

NINK

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CLUTTER CHALLENGE – PART 2 DEAD ELECTRONICS

Here's a problem most of our parents and grandparents never had to deal with: What to do with inoperative cell phones, computers, monitors, printers, cables, disks, hard drives, and other 21st-Century electronics once they've outlived their usefulness. These items are filled with components that contain toxic elements, so you can't simply put them in a trash can or take them to the local landfill. They must be disposed of responsibly, so here are some tips on how to purge properly.

Decluttering in the Digital Age — Begin with these three easy steps:

Step 1: Some Assembly Required

On a horizontal surface, assemble every single piece of nonfunctioning or outdated electronic gear you possess. Yes, that includes the funky vintage radio you never use; the cables to long-gone computers; the cell phone that has been replaced twice already; the dead printer that would cost more to fix than to buy new.... You get the idea.

The critical part of this first step is erasing from your mind the "I might use this someday" excuse. There's a reason they're called "dead electronics": Chances are that new models, styles, and formats have made any nonfunctioning product more than a couple of years old totally obsolete.

Step 2: Sort and Purge

Have ready a handful of smaller plastic bags and larger trash bags. Label five of the larger as follows:

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► **CELL PHONES** (including chargers, adapters, holders, carry cases, manuals—if you still have them—and any other peripherals). Each discarded cell phone and its peripherals go in one of the smaller plastic bags, for possible donation.

► **COMPUTERS** (including the computer itself, monitors, cables, instructional manuals, disks). Again, put each computer and its parts into a bag together and do the same for the next two items on the list—printers and appliances

► **PRINTERS** (cables, driver disks, manuals, ink cartridges)

Continued on page 4 ►

Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

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

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Address changes may be made on the
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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: JoAnn Grote
PO Box 5, Le Sueur, MN 56058
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New Applicants:

Karen Alarie, aka Karen Anders, Raleigh, NC
Jeannette Monaco, aka Jenna Kernan, White Plains, NY
Frances Mallary, aka Miranda Neville, Bradford, VT

New Member:

Lavinia Klein, aka Lavinia Kent, Washington, DC
Sherri Browning Erwin, Longmeadow, MA
Judy Fitzwater, Germantown, MD

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.
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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.

Odds and Ends and Lessons Learned....

I'm now at the halfway point of my Ninc Presidency, and I must say I've learned some things, even more than I learned last year as your President-Elect. I've learned that your board works amazingly hard, all month long, every month, to keep Ninc functioning smoothly, with emails circulating almost constantly to deal with or consider this or that issue or idea or chore. I've learned that our volunteers, both JOT and otherwise, work their collective tushies off helping.

I've learned that tough decisions come with the territory, decisions most of you will never even know about. I've learned that while new blood is incredibly valuable to our organization, every bit as valuable are the collective memories and experiences of our longtime members, those who can often remind your board of just why the Founders made the decisions and choices they made. (Thank you, Jasmine!)

I have also learned a bit more about being patient, for which I do sincerely thank you; that's been an ongoing lesson in my life, because I'm an impatient Scorpio convinced I could run the world if all those pesky people would just do things on my terms. <Grins> But being part of a group, especially a group with the collective intelligence and creative instincts offered up by so many talented writers, provides even more of a lesson in being patient—and in listening to opposing points of view.

Because, let me tell you, writers know how to make the case for their point of view, no matter what it is.

That's uncommon, in case you didn't know. I know because I happen to be dealing with our county government here at home on an important issue, and I've been astonished—all right, appalled—by the ineffective speaking and writing skills of our elected officials. (Seriously, now I know why politicians acquire speechwriters somewhere along the way if they advance in government; apparently, few of them possess even rudimentary skills themselves.)

Ahem. Sorry for the tangent, but it's enormously frustrating dealing with people who lack the ability to express themselves with simple clarity, far less any creative energy.

Writers do that. A lot. All the time, in fact. Whether it was born in us or honed over years (or decades) of storytelling, writers know how to express themselves and their opinions and beliefs eloquently. And I can't tell you how much I appreciate that fact.

That wasn't really a lesson I've learned this year, just a reminder. But a welcome reminder. Because it's very nice to communicate with people who possess that particular mad skill. Really.

I don't think most of us value it as we should. I think we take it for granted, or just don't think about how we can apply it to our "real" lives. You know, the part where we're not chained to our desks writing until we're so tired we're convinced that "the" can't possibly be spelled that way? (You've all been there, right? Please don't tell me it's just me!)

We can apply our writing skill to our lives. Hey, I once got Toshiba to replace a faulty big-screen TV with a brand-new, more expensive model. Didn't cost me a dime. And when my dealer (who hadn't been able to resolve the problem on his own) delivered it, he was grinning and said he'd never in all his years in the business had one of his suppliers do such a thing. He asked me how many threats it had taken.

Well ... none. I was polite. I was excruciatingly polite in my letter to the president of the company. It took about four days for his assistant to call me with assurances that a replacement TV was on its way to me. And after I received it, I sent the president a second letter praising his assistant's skills and energy in promptly dealing with what had become a bungled situation.

Maybe she got a few Brownie points for that one. I know that Toshiba got a loyal customer in me because of the eventual outcome. ►

The point to this rambling story being that the creative skills we love can be applied to our everyday lives. And should be.

I'd like to finish this rambling column with another rambling, but short story, if you'll forgive me, further illustrating the point. Not so many years ago, one of our area TV stations failed to rebroadcast an episode of a show I loved, pre-empted due to a basketball game (Hey, I live in NC; college basketball is everything here.). This was before TiVo, and my VCR had died on me. I was upset. I wanted the station manager to know I was upset. So I wrote him a letter.

Again, I was polite. And didn't use a single cussword.

About a week later, I got a letter from the gentleman. Not a form letter, but one he'd written (or dictated) to me. He told me he had never in his career been so entertained by a letter complaining that he'd screwed up in his job. He offered apologies, told me when the rebroadcast of that episode was scheduled (I'm sure I had nothing to do with that!), and thanked me for reminding him that sometimes dealing with disgruntled customers could be amusing in a good way.

We do have mad skills, you know. Skills a whole lot of other people just don't have. And we can make them work for us.

That's a lesson worth remembering.

— Kay Hooper

Decluttering—Part 2: Dead Electronics

Continued from page 1 ▶ **ELECTRONIC APPLIANCES** (radios, TVs, scanners, mixers, and the like)
▶ **DEAD BATTERIES AND LIGHTBULBS**

Step 3: Responsible Disposal

Now comes the really important part: Once you've sorted these items into the proper bags, what do you do with them? As mentioned, simply wheeling them out to the curb for a regular trash pick-up won't work. If you end up donating them for reuse, keep all necessary parts for a particular item and its instructions together in a bag. Otherwise, manuals can be put in the paper-recycling bin; for the cords, cases, and other peripherals, you'll have to do a little checking locally to see which institutions or companies are receiving dead electronics and peripherals in your area.

- ▶ **Basic Recycling Information** Check with your local city hall or waste-management company for recycling information. Also, an online search of the phrase "Safe Disposal of Hazardous Material," along with the name of your county, will usually bring up the location of the nearest EPA-approved recycling center. Some charge, some don't.
- ▶ **Cell and Landline Phones** National electronics stores like Best Buy and Radio Shack, as well as most cell phone stores, often have programs for electronic recycling (they may charge a minimal fee, and more for larger items). Some local police stations will also accept recycled phones. And organizations like [cellulardonation.org](http://www.cellulardonation.org) (<http://www.cellulardonation.org/>) or [charitablerecycling.com](http://www.charitablerecycling.com) (<http://www.charitablerecycling.com/>) will either refurbish or pass on working cell phones to charitable organizations. Just be sure you've discontinued your service

for that phone, so you're no longer paying for calls made from it.

