

N I N K

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Free Money for Writers— Is There a Grant in Your Future?

BY HOLLY JACOBS

Author and friend Nancy Warren and I once did a workshop entitled *My Writing May Be Art, but My Kids Need Braces*. Most of us write for the love of it, but we have financial obligations. Kids. Mortgages. Groceries. And professional writing can be very much a feast-or-famine career. Grants might be a way for a writer to bridge a famine until they find another feast.

When I think of grants, I think of nonprofit organizations and educational institutes. I don't necessarily think of writers. But it turns out, maybe I should. There are grants out there for aspiring writers and for published writers. Grants awarded to authors of a particular genre. Grants for creating writing programs, which allow you to teach what you know and earn a bit of money while you continue to hone your own writing craft. Grants to tide you over while you write the next great novel.

Free money.

Why haven't I heard of writers' grants before? It seems that grants are part of the writing world's best kept secrets.

How To Find Grants

There are national, state and local grants. Many grants are privately funded. Google can help you track down grants. Networking can also prove an invaluable research tool.

Jo Ann Ferguson (*Sea Wraith* w/a Jocelyn Kelley) says, "I found out about the Arts Lottery Councils and grants because of two programs that were going on in my home town at that point. One was the course I was asked to teach at the public library, which was funded by an arts grant. The other was an artists directory being put together for the city's anniversary. That also was paid for by an arts grant, and I got to meet a lot of other artists—of all types—in the city at that time. We traded info and learned from each other."

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The Application Process

Once you find a grant you qualify for, you need to apply. I have a friend who writes grants as part of her day-job and she's assured me that writing a grant is a very specific writing skill. But there are books and online sources out there to help you through it.

Nalo Hopkinson, (*Blackheart Man*, 2009) was a Grants Officer for the Toronto Arts Council (Canada), ran the Grants for Writers listserve for SFWA, and also served on arts grant juries. "There are grants for many different aspects of the art-making process, so read the application carefully. Don't apply to write your work to a grant pro-

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Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

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Address changes may be made on the
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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:

Susan Wright, Ridgewood NY
Margaret Hubbard, Baton Rouge LA
Karen Hafter, Bradenton FL
Dianne Kruetzkamp, Milford OH
Lori Vanzura, Weatherford TX
Jeannie Steinman, Winnemucca NV

New Members:

Greg Herren, New Orleans LA

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.

Ninc Blog Ads? Ninc Bookstore Email Blasts? Ninc Speakers Bureau? Really???

KASEY MICHAELS. PRESIDENT 2009

Well, no, not *really*. At least not yet.

But we're always looking for new Member Services, talking about them, considering them, wondering how the heck we'd do them. That sort of thing. And you thought we were just here for the complimentary bon-bons...

The number one consideration when we do this talking and considering and wondering: is this something the membership would like?

So today let's talk about three ideas we've had recently, and, you know, run them up the flagpole and see if anyone ... no, I just can't finish that one.

Here's the first idea:

You know how we've got those nifty rotating covers on the Ninc home page, part of our new and improved The Next Page? They're there, and the expanded information about our new releases is there because, hey, we've got the page, why not use it to help us promote our work? Just like the links from Ninc's home page to all member websites — Ninc, promoting Ninc authors.

The Next Page is work for volunteer Neff Rotter, costs us a little bit each month to have our Webmaster put the stuff on the page — and that's it. Voila, a Member Service.

NOTE: You can go to <http://www.ninc.com>, sign in, click on http://ninc.com/members_only/member_services/logo.asp and put the Ninc logo on your website.

Okay, back to this first idea:

So, as the new The Next Page is working out so well, we began looking at the margins that run down either side of the Ninc Blog, and all that lovely empty space, just sitting there. Zap — inspiration struck. How about we “rent” that space to members on a monthly basis? A place where jpegs of book covers and some advertising copy can be posted for a small fee.

Do we know how many ads we could fit on the page? No. Do we know how much we should charge to cover the Webmaster's costs and still maybe put a few pennies in the Ninc coffers for use for other services? How would we do all of it? With limited space, first come, first served makes a lot of sense — which means we'd need a JOT volunteer or two or three to ask Pati Nagle just what we need to do and how we need to do it, and then take names, keep a schedule, make sure the artwork is submitted, get it all to the Webmaster on time each month, etc.

Big ideas are easy, I think I get about three a day — but after the Big Idea, some work is involved. So, is there an interest in this idea? Is there anyone out there who'd like to investigate further, decide if we're operating in the world of feasible, and then become a JOT volunteer in charge of Blog Ads? If so, it's kcmi@aol.com.

Idea Number Two:

While we're on the subject of Ninc helping members advertise their books, how about this one — we gather email addresses for bookstores and send out a monthly email blast promoting the current releases of Ninc members.

And not just any old email, but one with color jpegs, and headlines, and bells and whistles and all that good stuff. We would, naturally, put an “opt out” option for any bookstore that doesn't want to continue receiving a monthly Ninc News (or whatever we'd call it), but most bookstores, we hear, are receptive to this sort of promotional email.

Oh (new idea!), and we could eventually run contests, book giveaways, all linked to our website...helping to promote the website to readers who would then come see our nifty rotating covers for The Next Page, and visit the fantastic Ninc Blog, and then there's maybe a way for readers to opt in on the Ninc News and get their own email blast

Continued from page 1 ▶ every month, and ... sorry, I get a little carried away when these Big Ideas drop from the sky and clonk me on the head; I'm calmer now, honest.

Again, big ideas are easy (see the above...). But there's work involved, too. Gathering email addresses for the targeted bookstores. Working with the jpegs and whatever else members submit for that month's "issue" of Ninc News. Reminding members of deadlines to submit their book for inclusion in the email ... and whatever else I forgot as I'm busy seeing The Big Picture (again, the easy part).

So does this seem like an idea that — okay, I'll say it — anyone wants to salute? Is there an interest? Is there a JOT volunteer (and the more the merrier and less work for each JOT person!) who would like to take this on? If so, again, kcmi@aol.com.

Big Idea Number Three:

This one has already been mentioned in passing, but now it's time to investigate it in some depth. A Ninc Speakers Bureau.

We've got the website (and if you still haven't been to see it, what *are* you waiting for?). So let's use it to set up a page for our very own Speakers Bureau.

Susan Wiggs mentioned a speakers bureau in one of her columns for *Nink* last year, and I, always poised to pounce, immediately asked her if she'd like to take charge of such a venture. When she was through laughing, Susan said she'd love to help out, but she'd just given up her monthly column because she's so busy. Okay, never let it be said I go away easy ... so I asked her for a few "pointers" that would at least get us started.

I've got Susan's list of very good ideas in my files, and now what we need to know is — hey, anyone interested in Ninc setting up a speakers bureau? A place where members can list their availability to speak, the topics they speak on, the costs involved? And what about those details? Would Ninc act as the go-between? Would the page be a simple listing of names and information? Should Ninc charge something small for the service? How do the members see a speakers bureau as working best for them? How can Ninc best serve the members in such a venture?

Being repetitive here, but anyone interested in helping to form a speakers bureau from the ground up, that email address is kcmi@aol.com.

So that's it, three Big Ideas.

Does anyone think there is some merit in one of them, two of them — the hat trick, all three?

Ninc is not static. Our website (that gorgeous website!) is not static. We all want Ninc to keep growing, evolving, offering more to members. You've just seen three possibilities.

Now we need, yes, some boots on the ground (I'm full of clichés today for some reason). If there's interest, if there are JOT volunteers out there looking for something interesting to do while meeting other members and feeling a part of Ninc, then maybe by the end of this year we'll have three new member services, all designed to help us promote our work. And this doesn't mean just Doing The Work, with the Board first laying down a bunch of rules and second-guessing you every moment. No, no. It means Your Project, Your Ideas, Your Inspiration —you build it because when your heart is in a project like the Ninc Ads, the Email Blasts, the Speakers Bureau, then we know the results will be terrific.

Oh, and if anyone else gets at least three Big Ideas a day (don't we all?), Ninc wants to hear about them. Because we aren't content to simply be the best writers organization out there, we want to keep raising the bar (another cliché! Gad!) on Member Services. ▲

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Google Deadline – Happy or Sad About It?

