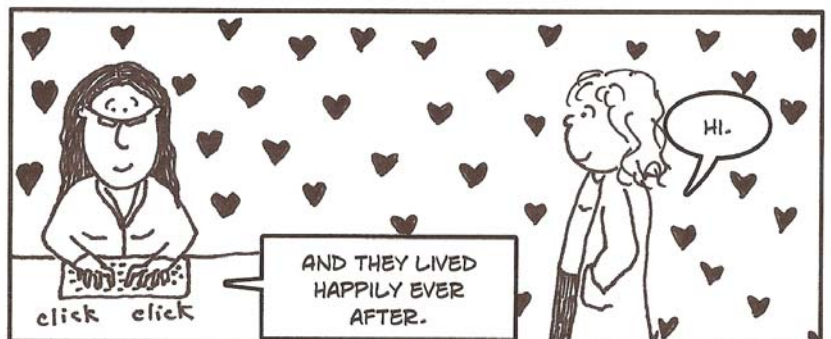
Waterbrook – <http://www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook/>

Whitaker House – <http://whitakerhouse.com/>

Zondervan – <http://zondervan.com>

The Author

NERVOUSLY AWAITING HER EDITOR'S PHONE CALL, THE AUTHOR DECIDES TO VISIT HER BEST FRIEND, THE ROMANCE WRITER.





Join us in Saint Louis September 30 – October 4, 2009

And here it is, the Ninc Goes Platinum program. No, not set in stone, but you can consider it a Second Draft, with the Final Draft to be tinkered with until we're all happy.

Let's begin with Ninc Does Forensics, the all-day program that precedes the regular conference, remembering that attendance is limited to the first 175 to sign up, and that editors, agents, and other publishing types attending the conference have all been invited to participate in the day as Ninc's guests.

And please note: until June 30, there's a \$25 discount for members who sign up and pay for both Ninc Does Forensics and the conference. The Easy Payment Plans are still available. **Earlybird pricing ends June 30.** Sign up online or download the Registration Form and mail to our Registrar.



Thursday, October 1: *Ninc Does Forensics*

9:00 to 10:00
The ABC's of Forensics, Dr. D. P. Lyle
 This one is pretty self-explanatory. Learn to crawl before you try to walk, right? Dr. Lyle gets us started in this informative session that sets up the remainder of the day.

10:15 to 11:15
Basic Death Investigation, Mary Fran Ernst
 Okay, so you stumble over this dead guy, see? What happens next? Sure, the homicide cops show up. But who else? And what happens to that poor dead guy? And just for extra points, what's the difference between a coroner and a medical examiner?

Toxicology, Dr. D. P. Lyle
 Anything can be a poison. The question is, how does your villain use it? And how does your hero cop discover it? It's not as simple as it looks on TV.

11:30 to 1:00
Let's Do Lunch ... and a Crime Scene
 Visit the Crime Scene set up in one of the meeting rooms, walk around in the middle of it, take notes, and then compare them over a great lunch catered by Carmine's Steak House. Your workshop presenters will also be at lunch with you. All included in the cost for the day.

1:00 to 2:00
Crime Scene Investigation, Major Mike Copeland
 What did the crime scene tell us? Find out from the head of Franklin County Sheriff's Office CSI bureau as he instructs us on that and the real world of CSI—as opposed to what you see on television (hint: he does not drive a Hummer).

Trauma, Eileen Dreyer, RN, Kate Christlieb, PA
 What really happens to your hero when he gets shot in the shoulder? Or conked on the head? What do the medics do? The Hospital? What does your hero feel? (Hint: He won't pass out from a gunshot wound to the shoulder unless he's a wuss.) Eileen and Kate separate myth from real treatment to make those desperate E.R. scenes more realistic.

OCTOBER

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Thursday, October 1: Members-Only Night Owls

Night Owls are relaxed, private, interactive sessions for **Ninc members only**, with volunteer members serving as moderators and guides. Bring your own voices to the party!

8:00 to 8:45 p.m. **Creating Characters with the Tarot**

Always on the hunt to find new ways to create convincing characters? Bring your own Tarot deck and play along!
Charlotte Hubbard, Moderator and Chief Tarot Teacher

Critique Groups in Ninc

Yes, we've got one. Yes, we'll create more groups if there is a demand. Come meet your fellow critiquers face-to-face.
Pat Rice, Moderator

9:00 to 10:00 p.m. **Grumpy Ole Writers (...and you know who you are!)**

An extension of one of Ninclink's most remarked-upon topics. Bring your worst fan letters, most out-there reviews, your jaded outlook on The Great Unpublished and, yes, your sense of humor. Consider this Night Owl an exorcism.
Jasmine Cresswell , Moderator

What, me, stressed? Nonsense, my eyelid always twitches like this...

Melinda Haynes on Stress Management. Melinda, who is a certified hypnotherapist with fourteen years' experience, an NLP practitioner and certified in past life regression therapy (you know, all that "woo-woo" stuff), will guide everyone into a state of writerly bliss with her magic voice, and demonstrate how to achieve this state ourselves. And if that doesn't work, we hear the bar stays open late.

2:15 to 3:15

Interview and Interrogation, Detective Sergeant Joseph Burgoon

What happens when you get your suspect "in the box?" There's a psychology to asking questions and getting answers. Spontaneous confessions and long recaps by a cooperative villain that neatly tie up all of the plot's loose ends in the last chapter are the stuff of fiction. But not *your* fiction, because Det. Sgt. Burgoon is going to tell you how it really works.

Forensic Anthropology, Forensic Anthropologist Gwen Haugen

Ah! Now we get to the good stuff. Examining remains. Crispy critters (burn victims). Skeletons long in the ground. ID-ing using dental records. Extracting DNA, determining sex and age of the victim, on and on.

3:30 to 4:30

Forensic Pathology, Dr. Mary Case

Dr. Case is the Chief Medical Examiner of Saint Louis county. This one's going to be good!

FBI

When exactly do you call in the FBI? And what do they do? A local Special Agent tells us all that and more as he fills us in on the role of the FBI in today's post 9-11 law enforcement, and answers our "feebie" questions. Even the tough questions, like – do they cringe when writers call them feebies?

4:45 to 5:45

So, I Have This Guy I Need To Kill

A panel including Eileen Dreyer, Dr. Lyle, Det. Sgt. Burgoon, Gwen Haugen, Dr. Mary Case, Major Copeland, and other Forensics Day presenters that lets authors ask questions specific to their manuscripts. How to kill the victim, how the bad guy can slip up so your hero can catch him – ask your questions here, and get the answers you need!

Note: To help keep things moving, questions will be submitted ahead of time (with a microphone available if the questioner needs to clarify a point).

6:00 to 8:00

Included in the cost for the day, a reception for all members, guests and presenters, catered by Carmine's Steak House.

Twentieth Year Anniversary Pin

Limited Edition, Available Only in St. Louis 2009
A "Thank You" gift from Ninc. Wear it proudly!



Friday, October 2: Open Sessions

8:45 to 9:30

Starting Over, Lou Aronica and Peter Miller

What is it like to “start in the middle?” Start over in the middle of your life, that is. Hear what it takes, how to do it, and all about *The Story Plant*, a new day in publishing.

Choosing The When, Where, Who, and How, Kathy Emerson

Designed to help writers contemplating writing historical mystery fiction make intelligent decisions about time period, setting, the character of the sleuth, and the method of murder. Information on the current market for historical mysteries is included. Most of the content of this workshop is also applicable to historical romantic suspense, present/past mysteries, and historical mysteries for young people.