- ▶ **Computers, Monitors, TVs, DVD Players, Peripherals** Again, official recycling sites or national stores like Staples, Office Depot, and Best Buy often offer recycling programs for these items, and many local charities will accept them—with or without instruction manuals—to refurbish or recycle. Or you can search for worthy recipients for used computers and monitors at <http://pcrr.com/pcsforschools.asp> or <http://worldcomputerexchange.org>. These places are delighted to accept donations that still work and have all necessary parts and peripherals, but be sure to erase all of your data first. If you're not giving your gear to an institution for reuse, one sure way to make certain all data on your hard drive is destroyed is to take the drive out yourself and smash it with a hammer. (Not bad for a little stress relief after a decluttering project, either.) Then take it to a recycling center.
- ▶ **Dead batteries and energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs** Though some alkaline batteries are disposable, they could still be hazardous if you dispose of large numbers at once. So, it's best to treat *all* non-functioning batteries like any other hazardous material by taking them to a recycling center or collection point for safe disposal. Same goes for energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs, which contain mercury. Places like IKEA, Walgreens, The Shack (formerly Radio Shack), Best Buy, and Whole Foods have sponsored disposal programs for these items. Check out the Environmental Health and Safety website [<http://www.ehso.com/ehshome/>] for excellent advice on all matters to do with batteries and light bulbs—dead or otherwise.
- ▶ **Commercial Help Outfits** such as 1-800-GOT-JUNK? or EcoHaul can solve your tough disposal problems if you have large amounts of electronics to get rid of or have no other way of getting heavy components out of your house. Just keep in mind that they charge a fee for this.

Once you've determined where your electronic rejects are headed, immediately transport them to their destination or arrange for pick-up as soon as possible. After all, out of sight, out of mind—and, most important, out of your life!

NEXT MONTH: It's time to rehab that wardrobe hanging in your closet so that every keeper suits your age, stage, lifestyle, and size.

Ciji Ware is a multi-published fiction and nonfiction author, Emmy-award winning television and radio broadcaster, professional speaker, and the first woman graduate of Harvard College to serve as President of the Harvard Alumni Association. For more on Ware's fiction/nonfiction career and to see the new Sourcebooks Landmark covers of her five reissued historicals as well as her new novel, go to <http://www.cijiware.com>

Read a free chapter from Ware's Rightsizing Your Life and learn about her instructional CD on <http://www.rightsizingyourlife.com>, or check out www.aarp.org/decluttering for more decluttering tips.

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

BEA – Back to three days in 2011

BEA will be returning to the three-day format next year. According to show manager Steve Rosato, "In the end while many people *liked* BEA as a two-day show - more people *need* BEA to be a three-day show. We will remain mid-week with the show days being Tuesday – Wednesday – Thursday. My plan right now is to keep the conference program on Monday because the impact of the conference this year running on Tuesday without competing with the show floor was tremendous."

PubIt! Summer 2010

Barnes & Noble joins the self-publishing market this summer with PubIt!, which will allow independent publishers and self-publishing writers to distribute their work through BarnesandNoble.com and Barnes & Noble ebookstore. Publication and distribution will be limited to digital works, with no sales through the B&N stores. Details of the royalty model and compensation process have yet to be announced.



GET YOUR JUST DESSERTS WITH NINC NIGHT OWLS

BY MELINDA HAYNES, NIGHT OWL COORDINATOR

When Kasey asked me how Night Owls was shaping up for the conference, I have to admit I was fresh off the airport shuttle after eating and drinking my way from Paris to Nice for 16 days. Sooo, that might explain why I was thinking in “food” terms about our lineup of fabulous after-hours Night Owl offerings.

The delicious workshops and presentations planned for NINC’s *Brainstorming on the Beach* Conference are guaranteed to pique your appetite for more fun and inspiration. Ever the luscious dessert course in NINC’s conference program menu, NINC Night Owls have expanded their exotic bill of fare of evening pleasure on Thursday and Friday nights to include afternoon treats. Here’s a little taste:

GET CRAZY CREATIVE WITH STORY COMPASS® with Melinda Haynes (that’s me!)

Find new direction and get your story on track with Melinda’s crazy fun process that will shake up your perspective and encourage you to experiment with new ways of combining the elements of fiction—plot, characterization, setting, and theme—into totally unpredictable stories. You might even be inspired to get crazy creative with your own personal story and discover a new one in the process. STORY COMPASS® tool provided for practice and fun.

Melinda says: It’s always so fun to watch STORY COMPASS® experiencers go from *Whatha?* to *Ohmygosh this works. Weird!!*

NANCY COHEN’S ROYALTY SPREADSHEET with Nancy Cohen

Do you have trouble keeping track of your royalties? Want to determine how one title compares to another? Join multi-published author Nancy J. Cohen as she offers a spreadsheet to help you organize your statements on a cumulative basis. Track your income for domestic and foreign rights, e-book royalties, large print rights, reserves against returns, and more. You’ll never be confused again if you use this tool.

Nancy says: With fourteen books in print, I needed a way to keep track of royalty payments and to see if my book sales were rising. Designing my own spreadsheet was the answer.

WHAT’S IN A NAME? WOULD A WRITER BY ANY OTHER NAME BE MORE PRODUCTIVE? with Lisa Wanttaja

As authors, we’re all used to using numerous sources to choose character names based on their meanings, but what about our own names? Names have power, and learning the meanings and symbology of our own names can

unlock clues to our work styles, gifts, and challenges, leading to greater creativity and enhanced motivation. Join Lisa in an interactive workshop that uses traditional name meanings, numerology, and runic symbols to find the deeper significance of your name, while giving you tools for selecting a pseudonym and new techniques for creating effective characters.

Lisa says: This is so much fun that I'm thinking of changing my name—often.

I'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER! with Charlotte Hubbard*

Does your hero require constant variety? Is your heroine so able to see both sides of a story she seems indecisive? Perfect examples of a “5” and a “2” lifepath! Charlotte puts you on the fast track to numerology, both to concoct interesting characters *and* to figure, from a character's name and/or birth date, what sort of person he or she is likely to be. (Yes, this simple system is a fast way to analyze your friends, too!) Take-home charts and personality keys provided!

Charlotte says again: I've got your number. (This isn't good; we think she really means it!)

FINDING YOUR VOICE: FAN MAIL FROM THE FUTURE with Jennifer Stevenson

Join Jennifer for an afternoon treat in the Collaging Room and in less than two hours find five elements of your voice that your fans love, figure out new genres where you might sell well, and more! (Check schedule for day and time.)

Jen says: “I've been using this workshop with critique partners and in public workshops for years. Even when repeating it with old friends, I learn something new every time. Nobody goes away hungry!”

COLLAGING FOR FUN AND PROFIT: Open all day!

Supplies like glue stix, scissors, folders etc. as well as a vast array of magazines/pages will be available for you—but *please* bring any magazines you have, too. Fresh images we'll all enjoy!

**Charlotte Hubbard will also be dropping in to encourage/enable collage fans in the Collaging Room. (Check schedule)*

Charlotte says: “New to collaging? I'm here to help! I've seen collage participants come up with entire plots in an hour of picture-gazing, and I've seen some find THE ANSWER to the plot point/character detail that had been stalling their story.

ALSO IN THE WORKS (fingers crossed!)

We're working hard to gather sample e-reader devices to check out during an informal afternoon session (time will be listed in the conference program). Pick 'em up, give 'em a look, take 'em for a small test drive ... and then talk about how we, as authors, may best take advantage of these new e-reader systems. E-books aren't the future anymore, they're here!