After denying a motion to intervene to The Internet Archive, Judge Denny Chin granted a 4 month extension to a group of writers, during which time they might choose to stay out or object to the Google Book Search settlement. The group was headed by Gail Knight Steinbeck, who was pleased that the extension beyond May 5 would allow sufficient time to look at the matter. At the same time Paul Aiken, Authors Guild president, didn't seem as pleased, commenting that a shorter extension was anticipated so the next phase could be in process. So the saga continues . . .

Free Money for Writers

Continued from page 1 ▶ gram that's there to help you tour your already-written work."

Jo Ferguson advised applicants might find it beneficial "to get help filling out the grant's application. If it's an "easy" one like [the program she worked with], it's pretty self-explanatory, but I still had it reviewed by the art museum director before I sent it in. If you're going for a biggie grant—like a federal arts grant—you need either to take a grant-writing course or hire someone who knows how to do it. There are certain buzz words that are vital and some that are [the kiss of death]. Realize it will take time to get everything filed and approved. Keep excellent records of all expenses being paid for by the grant. In my case, I had a ten-week course at \$50/week and then \$50 for materials. I had to account for every penny."

Nalo Hopkinson had a final piece of advice. "Before you apply, you might want to have a look at who's received grants from that organization in prior years, for what projects. Look at who they've put on previous juries, see whether they routinely have people working in your genre. You might also try talking to the grants officer well ahead of time. If the officer finds s/he's hearing from a fair number of, say, mystery writers before an upcoming deadline, s/he might be in a position to get a mystery writer (preferably more than one) on the jury. The more an arts organization knows what its constituency needs, the more they can tailor their services to help."

Outside the US

Many countries recognize that art in all forms is not only beneficial to their populations, but necessary to their citizens' quality of life. So, many make grants available to their residents. One of the most famous grant recipients was J.K. Rowling. She's frequently mentioned in interviews that she was awarded a Scottish Art Council grant that allowed her to finish her book.

Nalo Hopkinson worked with the Canadian Arts Council and points out that "Canada has a handful of government-supported agencies, mostly at the provincial (equivalent of state) and national levels.... Fact is, the arts and entertainment industries are huge employers and they produce work that empowers people to think and/or brightens their lives."

She continues, "As I understand it, the U.S. has per capita fewer government-funded arts grants, but way more independent foundations that give grants. It's more common in the U.S. that someone with a lot of money might decide to start an annual award for whatever turns their crank; people who make human hair pictures of whirligigs, whatever. In Canada, you'll typically deed that money to an arts council to manage for you as a separate budget. So a grant from the Ontario Arts Council comes from a different fund and is adjudicated differently than a grant from the Ontario Arts Council Foundation."

Rejection...It Happens

Applying for a grant very much mirrors a writer's journey. As a writer, you need to write a book, educate yourself about the market and submit to the appropriate house. Yet, despite all the work you put into it, the odds are you'll be rejected because the competition for those publication slots is fierce. You have to locate a grant that you are qualified for, write the grant, then send it off, knowing that there are many other qualified applicants applying for that very limited funding and that the odds are you'll be rejected. Try again. Most grants are awarded annually.

Despite the difficulty, many writers receive grants. Brad Barkley (*Jars of Glass*) has won four from the Maryland State Arts Council and says that "most states have a similar group, and that is a good route to go, plus they are open to everyone. I have also won a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Those are highly, highly competitive, and if you win you can't apply again for ten years. Those are based mostly on the quality of your work, and you have to have had some national publications to apply."

Every facet of writing is highly individual and subjective. Each writer has her own style, her own story to tell. Each agent/editor has his own particular likes and dislikes. Submitting books is ultimately a crapshoot — sending the right book to the right editor on the right day. Grants are like that as well. But just as a writer who never submits will never sell, you will never get a grant...if you don't apply.

Award winning author Holly Jacobs writes for Harlequin American Romance, SuperRomance and Avalon Books. Her next releases are *Unexpected Gifts*, *SuperRomance*, *11/09* and *Everything But a Christmas Eve*, Avalon, *12/09*. Her award-winning *Avalon Everything But* trilogy is being reprinted this year by Thorndike. You can find her online at <http://www.HollyJacobs.com>.

Learn more about it with these further resources in books and online ▶

Books:

Foundation Grants to Individuals, by Foundation Center (Corporate Author), Phyllis Edelson (Editor)

2009 Writer's Market, by Robert Brewer

Artists Communities: A Directory of Residencies in the United States That Offer Time and Space for Creativity, by Alliance of Artists' Communities (Corporate Author), Tricia Snell (Editor)

Online Resources:

National Endowment for the Arts <http://www.nea.gov/>

State and Regional NEA Partners http://www.nea.gov/partner/state/SAA_RAO_list.html

Canada Council for the Arts <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/>

Pen American Center <http://www.pen.org/>

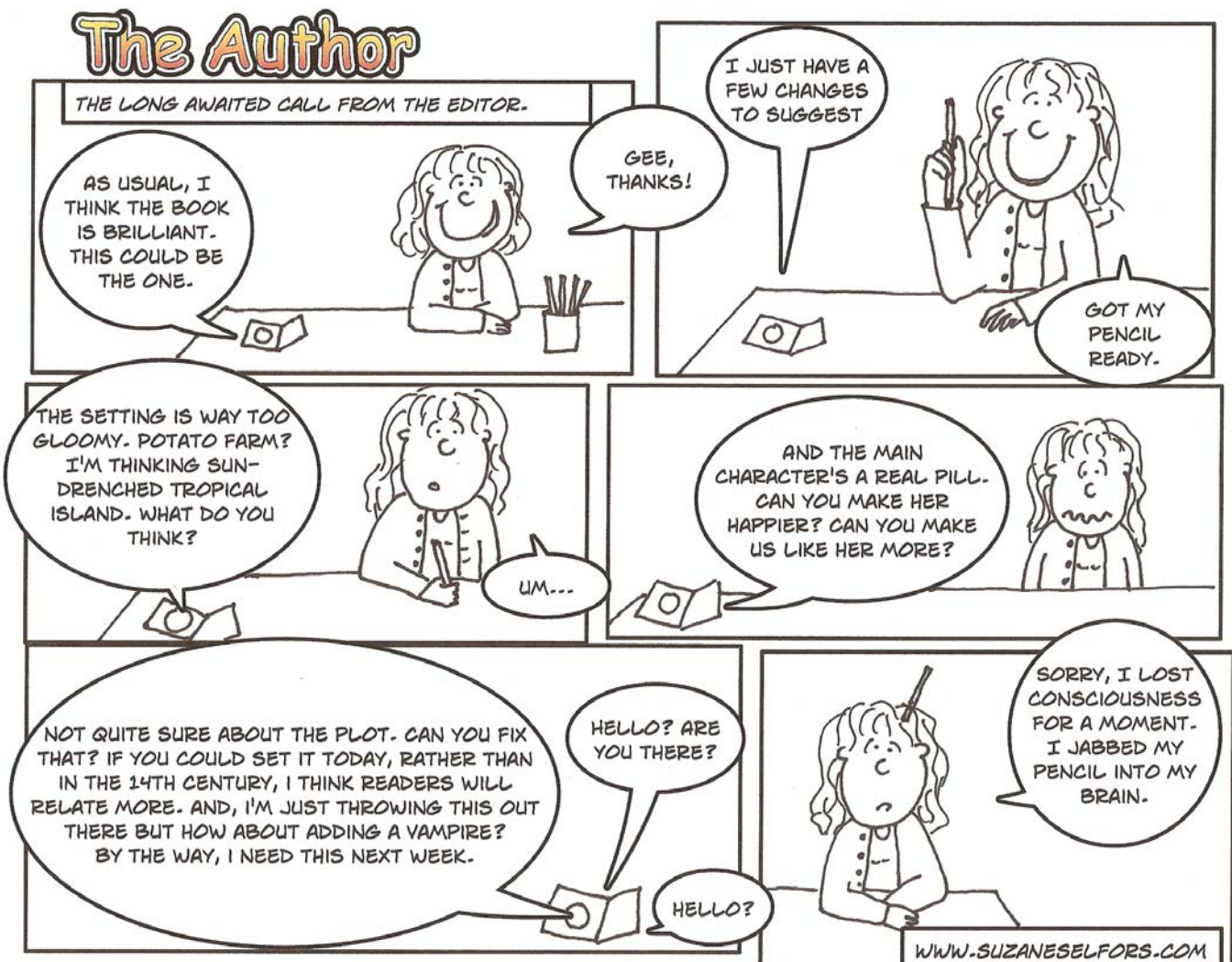
Isherwood Grants <http://www.isherwoodfoundation.org/>

Jo Ann Ferguson's article, "Can We Grant Your Wish," <http://jocelynelley.com/blog/>

Applying for State Grants http://writingfiction.suite101.com/article.cfm/applying_for_state_art_grants

Applying for Fiction Grants http://www.suite101.com/blog/writerrider/applying_for_fiction_grants

Grant Info <http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/guides/writers.html>





The World Inside the Book (just a taste, to whet your appetite!)

