

NINK

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Not the Whole Enchilada

BY KAT RICHARDSON

E-publishing, and specifically self-publishing e-books on Kindle, is a hot topic right now what with the interesting juxtaposition of Amanda Hocking's Big 6 print contract (<http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/24/self-publisher-signs-four-book-deal-with-macmillan/>) and Barry Eisler's ship-jump from print to Kindle only (<http://www.techdirt.com/blog/casestudies/articles/20110321/00183913568/best-selling-author-turns-down-half-million-dollar-publishing-contract-to-self-publish.shtml>). In the meantime I'm also engaged in a contract negotiation and the issue of e-books is, of course, a major one. E-books have been an increasingly large issue since I first got into the business, and while it may appear that I'm ignoring it, mostly I'm keeping my impetuous trap shut and observing and thinking a lot.

Over the past two years, I've been asked with some regularity when/if I will engage in electronic self-publishing (with varying degrees of "and get out from under the thumb of those evil money-grubbing publishers" implied or actually stated) or why I haven't yet when I'm obviously doing so well for myself. But the truth is, I do not do it myself. And having once been an editor, I

do not wish to be-
cause I have learned to my sorrow that I simply cannot see the trees for the forest.

When I complete a manuscript, even though I know parts of it are rough or rickety, I tend to look upon the finished draft as a beautiful woodland perfect (or mostly) and delightful. I cannot separate from the relief of completing the task enough to see all its flaws or—worse—how the flaws form a pattern or create other holes and problems; I simply don't see the dead trees and rabbit burrows and trash heaps. I only see my beautiful forest of literary endeavor and think "Isn't that lovely? That should be good enough to satisfy anyone." And then I press "Send" on the e-mail and ... a few weeks later my editor returns it

*Because we
spend so
much time on
the Internet,
I think we
lose track of
the number
of people
who don't.*

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Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

Founders

Rebecca Brandewyne
Janice Young Brooks
Jasmine Cresswell

Maggie Osborne
Marianne Shock

Advisory Council

Janice Young Brooks
Jasmine Cresswell
Maggie Osborne
Marianne Shock
Linda Barlow
Georgia Bockoven

Evan Maxwell
Victoria Thompson
Steven Womack
Barbara Keiler
Pat Rice
Jean Brashear

Vicki Lewis Thompson
Brenda Hiatt Barber
Pat McLaughlin
Kasey Michaels
Kay Hooper

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

2011 Board of Directors

President:

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2011 Committees

2011 Conference

Chair: Kasey Michaels
Program: Karen Tintori Katz

Anthology

Editor: Lou Aronica

Authors Coalition Reps

Deborah Gordon
Elaine Isaak

Elections

Chair: Sylvie Kurtz

Managing Electronic Rights

Chair: Open; contact Kay Hooper

Marketing

Chair:

Member Retention

Chair:

Membership

Chair: JoAnn Grote

Nink Online Index

Denise Lynn

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Royalty Committee

Chair: Allison Brennan
Marianna Jameson

Volunteer Jobs List

Coordinator

Dianne Despain

Website

Chair: Pati Nagle

Blog Coordinator

Patricia Rosemoor

Complete committee member listings
are available on the website:

<http://www.ninc.com>

Central Coordinator:

Tonya Wilkerson, Varney and Assoc.
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Manhattan KS 66505
Fax: 785-537-1877
Ninc@varney.com

Address changes may be made on the
website.

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

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newsletter may be used or reproduced
in any manner without written
permission.

Website:

<http://www.Ninc.com>

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
jaghi@rconnect.com

New Applicants:

Amy Knupp, Middleton, WI
Anna Adams, Newnan, GA
Shiloh Walker, Jeffersonville, IN
Maureen McGowan, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Nick DiChario, Rochester, NY
Merrilee Whren, Fernandina Beach, FL
Christyne Butilier (Christyne Butler), Leominster, MA
Michelle Holman, Cambridge, Waikato, New Zealand
Toni McGee Causey, Baton Rouge, LA
Wendy Wootton (Portia Da Costa), Ossett, West
Yorkshire, United Kingdom
Nina Bruhns (Nikita Black), Summerville, SC
Tracy Higley (T. L. Higley), Wernersville, PA
Lee Duncan (Leigh Duncan), Rockledge, FL

New Members:

Laura Lee Guhrke, Eagle, ID
Melissa McClone, Camas, WA
Kate Rorick (Kate Noble), Marina Del Ray, CA
James LePore, South Salem, NY

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.

VOTE

There has been a lot of discussion on NinLink in conjunction with the proposed Bylaw change and since I'm writing this at the beginning of April, I imagine more has already followed. However, right now we need members to concentrate on one thing alone ... the Bylaw change.

For or against, it's time to stand up and cast your vote.

We all have our different reasons for either wanting the five-year rule to stay in effect or dropping the five-year rule. The board has presented a rationale for the change: *Twenty-two years ago, when this section of the Bylaws was written, the publishing world was a different place. Today, working authors are not published with the regularity of times gone by. A portion of our current membership, if applying for membership today, and past NINC members who wish to come back to the organization—although all multi-published professionals—would not qualify under the existing five-year rule.*

You've had a month to consider this change and you have two months to vote on it. Voting ends June 30. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to e-mail me at donna@donnaletcher.com or to contact any other member of the Board. You can find their e-mail addresses on page two of this newsletter.