October 7 – 10, 2010

Tradewinds Island Grand

St. Pete Beach, Florida

Room Rate: \$129 plus tax

<http://www.tradewindsresort.com/properties/island-grand.aspx>

Conference fee (includes *Brainstorming: The Future of Publishing*): \$255. EZ payment plan: three payments of \$85 between now and July 31. NINC keeps its conference fees low because we know writers need a quality conference *and* reasonable costs.

Sign up today at (<http://www.ninc.com>), keep checking Ninclink and the website for additions to the list of invited speakers and workshop topics. Come to Florida in October, and be a part of this groundbreaking conference.

Bring your questions, your imagination, and your suntan oil!

Street Teams & Ninjas:

Free and Easy Promotional Tactics for Fans, Friends, and Chapter Members

BY ELAINE ISAAK

We all want to set off a great buzz campaign without spending a lot of time or money and harnessing fan energy can be a great way to start. In today's world of small budgets and lack of publisher support for marketing, many published authors are talking about "street teams"—groups of dedicated fans, friends, or family members willing to go the extra mile to help make the author's book successful. Even if you don't have a big fan base yet, or you haven't established contact with them, given the right direction, your RWA chapter or local writers' group has the potential to become a street team.

When my first book was coming out, I drafted a "ninja" letter incorporating a variety of free and simple things my friends could do to help get the word out. I included the following list of suggestions. Most are totally free and very easy for street teams and chapter members to help promote their author-friends.

In-Person Efforts

- ▶ Ask about the book at stores, ideally a little before it comes out.
- ▶ Pre-order the book online or at a local store.
- ▶ Ask an employee to help find the book—calling it to their attention.
- ▶ Turn the shelf copies face-out.
- ▶ Place cards or bookmarks in works that might appeal to a similar audience or at the front of the store or library.
- ▶ At chain stores, look up the book on their digital kiosk, leaving the page up when you walk away.
- ▶ Ask about readers' groups, writers' groups, or staffers who would be especially interested in the book. Pass these contacts to the author.
- ▶ Come to local appearances, even if you've already bought the book—it's great to have a big turn-out!

Online Tools

- ▶ Recent research suggests that online buyers tend to prefer things that are already popular. Sheer quantity of reviews, views of online videos and mentions on favorites lists can equal sales.
- ▶ Provide honest online reviews.
- ▶ Mention the book in reviews of similar works (think about creating a circle of authors this way—reviews might lead readers to your author-friends as well).
- ▶ On Amazon: include the title in "listmania" lists. Provide a list of suggested tags readers can use to make the book more searchable.
- ▶ Start discussion threads about the book or author at bookstores, review sites, and appropriate special interest sites.
- ▶ Link to the book's website, or become an Amazon or other store affiliate, and even make money when others discover it.
- ▶ Friend the author on social networking sites, re-tweeting author tweets, and passing on author events. An author website can have widgets that let fans friend you just with a click.
- ▶ On Twitter, use a hash tag (#) discussion for the author or title, mention it at #amreading to spread the word.
- ▶ Create or update fan pages for you at sites like Facebook or Wikipedia 9.

Community Outreach

- ▶ Request the book at the library. Suggest they could order it, if they don't have it. Just requesting the book through interlibrary loan gets it moving through a system of people who are in a position to recommend it to other readers.
- ▶ Collect information about local writers' clubs, bookstores, coffee shops, or other places you think might host an author event. Chapters might keep a database of these outlets.
- ▶ Collect information about any specialty publications, radio and cable programs, or other venues that might run an article, event listing, or interview with an author.
- ▶ For nonfiction writer-fans, consider writing an article about the book or interviewing the author. Even without a paid publication, these can be a nice addition to your website or press kit.
- ▶ Suggest the book to local or favorite review outlets.
- ▶ Provide copies of author's workshop brochures to board members of other chapters, local book/author fairs, or conference organizers.
- ▶ Get caught reading the book in public places.
- ▶ Use author bookmarks for all of your reading. Carry spares in case you want to leave them someplace.
- ▶ Place postcards or bookmarks on freebie tables at conferences or shops—beyond bookstores: fantasy or new-age stores, college hangouts, or special interest clubs.

Most of the items on this list can be done anytime, anywhere. Others require planning ahead, or receiving promotional materials in advance. In making these suggestions I stressed that I didn't want team members to think that I wanted them to become spammers or to badger local stores. Rather, I encouraged them to think about what would be comfortable—to discover and take advantage of opportunities already around them. (These suggestions can be especially helpful when your cousin tells you that she just doesn't read that kind of book. Tell her she doesn't have to read it—just buy it!)

Some authors keep a page on their website with street team suggestions or recruitment information. For a great example of this, check out Karin Tabke's page at <http://karintabke.com/street-team/>. Notice the tone she takes, repeatedly thanking her fans and starting off with the benefits she's offering to encourage participation.

Don't expect something for nothing. While many fans help out because they want to spread the word about their favorite author, thank-you gifts like signed bookplates, ARCs, or the chance to win ARCs, or t-shirts are much appreciated. T-shirts, in particular, work great as both gifts and promotion. One author provided t-shirts to each member of her writers' group, which they wore to a convention to celebrate and promote her new title. Consider listing the names of your team online or in your book acknowledgments—seeing your name in print is a thrill we jaded authors often forget.

Promoting a book can be a huge stress factor for an author, but it can be both more fun and easier—with a little help from your friends.

Elaine Isaak's latest series of novels will come out under a pseudonym which, alas, she's not supposed to tell you. .

Business Briefs

Bloomsbury Down Under

Bloomsbury will launch an Australian division in January 2011, headed by UK marketing director and Australian-native Kathleen Farrar. Bloomsbury has long distributed in Australia through Allen & Unwin, and the publisher will continue to provide sales and distribution for the new division, which will be based in Sydney.

New from Night Shade

Night Shade Books, publisher of fantasy, science fiction, and horror, will launch a literary fiction imprint this fall. Night Shade founder Jason Williams will act as publisher and Bantam Dell veteran Juliet Ulman will serve as editor-in-chief.

Ask the Lawyer...

Reversion of Electronic Rights

Question:

From 1993 through 2001, I wrote nine books for Tor and am now looking into getting them out again via Kindle, etc. I did the certified/registered mail thing but haven't heard back, although a month has passed.

The contracts changed over the years with the most recent granting Tor electronic text rights.

What confuses me re whether I need to pursue asking for the rights back is the paragraph about Reversion of Rights. It reads:

12.(2) If the Publisher determines, in its sole discretion, that the Work or any edition thereof has ceased to have a remunerative sale, the Publisher may discontinue publication and may at any time thereafter remainder or otherwise dispose of copies on hand. If, at any time after three years from the date of initial publication of the Work, all editions, whether trade hardcover, trade or mass-market paperback, of the Work that have been published or licensed by the Publisher anywhere in the United States shall be unavailable for sale as a result of lack of stock and, six months after written demand by the Author, mailed to the Publisher by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, is received, the Publisher still has not made arrangement for one of its own or a licensed trade hardcover, trade paperback or mass-market edition of the Work to be available for sale in the United States, the Author may terminate this Agreement by sending written notice of termination to the Publisher by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested.

There's nothing in the Reversion paragraph about electronic copies and none were ever brought out by the publisher. Do I still have to jump through the waiting hoops? The three years since initial publication is long over and the books haven't been available for years.

Answer:

Assuming that your grant of rights to Tor was sufficiently broad (e.g. "all publication rights") that Tor could claim to own electronic rights (even where such rights were not explicitly granted), then, yes, sadly, you need to jump through the hoops. The Tor Reversion of Rights clause, like most publishers' out-of-print clauses, requires action by the publisher to return its rights to you. It does not permit you to say, "Gee, they must be out of print... I haven't seen my book in Barnes & Noble in forever, so now I'll resell it to Ballantine, or self-publish it for e-book and print-on-demand sale."