BY SHARON SHINN

To a certain extent, world-building is a skill that every author has to develop. Whether writing about czarist Russia or 1950s America, the novelist must make the time and place come alive so vividly that readers feel as if they can walk down the corridors, touch the walls, and breathe the air. I've read so much Georgette Heyer that I feel I could dress myself for tea at the Pump Room or a ball at Almack's and know exactly what topics of conversation would be acceptable in either place.

As a science fiction/fantasy author, I'm acutely aware of the challenge of world-building, because I'm always starting from scratch. Should the technology be futuristic or faux medieval? Are the women wearing long dresses, casual trousers, or some kind of ceremonial garb that I must pause and describe? Are they eating the staples like wine and bread and cheese that any reader would be familiar with, or should I invent food groups and growing seasons? If they're drinking hot chocolate, is the climate I've created hospitable to cacao plants—and if it's not, have I indicated that the residents trade with other nations? Can a man be sitting "ramrod straight" if muskets haven't been invented yet? Can a woman be wearing a ponytail if this world doesn't include horses? There are so many places to go wrong! Yet there are so many opportunities to create a rich, lush, extraordinarily detailed environment.

There is always a certain amount of tension between providing *too much* detail and *not enough*. When I'm reading, I can sometimes get bogged down by the author's minutiae. It can be hard to slog through a neighborhood-by-neighborhood description of the city as the main character travels through. On the other hand, if the book doesn't give me some idea of the season, the vegetation, the size of the houses, and the time of day, I don't have any sense of time and place, and the book loses much of its impact.

When I'm building a new world, I try to provide just enough detail on both the macro and the micro level to make it seem real. I use broad brushstrokes for the macro level. It's a desert world; the people have blue skin; angels live among men. But I try to add texture by filling in a few of those ordinary, everyday details. The sand drifts over the road and obliterates it within hours. A woman buys a cobalt-colored dress the exact same color as her skin. Angels sit in special chairs with cutaway backs to accommodate their wings. Sometimes I make up words. Often I make up rituals. I try to describe a fictional world just enough different from the real one that my readers can actually slip

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



through the door and imagine they are somewhere else.

In the end, I believe that the reader will be won over by character more than world, or even plot. But if the writer can create a world vivid enough, and real enough, that readers feel like they can stroll through it admiring the scenery, then I think they'll want to return to that place over and over again. World-building is crucial for any novel—fantasy, historical, or murder mystery—but for the novelist thinking *series*, it's absolutely essential. Like me longing for a Regency ballroom, readers want to return to a beloved place, whether it's a desert planet, an enchanted palace, wartime Paris, or modern-day Boston. A book is the fastest, easiest, cheapest way to travel to distant worlds and feel right at home.

Sharon Shinn is the bestselling author of The Safe-Keeper's Secret, the Twelve House Series, and other YA and fantasy novels. Anne McCafferty tells us that Sharon's books "have been on my comfort shelf ever since Archangel came out." Sharon will be speaking on The World Inside The Book and What's So Different About YA? at Ninc Goes Platinum.

You Can Still Take Advantage of Big Savings on Ninc Goes Platinum

Response to Ninc's offer of 1/2 price conference fees for the first 100 members who sign up was prompt and enthusiastic. By the time this newsletter goes to press, 80 members had taken advantage of this fabulous offer. Once we hit that magic 100 mark, the price rises by \$100. Ninc Does Forensics remains a \$75 fee if you sign up when you register for the conference, but rises to \$100 if you decide later that you'd be foolish to miss that exciting special one-day program that includes lunch and a post-workshops reception. Go to <http://www.ninc.com/conferences/2009conference> — and sign up today!

ASK the **LAWYER**

Q: What happens and how should you handle your contracts/publisher stuff, etc. when your agent dies?

A: The answer to this question will vary from state to state and from country to country, as laws differ. In New York State, where I practice, the death of a solo agent automatically terminates the agency relationship. All of the following statements are premised on that fact.

If the deceased agent was solo, and not incorporated, then the author is free of any further obligation to the agent, and can notify her publisher to that effect (including a request that the publisher cease sending any money at all to the deceased agent or her estate). The publisher may want some convincing of the legal position, but should be persuadable with some legal citations.

If the deceased agent was solo and incorporated, then I would think her death terminates the relationship, even if her agency was incorporated... but I have not researched that question and thus cannot be certain.

If the deceased agent was one of two or more agents at an agency, and if the author signed a contract with that agency (or if the agency clause in the publisher's contract specified the agency rather than a particular agent), then I don't think the death of the individual agent will necessarily terminate the agency relationship, assuming that the surviving agent is willing to continue to service the author's books.

Q: I live in New Zealand and am published by Harlequin, across lines, so usually first in the UK, then Canada, but sometimes in the US alone or as first publication followed by UK editions. Some time ago when writers realised that Harlequin no longer registered their books in the US, it was stated in the RWR that authors outside of the US were not covered by the US copyright registration anyway. Is this true?

A: It is *not* true. Section 104 of the United States Copyright Act states:

§ 104. Subject matter of copyright: National origin

(a) Unpublished Works. — The works specified by sections 102 and 103, while unpublished, are subject to protection under this title without regard to the nationality or domicile of the author.

(b) Published Works. — The works specified by sections 102 and 103, when published, are subject to protection under this title if —

(1) on the date of first publication, one or more of the authors is a national or domiciliary of the United States, or is a national, domiciliary, or sovereign authority of a treaty party, or is a stateless person, wherever that person may be domiciled; or

(2) the work is first published in the United States or in a foreign nation that, on the date of first publication, is a treaty party; or ...

Canada, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom are all signatories to the Berne Convention (as are many other countries). Accordingly, Canada, New Zealand and the UK would all be considered “treaty parties” of the United States, and thus first publication of your books in any of Canada, New Zealand, the US, or the UK, would entitle you to the benefit of United States copyright protection. If Harlequin will not register your copyrights for you in the US, I would urge you to register them yourself, using the forms and instructions available at <http://www.copyright.gov/forms/>, preferably (but not necessarily) within 90 days of the first publication of each book in one or more of the four countries.

Q: Also, apparently non-US authors are affected by the Google rights issue and our local author societies have been contacted re those of us with books published in the US. But if our copyrights aren't registered in the US, are we eligible for any of the monies that may be recovered under the Google settlement?

A: Books by non-US authors from Berne Convention member countries are in fact included in the settlement. US copyright registration is not necessary to participate in the revenue arising from the settlement. The terms of the Google settlement are available in full and in summary form at http://www.googlebooksettlement.com/r/view_notice. You may create an account with the Book Rights Registry in order to participate in and make claims under the Settlement at http://www.googlebooksettlement.com/r/new_claimant_info. Opening an account and managing your books is surprisingly easy to do.



Robert Stein has over three decades experience in publishing. He has served as legal counsel for Random House, Simon and Schuster, and Warner Brothers. As an attorney with Pryor Cashman, LLP, he represents authors, literary agents, book publishers, and others in publishing negotiations and disputes.

Advice given in this column is general and brief, and is not based upon a thorough review of facts and considerations in any given instance, You should consult an attorney in depth if you need personal legal advice.