I've received a few emails in regard to one particular issue and I want to make things perfectly clear: *no one will lose their membership in NINC because of this Bylaw change.*

Many members who, under the existing Bylaw, would not be eligible to *join* NINC today but who have kept their membership current, have no need to worry. They are members in good standing and will remain so with their paid membership. Actually, they would benefit from this Bylaw change if they hadn't kept their membership current. If the change goes through, former members who may have endured setbacks in their careers will be able to join NINC once again and benefit from all it has to offer.

So please take some time to consider what this Bylaw change means to you and to NINC, both in today's rapidly changing publishing climate and in the future.

The Bylaws Amendment Ballot is included in the print edition of *Nink* and in e-Nink, if you want to send in your vote by mail; online voting is also available on the NINC website (www.NINC.com) on the Members Only page.

Speak up and be heard...VOTE!

VOTE!

Not the Whole Enchilada

Continued from page 1 ▶ saying it's a lovely woods, but ... this tree here is dead, and that hummock over there is, in fact, a trash tip, and the lake is much too shallow and ... would I mind terribly cleaning this up just a touch before company comes to visit? ... For this reason I would be a terrible candidate to "go it alone."

Among other things, I'm extremely lazy and this just doesn't look like fun:



Joking aside, one of the points that Ms. Hocking brings up—and which is for me a large one—is the need for editing and other editorial, design, marketing, promotion, and sales help. There is also the market penetration issue and the associated and often forgotten one of market breadth and reach. At the moment, people on the Internet are deeply in love with their electronic realm and forget that, in fact, it is not the whole world. E-books are a very nice thing, but at the moment, no matter how impressive the growth rate, they represent less than one-third of all books—fiction, non-fiction, textbook, etc.—sold in the US.

I personally do not wish to throw away two-thirds of my reader base or make the demand that they convert their reading habit from pulp to electronic. It is not my place to tell them they must pay for an e-reader or an application, that they must marry their book-buying to a particular vendor or format, especially since we are still

engaged in the format wars, which will, eventually, fall out with two or three formats being the victor—that's the way systems like this tend to work. Right now we have five or six major file types vying for readers, but that won't be the case forever, and I don't want to be in the Sony/Betamax position of having chosen a standard I prefer only to see it fail and vanish. Nor, I think, should I ask that of readers. Appearances to the contrary, I am not, in fact, a multi-million volume seller, making \$100,000 a year and up. I make the kind of money I used to make working as a contract editor at Microsoft, but without the benefits, and with considerably more expenses and higher taxes. I cannot *afford* to throw away two-thirds of my readers.

So, if I want to continue to reach those readers, I need to stay in physical print—in books made of paper, or plastic, or magic bean paste as it may be—so that they can find my books at their local supermarket or independent bookstore or chain or ... wherever they get their books. That's what I mean by "breadth and reach." Because we spend so much time on the Internet, I think we lose track of the number of people who don't. According to [Neilsen](http://www.websiteoptimization.com/bw/0403/) (<http://www.websiteoptimization.com/bw/0403/>), 74.9% of U.S. homes with a phone line have Internet access (note they don't say anything about homes without phone lines), but of those, less than half have broadband and of those, about 10% use their Internet for e-mail and routine communication only, not for shopping or surfing the net—and certainly not for reading or buying books. So, that boils down to roughly 33.7% of U.S. homes have the capacity for e-book downloads. Now, some of this will also be compensated by cell phones with reasonable data speeds and applications, but not a massive percentage. So, for now, e-books are not on the cutting edge of taking over the reading habits of Americans.

And I don't believe they ever will. I think there will always be a place for the lowly cheap paperback, the impulse buy at the checkout counter, the shiny cover that catches your eye on the bookstore shelf. And from the work point of view, I'd much rather write than edit, design, typeset, format, package, market, promote, and sell my books. Not only am I not as good at those as I am at writing, but I don't enjoy them and they take time and effort I could spend on my writing and the rest of my life—which I would like to enjoy as much anyone else.

For me, self-publishing is not a business model I'm yet comfortable with. It may never be and until and if it is, self-publishing would mean spending a much greater amount of my time or money on the business end and less time on the writing end. And as I am not, at least yet, God, I don't have all the time I'd like to do all the things I'd like—much less to do them perfectly. Until that day when the reach of the e-book matches that of the lowly paperback, I think I shall continue to watch and wait and spend my time writing.

Which would you rather do? Which would you rather I do?

“Who me? I’m a writer. Not terribly exciting, that. Live on a sailboat, love ferrets, married, umm ... that’s about it.” You can find out more about Kat Richardson and her Greywalker paranormal detective novels on her website, www.KatRichardson.com.

© 2011, Kat Richardson. This post first appeared on March 26, 2011 on Kat Richardson's blog <http://katrich.wordpress.com>. It is reprinted with permission.