Podcasting for the Technologically Innocent, Joe Nassise

What is podcasting? Who does it? Why should we do it? Do we need either a Masters Degree or a six-year-old who can do it for us? He's not six, but Joe Knows. Now you will, too!

9:45 to 10:30

She said, He heard, Ken Casper

The different ways men and women speak and use words, and their consequences in the art of negotiation – like in contracts and such, you know.

E-Publishing, Is It For Me? Angela James, Samhain

Ninc members have asked the questions about the pros and cons of e-pubbing, and Angela will now answer them. Real questions. Real answers.

How to Write a Screenplay, Paul Guyot

From the man who wrote for *Felicity*, *Judging Amy*, etc. The guy knows what he's talking about, and now he'll show you how it's done...and why some things that work for novels just don't work for screenplays.

10:45 to 11:30

How Do I Sell My Book to Hollywood? Paul Guyot

Well, first, it has to be the right book! Here's where we get hands-on and interactive. Bring your ideas and let Paul tell you what works ... and what doesn't.

Sitting on Both Sides of the Table, Lou Aronica

How does it feel to be a writer hitting your head against the stone wall of a publishing house? How does it feel to

be a publishing house type being hit on the head by an author? Lou knows both sides, and he'll tell you how to, and how not to be a “hit” with your publishing house.

Literacy is YOU! Deborah LeBlanc

Authors taking a Literacy Project to the High Schools is a win-win situation, building readers and sharing our passion for the written word. Deborah offers cold hard cash to students to encourage reading. Her brilliant LeBlanc Literacy Challenge is now in its second year.

11:45 to 12:30

Who Said Sanity Was Necessary? Definitely not these two NYT authors!

Join Catherine Coulter and Kay Hooper in a wild, wacky, brutally honest and laugh-out-loud look at their careers, their quarter-century friendship, and the weirded-out world of publishing. PPP (Potent Potables Provided)

12:30 to 2:00

Lunch on our own

There will be sign-up sheets at the Registration Desk for group lunches, and a variety of restaurants to choose from. Ninc hostesses provided.

2:00 to 2:45

Book to Film, Peter Miller

Okay, now you've written a sure-fire movie hit. Now what? Well, now it's time to hear from the man who has been managing writers in books and film for more than three decades, that's what.

Psychopaths Are People Too, Tami Hoag

Does anyone really need any more information than that to know this is a must-see workshop?

The Long Tail of Publishing, Serena Robar

Why does Nora Roberts get three shelves at the local B&N and they barely carry your new release for a month? Why won't they carry your backlist? They follow the brick and mortar sales model that dictates 80% of the sales comes from 20% of the inventory (better known as the bestseller list). Did you know that model of sales is losing relevance? Have you heard of The Short Tail in economics? Do you understand what filters and niches are? If you want to know how to compete in today's changing market, then this workshop is a must for any writer wanting to be competitive.

3:00 to 3:45

Book Marketing, Mistakes and Winning Strategies, Penny Sansevieri

Now that you know what 2.0 is, let's talk about content, because the real expertise lies in *how* to use

these nifty new tools to get the word out, publicize the author and the books. How friendly and/or accessible do you need to be? Is posting a photo of fave pet Fido a good move, or does it brand you as unprofessional? What works? What doesn't? Ask the expert!

Fear, Intuition and the Writer's Mind, Laura Phillips
Understanding the role of fear and its physical aspects, how to use it effectively in writing - and how to apply the info we've learned about fear itself to overcoming our personal fears about our work.

Organized By Design: Using Your Unique Organizational Style to Maximize Productivity, Cyndy Salzmann

Ready to stop the cycle of broken resolutions to get more organized? Professional organizer Cyndy Salzmann will help you identify your unique organizational style and provide practical strategies to make it work for you - instead of against you.

4:00 to 4:45

His Brain/ Her Brain, Eileen Dreyer

There really is a scientific reason he can't find the butter in the refrigerator. Learn the real biological differences between a man's brain and a woman's that set up such delicious conflict. If this session doesn't save your book, it may save your significant other!

Marketing Panel

Penny Sansevieri, Ruta Duhon, and others to be announced.

(possibility of late addition here to round out the hour)

5:00 to 5:45

Para-Basics, Greg Myers

Everything you wanted to know about how the professional ghost busters work, straight from the Director of Paranormal Task Force, Inc., based in Missouri.

Taming The Paper Tiger: A Simple Approach to Maintaining both Paper and Electronic Files, Cyndy Salzmann

"I know it's here somewhere..." Don't waste precious writing time sorting through piles to find needed information. This fascinating workshop will provide practical strategies for finding what you need - when you need it.

(possibility of late addition here to round out the hour)

6:00 to 8:00.....

Dinner on our own. Sign-up sheets for group meals located at the Reception Desk, along with a list of restaurants, directions, for all appetites.

OCTOBER

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Friday, October 2: Members-Only Night Owls

Night Owls are relaxed, private, interactive sessions for **Ninc members only**, with volunteer members serving as moderators and guides. Bring your own voices to the party!

8:00 to 8:45

Collages, Part I

You know the drill - bring your props and scissors!
Charlotte Hubbard

Feng Shui Your Career

(Don't knock it - it worked for her!)

Kay Hooper

9:00 to 10:00

Collages, Part Deux

Charlotte Hubbard

The World May End Tomorrow, But I'm Writing Today

— or —

Optimism In The Face of Reasonable Pessimism

How to keep going when the going gets tough, tougher, and then downright ridiculous.

Pat Rice and Thea Devine, our own optimistic pessimists, as moderators

OCTOBER

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Saturday, October 3: Open Sessions

8:45 to 9:30.....

The World Inside the Book, Sharon Shinn

It's not just plot and characters. It's a whole world we're building here, folks. Let fantasy writer Sharon Shinn show you some winning ways to create that unique world your characters deserve.

A Writers Guide to Web 2.0 and Social Media, Joe Nassise

Our publishers tell us we need Internet Presence. So here we go again - all this scary stuff we know we need but are afraid to use. Let Joe take the worry out of being "out there" on the Web.

Publishers Panel

Eileen Hutton, Brilliance Audio; Angela James, Samhain; Margaret Marbury, Harlequin; Deb Werksman, Sourcebooks; The Story Plant ... and others to be announced.

9:45 to 10:30

World Building For Fun and Profit, Elaine Isaak

How many ways to skin a cat? How many worlds inside your head? When creativity needs its own universe, here are some more building blocks on how to make the world your characters inhabit unique and, more importantly, believable.

What's So Different About YA? Sharon Shinn

Everyone knows YA is a growing market. So what do we need to know to grab a piece of it? We all can't write *Twilight* or *Harry Potter*, but there's an entire world of YA out there just waiting to be conquered.

Agent Panel

Adam Chromy, Peter Miller, Lauren Bradford, and others to be announced.

10:45 to 11:30

Small Press: Smart Choice or Second Chance,

Patricia Wynn Ricks and Fran Baker

Let two small press publishers walk you through the process, answer your questions, and see if there's a new/old market out there just waiting for you.

The View, Tami Hoag

How does she do it? Why does she do it? Is what she does and how she does it so dissimilar from how we do it? Let's talk about writing. The process, the joys, the pain, the triumphs. A writer is a writer is a writer.

Debunking the Paranormal Fakes, Dr. Michael Henry

Michael Henry became a professional magician specifically to learn the tricks of the trade and, yes, debunk the fakes. What's real paranormal...and what's just not going to cut it in our stories?

11:45 to 12:30

Wind 'Em Up And Watch 'Em Go!