Tor wants the ability to reevaluate the market for the books; if you find e-book publication viable, Tor might also. So they want you to remind them that your books exist and could be published electronically. If they fail to reprint (or to "arrange for" a reprint) a paper copy of the book with six months after your request by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, then you are entitled to send them a formal termination and to proceed with your e-book and/or POD publication.

But now, let's return to my initial assumption above: that the grant of rights to Tor implicitly included e-book rights. Chances are that Tor will take the position that such rights were granted to them, whether they were or not. That means likely legal expense for you if you choose to fight them over this issue.

On the other hand, if Tor's older contract forms did not include sweeping language, then it might be worth engaging them in discussion about whether you still control e-book rights. Frankly, I suspect that would be a waste of time, and that you'd be much better off simply going through the reversion process

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Keeping It Real: Five Satellite Subtleties for the Savvy Writer

BY RON ZELLAR

With all the Internet resources available today, SF and Thriller fans are increasingly tech savvy. Here are five elements of satellite technology that could improve the chances of engaging your reader's willing suspension of disbelief.

1. Orbits – What's your inclination?

Everything that moves in space is in some kind of orbit. *Star Wars* gave us the impression that flying through space is like flying a plane, but it's not that simple.

You don't have to describe an orbit in detail to your reader, but if you have an idea of what the orbit is, your writing will reflect consistency with those in the space business.

First, there are many different types of orbits for satellites, all with different advantages. Some are good for spying or mapping. Others are better for communication, science, or solar system exploration. Once you know the purpose of the satellite in your story, a little research will lead you to the orbit that fits.

Two of the most common orbits for satellites are polar orbits, used for reconnaissance and mapping, and geosynchronous orbits, used for communication and weather.

Here's some terminology. Don't worry. We're not going to make you an orbital expert. It just simplifies the discussion.

An orbit's inclination is the angle between the Earth's equatorial plane and the satellite's orbital plane. A polar-orbiting satellite, for example, makes a circuit over the Earth's North pole and South pole. It would have an inclination of 90 degrees (or nearly so). A geosynchronous satellite has an inclination of zero degrees (or nearly so) because it circles the Earth's equator. For a visual description of inclination, see <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/OrbitsCatalog/>.

You can create an orbit for any inclination you desire. The International Space Station orbits at an inclination of about 51 degrees, for instance.

Polar and geosynch orbits are circular. But, in general, orbits are elliptical with a large mass on one side of the ellipse, sort of like the yolk in an egg shell. Satellites in elliptical orbits move closer and farther from the central body as they revolve.

One last point to know about satellites in orbit is that the Earth rotates beneath the orbit. For most orbits with a substantial inclination, this means that every successive orbit has a ground track a bit farther West on the Earth. The satellite won't see the same spot on the Earth for another 12 hours. Some missions require constellations of satellites in different orbit planes or following each other in the same orbit to collect the needed data.

2. Changing Orbits – Not on a whim

Fuel on a satellite is a precious commodity. It's used routinely to reboost a decaying satellite and orient its attitude. Engineers will project a satellite's fuel budget into the future and estimate how long the satellite can operate. Once the fuel is gone, the satellite is uncontrollable and operators are forced to "throw it away." And if there's no replacement, your company or your mission could be in jeopardy. Unplanned maneuvers eat into the fuel budget and decrease the satellite's life.

On top of the fuel accounting, it's just plain hard to get satellites into orbit. Once they're there, people like to keep them working for as long as they can. You can imagine the bureaucratic inertia for performing an unplanned maneuver. Approvals are needed from higher offices. Company execs need to be briefed. Generals need to squabble.

The physics of moving a satellite is no small matter either. To do the maneuver optimally, there are particular points in the orbit where the thrusters should be activated. The maneuver has to be planned in advance and commands loaded to the satellite. After the burn, the satellite is tracked for a while to verify its new orbit. Substantial orbit changes might require multiple maneuvers over many days—perform a burn, track the satellite, compute the new orbit, correct the orbit ►

with another burn, track some more, etc. All this is to say that satellites aren't easily moved from one orbit to another.

3. Maneuvering in Space – Everything happens slowly

Satellite orbital speeds can be really high. Low Earth orbit satellites travel at about seven kilometers per second or nearly 16,000 miles per hour. Imagine the impact of a polar orbit satellite hitting another polar satellite head-on. The chance of this happening is like two bullets hitting each other in midair. But when they hit, what a mess!

Each satellite in space can't be expected to know where all the other satellites are that may cross its path. So all of this information is tracked on the ground. And operators are careful to put satellites into orbits that won't have collisions. When they need to move a satellite, everything goes very slowly.

During rendezvous and docking, the satellites are still moving at high speed, but their relative speed to each other is much lower. No one wants to be responsible for damaging valuable hardware, puncturing the spacecraft hull, or injuring astronauts, so approach is done really slowly. If something goes wrong, there's more time to react.

Furthermore, a satellite's control algorithms are usually written in a way that assumes the satellite could be rotating, but only very slowly. Attitude cameras, for example, will only image stars and determine the spacecraft orientation if the stars don't streak in the picture. If the satellite is rotating too quickly, it could decide it's in trouble, go to safe mode, and wait for a human to figure out what the problem is. Going to safe mode in the middle of a critical maneuver can be really risky. Another reason to maneuver slowly in space.

4. Satellite Communications – They want you to think it's gibberish

We've all seen the stories where the bad guys intercept the satellite communications to get some important information or send commands to take over a satellite. This doesn't happen.

All the most important satellites are equipped with encryption hardware. Cracking the encryption is just as hard as trying to crack an encrypted file—nearly impossible. Anybody listening in to the signals would only hear gibberish.

Even if encryption hardware isn't used, the bad guys usually only see one side of the conversation. Commands are beamed up to the satellite via a directional antenna. If you're above the ground station or near the receiving satellite, you may be able to see the signals from the antenna. This isn't easy, so the bad guys are potentially only limited to listening to the telemetry transmitted from the satellite.

As with the commands, telemetry is mostly sent down via a directional beam. The "splash" area for the downward data could be big enough to be seen by some bad guys near the ground station. But one side of the conversation isn't enough to figure out how to commandeer a satellite. It's only enough to see what its capabilities are and only if there's no encryption.

Really, the only malicious thing people can do regarding satellite communications is to attempt to jam or drown out the legitimate command signals from the ground. This could be done by directionally beaming really high intensity noise at the precise command frequency so that the legit signals are not heard.

5. Eyes in the Sky – Satellites Don't Zoom

Do you imagine that the cameras on satellites have multiple lenses that click into place giving the camera greater and greater zoom capability? Or that there's a tube full of lenses that gets longer when they want more zoom, just like on your pocket camera? You guessed it. It doesn't work that way.

Mechanisms in space wear out much more quickly than on the ground. Oils evaporate, temperatures are extreme, and gears wear out. So engineers avoid mechanisms if they can.

If you're committed to flying the biggest, most powerful set of lenses anyway, why not just mount them permanently in front of the camera? As long as you know where the satellite is pointed, you'll know where the image is coming from. And if they really need a broader image, the operators will take multiple high resolution images and piece them together.

Now, if they want broad view, low resolution images at the same time as they want narrow view, high resolution images, they'll fly two sets of cameras. That's easier than trying to build in a zoom feature.

Deviating from any of this information doesn't necessarily mean that your story won't be a raging success. *Star Wars* has the light saber, and that violates many laws of physics. But that story's done pretty well. If you have a good story to tell, just tell it. But if you're looking to inject your story with some plausible reality, these concepts may help.

Ron Zellar has worked in the aerospace industry for nearly 20 years. He's currently a NASA Systems Engineer and most recently led the production of a laser ranging system used to track the distance to a satellite in orbit around the Moon. The laser ranging system is part of the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter mission and determines distances to the satellite with a precision of 10 centimeters (four inches).