Volunteer Sought for Next Page

We have an opening for a volunteer or volunteers. Neff Rotter, who is the genius behind the Next Page listings on the NINC website will be leaving the position beginning with the June edition. The job includes collecting book listings, cover images, author/pseudonym, title, publisher, month of publication, ISBN and blurb. This involves no hunting on your part! It's easily done by posting for the info on Ninclink a few days before the end of the month. Once collected, you get it into the Next Page format, upload as an HTML file and onto the NINC website. Lastly, you announce the current listings on Ninclink. Neff has graciously agreed to help the new volunteer get comfortable with the position. If interested, please contact Donna Fletcher at donna@donnaletcher.com.

Business Briefs

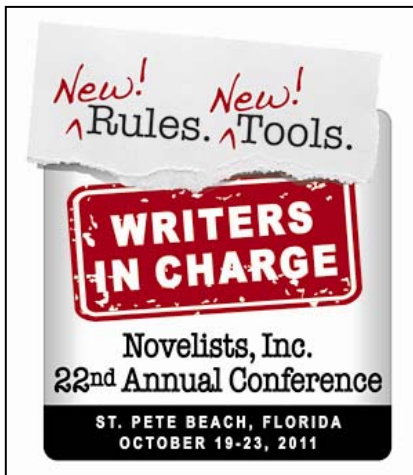
— Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Facaggle or GooBook?

The creators of BookGlutton.com have put together an application that lets readers take comments and notes from the Google e-book library and post them on Facebook. Readum, the new application, uses Read-Social <http://www.readsocialapi.com/>, which allows connections between various platforms and systems. The idea is that reading clubs can't be developed on a smart phone or e-reader and this will bridge the gap between devices. See a video presentation at <http://vimeo.com/21173679>

2011 Science Fiction Hall of Fame

Octavia E. Butler, Richard Matheson, Douglas Trumbull, and Roger Zelazny are this year's inductees into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame. The ceremony will be in Seattle June 25 at the Experience Music Project Science Fiction Museum. <http://www.empsfm.org/programs/index.asp?categoryID=225>



NINC Night Owls Offer Afterhours Inspiration and Fun

BY MELINDA RUCKER HAYNES, NIGHT OWL CHAIR

Now that we writers are in charge, how do we keep any new-found freedom in our careers from becoming even more responsibility, and exacting physical and mental tolls on us we're not prepared to pay?

There's a whole new world out there, but we're still the same stressed out, overworked people we were yesterday, and more chained to our computers than ever before. We've added irons to our professional fires, but we have yet to learn how to clone ourselves! So how do we keep on keeping on, manage our careers while also exploring all these new worlds, hop on the social networking and self-promotion bandwagons, and make sure we still take care of Number One?

The following Night Owl facilitators will present personal experiences, practices and successful processes writers can make their own to find balance and solutions regardless of current career stage or life circumstances. Everyone is looking toward the same destination: a healthy, happy, productive writer, and everyone must find his or her own route to that destination. Take one from a physical up-and-at-'em Column A and maybe two from a more laid-back mental exercise Column B—there's something here that will “click” with all of us.

Walking, Breathing, Yoga: Simple Practices for a Healthier Writer, with Barbara Samuel

Writing is a very challenging career both physically and mentally. Sitting for such long periods of time moving only your fingers is very hard on the body, and the capricious nature of both creativity and the business takes its toll mentally, so it's the rare writer who does not complain sometimes of a sore back or shoulder, a stiff neck, or exhausted brain. Join us for a discussion of some very simple, yet powerful ways to combat those ills through the gentle practices of meditation, yoga, and walking. There will be a short meditation to teach the practice of conscious breathing, and demonstrations of very simple, super-easy yoga stretches to loosen tight shoulders and necks, to stretch the lower back, and ease tired hands and wrists. (No twisting or pretzel-making required, promise!) The practice of walking will also be discussed, and if there is enough interest, there will be a group walk on the beach.

Belly Dancing for the Writer, with Karen Tintori

Belly dancing is great for the writer's soul—and body. Not only will it loosen tight hips after a day plopped in front of the computer, this enjoyable art form can improve posture as it strengthens the core, which includes our backs as well as our abs. Since this ancient dance form has long been employed by women to pass along the mysteries of childbirth, belly dancing is the perfect movement to help spark our creativity as we birth our stories. This session was a huge hit last year, and will be again this year!

Keeping On Keeping On, with JoAnn Grote

Most novelists feel fortunate to make a living doing what they love, yet years of creating stories day-in and day-out can leave a writer drained of energy, ideas, and the joy of creating. What keeps a writer going? How

does a writer continue to feed his or her creativity throughout an entire career? How does one keep hope and the joy of creating when faced with a publishing world in constant flux? Sometimes one small change in routine, habit, or practice can start a ripple effect and re-energize a writer. Join JoAnn Grote, author of the *Nink* column “Not Your Usual Writing Advice,” to share ideas on how to keep on keeping on through the years of a creative career.