For more information about Robert Stein, visit his website, <http://www.pryorcashman.com/attorneys-119.html>



Mentoring Program a Volunteerism Opportunity for Writers and Writers Groups

Capitol City Young Writers (CCYW) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the education and inspiration of young writers. CCYW's goal is to educate members on the art and craft of writing and to provide opportunities for young writers to pursue their writing and literary dreams.

CCYW provides career exploration, writing workshops, scholarships, internships and leadership opportunities. Members discover the skills necessary to enter literary related careers such as editing, journalism or broadcast radio. From fiction and non-fiction, to poetry, screenwriting, songwriting and broadcast radio, students are supported through workshops bringing professionals and mentors together in local communities through online tutorials, annual conferences, a youth run literary journal, writing and audio competitions, and mentoring.



CCYW is a mentoring program based upon the dedication and spirit of volunteers. CCYW offers a diverse and distinctive group of published authors and professional writers to work directly with young writers in the **Master Mentor Program**. We invite you to participate in this program. We match authors with members who have shown exceptional talent and dedication to the art and craft of writing in diverse fields from fiction, journalism, screenwriting and more. The objective is to foster creative talents and develop professional skills. By merging opportunity, knowledge, and social networking, CCYW can offer guidance and support as members' educational and professional careers advance. For youth members, invitation

to this advanced mentoring program is by application and invitation only by the CCYW board of directors.

As a Master Mentor, you are free to help when it is most convenient to you. We understand the life of a writer and want to respect your time. Some authors prefer to mentor students in a particular genre or area of expertise. We will do our best to match a young writer to your interests and provide a short bio on the student and a writing sample. You can make a decision based upon your time, the student and project we offer to you. We want this experience to be enjoyable and rewarding for you as well.

CCYW started in Northern California in 2008, and currently serves members throughout the U.S. and internationally in Canada, Germany and the UK. Two levels of membership are available, a junior membership for youth up to the junior high school level (age 11) and a senior membership for students in junior high and high school (ages 11 to 18). Membership dues are \$25 annually. Scholarships are available to families with financial need.

Please visit the website for more information,

<http://www.capitolcityyoungwriters.com>.

Please contact CCYW board member and mentoring coordinator, Michele Scott, at readmichelescott@yahoo.com. (<http://www.michelescott.com/>)

or

Verna Dreisbach, Founder and President of CCYW, at verna@capitolcityyoungwriters.com or verna@dreisbachliterary.com.



CCYW members with published author Eldon Thompson at the February 2009 meeting in Sacramento, CA.

“So, Where’s the Printer Friendly List?”

A Look at Writers’ Web Pages

BY SALLY HAWKE

Over the past six months I’ve done something that no other Novelists, Inc. member has done, probably. I’ve looked at every single Ninc member’s web page. It wasn’t to do an article about web pages, but in preparation for our 2009 conference. This article started to develop as I searched the web pages to find out when the author’s first book was published and by which publisher.

Most readers aren’t looking for exact information on what was published when, but I began to think there were one or two things the average reader and I would have in common. Some of the things I’ll mention I’ve learned over the years from web page classes. (Yes, one of my day job assignments is web master but probably not a good example for simplicity).

The first thing we’re told is to use words the user will understand. Okay, readers are savvier these days; however, I think Books or Book List is clearer than Backlist. In some cases, authors used entire phrases to mark the link that turned out to be the author’s titles. This took me a while to figure out. Don’t risk confusing someone who’s visiting your page.

I realize I need to start at the top of the web page to stay organized. Your Toolbar or Page Links are at the top of your page or in a sidebar at the top of the page, right? We don’t want the reader to work too hard looking for the added information. Scrolling down looking for information isn’t good for the reader with a short attention span.

You think I was kidding about the Printer Friendly List? I would guess only about 50% of the sites I looked at included a list of the author’s books. Some are arranged by imprint, others in chronological order or under pseudonyms. The key is to use an order that is coherent to the readers. No matter in what order your books are listed on your web page, I encourage you to also have a master list in a printer friendly format.

Readers’ computer connections come in all speeds and capabilities. This will dictate how well their computers will handle graphics. My computer at work is a 10 MB fiber optic connection, a lot faster than most home computers because it’s on a private network. I tested the author web pages with more sophisticated graphics on this connection. Occasionally I had to wait for book covers and other graphics to show up. One design for book links showed up on various pages where each cover was a single link to that one book’s information. I had to click on each cover to check each title; with an author that has more than 10 titles that can take some time. The pages looked fantastic, but were somewhat labor intensive.

If I was reader with a slow DSL line, I think I might give up after a few titles. It reminds me that I can tell when an IT (information technology) person designs a library’s page, instead of an information provider. Sometimes IT people get carried away with the design and forget to make the page user friendly. You might be paying for something that looks fantastic, but is frustrating your readers because they can’t get this or that gimmick to function properly. I’m not a big fan of graphic/musical interlude intros to pages, because I know they eat up the user’s RAM and cost the web page a few dollars. It’s a case of individual likes and dislikes as to the amount of graphics and how much the person wants to pay for the page.

I was fascinated by the sites that didn’t actually say what the author’s books were about. The cover art was there and the title. Yes, the reviews were there and blurbs by other authors. Heaven knows, when we get a good review we want to share it with everyone we know and strangers on the street. The problem was I couldn’t find a synopsis of the basic story. Maybe this isn’t something that bothers other readers, but I want to know what is going on in

the book and something about the characters. It's good to know what other people think about the book, but my purpose in exploring an author's web page is to find out about the stories inside the books the author has written.

There are some other details about the book I want to know. I've written books that relate to each other — in fact, one started in a scene from the fourth chapter of the previous book. I want to know when books are related to each other. I think about 90% of the members did a good job on this. Some marked them with asterisks or symbols, and others listed the books together under informal or official series titles.

Some readers want to be the author's new BFF, and know all about the author's personal life. This isn't unusual, but there is an imaginary line to consider. Prior to Internet there were similar problems to consider, like what to say and not say in the author bio in the current book. Several authors discovered including their husbands' names in dedications or bios meant they got surprise phone calls from readers. Others needed to get unlisted phone numbers after putting the home phone on a business card. These are still real considerations when deciding what to include in online bios. Should you relate information about trips you are going to take, what local organizations you belong to, even where your kids go to school?

Blogs can become landmines when it come to determining what is and isn't going to be a problem. There are some really creative ones that take on the author's character's persona or give details about backgrounds from the latest book or the next book. This is something each author has to come to terms with and see how readers respond.

I know you're saying what authors had better pages than others? Do you think I'm nuts? (OK, that's a bad question to ask at any time). This list of likes and dislikes is very subjective, so I didn't use examples. I simply wanted to share some things I saw as I looked at over 300 member web pages.

If you want to do your own research, log on to www.ninc.com, pull up the Member Directory, and tour some of your fellow Nincer's web pages. Put yourself in the reader's place and consider what web site features work for you, and how you might apply these lessons to your own site. ▲

ASK the **LAWYER**

Q: I have a corporation that holds the copyright to my recent books. I am an independent contractor writing books for the corporation. I (me personally) want to transfer the copyrights to the older books which aren't currently producing much income. In this case, I don't want to close the corp now, but I do want to gradually move the copyright of older works as the income stream from them diminishes.

From the publisher's angle, is it a routine bit of paperwork, or is it more complicated? Would they make any changes necessary in the official copyright office, or would I do that? Are there any legal wrinkles I've not thought of? Also, once the copyright is in my name, does that affect all future income from that title, even if under a contract originally made with my corporation, or would it only be for new contracts? I want it to apply to all future income, for the corporation to cease to have any interest in these titles.

A: If I understand your goal correctly, then you need to transfer both the copyrights and the ownership of the publishing contracts from your corporation to yourself.

All that is required is a simple assignment document, to be signed by an officer (presumably you) of the corporation, a copy of which you (not your publisher) would then file in the copyright office, and another copy of which you would send to your publisher's contracts department.

Note, however, than many or most publisher contract forms prohibit assignment of the contract by the author without the prior written consent of the publisher. So you should begin by checking the assignment clause (usually at or near the very end of the contract) and then if necessary write your publisher to request its permission.