Round off your morning with Tami Hoag and her Posse of Pals as they talk careers, publishing foibles, and how to keep writing friendships alive and thriving. And, if pushed, we may hear Eileen Dreyer sing *Danny Boy* for us. PPP (Potent Potables Provided).

12:30 to 2:00

Lunch on our own. There will be sign-up sheets at the Registration Desk for group lunches, and a variety of restaurants to choose from. Ninc hostesses provided.

2:00 to 2:45

Michael the Wizard Performs Magic for Grown Ups

Michael Henry calls himself a "wizard" rather than a magician. The difference between a Wizard and a Magician is simple, he says. "When a Magician does a card trick, for example, you know that it is a trick," he said. "If I do a card effect, there's a probability that something supernatural occurred, and I don't bother to provide a disclaimer. Mysteries do happen. Mysteries are real."

Publishing From the Inside, Lou Aronica

If you heard Lou dish on publishing at the New York conference last year, you know why Kasey Michaels ran him down in the hallway after the session to nab him for St. Louis. This former Bantam, Avon and Berkley publisher has teamed up with agent Peter Miller to create The Story Plant, a publishing company focused on "commercial fiction and author development."

Painless Research, Kathy Lynn Emerson

How do you dig up those elusive details that make historical mysteries come alive . . . and have fun doing it . . . whether your history is twenty years ago or two hundred? Among the topics covered are how to evaluate a printed source, tips on using library resources, the benefits of hands-on research, the pitfalls of doing research online, and why historical accuracy is important, even though you're writing fiction.

3:00 to 3:45

Editing Your Space: A Step-by-Step Plan for Putting the Clamp on Clutter, Cyndy Salzmann

Too much stuff not only clutters your environment – it clutters your mind. Professional organizer Cyndy Salzmann will help writers employ their editing skills to clean up their spaces and keep creativity flowing. And she promises we'll never need backhoes to clean out our offices again!

Non-fiction Book Proposals, Peter Miller

Nicknamed "the Literary Lion," Peter Miller has successfully managed over 900 books and dozens of motion picture and television properties. He understands fiction, but in these tough times, he understands that novelists might need to be nonfiction writers, too.

Paranormal Across the Genres, Greg Myers

Greg Myers explores the paranormal in romance, thriller, mystery, and more. The Paranormal Task Force director has had personal paranormal encounters since his teens. With his years of solid paranormal investigative

experience, Greg was voted one of the top ten Investigators in America for 2008-09 on Haunted America Tours (<http://www.hauntedamericatours.com>).

OCTOBER

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Sunday, October 4:

4:00 to 5:00

The Psychology of Character, Dr. D. P. Lyle

Bring your notebooks and prepare to use them! Using Hannibal and Clarice from *Silence of the Lambs*, among others, have the Character Arc explained in a way that will have us seeing the proverbial lightbulbs going off over the heads of all attendees, whether they be two-book authors or 102-book authors. A breakthrough workshop!

6:00 to 8:00

Celebrating Twenty Years of Excellence

Grand Ballroom

Food, drink, and Special Presentations

8:45 to 9:30.....

General Meeting

If you're not going to wake up that early, we need your proxy. Proxies are in your Welcome Packet and available at the Registration Desk ... and you'll be best-served to sign one now rather than have the Conference Committee come hunting for you at 8:45 in the a.m. But you don't want to miss the meeting, because Deb Gordon and Elaine Isaak will be explaining the Authors Coalition to us!

9:45 to 10:30

Lou Aronica, Unplugged

Plus any other Industry Professionals willing to speak with the gloves off about this business we're all in together! Bring your toughest questions. This is no day for an early flight reservation!

Note to members: If you don't see a moderator listed for any of these workshops, that's because we don't have all of them lined up yet. A great JOT job is moderating workshops – introducing the speakers and keeping them wired and watered, as it were. If you want to moderate one or more workshops, contact JOT volunteer Deborah LeBlanc, tell her which sessions you'd like. First volunteered, first served: Deborah@deborahleblanc.com

And another note: The **Kritters For The Kids** (and autographed books for the parents and the hospital library!) delivery schedule will be announced shortly.

And one more note: Go to <http://www.Ninc.com>, click on JOT Volunteers, and sign up to help out pre-conference, during the conference, or both. Pick your favorite job now, while it's still available. This conference is for everyone – let's get involved so we meet and get to know more of our fellow members. Remember, networking is more than just finding a good seat in the Lounge bar! Contact Marcia Evanick at Marcie@ptd.net.

**Ninc Goes Platinum:
Celebrating Twenty Years Of Excellence**

Drury Plaza Hotel, Saint Louis September 30 – October 4, 2009

Register Now:

<http://www.Ninc.com/conferences/2009/index.asp>



WANTED: Writers Seeking Small Pleasures and Other Conference Fun in St. Louis

BY MELINDA RUCKER HAYNES

A recent BBC news article reported that in tough times people turn to small pleasures like chocolate. The article quoted a chocolate lover who said, “We can just take a little and it makes us happy. I won’t cut back on chocolate. Anything else but chocolate.”

In coping with the economy, some new Ninc members may wonder what they can cut back on to make the St. Louis conference and have their chocolate, too. However, savvy Ninc conference veterans might say instead, “Even if I had to sell my last kidney, I’d cut back on anything else *but* the Ninc Goes Platinum conference. And bonus, I can get my chocolate and other small pleasures at the Night Owls sessions!”

Good chocolate isn’t the only after hours treat conference attendees can enjoy in St. Louis. Starting at 8:00 pm on Thursday and Friday nights, Night Owls sessions offer rare treats that are more informal and experimental than daytime programming. Currently, seven presentations/discussions are scheduled, and if another meeting room is available, two more programs will be added on Thursday. On Friday night if we have another room—preferably a public one instead of a president’s suite entirely too scrutinized by hotel security—Night Owls can play the infamous-to-some *Writers’ Game of Mastery and Mayhem* for huge fun and very little profit, other than possible blackmail of members performing Stupid Author Tricks. (No worries, U-No-Who-U-R, I can’t find those photos from last year.) In any case, here’s what the facilitators/moderators have planned for Ninc Night Owls in St. Louis:

Ninc Night Owls Sessions, Thursday 8:00 — 9:00 pm

Conjuring Characters with Tarot Cards—Charlotte Hubbard, Facilitator

“Characters, conflicts, backstory and other fuel for fiction are at your fingertips! Using Tarot energy, we’ll arrange card spreads to create characters who work/play well with others—or not! The images on Tarot cards are great catalysts for creating story ideas or cranking up stalled plots, using right-brain magic similar to collaging. NO knowledge of Tarot is necessary! Bring any deck(s) you have (I’ll bring 3), or come deck-less and buddy up to brainstorm. This is a fun, hands-on session with take-away idea sheets. Want a deck? Look on <http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot>. Questions? Email Charlotte: cmhubbard@embarqmail.com.”

Ninc’s Own Online Critique Group Discussion—Pat Rice, Moderator

Trying something new? Need an extra pair of eyes? Lucky conference attendees have a chance to learn about Ninc’s Yahoo invaluable critique group that started years ago. Ninc members are very laid back and cooperative and the group has no rules. We just all contribute what we can, when we can. Join us and discuss what Ninc Critique Group is and what it can be.