Breaking the Technology-Induced Madness Cycle, with Marcella Burnard

Brain feeling scrambled? Focus fuzzy? Forgotten what it’s like to sit for hours at a time and lose yourself in your work? Come gather the straying fragments of your mind and thoughts. Follow one author’s (admittedly) drastic attempt to climb out of the Twitter-, blogging-, and FaceBook-induced habit of fractured attention. Marcella doesn’t recommend her cold-turkey break from technology for everyone, for it involved a sailboat, a husband, two seasick cats, and five months at sea.

The Physical Writer, with Jennifer Stevenson, Brenda Hiatt Barber, and Pati Nagle

Our work has been called the most dangerous white collar job there is—sitting at a computer hour after hour, with no one supervising us to make us take breaks for stretching, water, or meals. Writers risk developing back trouble, eyestrain, autoimmune disease, carpal tunnel stress, and more. The best prevention for writing’s terrible physical cost is exercise. Go ahead, groan. Nobody likes boring exercise. The secret to getting the exercise you need is to enjoy it. Love it. Meet three writers who have found exercise they love. And hop aboard the gravy train—endorphins, yay!

Writing with Feline: Cat You Feel the Love Tonight?, with Lisa Wanttaja

Are you a writer with cats and stress? Ever thought of applying cat philosophy to your writing life? Former veterinary technician and aspiring crazy cat lady, Lisa Wanttaja, shows you how techniques she’s learned from her cats can help you release some of that tension and allow you to balance work with taking care of yourself.

Health Issues & Writing: Let Talk!, with Laura Phillips

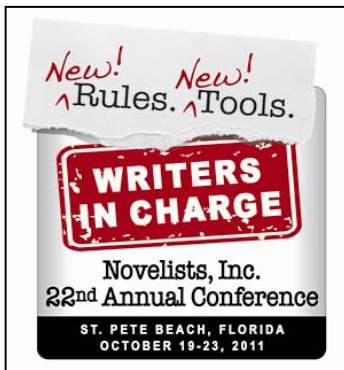
Tips, tricks, tools, and alternative therapies for living well and staying productive despite fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel, a bad back, failing eyesight, immune disorders, and/or other serious health problems. Laura copes daily with most of that list and still writes, farms, and manages a niche software company. How does she do it? How do you do it (or wish you could do it)? Let’s talk!

Personal Time Travel[®], with Melinda Haynes

Close your eyes, take a deep breath and let go. Follow Melinda on a journey of imagination to your own creative center within, where you will commune with your muse or resource team for answers, insight, and joy. Emerge from your inner journey relaxed, refreshed, and inspired. You will learn to return to your creative center anytime, anywhere you wish, with Melinda’s Personal Time Travel[®] techniques.

Remember, Night Owls are for us. *Slip into your most casual clothes, perhaps bring along the adult refreshment of your choice, and end your day with the only people in the world who truly understand you, where you’re coming from, and where it is you want to go. And what better atmosphere to begin to take back our lives than the sun, beach, and blue Gulf of the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort. As the saying goes: it doesn’t get much better than this!*

Speaker Announcement



Please see the NINC website (www.ninc.com) for a more complete list (and remember, the *Nink* deadline is nearly a full month before publication, so there may be more additions), but for now, here's a speaker who has signed on since the April edition of *Nink* went to press:

Mark Coker, Founder and CEO of Smashwords

Mark set out in 2008 to change the way books are published, marketed, and sold. He believes Smashwords holds the promise **to make publishing more enriching for authors, readers, and publishers**. In the three years since its launch, Smashwords has grown to become the leading e-book publishing and distribution platform for indie authors and small publishers. More than 13,000 authors from around the world have published more than 30,000 books at Smashwords. Mark is a contributing columnist for the *Huffington Post*, where he writes about e-books and the future of publishing. In June, 2010, *The Wall Street Journal* named Mark one of the "Eight Stars of Self-Publishing." (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704912004575253132121412028.html>)

Don't wait, register for the conference today at www.ninc.com
There's something for every writer
at *New Rules, New Tools: Writers in Charge!*
You do not want to miss this conference!

Business Briefs

Canada Online

BookNet Canada launched BNC Catalist in March. BNC Catalist is a new source for publisher catalogs and promises to be reasonably priced and easy to use, and to be economically advantageous for small presses. Sales data will also be tracked through this service.

Retro Romance e-Books

Samhain Publishing has launched a program to bring back out-of-print romance titles published in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. Authors wanting to participate in the program must own the digital rights to their titles. The program offers a sliding scale for royalties: 30% of list price for the first 2,500 copies; 35% for the next 2,500 copies; and 40% for all additional copies sold. Samhain's program includes copyediting, formatting, cover art, and distribution. Books in electronic format and print format are being considered. <http://www.samhainpublishing.com/submissions/#retro>



Novelists, Inc.

2011 Proposed Bylaws Amendment

You may use the ballot published on page 10 to vote on this Bylaws amendment, or you may vote electronically. If you choose to use the paper ballot, please send the completed ballot to:

Novelists, Inc.
P.O. Box 2037
Mission, KS 66505

If you lose or misplace this ballot, you can download a replacement ballot at www.NINC.com in the Members Only section of the website. You must log in to download a ballot.

If you choose to vote electronically, please go to the NINC website and log in at the Member Login prompt in the upper right corner of the Home page, then proceed to the Bylaws Ballot, which will be on the Members page where we place announcements, and cast your vote.