If you assign the copyright without assigning the contract, then the assignment will have no affect on your corporation's relationship with the publisher, which will continue to make all payments to and in the name of the corporation. That is also likely to complicate matters for your estate when you die, as the corporation's interest in the contracts and the royalties therefrom will not be governed by your personal will, except to the extent that your will bequeaths ownership of the stock of the corporation. ▲

Cover To Cover

By Lou Aronica



“Hi, we haven’t met yet, but....”

One of the greatest frustrations of my publishing career was that I was the underbidder on *Tuesdays with Morrie*. The staff fell in love with Mitch Albom when we met with him, he’d written a beautiful book proposal, and we knew there was going to be a big audience for the book. On the day of the auction, as publisher after publisher dropped out, I kept making bids. Unfortunately, so did David Gernert at Doubleday. In fact, every time I made a bid, David would offer five thousand dollars more. If I raised my offer by five thousand, he would do the same. If I raised my offer by twenty-five thousand, he would still go up by five.

“Do you notice a pattern here?” I said to the CEO of the Hearst Book Group (Hearst owned Avon at the time).

“Give it one more shot,” he advised. “Raise the offer by fifty thousand. If he tops you, we’re out.”

I raised the offer by fifty thousand. David topped my bid by five thousand dollars (maybe he had a mole in the room). He got the book. I got a lovely parting gift.

A few months later, however, David Gernert, who had made his mark in the industry by signing John Grisham to Doubleday after every major publisher passed on Grisham’s first novel, announced that he was leaving the house to become Grisham’s agent. The second I heard about this, I picked up the phone and called Albom’s agent, the venerable David Black (David’s latest monolith is *The Last Lecture*, though he also recently represented Joe Torre’s scathing book, *The Yankee Years*; as a Yankee fan, I am therefore obligated to sneer whenever I see David’s name, which means that I’ve been writing this paragraph with a contorted face).

“Amazing news about David Gernert, huh?” I said to him. “Doubleday has to be stunned.”

“I’m sure they are.”

“You can’t be happy about *Tuesdays with Morrie* being an orphan there. You know how much we loved that project over here. Doubleday can’t possibly be as committed to it now. If you feel the need to buy it back, we’d be happy to talk to you about making Avon Mitch’s home.”

David laughed. A little too loudly for my taste, to be honest. “Nice try, Lou. Mitch’ll miss David, but he’s made lots of friends at Doubleday. They’re gonna do a great job for the book.”

Frankly, I think the agent really missed the boat here. I mean, in retrospect, did Doubleday *really* do a good job — they sold a mere six or seven million in hardcover and then several million more in paperback. Good job? That’s overstating it a bit, don’t you think?

I’m telling you this story for two reasons. One is that I seem to have this burning desire to reveal all of my worst professional moments to you in these pages (this alone will keep me writing columns until retirement). The other is that it points up both sides of the editorial abandonment issue.

Overwhelmingly, the trade publishing industry resides in Manhattan (you know, the other one; the one that isn’t in Kansas). This means that publishing people hover around each other, having lunch together, meeting up at cocktail parties, going to the numerous industry events that take place in the city.

All of this hovering and Spanish sparkling wine sipping (it’s not a particularly prosperous business) makes it very easy for people to jump from job to job. This is especially true of editorial people because they’re out in public the most. Hence, the very real possibility that the person who acquires your book will not be there when the house publishes that book. I participated very little in this professional version of musical chairs.

I worked for exactly three companies during my twenty years on that side of the business and, if one or

two things had been different, I might have stayed at Bantam my entire career. However, I supervised a good number of comings and goings.

There are essentially three types of editorial departures from the publishing house's perspective. There's the *holy crap, what do we do now* departure. That's when a prized editor receives an offer that you can't possibly match, either because it is too good or because the editor really wants to move on.

Then there's the *you got another job offer? Hey congratulations* departure. That's when the editor just doesn't fit in with the house's culture for whatever reason and you've been hoping he or she figures this out before you have to get to the last kind of departure — the *can you come down to my office* departure.

There are some others, of course. There's the *I've decided publishing isn't for me* departure, and the *it's time to hang out with the grandkids* departure, and the *I've decided to become an agent/novelist/industry blogger* departure, and the *my wife and I have decided that we're moving to Kansas so we can be closer to the other Manhattan* departure, to name a few, but those first three are the most common.

When an editor leaves, one of four things happens to the authors on that editor's list. One is that the departing editor (or the author's agent) lobbies for the author to move with the editor to the new house. This often involves the original publisher making proclamations about the sanctity of contracts. The fervor of these proclamations comes in direct proportion to the profit potential of the author in question.

Another thing that happens is that the Publisher or Editor-in-Chief reviews the departing editor's list and places the editor's books with other editors familiar with and enthusiastic about the author's work. The third thing that happens is that the authors on that editor's list get a temporary caretaker (often the editor's assistant) until the house replaces the departing editor. The fourth — and scariest — thing that happens is that the publisher tosses every author that doesn't fit one of the first two categories to whoever is available — whether the new editor is interested in the book or not.

If you've been writing for any length of time, an editor or two has probably abandoned you. This might even be the case if you haven't been writing long. A couple of months after I sold my first novel, I learned that my editor was leaving and that someone else was taking over. As it turns out, this new editor was very sharp and very perceptive. I'm not sure that I would have been better off if the first editor hadn't moved on.

The other time this kind of thing happened to me was on a nonfiction collaboration. The first editor was hugely excited and had big plans for the book. Unfortunately, she also had big plans for her life and those plans didn't include staying at this publishing house. The next editor was actually senior to the first editor. This would have been good for the book if she shared the vision of the first editor. However, she did not. My collaborator and I began to get nervous, but we figured we'd address anything we needed to address when it was time to discuss publishing plans.

The new editor got the book into production — and then *she* left. The third editor didn't really handle this kind of book. That made dealing with the publishing plans exponentially harder. I probably don't need to tell you how that publication turned out.

My *Tuesdays with Morrie* story illustrates both the stressful component of editorial abandonment and the best way to insulate yourself from the consequences of this. The reason I picked up the phone as soon as I heard that David Gernert was leaving Doubleday was because I assumed that Albom would be freaking out over losing his editor. This was a labor of love for Albom and it required very special handling. I guessed that he'd be feeling unsettled after losing the guy who had five-granded me into submission. Though I had yet to be an abandoned author at that point, I had some sense of what this felt like because I'd talked numerous authors down from the ledge after they'd lost an editor at one of my houses.

But as it turns out, Mitch Albom wasn't freaking out. When he heard that David was leaving, he probably ordered him a nice bottle of champagne (French, not Spanish; writing was already a prosperous business for him at that point) or a fruit basket or something. He was likely a little saddened that the man who brought him to Doubleday was leaving, but he knew that he had an entire team at the house that was going to make sure his book received the publication it deserved.

Herein lies the key to surviving editorial abandonment: having connections at the house that go beyond your editor. I think I've offered this advice in another context, but it is absolutely worth reprising here. It is extremely beneficial to you to get to know as many people at your publishing house as you can without making yourself a nuisance.

Yes, of course this is easier if the publisher acquired your book as a big lead title as Doubleday did with *Tuesdays with Morrie*. But you can do it even if you're writing genre mysteries. Send the Publisher a note saying how much you like your cover (it helps if you actually do like your cover, but this isn't a requirement). Email the Publicity Director and the Marketing Director to let them know that you're available to help in any way you can (without suggesting at all that

you're expecting them to do anything for you). Send some pastries to the Sales Director thanking him or her for getting nice distribution for your book, whether you are happy with the numbers or not (sales directors are particularly responsive to pastries; pick a good bakery though, as you don't want the sales director to think you have bad taste). It's possible that none of these people will respond to you. But it's very possible that at least one of them will (I always did). At that point, you have the beginning of a relationship. If you keep this relationship positive — in other words, you avoid haranguing the Publicity Director over not getting you a feature in *People* — this could benefit you greatly if you lose your editor, your #1 advocate.

Since we're all novelists and since most of us are genre novelists, you have another tool at your disposal. Publishers tend to send a team of people to the big annual genre conventions and even to some of the larger regional ones. This is a huge opportunity for you to get to know the other editors at your house. As with all other publisher relationships, if you keep this casual and light, you can forge a nice relationship.