Thursday 9:00 — 10:00 pm

Grumpy Ole Writers Discussion—Jasmine Cresswell, Moderator

“Once upon a time, when you were an unpublished writer, do you remember how you thought that making a living as a published novelist had to be the most wonderful career in the world? Now you’re older and a lot wiser. Even if you’ve been lucky enough to avoid the standard hazards of writer’s block, demented editors, and unhelpful agents, you almost certainly haven’t escaped scathing reviews on Amazon; fan letters that suggest the signatories reside in secure, locked facilities, either padded or barred; not to mention the PR effort that ate up your life, stole your sanity, and didn’t increase sales. This is the Night Owl Session for Old Timers, the grizzled veterans with ten, twenty or ▶

more years in the trenches. Writers who feel like the wrung out survivors of a very long and hard slog are welcome to join us, even if it's only a couple of years since their first book was published. We'll discuss problems big and small, from the relatively minor irritants mentioned above, to larger issues such as what happens when you've written so many books that every scene and every character seems to have appeared in a previous story; whether burn-out can be overcome when it occurs late in a career as opposed to the middle; and what might be signs that it's time to retire."

De-Stress and Re-Create Yourself with Self Hypnosis—Melinda Rucker Haynes, Facilitator

Life and career stressing you out? Has the Muse fled to calmer creative climes within that you can't seem to find? Do you feel the need to recreate yourself in a whole new "brand" but haven't a clue where or how to begin? Don't worry, you don't need pie and a flash from a deneuralizer* to put yourself right. Let certified hypnotherapist MMMMelinda safely soothe you into a state of writerly bliss with her magic voice and teach you how to easily enter into this harmonious creative state of self hypnosis whenever you need to relax, refresh and re-create yourself.

**Men in Black* reference

Ninc Night Owls Sessions Friday 8:00 — 10:00 pm

Collaging—Charlotte Hubbard, Facilitator (Two Hours)

Take a self-guided magical mystery tour via right-brain visualization! You might come away with that one missing ingredient for your WIP, or an entire plot for a new book! Seasoned collagers and newbies alike are astounded at what jumps out at them as they sift through magazine images and other stick-on doodads...cut and paste, like in kindergarten when stories were *fun*, and then take it home! Ninc provides scissors, glue, markers, a stash of magazine pix and some backing materials, but *please* bring old mags and crafty what-nots to share!

The World May End Tomorrow, But I'm Writing Today Discussion—Pat Rice and Thea Devine, Moderators

Learn survival tactics from the experts in pessimism and optimism. Will publishing as we know it end tomorrow or are we on the brink of a Brave New World? Will you have another idea that has as good a chance to sell as anyone else? Can you be replaced? Or if you write what interests you, will you interest readers? Can you reinvent yourself? Do you need to? Join us for a discussion of how we'll move forward in the face of uncertainty.

Friday 9:00 — 10:00 pm

Feng Shui Your Career—Kay Hooper, Facilitator

Can you see over the clutter on your desk? Do you work with your back to the door? Do you know what one thing you can do to "energize" your cover flats or jackets? Do you know which corner of your office is your prosperity area, and what steps you can take to "invite" prosperity and career success into your life? Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese practice whose simple motto is "Energy Follows Intent" can change the way you look at the space around you — and change your life. It's also very sensible and a lot of fun. Let's talk about it!"

Check the Ninc Goes Platinum conference webpage often for program schedule updates and more small pleasures in St. Louis.

For information on Ninc Night Owls sessions or to suggest session topics and presenters, email MMMMMMelinda at melindahaynes@comcast.net.

You'll find quick conference bits in the Bulletin Board this month, too—see page 18.

Cover To Cover

By Lou Aronica



The 15% Solution

Back in my Avon days, one of our junior editors (let's call him Ed, not his real name) came to me with the name of a thriller writer he wanted to pursue (let's call him Jason, also not his real name). The writer had been publishing paperback originals at one of the smaller mass market houses and therefore hadn't developed much of an audience. Still, Jason's work excited Ed. Ed felt that, with the proper direction and the resources a large house could throw at him, Jason could have a long and successful career. We contacted Jason's agent (let's call him Midas, not his real — oh, you get the point), who happened to be one of the biggest agents selling fiction in America. Midas told us that, yes, Jason was at that moment finishing a new proposal and that he was seriously contemplating switching houses.

A few weeks later, the proposal hit our desks. Ed and I both felt that, while the story needed work, the project had considerable promise. We discussed the challenges associated with increasing the sales of a writer whose books had always sold relatively few copies, and we convinced ourselves that we could overcome any such problems. Ed had a nice conversation with Jason about ideas that would boost the commercial potential of the novel and then we put an offer together that was easily twice what Jason had earned on any of his previous books. Included in the offer was a commitment to publish the new novel in hardcover. Since we were dealing with a mega-agent and Ed was a junior editor, I made the phone call, assuming it would be one of the easiest I would make that day. I laid out our offer to Midas.

And he laughed at me.

When Midas stopped laughing, he told me that he wouldn't even take an offer to his client unless we came up to six figures. I checked to make sure we were talking about the same client. Indeed we were. I asked if I'd perhaps been unaware of the author's recent explosion onto the bestseller list. No, the sales history was much as I had assumed it to be. Since it was important to be polite to an agent who had sold me bestselling authors in the past and could very well have another for me sometime soon, I suggested that perhaps my calculator was missing the button that put the writer's earnings potential anywhere near the six-figure range.

"Look, Lou (notice I'm using my real name here), I'm not taking less than six figures for this novel. Get back to me if you think you can do that."

We shared a pleasant exchange about one of the bestselling authors we had in common and then I hung up the phone. I walked down to Ed's office to debrief him and to share my disbelief at Midas's demands. Ed and I had a good chuckle about how ridiculous agents could be. Yes, we wanted the book, but to bid \$100,000 for a writer with this track record when no one was bidding against us was simple lunacy.

A couple of days later, I closed the deal for \$87,500. My crack negotiating skills had netted Avon the book for only somewhere around five times what the writer earned for his last book.

Several years earlier, when I was at a different house, I received a submission from a Midwestern agent (let's call him Slim) who represented a fantasy writer (let's call him Aragorn) who wrote a number of bestsellers for a publisher who did licensed books and paid very low royalties. Aragorn's new proposal had nothing to do with the fantasy universe in which he'd written the bestsellers because that universe was the property of the publisher. Still, Aragorn had been showing up on the *Times* list regularly, therefore developing a good level of name recognition with both readers and booksellers, and the proposal was very good. Realizing there was some risk involved but that there was considerable upside, I made a very conservative offer of low-mid five-figures for each of three books.

Slim accepted the offer immediately.

I called Aragorn to congratulate him on the deal and he seemed very happy. This has all gone remarkably easily and everyone appeared to be so pleased. I actually started to wonder if I'd missed an article about Aragorn's having

recently been convicted for a felony.

We sent out the contracts and Slim called to discuss a few points. Early in the conversation, he actually said to me, “You know, I was a little surprised when I got the contract. I didn’t realize we were talking about this much money for *each* book. I thought you were talking about that for *all three*.” That I managed to keep the phone in my hands at that point was a testament to the effectiveness of the Zen breathing techniques I’d recently begun practicing.

These two stories have decidedly different postscripts. Jason’s thriller did only modestly well and wound up with a big unearned advance. However, all three books in Aragorn’s fantasy

trilogy hit the *Times* list and the author earned somewhere around a million dollars total before publishing many additional bestsellers (at admittedly higher advances negotiated by a different agent) with us.

The point of this, of course, is that *who* negotiates your deal has a huge impact on how — or even if — that deal turns out.

There are many ways to look at the above examples. One is to see that I am a lousy negotiator. After all, I actually paid more for both of these projects than I needed to pay. This is one of the many reasons why I don’t negotiate the deals on my own books, and why I never for a second considered becoming an agent after my last gig as a publisher. But we’re not here to dissect my skillset as a businessperson.