Business Briefs

People, people, people

Simon and Schuster has selected Jonathan Karp to head its adult trade imprint, replacing 13-year veteran David Rosenthal. Karp has been head of Twelve, an imprint of the Hachette Book Group, since 2005.

Former Putnam Exec. Editor Peternelle van Arsdale has become a freelance editor and ghostwriter (contact at pva@pvabooks.com).

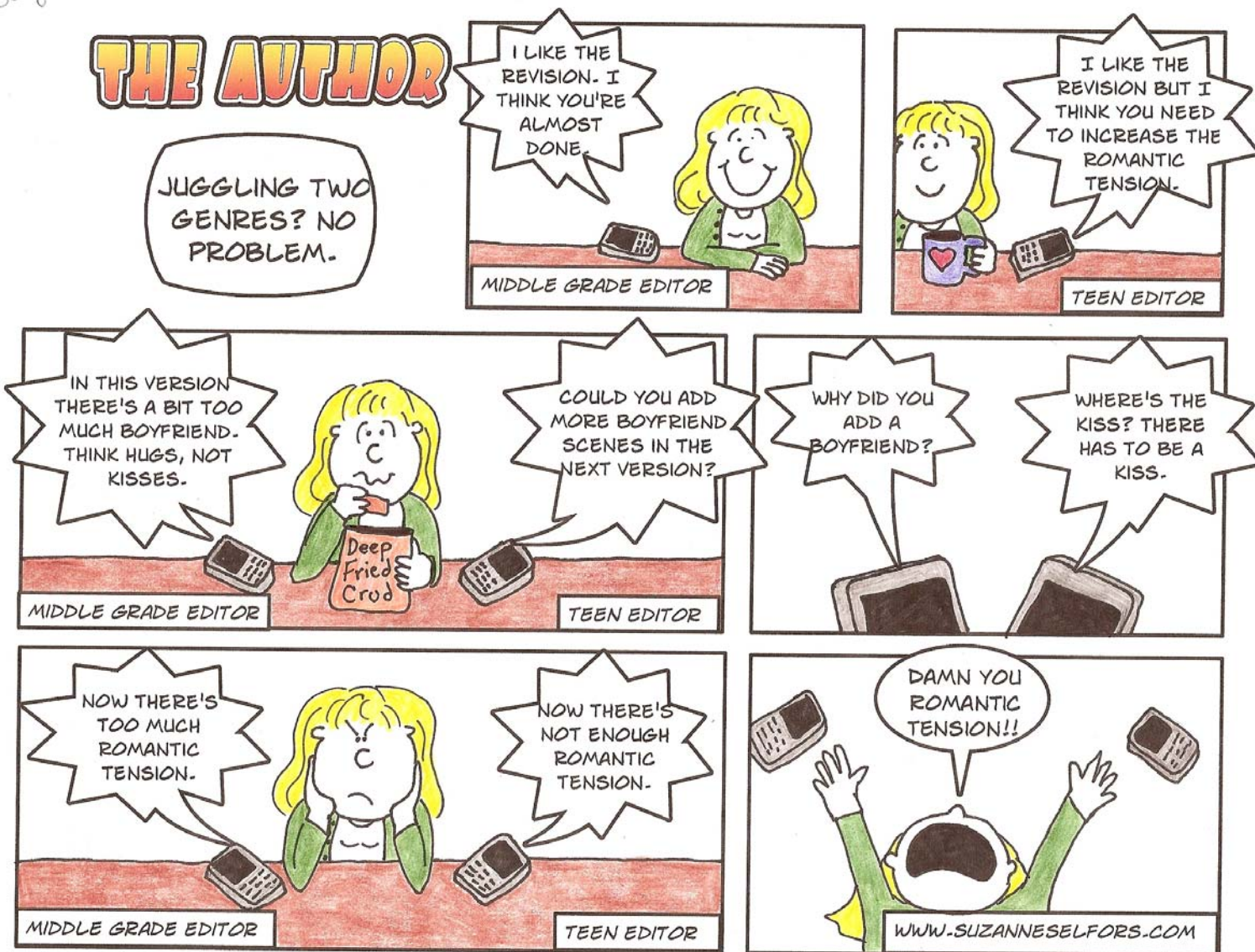
At Random House, editor-at-large and author Shana Corey has been promoted to executive editor.

Jennifer Bonnell has been promoted from senior editor to executive editor at Puffin books.

Former editor at Grand Central and editorial director at Five Spot, Caryn Karmatz Rudy, will be joining the literary agency DeFiore and Co. in September. She will be working out of Philadelphia.

Adrienne Schultz turns freelance editor after leaving Penguin.

Thomas Nelson's children's publishing expansion has Molly Kempf moving into editorial director from Scholastic and Mackenzie Howard moving up to acquisitions editor for children's books.



Ask the Agent...

JoAnna Stampfel-Volpe



The Buzz

Editor's note: Because we didn't have an Ask the Agent question for this month, I decided to ask JoAnna about her experience having one of her author's books chosen by Book Expo America's YA Buzz Panel

When I first found out that Kody Keplinger's *The DUFF* (*Designated Ugly Fat Friend*) was chosen as one of the five books at Book Expo America's YA Buzz Panel, I just about did a happy dance around the office. But first, as always, I called the author to let her know. And her response?

"Wow, that's great! Is this a big thing?"

Yes, my dear. A very big thing.

When I attended BEA 2009's YA Buzz Panel, I remember walking away and thinking, I want to read every single one of those books! The editors did such a fabulous job of selling them, and it took me a moment to really realize why. At first I thought it was because they are just good at what they do. Well, that's part of it, but that's not all of it. And now that I've been involved in a Buzz Panel, I can tell you this from personal experience: The editors sell those books so well because they are genuinely excited about them.

I don't know how or what the process is for the Buzz Panel books being chosen, but I do know how reading *The DUFF* made me feel. I know how it made Kody's presenter, Editorial Director of Poppy Cindy Eagan feel. And I can only guess that it made the Powers-that-Decide feel that way, too. Excited. Hopeful. Like they wanted to talk about it with everyone. Like it's a book everyone should be *buzzing* about.

Kody is a teen author, yes, but that's not what made me sign her on as a client (anyone who has heard me tell that story knows it's true—I actually had no idea she was a teenager). What made me call her up to offer representation was the book. The main character in *The DUFF* has such a raw and honest voice, I felt like I knew her. In fact, I felt like I was her in high school. The dialogue in Kody's book is spot on teen, it doesn't hold back, and it's true to the point of cringeworthy in some scenes. Who didn't feel like a DUFF at one point? And that's the whole purpose of the book. It's not about a fat ugly girl who takes off her glasses and lets down her ponytail and suddenly she's gorgeous and she gets the guy. It's about a *real* girl, who is labeled the DUFF, and even feels like the DUFF at times—but she also discovers that she's not the only one who feels that way. And taking off a pair of glasses or letting down your hair doesn't change who we are. There's a little bit of DUFF in all of us, no?

On this year's Buzz Panel, *The DUFF* was the only contemporary novel up there. The rest were either paranormal, fantasy, or dystopian. So I guess if we're going to discuss trends, it's safe to say that fantasy isn't going anywhere for a while. But one thing that seemed to really shine through is that each book had a voice that made the editors sit up and listen. These books are not formulaic, or plot-driven. These books all have a teen female lead that has a story to tell.

So what does that have to say about YA books in the marketplace? Well, I think it says that teens have something to say, and that there are readers, both teen and adult, who resonate with their messages. When Kody wrote *The DUFF*, she wasn't thinking about market or sales. She was simply digging deep and putting what she feels on the page. This rings true for any genre. And when that voice really comes alive, it is definitely something to buzz about.