Editors are especially cautious about talking to writers handled by other editors at the same house, but if you avoid appearing to have an agenda, you can make some valuable friends. Since the editor is at the convention because he or she participates actively in your genre, this editor might take an interest in your work. Then, if your editor leaves, the just-friends editor might in fact ask to be your new editor.

The other important insulator against editor-abandonment stress is your agent. There are many reasons to have a powerful but well-liked agent and we discussed many of them in my last column. Yet another reason is that a good agent probably has multiple relationships at various levels at every house.

If you have the right agent on your side and your editor moves on, that agent will know which editor at the house would be right for you and will also have a good enough relationship with the Publisher or Editor-in-Chief to put you together with that new editor. Interestingly, the right person at that house might be an editor junior to the one you originally had.

This is especially true if your agent has strong relationships at the top of the house and can therefore push for attention for you in other ways. Junior editors are usually hungrier and they are more likely to celebrate inheriting you. A senior editor might simply consider you a burden.

This brings me to the matter of starting your relationship with your new editor. Obviously, this depends on circumstances. If you're a top-of-the-list author inherited by a top-level editor, you don't need to concern yourself with much other than learning each other's preferences.

If you're a category author assigned to an editorial assistant, you'll have a lot more work to do. The rules here are similar to the rules in a new romantic relationship after you've just exited a long one. It's okay to mention the old relationship on occasion, but it's really best if you turn that page quickly. Your new editor isn't going to want to hear about how great your old editor was, how you did things with the old editor, or what promises your old editor made you. Assume the worst and try to facilitate the best here. If you assume that your new editor feels as though her boss "dumped" you on her, you'll be in the safest place.

Given staff cutbacks, every editor has a full list. Therefore, the editor who inherits you is likely to feel overburdened. If you don't have big sales behind you and you present yourself as scared and needy, the editor is probably going to recoil.

If you do a little homework about the editor, let the editor know that you're glad you landed where you did, and assume that you're going to need to do the bulk of the work building the new relationship, you'll be in a better place.

I inherited my share of writers in my editorial days, several of whom I didn't ask to inherit. Of this latter group, I rarely developed a successful relationship with any of those who came to me with an outsized sense of entitlement or neediness. However, I developed great relationships with those who let me know that they were open to the new arrangement and ready to work with me.

Losing your editor can be a huge hassle. Inheriting an author can be the same. It isn't a guaranteed disaster, though, especially if you've prepared for the eventuality.

By the way, I'm very open to ideas for this column. Is there some aspect of publishing you'd like me to address? If so, e-mail me at laronica@fictionstudio.com.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



On Acting Crazy

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

— *Albert Einstein*

If you read this column regularly, you may recall that I no longer work with agents, due to my pesky bad Agent Karma. And since I'm not nearly virtuous enough to acquire the merit needed to change my karma, I instead work on strategies for managing my career without an agent. This is an ongoing process, not a finished product.

I don't develop my business strategies in the belief that writers should represent themselves. I do it in the belief that I'd rather hit myself repeatedly in the head with a brick than hire another agent—because, although this may not apply to anyone else, my hiring another agent would come perilously close to exemplifying Einstein's definition of insanity.

And I try, whenever possible, to avoid acting crazy.

Upon deciding in 2007 that I would take a project that no one wanted to handle and try to sell it by myself, I did exactly what I had always done in such situations (and, yes, I'd been in that situation before—sometimes while I was agented): I studied the marketplace.

I developed a shortlist of houses that were publishing books in a similar subgenre to the project I was trying to market, and I investigated who the acquiring editors were. I also read publishing trade news in search of editors who said they were looking for material like my project. I had a first-round list of names/houses that were my preferred markets; and I had a back-up list of additional markets (including various small and mid-size presses). I sent out a query package to multiple markets.

I prepared the best query package and cover letter I could. This is business, and I was trying to sell something. That meant making myself (as a novelist) and the project as attractive a prospect as possible to potential buyers. My strategy for this: I thought about what sort of cover letter and query package would make a favorable impression on me if I were an acquiring editor. (This isn't hard. We're novelists, after all; we mentally put ourselves in other people's shoes every day).

As it happens, I got an offer within a few weeks. If I had not, though, there are two things I had already decided.

One, I wouldn't abandon the project after three to four rejections. I'd keep trying, until I had worked my way through my entire list of potential markets. And then a couple of years later, I'd re-examine the marketplace and try again. One of the things I dislike about agents, in my own experience, is how quickly and completely they give up on a project. They may have their reasons... but those reasons serve them well, not my work. And when it comes to my career, I'm only interested in what serves my work well. If I gave up as easily as most of the agents I've known, I would never have made my first book sale, nor most of the sales which have followed.

Two, if I didn't sell this material, then I would go through the same process with another project, and another after that, and another after that, rather than start querying agents again. I had sold more books without an agent than with one; it was not going to be easy to convince me I couldn't do so again.

However, as I say, I got an offer.

One of the things I hadn't known when I began this process is how offers work in relationship to conglomeration. That is to say, a lot of publishers or imprints that used to be separate companies now operate under the same corporate umbrella. Some people think this means you should only submit to one imprint per umbrella (so to speak). I, how-

ever, think that's crazy. And for my views on acting crazy, see above.

There are, for example, at least three prominent sf/f imprints (DAW, Roc, and Ace) operating under the vast Penguin/Putnam/Berkley conglomerate umbrella. Am I going to omit two-out-of-three important sf/f programs from my first round of submissions? Am I going to accept an offer from one imprint without even bothering to find out if a different imprint might have made a better offer? Am I, who makes a full-time self-supporting living as a writer, going to wait weeks or months for a response from one imprint before ever sending the material to another?

That's insane. So, in keeping with my principles (see above), I decided not to do that.

Fortunately, once an offer was on the table, an editor explained to me how things work in this era of conglomeration. In fact, several of them explained it to me. They were all very courteous about it, and no one acted as if I'd committed a faux pas by, oh, trying to sell my work in an efficient and sane manner.

Once an imprint makes an offer, another imprint under the same corporate umbrella can't make a competing offer. Presumably because this would be rather like you and your co-habiting spouse bidding against each other at an auction for the same Louis XV armoire. That is to say, crazy.

However, both of those imprints can bid (if they want to) if there's a competing offer from an imprint that lives under a different corporate umbrella. So once you get an offer from Ace, for example, you only want to follow up with Roc and DAW after following up on any submissions you made to other umbrellas (as it were); because when you contact Roc and DAW, you need to be able to tell them if any imprint from a different conglomerate is bidding. If so, they may consider bidding, too. If not, then they can't bid against Ace, and the ball game is over.

(How do you know which publishing programs live under which umbrellas? Oh, for pity's sake, man! Look it up).

Do editors get angry upon learning from a courteous, businesslike author that they've got a submission on their desk that they can't bid on? Not in my own experience so far. (Or, if they did, then they concealed it manfully by congratulating me on my sale in tones of cheerful goodwill).

Was I worried that an editor might get angry? No. Too many editors have been angry at me over the years about too many things for me to fret much about the possibility of making another one angry. Besides, getting angry at a writer over something as self-evidently logical as multiple submissions strikes me as insane, anyhow—and, as a corollary to my principles, I try to avoid working with crazy people.

Laura Resnick's efforts not to act crazy create a flimsy veneer, at best, but the appearance of sanity is a noble goal and should be encouraged.

Business Briefs

Edgars Announced

Best Novel - Blue Heaven / C.J. Box / St. Martin's Minotaur;

Best First Novel By An American Author—The Foreigner / Francie Lin / Picador;

Best Paperback Original - China Lake / Meg Gardiner / New American Library - Obsidian Mysteries;

Best Fact Crime - American Lightning: Terror, Mystery and the Birth of Hollywood, and the Crime of the Century / Howard Blum / Crown Publishers;

Best Short Story—"Skinhead Central" - Mystery Writers of America Presents: The Blue Religion / T. Jefferson Parker / Hachette Book Group - Little, Brown and Company;

Best Juvenile - The Postcard / Tony Abbott / Little, Brown Books for Young Readers;

Best Young Adult - Paper Towns / John Green / Penguin Young Readers Group - Dutton Children's Books;

Best Television Episode Teleplay - "Prayer of the Bone" - Wire in the Blood, Teleplay / Patrick Harbinson / BBC America;

Best Motion Picture Screen Play—In Bruges, Screenplay / Martin McDonagh / Focus Features.