Another way to look at this is that both agents did a disservice to their clients. Yes, Midas got me to pay significantly more for Jason than Jason’s sales warranted. But the upshot is that he put us in a position — one that he should have known he was putting us in — where there was a good chance we’d feel uncomfortable continuing with the writer after this first book. The large unearned advance made the publication highly unprofitable for us (this isn’t always the case; in fact, a publisher can sometimes earn plenty of money even with a sizeable unearned advance) and this soured us on Jason’s publishing future. We wound up publishing only this one book. If we’d paid what we originally intended, we would have been much more likely to try to build Jason in spite of his modest sales start for us.

In Slim’s case, had he known how valuable Aragorn was, he could have gotten a considerably larger advance. Yes, Aragorn ultimately made his money in royalties, but only because I was willing to give him a fair royalty rate in the first place. If I had been less writer-friendly (or a better negotiator — I really wish you’d stop bringing that up!), I could have gotten these books for a lower royalty rate and the writer would have earned considerably less. Eventually, Slim lost the most in this situation. When Aragorn realized that his agent had left so much on the table, he fired Slim and went to an agent with more clout.

If you recall, my goal in this column is to give you an “omnidirectional” perspective on the industry. Since none of you is shy about discussing agents from the writer’s perspective, you don’t need me to add anything to that conversation. What I’d like to do here is discuss agents from the publisher’s perspective.

The first year I had an expense account as an acquiring editor, my expenses were greater than my salary. Mostly, this was because I was grossly underpaid and because I really liked eating in nice restaurants. In addition, though, there was the part about introducing myself over lunches, breakfasts, and drinks dates to as many agents as possible. From an editor’s standpoint, it’s essential to have a good relationship with as many agents as you can. Doing so increases the chances of their thinking of you when the next hot project comes along.

At the beginning of my career, I defined someone as a “good agent” if he or she were willing to sell something to me. As time went on, though, I added some nuance to this definition. I didn’t want an agent to send me things that didn’t fit my publishing program in any way. I didn’t want an agent to present everything to me as though it were the next #1 bestseller. I didn’t want the agent to squeeze every last penny and every last deal point out of me. But at the same time, I didn’t want the agent to be a pushover. From a publisher’s standpoint, a good agent strikes a balance. A good agent knows when he’s about to ask for too much and stops just before it becomes painful for the publisher. This is important because agents who make every negotiation excruciating for a publisher find that publisher far less sympathetic if problems arise down the road. At the same time, if an agent accepts offers too easily, I’d be concerned about having an angry author on my hands — one who realized the terrible deal his agent had made — somewhere down the line.

Writers often want their agents to be pit bulls with publishers. This doesn’t necessarily help writers in the end. I recall an agent for one of the bestselling writers I worked with (I’m not giving these people names; make up your own if you’re so inclined) being so inflexible during every negotiation that I felt violated after every deal. This had an impact on my working relationship with the writer and it had an impact on the passion with which I published that writer. One could suggest that my need to extend myself so far in every negotiation should have driven me to do everything I could to generate the sales that would justify the deal, but really it just left me ticked off. Eventually, when the writer hit a rough patch, I walked away rather than trying to find a way to move forward.

On the other hand, agents who understand that everyone needs to make money in the transaction find publishers willing to make important concessions. I used to work regularly with an agent who, like Midas, had sold me a number of big books

and who represented several superstar clients. Unlike Midas, though, he didn't hold a gun to my head during every negotiation. He was a very aggressive negotiator for his big writers, but he actually understood that his name on a submission didn't automatically mean the publisher had to empty its bank account. One time, he submitted a nonfiction proposal to me by an extremely good writer that was on a topic that had limited commercial potential. A number of other publishers were moderately interested and a little auction took place. At the end of the auction, we were somewhere in the \$60,000 range, I had the highest bid, and everyone else had dropped out.

"I need another \$15,000," the agent said to me.

"You just had an auction. I bid the most. Isn't this the point where I order the contracts?"

"Only if you give me another \$15,000."

I practiced my Zen breathing. "Am I missing something?"

The agent seemed to be doing a bit of his own Zen breathing on the other end. "I know you have the highest bid. I know you don't *have* to do this. But this is the author's only source of income and it's going to take him a year-and-a-half to write this book. If you can't give him another \$15,000, he can't afford to do the book and he'll take a job as a staff writer instead."

Now here's where my history with the agent came into play. If the agent had been a jerk in previous dealings, I would have called his bluff. I would have let him know that he couldn't hold an auction and then negotiate for more money from the highest bidder. Maybe the author would have decided to take that job as a staff writer, leaving me without the book, but I would have taken that risk to avoid letting the agent use a suspicious negotiating ploy on me.

But, knowing that this agent had dealt with us fairly in the past, I also knew that he was being honest with me now. I gave him the extra \$15,000. And in case some of you are now saying to yourselves, "Man, Aronica wasn't just a lousy negotiator — he was one of the worst negotiators of all time!" I'd like to note that this was in fact an instance of Shrewd Editorial Vision instead. The author's next book, which I acquired for a reasonable sum, spent three months on the *Times* list and each of the author's subsequent books have been bestsellers as well.

The agent/editor relationship has changed somewhat in the past few years because of a tight market and greater corporate control on the publisher end. Still, relationships matter tremendously. An agent who fights hard for his client but also considers the health of the publisher will consistently get good deals. The others might be great for you at a certain stage of your career, but won't serve you well consistently.

So how do you know if you have one of the good ones? Actually, one way of finding out is looking at your editor's face when you mention the agent's name. If her face tightens, there's a good chance your agent has traumatized her and that this agent might fall into the pit bull category. If her expression doesn't change and she continues the conversation as though she didn't even hear the name, you might be represented by Slim. If she rolls her eyes a little (a sign that the agent challenges her) and then tells you about a recent phone conversation she had with your agent, you might very well have the right one.

Another way to know is to pay attention to your conversations with the agent. Does your agent know what's going on at various houses not because he read something on Publishers Lunch but because he deals regularly with the Publisher and a half dozen editors there? Does the agent ever mention the publisher's need to succeed with your book when strategizing a negotiation? Does the agent talk about the relationship he has with the editor he's submitting your book to, or does he regard all of them as targets?

I do realize that all of us have fewer choices right now. Business is not good and various players in our industry — publishers, writers, booksellers, distributors, etc. — are responding with various levels of hysteria. Your agent is probably a little hysterical himself and, even if he has great relationships with editors, many of those editors are probably looking for work right now. Still, the people who excel in down markets tend to be those who were practicing excellence during flush times (though certainly some good people flounder in recessions and some bozos succeed). While I certainly wouldn't advocate that any of us make any rash moves right now, it's a good idea to know what you're getting for your fifteen percent, even if you're only filing it away for use in better days. ▲

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Google Settlement Not Quite Settled

Objections to Google's settlement with AAP and the Authors Guild have begun. Consumer Watchdog has requested the Justice department delay the settlement, citing problems with the "most favored nation" clause and language involving orphaned works. The group states there was no public interest represented in the negotiations. Consumer Watchdog is the first of many expected to issue a challenge.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Money, Money, Money

“The advance for a book should be at least as much as the cost of the lunch at which it is discussed.”
—Calvin Trillin, journalist and novelist

When my fellow career novelists learn that I now work without an agent (because of my bad *Agent Karma*), they frequently ask me about money. How do I know, without an agent’s advice, what I should be earning for my work? And how do I ask a publisher for money?