Each NINC member may cast only one vote, whether electronically or by paper ballot. Only the final tally of the votes and a running tally of which members have voted will be available to the Board. The Board will not know which members voted for the amendment or against it.

Votes must be cast electronically by June 30, 2011, or postmarked by June 30, 2011. After June 30, 2011, the electronic poll will be closed. Paper ballots received with a postmark dated later than June 30, 2011 will not be counted.

***Please take a moment to vote on this issue.
A quorum of members is required to enact this amendment.***

Every vote counts.



Proposed Change to the Bylaws of Novelists, Inc.

The 2011 Board of Directors proposes the following change
to the Bylaws, Article II, *Members*, Section 2

The current Bylaw states:

To be considered for membership, an applicant must have published two works of book-length fiction, one within the last five years.

The proposed amended Bylaw states:

To be considered for membership, an applicant must have published two works of book-length fiction, ~~one within the last five years.~~

Rationale:

Twenty-two years ago, when this section of the Bylaws was written, the publishing world was a different place. Today, working authors are not published with the regularity of yesterday. A portion of our current membership, if applying for membership today, and past NINC members who wish to come back to the organization—although all multi-published professionals—would not qualify under the five-year rule.

Member signature: _____

Member Name (printed): _____

Date: _____

_____ I vote **FOR** the revision of Article II, *Members*, Section 2 of the NINC Bylaws.

_____ I vote **AGAINST** the revision of Article II, *Members*, Section 2 of the NINC Bylaws.

Infidelity Investigations: An Investigative Specialty

“Never sleep with anyone whose troubles are worse than your own.”

— **Lew Archer** in *Black Money* by Ross Macdonald (attributed to Nelson Algrin)

A common misconception is that a P.I.’s work mostly involves surveilling cheating spouses. Actually, there are dozens of investigative specialties that P.I.s practice, from accident reconstruction to insurance investigations to pet detection. Infidelity investigations, a.k.a. chasing cheaters, is one of those specialized fields.

Chuck Chambers, P.I. and author of *The Private Investigator’s Handbook*, specializes in infidelity investigations. He offers this interesting statistic: 98 percent of his female clients who suspect their husbands of cheating are correct, and 50 percent of his male clients who suspect their wives are correct.

At our agency, we specialize in legal investigations (trial preparation/investigations), but occasionally we get the “I think my husband/wife is cheating” call. We’re hesitant to take these cases because they’re fraught with emotion, from tears to homicidal rage. Tears we don’t mind, but that latter passion makes the work potentially dangerous. Remember the woman in Texas who ran over her philandering husband three times in the motel parking lot? Know how she learned her husband’s location? The P.I. she’d hired to follow her husband called her, explained that her husband had just entered a motel with another woman, and gave her the motel’s name and address. That P.I.’s firm was later sued for gross negligence and will ultimately pay the children of the deceased philander millions of dollars.

Chasing Cheaters: Adding Danger (or Humor) to a Story

Infidelity investigations being fraught with danger might be undesirable in reality, but it’s great for fiction. Maybe your sleuth/P.I. takes a cheating-spouse case thinking it’ll be an easy way to make a few bucks, but before the sleuth has time to focus her camera, she becomes a witness to a murder. The Texas P.I. mentioned earlier actually filmed the murder as it took place and then provided testimony to convict her spurned client. What if the infidelity case was just a ruse, and actually the betrayed-wife pretext lures the P.I. into solving another crime (think *Chinatown*)?

Chasing cheaters can also add humor to a story. We know a P.I. who ended up marrying his client’s divorce attorney. And—true story—we once followed a suspected philandering husband who the wife said also “appeared to be involved in some kind of new business.” We learned what that new business was—a brothel.

What steps might a P.I. follow in a cheating-spouse case? ▶

Catching the Cheater

When we accept an infidelity case, we request:

- ▶ Information about the suspected cheater's habits, work schedule, days off, etc.;
- ▶ Photographs of the suspected cheater (and the suspected girlfriend/boyfriend, if available);
- ▶ Addresses and phone numbers (suspected cheater's home, businesses, etc. as well as addresses/phone for suspected girlfriend/boyfriend);
- ▶ Any known routes suspected cheater takes on way to work, home, to exercise gym, etc.;
- ▶ Vehicle descriptions, license plate numbers for the suspected cheater (and suspected girlfriend/boyfriend).

What About Attaching a GPS Device to the Suspected Cheater's Vehicle?

Unless the spouse's name is registered on the suspected spouse's vehicle (and it's surprising how many spouses think their names are, but they aren't), this is a big no-no. We're talking felony charges. Not counting extraordinarily bad publicity.

But again, what's bad in reality can be great for fiction. What if your P.I. knows he's courting a felony, but attaches the GPS device anyway, gets caught, and ends up in jail? This happened to a P.I. we know. He knew his client's name wasn't on the spouse's vehicle registration, but attached the GPS device anyway. A woman in an adjacent parking lot saw him crawl underneath the vehicle with an object, then reappear empty-handed. She called the police and said, "I think a guy just attached a bomb to a car."