For a complete list of nominees go to: <http://www.mysterywriters.org/?q=Edgars-Winners>

Barnes & Noble Has Talkies

B&N introduces its Audiobook MP3 Store, which will provide spokenword/audiobooks MP3 for download and transfer to iPods, iPhones, and MP3 players among others. With over 10,000 titles in all genres the cost will be \$10 to \$20 per download. This is done in partnership with Overdrive. An e-bookstore is expected by the end of the year as a result of the purchase of Fictionwise.

Ninc Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY JACKIE KRAMER

It's never too early to set up travel plans for the conference!

Carpooling — for those who wish to drive together to the conference (seven states are within driving distance of Saint Louis), and for those who wish to possibly travel together by plane and/or hook up for rides to and from the airport. Moderator: Kristine Smith. Sign up at:

NINC09Carpool-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Roommates — find your roommate here. Moderator: Janelle Clare Schneider Sign up at:

NINC09Roommates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Discussion Loop — Here is where we're talking about All Things Conference from meeting up with old friends, making new ones before getting together in Saint Louis, and everything else under the sun.

NINC09ConfDisc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Got any news or information for the Bulletin Board?

Send it to Jackie at jackiekramer7@netscape.com

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

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

From the ROYALTY STATEMENT COMMITTEE :

WANTED: Recent royalty statements with no information blocked out (not older than 2007) All information will be kept strictly confidential among a small, three-person committee chaired by Allison Brennan. Please email no later than 6/15 to allison@allisonbrennan.com or fax to 916-681-8587.

Ooooooh, Goody....

Do you have a new release coming out between now and ohhh, say, November? Would you like Ninc Goes Platinum attendees to receive free copies of those releases, or backlist to pimp the post-conference releases, at the conference, in their goody bags?

Email me privately with your release title(s) and your publisher/editor and Ninc will solicit copies for the conference. If you have a publicist either in your employ or at your publisher, that name would also be helpful.

This is especially important for those who are speakers at the conference. I'll be contacting you individually as well, to give your editor an opportunity to showcase you even more.

Jennifer Stevenson, jks.enteract@rcn.com
Goody Bag Hoovermistress

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 Ninclink, send a blank email to: NINCLINK-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.



**WRITING is
TAXING**
By Diane O'Brien Kelly

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

With the economy in the dumps, our new president has been a busy man — bailing out automakers, distributing TARP funds, and enacting new legislation designed to stimulate the economy. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 contains a variety of new tax provisions. This article gives a brief summary of some of the changes that may affect you. For full details, see your tax advisor or www.irs.gov.

The “Making Work Pay” Credit. Working taxpayers will be entitled to a refundable tax credit of up to \$400 each. Employers will automatically pay the credit to employees by reducing the amount of tax withheld from employee paychecks. Those who do not have taxes withheld by an employer, such as self-employed writers, can claim the credit on their 2009 federal income tax return.

Economic Recovery Payment. Retirees, disabled individuals, and Supplemental Security Income recipients will receive an additional \$250 payment from the Social Security Administration this year. Disabled veterans receiving benefits will receive the additional payment from the V.A. This payment will reduce any “Making Work Pay” credit the taxpayer may be entitled to — no double dipping allowed.

Reduction in Estimated Taxes. Normally, to avoid an underpayment penalty, a self-employed individual is required to pay-in the lesser of 90% of the current year’s tax or 100% of the tax for the immediately preceding year (or 110% if the taxpayer’s adjusted gross income was more than \$150,000 in the preceding year for married joint filers or more than \$75,000 for married separate filers). The Act has now lowered the required estimated tax payment for small business owners to the lesser of 90% of the current year’s tax or 90% of the immediately preceding year’s tax. To qualify as a “small business owner,” more than 50% of your gross income in 2008 must have been from your small business (your writing biz or another small biz), your average number of employees must have been less than 500, and your adjusted gross income for 2008 must have been less than \$500,000 (or \$250,000 if you file married separate returns). Note, too, that no underpayment penalty is due if the amount owed with a tax return is less than \$1,000. Details are in IRS Publication 505 “Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax.”

Net Operating Loss Carryback. A taxpayer incurs a net operating loss when their losses on their tax return exceed their income. Under old law, a net operating loss could be carried back to offset income reported in the preceding three tax years, thus generating a refund of taxes paid in those years. Now, if a taxpayer incurs a net operating loss, the taxpayer can carry the loss back five years. This expanded carryback period will generate greater refunds.

New Vehicle Purchases. Thinking about buying some new wheels? The Act provides for a tax deduction on a 2009 tax return for sales tax paid on qualifying new vehicle purchases. Sales tax paid on up to \$49,500 of the purchase price is deductible. Qualified vehicles include new cars, light trucks, motor homes, and motorcycles. Used cars don’t qualify. The purchase must be made after February 16, 2009 and before January 1, 2010. This deduction can be taken even if you do not itemize other deductions on your return. The deduction begins to phase out for married joint filers with adjusted gross income of \$250,000 and for other taxpayers with adjusted gross income of \$125,000.

American Opportunity Credit. This new credit modifies the existing credits for higher education expenses by expanding eligibility to those with higher incomes and adding required course materials to the list of qualifying expenses. The new credit can be claimed for four years of post-secondary education rather than the two years allowed per prior law. The full credit is available for married joint taxpayers with adjusted gross income of \$160,000 or less and other taxpayers with adjusted gross income of \$80,000 or less. See IRS Publication 970 “Tax Benefits for Education.”

Transportation Fringe Benefits. The Act increased the excludable monthly amount for parking and/or transportation passes provided by an employer to \$230 each, for a total of up to \$460 per month. Employees can now receive up to \$460 per month in such benefits tax free. ▶

WRITING is TAXING

Tax Exemption for Unemployment Benefits. The new law provides that the first \$2,400 in unemployment benefits received by an individual in 2009 shall be free from tax. Anyone receiving such benefits should check their withholding to make sure they are not having unnecessary tax withheld.

Homebuyer Credit. Taxpayers who purchase(d) homes from January 1, 2009 through November 30, 2009 may qualify for a credit of up to \$8,000. To qualify, the taxpayer must not have owned another principal residence during the three years preceding the date of purchase and must use the home as a principal residence. The

credit must be paid back if the home ceases to be the taxpayer's main residence during the three-year period after the purchase.

Earned Income Tax Credit. The Earned Income Tax Credit ("EITC") is a credit for taxpayers earning low incomes. The new law provides for a temporary increase in the EITC for taxpayers with three or more qualifying children.

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

Perseus Rises with Constellation

Perseus Books Group has partnered with various vendors to provide better services with high tech formats to small, independent publishers. Constellation will give reasonable rates for use of electronic readers, digital book search, print on demand and additional digital formats that have been out of reach to the smaller presses. Forecasters cite digital technologies as one of the growth potential areas in publishing, and this will help level the playing field. The clients can designate how they want their book file produced for the end user – the reader.

PW/IPR Book Sales Index Report

The latest report estimates a .5% decline in sales for 2009. The projection for downward trend is in all trade areas but prospects are forecast to be better in higher education and testing texts. Readers are expected to be pickier about purchasing, as indicated by reports on retail spending and personal income. Children's paperback sales may be up slightly but trade paperback sales are expected to be down 3% and adult hardcover sales down 6.8%

Hachette Authors Speak Up

Hachette Book Group has announced a partnership with Greater Talent Network for the Hachette Speakers Bureau. This is to include HBG authors from all imprints. A list of authors currently available may be found at: <http://www.hachettespeakersbureau.com>. The new partner represents over 100 celebrity speakers.

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The Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues

Professionalism—Part 2

BY MIKE RESNICK AND BARRY MALZBERG

Mike: Well, you've told me that [SFWA] founder, Damon Knight, felt that editorial courtesy should be written into a contract. Since I knew Damon, I have to ask: what did he say about authorial courtesy?