Well, first of all, in my own experience, agents aren’t infallible oracles when it comes to determining how much money to ask for. Indeed, several of my former agents sometimes asked *me* how much I wanted for a project or what I thought we could get for it. I’ve known various other writers whose agents do the same thing. I’ve always assumed this is because the sum an agent “should” ask for is a question of judgment, rather than a firm, finite fact.

Additionally, just like you or me, agents can be wrong about money. On one deal, the advance I got was only about half of what my then-agent wanted for the project. I was in the audience at a conference last year when the agent of a *New York Times* bestselling series told us that he hadn’t expected the material to get a very good offer. A baffled editor once confided to me that a prominent agent had recently made a deal at that house for *half* of what they would willingly have paid. And so on.

Perhaps your agent knows precisely what your new book proposal is worth and is shrewdly savvy in negotiating exactly the right sum for it. But in the reality that *I* inhabit, and when using the entertaining standards of our profession as my baseline for competence, I figure I can do this well enough.

So, how does one decide on a sum?

One popular school of thought suggests that the advance sum you propose should be based on (or bear a mathematical relationship to) your sales figures. I agree that sales have to be taken into account, but I think the sales information that I receive is too incomplete and arcane to be the primary basis of my decisions.

So my method is that I base my proposed advance on how much I want to earn for the work. This, in turn, is based on a variety of factors.

I take into account what I’m earning for my work at the time, or have earned recently, from that house or from other houses. If the project in question is comparable to my other work, then the sum I decide I want will probably be comparable. (Not necessarily identical; but comparable.)

On the other hand, if the project is not comparable, then my decision includes factors such as: How ambitious am I for this project? Is it a multi-book package that I see as a bright new career direction for me? Or it is a one-off book that I want to write primarily for personal satisfaction? Or is it an old, finished manuscript that I’ve had lying around for years and wouldn’t mind getting paid for?

Also, in any deal, I ask myself: What sum do I need to earn for the work, in order to make this deal a reasonable use of my time, considering that I have other writing commitments? (And if I *didn’t* have other writing commitments, that would also be a factor.)

If I find that I can’t get what I want for a project, perhaps I’ll change my mind and decide that a lower advance is acceptable. Alternately, perhaps I’ll stick with my original decision, despite making no sale, and retire the project from submissions—at least until the market changes again, as it always does.

I also take into account what the project means to me personally. Several years ago, for example, I submitted a

book to a small press after it had been turned down by eight major markets. The small press editor loved the book and made an enthusiastic offer for it. After I negotiated a 100% increase in the advance, the sum we signed for was nonetheless only 7% of what I was making elsewhere at the time. But I'm a writer—a creative artist, if I may say so without inciting your gag reflex—so this wasn't *just* about the money for me. I decided the creative satisfaction of that deal outweighed the fiscal disadvantages.

To give a different example, this past year I was invited to write a media tie-in novel for a gaming company. I wouldn't hold the copyright. I'd be working with various settings, premises, and characters that are not my own creation. My story would have to be tailored to fit the company's creative vision for the multi-book, multi-author story arc they were planning. And I'm extremely skeptical that media tie-in fiction builds a writer's audience or moves a writing career forward. So, overall, there was no way I would make fiscal sacrifices to do this.

Given my circumstances as a full-time, self-supporting writer, and considering the strained condition of the publishing market and the overall economy, I was certainly interested when the gaming company approached me with an opportunity to earn additional income. However, for this deal to be attractive, the money had to be right. And the initial advance the company offered was too low to meet my needs. So we negotiated, and they came up by 80%. This was within the range of what I felt I could agree to, so we closed the deal.

Naturally, I'd rather not have to negotiate for more money than a publisher is offering to pay me. I'd also rather not have to do laundry or clean my bathroom. The alternative, however, is to earn too little income and to become a very unhygienic person. So I do what I have to do.

I also keep in mind that a negotiation isn't about *me*; it's about the work. I take the work seriously, so I don't feel uncomfortable about asking for what I think is fair payment for it.

So far, I have never found fiscal negotiations with a publisher to be adversarial or awkward. It's just business. I need to earn income, and the publisher needs to restrict expenses. Within these constraints, we seek a compromise that works for each of us. No editor has ever yet treated me like I'm a delusional egomaniac for naming a higher sum than they're offering; and I have never treated any editor like a miserly jerk or pathetic wretch for offering a lower sum than I want. All of the editors I've negotiated with have been polite, the majority of them raised the opening offer by a fair amount, and at least one editor immediately agreed to the sum I wanted.

If the money on the table is the sum I've decided I want (whether I get an immediate "yes" or instead have to negotiate for a while), then I have no need to second-guess the deal, to wonder if I could have gotten more, or to question whether I should have done things differently. Getting what I've decided *I want* is good enough for me.

And if I can't get what I want, then perhaps it's not the right deal for me and I should seriously consider walking away. However, as one editor said to me, if both sides want to make a deal, they can usually find a way to work things out. So far, this has indeed been my experience.

Finally, I'm not explaining any of this to convince you to fire your current agent or not to hire your next agent. My position is that self-representation is sometimes the right choice for some writers; not that it's ever the right choice for all writers.

However, publishing is a business. So whether we talk to publishers directly or through our agents, we—as working novelists—do regularly have to make decisions about the money on the table. And this is how I make mine.

Laura Resnick has neglected to mention that a lot of time spent in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa, and the dealers rooms at sflf conventions has made her good at haggling over money.

Business Briefs

1.8 Million Authors Can't Go Wrong

Filedby.com is a new web site that lists 1.8 million author web pages. The links can be updated by authors or their publisher, while users "connect" with authors by writing reviews and making comments. The spotlight is on the author rather than the books.

The site is free, but if an author or publishers feel the need to add more to the site, there is a charge. The company Filedby, Inc. was founded by former Ingram exec Peter Clifton and industry analyst Mike Shatzkin.

Summer in Canada

Canadian Booksellers Association will be taking on some events from the cancelled BookExpo Canada. The conference is set for June 20 & 21 in Toronto.

Nink Needs a New Editor Next Year—You?

Want to work with some of the best writers in the business? Wish you had the inside scoop on industry happenings? Would you like to be a vital part of this great organization? Do you have what it takes to edit *Nink*, the newsletter of Novelists, Inc?

Ninc is looking for a volunteer to edit the newsletter in 2010. After two years overseeing *Nink*, Cindi Myers is stepping aside. The newsletter editor is responsible for acquiring content for each month's newsletter and working with our publisher, Sandy Huseby, who handles layout, printing and distribution.

While a Board member, the newsletter editor is appointed by the president. If you're interested in applying for this position, please contact Kay Hooper at castlelady@bellsouth.net. If you have questions about the duties involved in the editor's position, feel free to contact Cindi Myers at CMyersTex@aol.com

Ninc Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY JACKIE KRAMER

**Got any news or information
for the Bulletin Board?**

Send it to Jackie at
jackiekramer7@netscape.com

If you haven't yet signed up for the conference yet, now's the perfect time with all that tax refund you just got! And when you register, don't forget to contact Karen Tintori to volunteer for JOT duty. You can reach her at: ktinti@aol.com

If you're interested in carpooling to conference this year, subscribe to the new loop set up by Pati Nagle. Email: NINC09Carpoolssubscribe@yahoo.com

Just a reminder... Ninc has its own critique group. To sign on, email: NINCKritique-subscribe@yahoo.com Please include your name and email in the message.

The NincBlog can always use suggestions for great industry guests who would be interesting to members. Please send name and contact information to Patricia at: Patricia.Rosemoor@gmail.com

Denise Lynn announces that another year of goodies has been added to the NINKarchive database.