Joanna Stampfel-Volpe is an agent with Nancy Coffey Literary & Media Representation. She represents children's to adult books, and when she's not reading (which is almost never), she enjoys cooking, watching movies, and hanging with her husband and her chihuahua, PeeWee.

Not Your Usual Writing Advice— Career Planning

BY JOANN GROTE

“If you want to make the right decision for the future, fear is not a very good consultant.”

— **Marcus Dohle, Chairman and CEO, Random House**



I'm writing this at the end of May; graduation season. Everywhere people are asking graduates, “What are you going to do?” Many dream of an artistic career in one form or another, and most will receive the standard advice: “Find something to fall back on.”

Fear-based career planning. Sage advice? Not in my experience. A number of friends from college days who are artists at heart followed the “back-up” advice. All of them ditched their dreams and filled their lives with their “back-up” careers.

Not surprising. They'd been fed a dose of fear—fear of going into a career into which they could throw themselves heart and soul—and they swallowed it. The more time and energy drained by the “back-up” career, the more difficult it becomes to see a way to transition to one's dream career.

I know. I was one of the statistics. My “back-up” career was accounting. The transition to writing took many years.

Recently I dreamed a river in flood stage surged past an accounting firm. A sink faucet inside the firm ran wide open. Muddy water from the river gushed from the faucet, along with broken appliances, torn screens, and other items people tend to discard in river ditches. I was helping another accountant remove the pollutants from the water. At the dream's end, I stood in the open countryside where water from a pump beside me ran clear.

The dream reminded me of “Clear Water: Nourishing the Creative Life,” a chapter in Clarissa Pinkola Estes' *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. There are many ways to pollute and to clear the creative river, but when I reread the chapter following the dream, what struck me was Estes' statement that the same complexes which “question your worth, your intention, your sincerity and your talent...also send exhortations that assert unequivocally that you must labor to ‘earn a living’ doing things that exhaust you, leave you no time to create, destroying your will to imagine.”

The accountant working beside me in the dream owns a CPA firm where I once worked. She longs to do something totally different, but is tied to the “security” of her firm. Whenever I wonder whether I should reconsider working in accounting, I dream about this woman and her situation.

In my pre-published years, I worked full-time as a CPA, and for about six months of the year worked 70 to 80 hours a week. I hated it. I longed to write full-time. When I went part-time at the firm to put more time into writing, I discovered I no longer hated accounting. It simply became another part of my life, socially, mentally and financially. Within six months, I signed my first book contract. Eventually I reached my dream of writing full-time.

There are those who are not only capable of writing productively and well while employed in another demanding profession, but thrive in that situation. The difference between those who thrive and those who founder is found in Estes' words. Does the position “exhaust you, leave you no time to create, destroying your will to imagine”? If so, consider going part-time, changing your nonwriting profession, or writing full-time. Remember, it doesn't need to be an all-or-nothing decision, and it doesn't need to happen immediately.

The day job isn't the only area where writers make career plans by fear instead of joy. *New York Times*-bestselling author Tina Wainscott advises, “Don't stay in a place where you're unhappy out of fear. I knew I needed a change, but I kept hearing about authors whose contracts weren't renewed, the horrible market, and warnings about not even selling to a second publisher because you didn't want to upset the first one. When you hear that from a *NYT*-bestselling author...well, you just stay put. But in the end, staying ground down my muse and sent me in directions that didn't serve my career. Never risk the muse! I took a chance and cut ties, and being out of contract honestly felt so good I knew I'd done the right thing. In four months, I'd sold a new series to a new publisher at auction.”

Tina believes, “anything done out of fear will amount to no good. I always sit with an idea and see how I feel about doing it. Tight stomach? Forget it! Enthusiasm, okay, let's roll with it!”

There isn't one way that is the “right” way to be a writer. But whatever your career choices, I hope they are driven by your desires and joys, not by fears. Take courage. ▲

Ninc Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY JACKIE KRAMER

Got any news or information
for the Bulletin Board?

Send it to Jackie at
jackiekramer7@netscape.com

Judy Shore is the Roommate Coordinator for this year's conference, and she has opened a list for attendees to sign up for roomies. Please let her know if you're a smoker, so you won't be connected with someone with allergies.

Judy can be contacted at: judyashore@gmail.com, using "Roommate Wanted" in subject line.

The NINC blog (read: Blog Mistress) needs you. Rather, your agent, editor, publisher, publicist, web designer, or anyone else who could be considered an industry guest. There is a special need for guests to fill slots this summer. Take a few minutes to contribute to this valuable asset for Novelists, Inc. and find someone willing to blog (or do a Q&A) for us. If you succeed, contact Patricia at Patricia.Rosemoor@gmail.com. Don't forget there is a finder's fee of \$25 and a promo opportunity (Your name, bio, and photo).

If there is any question whether officers, committee chairpersons, or members are performing their duties within guidelines, don't forget that the guidelines are posted in the members section of the NINC website.

To NINC Members:

If you haven't heard, NINC will soon launch *Ninc Blast*, our new quarterly online newsletter to bookstores, libraries, and readers. It's a great marketing tool for members and for NINC. So please take advantage and participate.

It's easy! Here's all you need to do to be included in the fall issue.

1) Any member who has a book(s) out in June, July, and August, please send me title, author name, two brief sentences about the book, and your website URL if you want your name linked.

2) Also, we'd like to have something a bit different included in the *Blast*, something a subscriber won't find elsewhere. It will be a section titled *DID YOU KNOW?* We want it to include tidbits on our authors, examples: Mary Author won her first grade spelling bee, but now relies on spell check. Suzy Novelist is a den mother to ten cub scouts and she still has her sanity. John Q. Writer not only wrote but illustrated his first novel at age six.

Send me as many tidbits about yourself as you want. If you're not sure if it fits, send it anyway. We want backstock so we have enough to use throughout the quarterly *Blasts*.

Please send information to donna@donnafletcher.com by August 27.

3) Let bookstores, libraries, and readers know about *Ninc Blast* and encourage them to give it a try. All they need to do to join is go to NINC's website and, on the homepage, they will find the spot to subscribe to *Ninc Blast*. Sign up yourself if you'd like and see what it's all about.

This is a new venture for NINC and our members, and we hope to grow it into a must-have newsletter. We can't do it without your help. Content is everything! So please PARTICIPATE!

Looking forward to overwhelming participation.

Donna Fletcher
Ninc Blast Coordinator
President-elect

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

The Novelists, Inc. Legal Fund assists members who encounter legal issues pertaining to their careers (excluding contract negotiations). Most issues will not be resolved within the limits of the Fund, but it does afford members an opportunity to go over their situation with a legal professional, who will assess the problem and render advice.

For details and requirements of the NINC Legal Fund, see the Guidelines and Application form.

In addition, a number of qualified attorneys extend a discounted hourly rate to NINC members. Check the NINC website for further information.

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



The NINC Legal Fund

"Publishers are all cohorts of the devil; there must be a special hell for them somewhere."

— Goethe

There is a publisher, which company I shall refer to as The Publisher, that cancelled a multi-book contract with me after publishing one book. The Publisher subsequently reverted to me all rights to that book, which I shall refer to as The Book.

Two years later, a reader happened to mention to me that she had bought the e-book of The Book for her new Kindle. Since I own all rights to The Book and *had not licensed* an e-version, you can perhaps imagine my surprise. I investigated and discovered that The Book was widely available in electronic formats from a broad range of vendors, including Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, and Fictionwise.com.

I contacted these retail outlets. They all told me The Publisher had supplied them with this e-book. It appeared that The Publisher had started distributing The Book electronically about six months after reverting all rights to me.

So this was evidently an unauthorized edition of The Book and a violation of my copyright. However, I assumed it was a careless mistake, rather than a deliberate act of piracy. Perhaps The Book had gotten into some long e-production queue while I was still under contract, and someone neglected to take it out of the queue when the rights were reverted. This seemed like a problem that I and The Publisher should certainly be able to clear up quickly with a little reasonable, businesslike behavior on both our parts.