Barry: Damon, to my recollection, had nothing to say about authorial courtesy. Damon proceeded under a series of assumptions which still govern the reflexes of much of the SFWA membership and for that matter most of the membership of the Author's Guild: a) Writers are special, b) because they are special their suffering is special, c) writers are victims, d) publishers are intractably venal, e) given a chance to treat a writer inequitably publishers will always take it, f) because of the inequity of power held by publishers and writers, writers breaching contracts or otherwise trying to find their way through a situation by delay, lying, deliberately incompetent work (to break an option) should be understood and forgiven.

Perhaps these assumptions are defensible. Damon, after all, founded a writers' organization and he did so believing that such an organization was needed because writers needed to be defended in an overall situation where they had very little protection. If publishers or editors felt abused, Damon might have said (I do not wish to appropriate his voice or to speak for him; this is speculation) then they were free to form their own organizations or craft guilds . . . their problems were really not our problems. There was, at least in the earlier years of SFWA, little concern for mutuality of interest and any collegiality was on the basis of individual relationships, it was not organizational.

As with so much else in these 37 years there have been changes and there is perhaps a somewhat greater perception of common interest than there was at that time....

I know that writers are by no means special and it is very hard—I have come to know a lot of writers—to see them as victims but I'll say this: there is an imbalance in power and it is an imbalance which publishers have always been willing to exploit. There are a relatively few writers whose names are known and which make a difference in sales, but publishers perceive most writers as interchangeable or (in the case of those who have published several books to flat or declining sales figures) absolutely disposable. We might raise the issue of what in light of all this members of this organization [SFWA] might expect of it in terms of practical assistance: I did Grievance work for half a decade some time ago and I know that the organization does see some kind of obligation . . . but how much in those practical terms should SFWA attempt? Or should there be any obligation at all? Doesn't a Grievance function, if it is going to be at all effective, have to be ascribed to a union rather than the anomalous organization which we have today?

Mike: I might believe writers were special if I hadn't been rubbing shoulders with them for 40 years. I'm not aware that their suffering is any more special than anyone else's. If they are victims, it is because they choose to be; no one holds a gun to their heads and insists that they write for a living until the day they die. I won't argue about publishers being venal; they certainly are—but I'll argue that that's no excuse or justification for venality in a writer. And, finally, I have a difficult time believing that there is ever a reason for purposely, almost by design, breaching a contract that no one forced the writer to sign. ▶

Because I've been a writer, and many of my friends are writers, I've heard all these arguments (I'm inclined to say: all this pap) for decades. I didn't believe it then; I don't believe it now.

But I've also been an editor (weekly tabloids and monthly men's magazines in my starving-writer days, and science fiction anthologies more recently) and a publisher (racy mass market paperbacks, back in the earlies), and I have to say that almost every writer's ruse is not only venal but totally transparent. Science fiction conventions don't reinvent the wheel anywhere near as often as new writers reinvent every tired lie and scam. It didn't make me mad as an editor; it just made me feel *tired*, and maybe a bit old before my time.

I think what it comes down to is this: you either have a sense of personal honor or you don't. And if you do, you stick to it whether the publisher and editor behave with equal honor or not. It's easy to think of them as the enemy, but they really aren't. They want a bestseller as much as you do—and depending on how much they've invested in you, maybe more. They do not sign a contract with the hope that you will be late, that you'll deliver a deliberate turkey to bust an option clause, that you'll use wide margins and tons of brief dialog in order to deliver a 400-page, 100,000-word manuscript that actually measures out at 64,000 words.

A publisher puts his money on the line when you sell him a book. He pays you, and if he's lucky, he sees a finished manuscript a year or two later. I think you'd have to be awfully foolish, perhaps even unbalanced, to truly believe that he hopes it will bomb and that he'll do his best to sabotage it.

Meanwhile: do writers as a class—as you suggest—reinvent the scams, duplicity, deceits of previous generations of writers? Well, they would be atypical examples of humanity if they failed to do so and one thing writers are not (consider your earlier remark) is atypical. Writers are very much like people except that in understanding less they find themselves driven to extremes of articulacy to first explore, then explain, their ignorance. Every generation of writers approaches the scams as if they were new, of course. I am reminded of Platoon Sergeant Wheeler who gathered the Third Platoon of I Company around him at Fort Dix in the barracks at first nightfall of the first day of Basic Training to say, "All of you guys at this moment are trying to figure out a way to beat the system. Forget it. Hundreds of thousands of the finest and the worst minds have passed through this system over these hundred years and there is nothing you can try that hasn't been tried, nothing you can do that hasn't already failed. You can fight the system and start on your way to the Stockade or you can give it up and go along and have a relatively easy time. It's up to you."

This masterful speech applied to the circumstances of numb or terrified recruits; it wouldn't work so well in Writing Basic Training. Writers are not put through the obstacle course, writers don't face 4:00 a.m. Reveille, writers do not do 20-mile forced marches with full field pack. If they were subject to this they would not be writing articles for the house publication bragging about how they had made fools of the system.

On the other hand, a few recruits made it to OCS and a scattering went further than that; there are some Majors, Light Colonels, maybe even a General who came from that mix. Where did Avram go?

Mike: Correct me if I'm wrong, but you seem to be saying that it's all right for a writer to lie, to cheat, to mislead his editor in any way whatsoever because of the way (generic) editors treat (generic) writers, and that the only reason not to do so is because editors have seen it all and it won't work. Is that essentially your position? Because if it is, then I imagine you would also toss out all the points of Professionalism I listed early on.

Anyway, my question is not *do* writers as a class reinvent all the scams? You've made it clear that at least a sizeable minority of them do. What I want to know is: do you think they *should*?



Or, to put it as simply as I can: do you owe the previously-defined professionalism to yourself, or to your editor and publisher? If you owe it to them, then perhaps—and only perhaps—there are extenuating circumstances in individual cases that would allow you to ignore it. But if you owe it to yourself, as I believe, then who you’re dealing with and how they treat you personally (and how they treat writers as a group) makes no difference; you must behave honorably and professionally for the simple reason that you are trying your best to be an honorable man who takes pride in his behavior and his profession.

So which is it?

Barry: No, I am not recommending that writers should cheat, steal, lie or vote a straight ticket. Writers are quite capable of finding misalliance on their own without advice from me. To the contrary, I believe that writers should be honest, ethical, prompt on delivery dates, courteous to publishers and should split their ballot judiciously when the best candidates for Governor and Senator come from opposite party affiliation. You seem to have missed the point of my paragraphs and of First Sergeant Wheeler’s advice to the troops.

Wheeler was saying, “Don’t try this, everyone has tried everything and there’s nothing new you can do to beat the system, you might as well go along.” For practical if not ideological reasons. Third Platoon India Company did go along with the system, most of them and went on to lead decent civilian post-military lives in that pre-Vietnam, Cuban Missile Crisis pre-Reserve call-up in 1962 time. Wheeler’s point was that it could only be easier that way. That was my point too, although newer writers, looking at the often horrid examples presented by some older writers might think that if these practices worked for them they might still be working. Sometimes they do.

Writers and publishers are not in fundamental concord; I wish that such were the case, it is not: publishers are often unfair to writers, writers to publishers, would that this were not the case. We should all work in mutuality toward a better outcome. I have been looking for this through my own many decades in the business and perhaps matters are getting better although they may be getting worse. This is, as we have agreed, a subjective business.

Mike: Well, the initial question was what do a writer and an editor/publisher owe each other beyond the terms of the contract—and there would seem to be considerable doubt, currently and historically.

So maybe I should conclude by saying that what they owe each other isn’t really all that important. If they break the contract, the lawyers will step in and see that it’s fulfilled or that the side that breached it suffers some consequence.

But that doesn’t let them off the hook. I think what each owes *himself*, in terms of personal integrity and honor, remains vitally important and probably comes to the same thing in the end. If you have it, you’ll exercise it; and if you don’t have it, no contract or consequence can force it upon you.

[Editor’s Note: This section of the dialogues was edited due to space constraints. – CM]

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.