Early Bird sign up for a Ghost Tour at the Ninc Conference.

The tour will be Saturday night, October 3, midnight—and yes, there will be a full moon that night! The first 15-20 folks to sign up and send Marci Evanick, conference registrar, a check for \$20 will participate. Make checks payable to Novelists, Inc. and mail to:

Marcia Evanick
7 Laburk Lane
Reinholds, PA 17569-9315

Transportation from the Drury Plaza Hotel will be a bit extra. It is the St. Charles Ghost Tour, conducted by Dr. Michael Henry. Details on <http://www.stcharlesghosts.com> Don't miss out on what sounds like a fun, spooky time!

If you're writing or interested in writing for the YA market, join the new NINC-YA yahoo group – to subscribe, email NINC-YA-subscribe@yahoo.com

Are you getting the latest market news? Do you know the latest update about the conference or do you have to wait until you get your *Nink* newsletter? Are you involved in the newest discussions between fellow Ninc members? Do you have ANY idea what Kritters for the Kids is all about? If any of your answers are no, you need to join us on the NINC link. To subscribe to Ninlink, send a blank email to: NINCLINK-subscribe@yahoo.com.



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane O'Brien Kelly

Carry On

Most sole proprietors file their federal income tax returns on the “cash basis” of accounting. Under the cash basis, a taxpayer generally reports all income received during the tax year and deducts all expenses paid during the tax year on that particular year’s return. Income received or expenses paid in any given year normally have no effect on other tax years.

There are exceptions to this general rule, however. For instance, tax law may require an item to be depreciated, with its cost deducted over several tax years even though the taxpayer may have paid for the asset in full at the time of purchase. Other exceptions to the cash basis of accounting are what’s known in the tax biz as “carryovers,” which includes both “carryforwards,” and “carrybacks.” When certain deductions cannot be fully utilized in the tax year in which they are incurred, these deductions may time travel to other tax years and offset income earned in those years. The good news for taxpayers is that the ability to carry over unused deductions means the tax savings is not lost. Carry forwards save tax in future years. Carry backs entitle the taxpayer to a refund of taxes paid in earlier years.

The most common carryover items include net operating losses (NOLs), home office deductions, charitable contributions, and capital losses.

Net Operating Loss Carryovers. On a tax return, losses can offset income up to the amount of the income, thus zeroing out taxable income and eliminating tax. When a taxpayer incurs losses that exceed their income, the taxpayer has a “Net Operating Loss” or “NOL,” which can be carried back and/or carried forward to offset income and reduce tax in other tax years. The recently enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 extended the carry back period for NOLs from two years to five years. Any NOL remaining after the carry back years can then be carried forward twenty years to offset income earned in those years. A taxpayer can elect not to carry an NOL back and to carry it forward only. If a taxpayer chooses to carry back an NOL, however, the NOL must be carried back first to the earliest carryback year, then to the next earliest carryback year, and so on. Any loss not absorbed during the carry back or carry forward years is lost.

I’m sometimes asked by writers with little or no taxable income, who would not otherwise be required to file a return, whether they should bother filing a return that will show an NOL since they won’t owe any tax for the year regardless. My answer is an unequivocal “Heck, yeah!” If the NOL isn’t reported, it can’t be carried over to other tax years. Even if a writer had no taxable income for the previous five years and expects to have no taxable income for the foreseeable future (and thus doesn’t expect to benefit from an NOL carryback or carryforward), it’s best to go on record with the NOL in case circumstances change. For instance, a writer who’s been living on non-taxable social security and incurring net losses from his or her writing biz may suddenly make the bestseller list and wish they’d reported their losses in previous years so that the loss could be used now to offset current income. A lot can change during the twenty-year carry forward period. If the writing doesn’t pay off, maybe the lottery will!

An NOL carryback can be claimed either by filing an amended tax return (Form 1040X) for the carry-back year or by filing a Form 1045 “Application for Tentative Refund.”

Home Office Deduction Carryovers. Home office deductions for a given year are deductible only up to the amount of net income from the business and thus cannot generate a loss for the business. The portion of home office deductions that is not deductible due to this limitation can be carried forward indefinitely to succeeding tax years until used up, even if the taxpayer moves to a different home.

Charitable Contribution Carryovers. The amount of charitable contributions a taxpayer can claim in a given tax year is generally limited to 50% of a taxpayer’s adjusted gross income (AGI). Any amount that is not deductible due to the limitation can be carried forward to the next five tax years, but deductible contributions will still be ▶

WRITING is TAXING

subject to the AGI limit in those tax years. Any amount not deductible after the five carry forward years is lost.

Capital Loss Carryovers. Tax law allows a taxpayer to deduct a net capital loss of only \$3,000 per year, no matter how much capital loss is actually realized. Bummer. To soften the blow, the taxpayer is allowed to carry capital losses forward indefinitely to successive tax years until used up. Holders of significant shares of Enron stock will likely be deducting their losses for centuries to come.

A Quick Caveat. With any carrybacks or carryforwards, special computations may apply if there is a change in marital status or filing status across the tax years.

For more details, see IRS Publication 536 "Net Operating Losses (NOLs) for Individuals, Estates, and Trusts," Publication 587 "Business Use of Your Home," Publication 526 "Charitable Contributions," and Publication 550 "Investment Income and Expenses."

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>.

Business Briefs

Kensington Won't Exhibit at BEA

BEA director says exhibit numbers are smaller this year, and that Kensington is one of the larger publishers to decline to exhibit. Kensington staff will be at the BEA Rights Center and available as attendees in the exhibit area and will be hosting some parties. By downsizing this way, Kensington will save the cost of booths, storage for exhibits and labor to staff exhibits, as well as the expense of travel, entertainment and giveaways. BEA will limit its breakfast and lunch speakers to authors who have publishers exhibiting. Publishers also have to have a minimal presence for their authors to participate in the general autographing sessions.

Sony + Google = More e-Books

50,000 public domain titles from Google have been added to the Sony reader's selection of ebooks. Click on a button at <http://www.ebookstore.sony.com> for the Google titles. First time buyers will need to register and download Sony eBook Library software. Users have access to books by subject, author or featured titles. There are now two models of the Sony reader available: the \$300 PRS-505 and the \$350 PRS-700.

Meanwhile in Japan . . .

Fujitsu is offering the first color e-paper mobile device, called FLEPia. It is available in Japanese at \$1000. Books can be purchased from the FLEPia web site through Papyless. The new device weighs under a pound, with no-glare e-ink technology which makes it as easy to read as paper. It delivers 40 hours of use on a single charge and can store up to 5,000 page-based books of approx 300 pages in length. The company hopes to continue reducing the price and ship it outside Japan as early as fall 2009.

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The Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues

Professionalism—Part I

Dialogues between award-winning science fiction and fantasy authors Mike Resnick and Barry Malzberg were originally published in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Bulletin, and are reprinted here with the permission of Mr. Resnick and Mr. Malzberg. Each Dialogue features these pros discussing an issue of interest to working novelists. We hope you'll enjoy and profit by this eNink eXtra series. **Ed.**

BY MIKE RESNICK AND BARRY MALZBERG

Mike: Since I've been writing a column (elsewhere) for beginning writers, I've been asked, from time to time, exactly what a writer owes his editor and publisher, and what they in turn owe the writer.

First and foremost, of course, each of them owes a certain adherence to the terms of the contract. The writer owes his editor a manuscript of X number of words that bears at least a passing resemblance to the synopsis that was used to make the sale. The editor owes the writer his support and his best editorial judgment. The publisher owes the writer Z dollars upon acceptance, and whatever the contract calls for in terms of promotion.