Next thing the P.I. knew, police, fire trucks, and bomb squads arrived, and he was in handcuffs. Nearby schools, homes, and businesses were evacuated. News stations picked up on the story, reported the bomb threat. It took him nearly two years and \$8,000 in legal fees to salvage his investigations business.

Think about how to use infidelity investigations with your fictional P.I. As in the story above, it could be an expensive, comic subplot. Or maybe a seemingly distraught client hires a P.I. to watch his/her spouse, when the real reason for the investigation is something much darker.

Colleen Collins (www.colleencollins.net) is a multi-published author and professional private investigator. She blogs about investigations and writing at Guns, Gams, and Gumshoes <http://writingpis.wordpress.com/>. Send your questions for Colleen to the Nink Editor at Marianna@MariannaJameson.com and we'll put Colleen on the case!

Business Briefs

One Wacky First in Publishing...

Earlier this year, Shed Simove's book *What Every Man Thinks About Apart From Sex* hit number 44 on Amazon and the author described his reaction to the news as "jubliation...mixed in with a healthy dose of disbelief and abject bewilderment." Why? Because his book "contains two hundred pages and each one has absolutely nothing printed on it."
— From *Real Business*, April 6

And Then Another...

Author Andrew Kessler is launching his latest release, *Martian Summer*, with a uniquely splashy splash: He's created his own "monobookist bookstore." Ed's Martian Book, 547 Hudson Street in New York City, is a short-lived shop that stocks only one book: *Martian Summer*. Kessler said it was intended not only to promote his own book but to "make a big serious statement about the future of books." He pulled the project together, he said, by tapping into personal funds and relying on a lot of people who donated "time, real estate, and goodwill."
— *GalleyCat*, April 15

Not Your Usual Writing Advice — Creating from Chaos

BY JOANN GROTE

“Living is a form of not being sure, not knowing what next or how. The moment you know, you begin to die a little. The artist never entirely knows. We guess. We may be wrong, but we take leap after leap in the dark.”

— Agnes de Mille



Photo by Sabrina Ingraham

Writers create stories from chaos.

The initial story idea may come in a clear moment—a flash of plot, a vision of a perfect setting for a murder or a romantic tryst or both, or a character who appears instantly three-dimensional and as real as our next-door neighbor. When expanding the idea into story, we choose from many options for the plot line, for each scene, for settings, and for character choices. We choose sentence by sentence.

We choose our own order out of chaos to create our story.

It is my experience and belief that we do the same in our careers and our lives. Sometimes that feels like a place of craziness.

When we believe our lives are chaotic, we *feel* there is too much to do and not enough time, energy, and/or money. Living in that place *feels* like lack. It *feels* like overwhelm. We think it is something we need to fix. When our lives feel chaotic, we can lose days, months, and sometimes years of writing.

Chaos is normal. It is the way of life and of creation. It makes up everyone’s lives—every minute a new choice.

Choices are like doors in hallways. Choose one door and enter into a new hallway lined with more doors/choices.

This isn’t meant to frighten, but to reassure. Chaos and choices do not indicate our writing and careers and lives are out of control, but rather that they are in the natural order of things.

Chaos is not the enemy. It is not a place of craziness. It is simply, in Deepak Chopra’s words, “the world of all possibilities.”

We seek to create a place of stability within the chaos of the publishing world. All the possibilities available to writers today can sometimes feel like a tsunami threatening our career lives rather than opportunities. We want to believe there’s a choice we can make that will cause our career to always grow, that will always create new readers and keep the old readers, and will always bring adequate—and maybe even abundant—income. We understand and grow accustomed to the risk of choosing the specific from chaos for our stories. In our careers and lives, we desire something more “secure.”

I think the only thing that creates actual security is taking the risk to make another choice, and then taking that risk again, for that is how the universe operates. But there are steps we can take to gain a sense of security. These include: ritual, schedules, outlining our stories, day jobs—to free us from the stress of worry over money and free our creativity to write our stories, writing what our editors and readers have shown they like in our books, and prayer—trusting there is something greater than ourselves behind the chaos and controlling it. ▶

One action that has given me a sense of calm in the chaos was the choice (there's that word again) to change my writing schedule. For years, I began my day taking care of things like getting the kids up and off to school, cleaning, laundry, checking email, and handling financial responsibilities for my family. I knew from experience these things would eat at my focus when writing if I didn't handle them first. Besides, I'd always been a night person, with my best writing coming after dark.

A couple of months ago, I awoke at four in the morning with a scene for my work-in-process vivid in my mind. I hurried to the computer to write it down before I forgot anything or lost my enthusiasm. The words poured out. Within an hour-and-a-half, I'd written seven pages, an amount which, under my usual schedule, took many more hours. I felt great as I went about my other responsibilities that day and even stopped back at the computer again and again to add a couple of sentences or paragraphs in between other duties. Before going to bed, I added another page. I awoke the next morning just as excited to get to the computer, and the day unfolded in a manner similar to the previous day. This has since become my preferred writing schedule.