(As several friends said to me, "Yeah, right. Lotsa luck with that.")

My goal was simple: I just wanted this e-book removed from the market. That was all.

I had a contact in the editorial department who had dealt previously with the complications of extricating my business from The Publisher after my contract was cancelled. So I emailed this editor, who agreed to look into this matter and get back to me.

A month passed. Nothing happened. The e-book was still available in the retail market, and no one was "getting back" to me.

So I sent another email. No answer. And another. Still no answer.

Not long after that, I read in *Nink* that this editor had departed the company several weeks earlier.

So it now seemed likely that, during the *two months* that I had been pursuing this matter with The Publisher in a reasonable, businesslike manner, not a single freaking thing had actually been done about it.

I realized that a "reasonable and businesslike" process had been a naïve fantasy on my part, and I was going to have to get a lawyer.

So I applied to the NINC Legal Fund.

The Fund was the brainchild of former NINC president Pat McLaughlin, who began working on it in 2006 and brought it to fruition during her 2007 presidency; I was president-elect that year and helped her finalize and launch it. The Legal Fund pays for a NINC member to receive up to two billable hours per year of consultation with and assistance from a literary lawyer to solve a problem arising from her professional writing career.

My problem—a company publishing my work without authorization and completely ignoring my attempts to ►

contact them about it—is an excellent example of the sort of situation the Legal Fund was created to assist members with. The current NINC Board of Directors approved my application, and I contacted an attorney. She, in turn, contacted someone she knew in The Publisher's legal department, and—finally!—someone responded.

The legal department said they vaguely remembered the editor whom I had contacted telling them about this matter; they *also* said the editor had never told them about it. (After 22 years in the industry, this is exactly the sort of consistency and credibility I have come to expect from most publishing houses.)

In response to repeated prodding and poking from my attorney, The Publisher's legal department sluggishly began to review the matter in a vague and heel-dragging manner.

One of the surprising and annoying things that soon emerged from this murky process was that one of the parties at fault in this mess was my fourth—and final—former literary agent, whom I shall refer to as The Agent.

I had submitted The Book to The Publisher and gotten the offer on the table, and had then hired The Agent to negotiate the contract. Collecting the commission on that deal turned out to be the most engaged in my career The Agent ever got, and we parted company two months after the contract was cancelled. (We probably would have parted sooner, but I couldn't even get in touch with The Agent for most of that period.)

Well, it now turned out that The Publisher had actually been sending semi-annual royalty statements to The Agent, reflecting e-book sales of The Book; but The Agent (who had my current address, and whose agency boasts publicly about its large and efficient accounting department) never bothered to send me any of the statements. (There were no payments, because The Publisher's statements applied the earnings to the unearned portion of the advance.) Thus, I never knew about the existence of the e-book... until a reader happened to mention it to me one day, some 18 months after its release.

So now my NINC-funded lawyer, with a legal reversion agreement in hand that predated the release of the e-book, was explaining the problem to The Publisher and proposing a generously reasonable solution: I wasn't asking for damages; all I wanted was to get the e-book off the market, to be given proof that it had been withdrawn from all vendors, and to receive a guarantee that The Publisher wouldn't do this again.

The Publisher, however, was being frustratingly recalcitrant, uncommunicative, slow, and evasive. Their unwillingness to acknowledge that there *was* a problem (perhaps out of fear of increasing their legal liability) made it very difficult to *resolve* the problem. And so this mess—which should have been easy to clear up quickly with reasonable, businesslike behavior—took nearly *another* two months to conclude even after I hired a lawyer. (Fortunately, since 99.9% of that time was spent waiting for The Publisher to respond to repeated requests for a response, my legal bill remained within the parameters of the Legal Fund. Ultimately, I only got charged personally for about 10-20 minutes beyond the billable two hours that the Fund covers.)

The matter was finally resolved when The Publisher withdrew the e-book from the market and notified all their vendors to cease offering it. My attorney asked for more-specific verification, but it has not been forthcoming. I have received paperwork from The Publisher acknowledging the two-year-old reversion of my rights, but not acknowledging their violation of that agreement. And I am waiting a "final fiscal statement" for the book, but (given how long I've now been waiting) am becoming skeptical that I will receive it.

If nothing further happens, I am leaving the matter there. The Publisher's recalcitrance has been counter-productive and frustrating; but my primary goal was to get the unauthorized e-book off the market, and that is achieved. And considering how badly The Publisher has behaved every step of the way, I don't see how I could possibly have resolved this matter without legal representation.

Many thanks to the NINC Board and the NINC Legal Fund for helping me with this matter, so that I didn't have to spend hundreds of dollars of my own money, out of the meager budget of a working writer, to clean up the mess that The Publisher and The Agent created with their carelessness and their unprofessional behavior.



For more information about the NINC Legal Fund, visit ninc.com and look under “Member Services.” For a list of literary lawyers pre-approved for use by the Fund, look under “Directories.”



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane O'Brien Kelly

The Rebate Debate

When airlines first began granting customers frequent flyer miles, there was much debate between the IRS and tax practitioners about whether the “free” flights offered by the airlines constituted taxable income to the recipient. The same debate occurred with respect to cash rebates offered by automobile dealers. And what about store rebates? Manufacturer rebates? Credit card rebates? And is there a difference in tax treatment if the rebate applies to personal purchases rather than business purchases?

Let’s answer the last question first. Yep, the tax treatment is different for rebates generated and used in your business and those that relate to personal purchases.

Rebates on personal purchases are not considered income to the recipient. Rather, personal rebates are viewed simply as a reduction in the price paid by the consumer for the goods or services. For example, a cash rebate on a personal cell phone simply means the consumer paid less for the phone. A cash rebate or credit by the issuing bank on a personal credit card account is viewed as a reduction in the interest or charges on the personal account. Again, no income results to the taxpayer.

The rules are different in the business context, however. Because the IRS generally views rebates not as income, but as reduction of the price paid by the taxpayer for the goods or services generating the rebate, a rebate on a specific business item would decrease the depreciable basis or deductible cost of that item. For instance, if you purchased a \$200.00 cell phone for use only in your business and later received a \$50.00 manufacturer’s rebate on the purchase, you should depreciate only \$150.00, the net cost of the phone after the rebate. However, if the rebate is received in a subsequent tax year, a taxpayer reporting on the cash basis (which nearly all individuals do) should instead depreciate the full cost of the item, then include the rebate in their business income in the year in which it was received. The rebate must be included in income of the business in such instances to offset the “overstated” deduction.

Some rebates, however, such as store rebates, are based on accumulated purchases and may be used only on future purchases. For instance, an office supply store might offer a rebate redeemable only for merchandise. Such rebates are normally a percentage of past purchases and are paid out at regular intervals. In such a case, what’s a taxpayer to do? A cash basis taxpayer should reduce their expense deduction on the purchase to which the rebate is applied by the amount of the rebate and deduct only the net amount paid. For example, if you receive a \$25 rebate from Staples and apply it to a \$30 purchase of paper, you would deduct only \$5, the net cost of the paper, on your tax return.

Similarly, a cash rebate on a business credit card must be included in your business income. Why? Because you deducted both the purchases made with the card and the interest on the card, and the failure to include the rebate in income would result in your net income being understated.

Don’t Mix Business and Pleasure

Problems can arise when personal and business rebates are mixed. The IRS has pursued criminal charges against business owners who have diverted cash rebates related to their business to their personal accounts and failed to report the income. Although the cases involve rebates in significant amounts, while a writer is more likely to receive only nominal rebates, the basic underlying premise is the same. It is generally against tax law to divert a rebate on business purchases to personal expenses unless the rebate is included in business income. Thus, for example, if ►

you receive a store rebate on purchases of supplies for your writing business and apply it to a later personal purchase, be sure to include the rebate in your business income.