But what else do they owe one another? What other obligations has a writer got—if any? How about an editor? A publisher? Are the terms of the contract the end-all be-all, other than a certain degree of civility, or are there certain general obligations of professionalism that accrue to every writer and editor and publisher, whether spelled out in terms of the contract or not?

Barry: Here are the obligations of professionalism: you deliver contracted or promised manuscripts on time, you answer your mail, return phone calls promptly and treat editors and colleagues with civility unless severely provoked, and then you treat them with somewhat less civility. Simple, huh? No mystery to any of this. And yet—And yet I am reminded of my essay many years ago reminiscing none too warmly about my brief tenure (4/68-10/68) as editor of Sol Cohen's *Amazing/Fantastic*: "I could tell the difference between a good story and a bad story. At the time I thought that this represented the base level of how an editor should function. I learned that it was instead the most that could be expected of an editor." I would have expected that my first paragraph articulated the minimum level of professional conduct when as you and I know it represents perhaps the outer limit. Not to berate the members of SFWA and by inference the reader of these columns. We all have our problems and me too; somewhere in my dark history is a contracted but undelivered novel (terms were altered so that I did not have to return the advance) and several of our household names, writers who I will not dishonor by identifying here, made pocket-careers in their failing decades by signing contracts and taking advances for work that they not only did not deliver but knew they would not deliver . . . proposals which in many cases were sold in identical format to multiple publishers. Didn't keep any of them out of the Science Fiction Hall of Fame and I don't think it should. Many writers carry so much resentment, a burning, aching re-primation which deepens with the years, that they find a lack of civility the only way that they can strike at the system. (Of course in so doing they hurt their friends, not their enemies; the SMOFs are always fully sequestered from retaliation.)

I see that I am making a series of excuses; that what my first paragraph has given I am in the procedure of



taking away. Without excusing unprofessional behavior (at least unprofessional behavior by the members of the Science Fiction Hall of Fame) I do note that it can be explained, if not necessarily justified. Well, justified by most standards anyway. It sure can be justified by me: get to know any writer well enough, someone (not me!) wrote somewhere, "and you will inevitably find that unisolated bitterness, that feeling of entitlement which comes from what is felt to be great injury."

Mike: I think I'm going to start with the minimal professionalism a writer owes his editor and publisher:

1. He owes them the best writing of which he is capable, whether he likes the assignment or not.
2. He owes them a professional manuscript, which is to say, one that has been proofread and corrected. After all, if a writer shows contempt for his work by not going over it and correcting it before handing it in, why should an editor treat it with any greater respect?
3. He owes them an honest effort to meet his deadline.
4. In this day and age, he owes them a computer copy in a common, readable format, especially with shorter-than-book-length works. Since most business correspondence is now carried on through e-mail, he owes it to them to check his e-mailbox frequently, respond promptly, and to have a computer and system that is compatible with most other systems.
5. He owes them civil behavior.
6. He owes them a fast, competent turnaround when proofreading galleys.
7. He owes them whatever small extras are requested to promote the book or story, from having an autograph session at a convention to supplying a photo or brief bio for the dust jacket or introductory material.

And what is the minimum owed the writer by his editor and publisher?

1. An honest appraisal of his work when it is delivered. (That would seem to be an absolute given, but we've all seen what happens to orphaned books after inter-office wars.)
2. A prompt reading and a prompt decision.
3. Prompt pay.
4. Prompt and honest royalty statements on books.
5. A honest effort to promote the book or story to the best of the editor's and publisher's ability.
6. A caring handling of the material, by which I mean a good and competent copy editor (they're hard to find and always to be cherished when found), an artist who will do justice to the work, ample amounts of time to read the copy-edited manuscript and the galleys.
7. Prompt delivery of the author's copies.
8. A willingness to share, if not all reviews (some books get hundreds), at least all major ones.
9. Civil behavior.

Those lists came out shorter than I thought they would. What am I missing?

Barry: What you're missing—what we have been intermittently missing through the course of these exchanges although I try to be alert—is a sense of history, is an awareness that new campaigns are simply old campaigns with a few labels changed and of course a different set of characters. The opposite of repertory theatre—same play, same masks, different actors. In 1966 Damon Knight had an article in this very *SFWA Bulletin* on the subject of editorial courtesy and ranked the markets in those terms . . . from hardcover publishers (nice and thoughtful) all the way down to men's magazines ("unbelievably rude"). Knight felt that editorial courtesy should be contractual, that the obligations of the publisher should be explicit and part of the terms of the agreement, if they weren't then such courtesies could not be expected. "A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it is written on" and so forth.

And here we are, 37 years later, still worrying the same issue: writers should do this, editors should do that and why



the hell so often do they do neither? I think that Damon was on to something: unless we can get it codified in contracts—all of it, the writer's obligations, the editor's necessity—the situation will never change, there will be a range of response, some will exhibit apropos behavior and some will not. But how willing would the membership be (let alone publishers) to make this part of the model contract? Isn't lying to one's publisher, for so many ("Just polishing it up, boss") part of Standard Operating Procedure? Didn't Avram Davidson, may his soul rest in piece, have an essay in the *SFWA Forum* decades ago bragging on the various and ingenious ways he had found to defraud his publishers, obtain and keep advances for books he had no intention of ever writing? What was that essay doing in an official publication, come to think of it?

Mike: Actually, the most honest *and* courteous guys I ever dealt with were in the sex field during my starving-writer days 35 years ago. If they said they were going to buy something from you, it was written in stone. If they said they were going to pay you, you got the money within 48 hours and their checks were good as gold. (If they said they were going to kill you, they did that pretty promptly and efficiently, too—but no one ever said it to me.)

If Avram wrote that essay—and if he did, I missed it— then he was in opposition to pretty much everything I believe about professionalism. I think when you make a commitment, either verbal or contractual, to anyone for any reason, you keep it. Period.

As for lying to editors, I don't think it's necessary. A *lot* of novels come in late; they get published. The only time I can remember a publisher going to court to cancel a contract on a late book was in 1975, when a journalist was two years late handing in a book on the Nixon White House, which of course had been the Ford White House for over a year. For what it's worth, I think the publisher was justified.

But I'm not aware of any publisher suing to reject a late novel. Oh, a few years back a couple of our more venal mass market houses used it as an excuse to get rid of writers they no longer wanted—but I noticed that they never pulled that shit on a leader, just on writers they wanted to dump.

Anyway, that's why major novels are hardly ever scheduled until they come in. Otherwise, the publisher explains away a lot of ads and eats a lot of crow, like Scholastic recently did for the fifth Harry Potter book.

Professionalism, Part 2 will appear in the June issue of *Nink*.

Mike Resnick is the all-time leading award winner, living or dead, of short fiction (according to Locus). He has won 5 Hugos, a Nebula, and other major awards in the USA, France, Japan, Poland, Croatia and Spain. He is the author of more than 50 novels, 200 short stories, and 2 screenplays, and the editor of more than 50 anthologies. He is currently the executive editor of Jim Baen's Universe. His work has been translated into 22 languages.

*Barry Malzberg is the author of more than 90 books and 350 stories. A multiple Hugo and Nebula nominee, he is the winner of the very first John Campbell Memorial Award for Best Novel, and won the 2008 Locus Award for Best Non-Fiction Book. He is a former editor of *Amazing and Fantastic*, has edited numerous anthologies, and has long been considered one of the leading critics of science fiction.*