My new schedule hasn't ended chaos in my life. Like all writers, my day is still filled with one choice after another from "the world of all possibilities." But the days I write first thing, I feel I've met one of my top priorities before I'm hit by all the other necessary life choices—even when life throws one of those curves that make things feel even more chaotic. My life feels much calmer, more productive, and more manageable.

T.S. Elliot told us, "There are only hints and guesses, hints followed by guesses, and the rest is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action."

Listen for the hints. Take a guess and make a choice. Listen for another hint and make another guess. Pray a little. Observe how you feel about your choices and what you see as the result of your choices. Give thought to your observations and take action on your choices. Then listen for another hint and make another guess.

This is how we all create the stories of our lives.

JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 38 books, including inspirational romances, middle grade historical novels, and children's nonfiction. Contact her at jaghi@rconnect.com.

Business Briefs

School for Scandal?

In an effort to reduce the amount of copyrighted material being uploaded illegally to YouTube, the video site has developed an educational video that explains copyright law to would-be posters. When the site receives a notice that a user has uploaded copyrighted material, the user will "be required to attend 'YouTube Copyright School'"—which is a video tutorial about copyright law that ends with a quiz the user must pass—before being allowed to post additional material to the site.

The site has always had a policy of three strikes and you're out: users who receive three uncontested copyright notifications were automatically suspended. However, "a one-size-fits-all suspension rule doesn't always lead to the right result." The violations remained on a user's record and if two violations were received early in one's posting history, followed by many legitimate posts, that user would still be at risk of losing posting rights if one more violation notice was received. The new system allows strikes to be eliminated from a user's account if good behavior is demonstrated following the successful completion of the tutorial.

YouTube states that it "remains committed to protecting original creative works, whether produced by an established star or the next breakout artist [and wants] to encourage good behavior from our users."

— Justin Green, *Broadcasting Ourselves: The Official YouTube Blog*, April 14

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Don't Risk

Misappropriation (DRM)

In my DIY e-venture, during the sleepless, unhygienic week when I was trying for the first time to format and upload an e-book, I came across various unexpected hurdles, swamps, and crossroads. (Yes, e-publishing is an *adventure!*) One of these crossroads was a crucial question I had failed to anticipate: When you try to upload a book to Amazon.com or BN.com, the system asks you if you want to enable Digital Rights Management (DRM) for your e-book.

DRM is a broad and complicated subject, but simply put, for our purposes, it's a technological means of protecting intellectual property in digital formats. In practical terms, DRM functions like a lock on your e-book; legal purchase of the work is the key to opening it.

When I asked around for feedback about DRM, quite a few writers advised me against using it. Arguments against it can best be summed up as: It's a nuisance and readers don't like it. (I have no doubt of that, since I have seen online discussions wherein some readers say they refuse to buy any e-book with DRM protection.) The additional argument against it is that it doesn't even perform its chief function, which is to protect the work from e-piracy; pirates can and do break DRM coding.

However, after discussing and researching the subject more, I've decided I disagree with the arguments against using DRM, and I'm enabling it on all my e-books. (Indeed, this is among the many reasons I chose not to deal with Smashwords in my e-book venture, since their program does not offer DRM.)

For one thing, I've always protected my work from bad editors, incompetent copy editors, inept production departments, and literary agents with poor judgment, so why on earth *wouldn't* I protect it from potential pirates—whether they're profit-seeking thieves or just kids who don't understand intellectual property rights?

True, some readers hate DRM. However, as a devoted iTunes and Audible.com customer, and a longtime user of computer software, I deal with DRM all the time as a consumer, and I don't see what the big fat hairy deal is. So I find no compelling reason to forego DRM as a copyright holder just because some people don't like it. After all, some people also don't like condoms, life jackets, or safety belts.

I also think a lot of the objection to DRM in e-books is based on looking back, rather than looking ahead. Exactly as in the digital music world, DRM was clumsy and poorly employed in the early generations of e-reading devices. There was also the question of whether the consumer actually *owned* her copy of a purchased e-book, such that notorious incident where Amazon remotely deleted digital copies of George Orwell's *1984* from Kindle devices after discovering it was being sold without proper licensing rights. (Imagine a bookseller coming to your home and simply taking away a copy of a book you've bought.)

Amazon was sued over this and settled out of court in 2010. According to Reuters, "Under terms of the settlement, Amazon will not delete such works unless the consumer agrees, unless a refund is requested, or unless the work contains some harmful embedded code that would hurt operation of the Kindle." The bad publicity and the ▶

expensive legal settlement of the 1984 incident probably created a memorable lesson for Amazon (and for its competitors).

Incidents like that linger long in people's memories. Nonetheless, e-store systems and e-reading devices will continue becoming more well-managed and user-friendly, following the path that the digital audio world has already traveled.

For example, DRM management of my iTunes purchases, initially a headache eight years ago when I bought my first iPod, is effortless now. Each time I buy a different computer or iPod, when I'm setting it up, the system automatically asks me if I want to import all my iTunes audio files from my old computer or device; when I say yes, it asks for my iTunes ID and my password, then it loads everything. Similarly, as a customer of Audible.com, an online store that specializes in digital downloads of audio books, when I want to re-download a purchase (due to loss of a device or accidental deletion of an audio file), the online system just asks for my ID and password to do this. So switching devices is not a laborious procedure anymore.