So now we know that we don't have to report as income any rebates on personal purchases, but that we do have to include business rebates in income or reduce our deduction for items to which a business rebate applies. The differences in tax reporting indicate the importance of keeping business and personal rebates separate. Keeping track of how much of a rebate is earned through personal purchases and how much is earned through business purchases could be a bookkeeping nightmare. The best thing to do if you would like to earn benefits under a rebate program is to segregate your business and personal purchases and to have separate accounts, and hence separate rebates, for each.

But here's an odd thing. In an inconsistent move, the IRS announced in 2002 that ". . . the IRS will not assert that any taxpayer has understated his federal tax liability by reason of the receipt or personal use of frequent flyer miles or other in-kind promotional benefits attributable to the taxpayer's business or official travel." See Announcement 2002-18 at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/a-02-18.pdf>. Thus, it appears that taxpayers are free to divert business flight benefits to personal purposes without suffering a tax hit.

My best guess is that the IRS has enacted this seemingly inconsistent rule due to the complications that would arise in valuing the "free" flight for tax purposes. Be aware, however, that this exception for airline rebates does not apply to rebates paid in cash, which must be treated as income by the taxpayer. To maximize your deductions and thus reduce your taxes, pay for your deductible business flights and use your frequent flyer miles for personal (non-deductible) flights.

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

Business Briefs

AOL Hiring

AOL's president of media and studios division has announced that the company is planning to hire hundreds of journalists, editors, and videographers in the coming year as it builds out its content-first business model. AOL also reportedly wants to ramp up the number of freelancers it employs; currently there are about 40,000 freelancers contributing to AOL, its SEED content production arm, and Studio One.

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Facebook Tips

Editor's Note: Julie Ortolon, NINC member and Facebook maven offers tips to make navigating the niceties of Facebook to make it work for you.



Facebook Tip: How to Hide Your Personal Profile

Recently, I've heard a lot of authors asking how to hide their personal profile page on Facebook. Today's tip — provided by Novelist Inc. member Lauren Dane — will tell you how to do that. First, though, for those who are new to Facebook, I'll explain why you'd want to hide your profile.

Facebook has two types of pages. The first is a profile page, which is what you get automatically when you join Facebook. To that profile, you can add “Pages,” which used to be called fan pages. You can’t have a Page without having a profile. For authors, or anyone using Facebook to promote themselves and interact with lots of people, a Page has many advantages, so I highly recommend you go that route.

Having both a Page and a profile gets confusing and cumbersome. So, your best option is to hide your profile so that only friends and family can see it. Even if you don't want to use the profile deleting it is not an option. You have to have it in order to have the public Page. So, here it is...

How to Hide Your Personal Profile on Facebook

Lauren says to go to “my account” and the “privacy setting” and adjust everything to only “my friends.” Be sure to sweep through the whole thing as your profile picture will be viewable to anyone as long as you have one. Because you can’t hide your picture, Lauren chose to use a non identifying one (of a leaf covered gate) and she keeps pics of kids and home life in a friends only locked albums. In the settings area you can also control who can find you by searching and who they can give your personal info to, so be sure to uncheck the box they’ve already checked for you to give them permission to share your info.

Thank you Lauren! You can learn more about Lauren Dane by visiting her Website, <http://LaurenDane.com>

More Tips..... ▶



Facebook 101, Basic Strategies for Authors

Rather than write a how-to guide for setting up a Facebook account, I want to focus on issues that concern authors, and that's usually privacy verses promotion. (If you do want a how to guide, here's a good one at <http://eHow.com>.)

When opening a Facebook account you need to decide what your purpose is for doing so. Is it:

- A) Strictly to prevent a cyber squatter from grabbing your name as I discussed in the previous section.
- B) To use it as a private account to network with personal friends and family.
- C) To promote yourself as an author by networking with readers and other authors.

If your purpose is A or B, here's an important tip: When you open the account, don't use any e-mail address that you've ever used as an author. Get a brand new e-mail free from someplace like gmail. This will keep your page from popping up on the list of "people you might want to friend" with everybody out there who has your e-mail address in their address book. You can never be completely anonymous on the Web, but this will help you keep a lower profile.

Now: Let's Talk Promotion!

If your purpose is C, and I think it should be, you have two options.

1) The easy option is to create a regular page and just start friending everyone you know. You can organize your friends into lists so that when you click on "Home" you can determine whose posts will display on the Wall. (Here's a link to explain [how to create a list](http://www.facebook.com/help/?search=using%20lists): <http://www.facebook.com/help/?search=using%20lists>)

I have one list for just family, one for personal friends, another for authors, readers, and so on. That helps me flip through everyone's posts quickly and decide where to leave comments. Leaving comments isn't just fun, it helps attract new friends. I believe there's also a way to use lists to control who can see your posts, but I've searched FB Help Center for hours now, and can't figure it out. *If you know where to find this information, please share!*

The disadvantage to a regular page is it limits you to 5,000 friends. Plus, you can't customize it. If you're content to splash in the shallow end of the Internet marketing pond (and there's nothing wrong with that) this isn't a problem. But, if you want to brave deeper waters, you'll want to go with option number...

2) The better way – if you're an author – is to start a Fan Page. At least, it used to be called that. Now it's just called a "Page." This is the best of both worlds, allowing you to have a personal FB page for family and friends, and a public Page for promoting your books and interacting with authors and readers.



Facebook 201: Creating an Author Fan Page

When I opened my Facebook account and started sending out friend requests to fellow authors, I kept getting responses back inviting me to join their Fan Page. I immediately thought, "I'm an author. I want one of those." The idea seemed so simple. Facebook has a Help Center, right? I should be able to type in a few keywords to get some instruc-



tions. *Sigh.* Nothing on the Internet is ever that easy. I literally spent days trying to figure it out. What should have been simple felt like following a treasure map that had a huge chunk missing.

The vital chunk of missing information? Facebook changed the name! “Fan Pages” are no more. They are now called “Pages” (with a capital P).

So, here you go, my **step-by-step instruction for setting up what used to be a Fan Page:**

First, if you don’t already have a regular Facebook page, you need to create one. Refer to my last post [Facebook 101](#) before doing this. Once you have that, here’s what you do:

- 1) Scroll down to the very bottom of your regular page.
- 2) In the lower right corner, click on “Help.”
- 3) On the help page, look under “Facebook Applications and Features” for the yellow flag icon next the words “Pages.” Click on that.
- 4) On the next page, click on “Admins: Creating, administering, and editing your Page.”
- 5) Click on “How can I create a Page?”
- 6) Select “writer” in the drop down window for Artist, Band, or Public Figure. Enter your name, and choose “Do not make Page publicly visible at this time” to give yourself time to design the page before taking it public.



Once you have created your Page, you can access it for editing and posting two ways. First, go back to your regular account. Look in the lower left corner and there should now be a new icon that looks like this:

Click on that. Or, click on the word “Applications” to the left of that icon, and choose Ads and Pages. I am currently hip-deep, wading through the murky waters of editing, designing, and pimping my own Page, so that—hopefully—will be the topic of a future blog. Wish me luck!



How to Customize Your Facebook URL

If you’re an author who has recently moved from profile page to a public page (aka fan page) on Facebook, you’ll love this. As soon as you have a minimum of 25 fans, you can change your URL from this: http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=6127*4#&re

To this: <http://www.facebook.com/julieortolon/>

It’s really simple! Just go to: <http://www.facebook.com/username/>

You can change both your personal profile page and your fan page, so pay attention and be sure you select the right page when it asks which page you want to customize. Other than that, it’s easy-peasy. ▲