Moreover, a friend tells me that this was exactly the same smooth process she followed when recently replacing her previous e-reader and uploading her e-books to her new device. Elimination of hassle or inconvenience in DRM will continue becoming more common as e-readers themselves become more common.

And if some people can't keep track of their user IDs and passwords ... I don't agree that the rational solution to this is to leave intellectual property unprotected by DRM, just as I wouldn't agree that the rational solution to some people losing their keys would be for society to eliminate locks.

Meanwhile, various DRM-protected formats now offer an "enable loan" option when you're uploading your e-book (as a seller). This lets the purchaser loan the e-book to a friend, just as they would loan a print copy. The digital loan lasts for a finite period, then expires. That strikes me as a perfectly reasonable system for accommodating e-consumers who want to share books with each other. (And much *more* reasonable, in my opinion, than accommodating them by selling my e-books in a wholly unprotected format.) In fact, I use a very similar system when renting movies on iTunes. A movie rental is downloaded to my computer, where I have up to 30 days to start watching it; after that, the rental expires and the movie disappears from my system. (Once I do start watching it, I've got 24 hours to finish it, after which my rental expires and the film disappears from my computer.)

By the time e-readers become as widespread as cell phones, I also don't want my copyrighted work floating around out there naked, without any sort of protection from decent people who simply don't understand intellectual property rights—which is *most* people. Yes, determined pirates will indeed crack DRM if they want to; but determined pirates occupy a very small portion of my thoughts about this.

When it comes to misappropriation of intellectual property, I believe the bulk of the potential problem is represented by enthusiastic readers who don't think they're doing anything wrong by copying, pasting, and posting whole chapters or scenes online from their favorite book; or making unauthorized digital copies of a book they enjoyed and giving it away to a dozen friends; or participating in massive file-sharing websites for e-book readers; or buying a digital compilation of copyrighted books for \$1 on eBay from someone who is a pirate; and so on.

And speaking of pirates ... I also don't see any reason to make things easier for them. Every time I've seen my own work pirated in the past decade, it has invariably been the exact same material I licensed to a small online e-publisher some years ago (which rights have recently reverted to me). By contrast, I have not seen my print-only releases pirated; and I have so far not seen the e-book editions of my novels from major houses (which are DRM-protected) pirated, either. This leads me to conclude that, at least in my case, pirates are most apt to steal the works which they find it easiest to steal—which certainly describes works that are digitized without DRM. So I propose to limit my work's piracy experiences to those pirates who are enterprising and industrious enough to go to the effort of cracking DRM; and I will hold out hope that pirates with that level of work ethic are, as they seem to be in my own experience, a minority group.

I'm not paranoid about pirates, or even about enthusiastic readers who don't understand intellectual property rights. But I do believe in exercising common sense; and enabling DRM on my e-books strikes me as self-evidently sensible. After all, I am also not paranoid enough to live in an impregnable fortress; but I do lock the front door before I go to bed at night, because that just strikes me as sensible.

Laura Resnick's DRM-protected e-books are available from online booksellers.

NINC is exploring the possibility of publishing back issues of the newsletter on the public page of the NINC website. If you have contributed to our newsletter in the past and do not wish your material used in this way, please contact the Nink Editor.



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Charitable Contributions vs. Business Deductions

As writers, we are often involved with literary groups, educational groups, schools, or libraries. We might give a workshop or presentation, hold a book signing, or donate our money, books, or services to these organizations.

Contributions and expenses associated with such events are deductible for tax purposes. But whether they are deductible as a charitable contribution or, instead, as a business expense must be determined. The amount we are permitted to deduct must also be considered.

Classification as Charitable vs. Business

“A charitable contribution is a donation or gift to, or for the use of, a qualified organization. It is voluntary and is made without getting, or expecting to get, anything of equal value.” *IRS Publication 526 - Charitable Contributions.*

Thus, to constitute a charitable contribution, the contribution must:

- 1) be made to a qualified organization,
- 2) without an equivalent quid pro quo.

To be qualified, an organization must be:

- 1) organized and operated for religious, charitable, educational, scientific, or literary purposes, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals;
- 2) a veterans organization;
- 3) a domestic fraternal organization operating under a lodge system (so long as your contribution is used for a purpose listed in number 1 above);
- 4) a non-profit cemetery; or
- 5) a governmental agency (including public libraries).

NOTE: Not all tax-exempt, non-profit organizations are qualified organizations.

For instance, while some writing organizations are 501(c)(3) educational organizations, which *are* qualified, others are 501(c)(6) business leagues, which are *not* qualified. It’s critical to find out what type of organization you’re dealing with.

If the organization is *not* a qualified organization, then your expenses are not classified as charitable contributions. Instead, the expenses would be deductible as business expenses.

If the organization is a qualified organization, then you must look at the second factor—whether you received a good or service of equivalent value in return. If you make a direct contribution of money and receive no business benefit in return, the payment is a charitable contribution deductible on Schedule A. However, if you make a payment to a qualified charity and receive an equivalent benefit in return, the cost would instead be a business expense. An example would be the purchase of an ad in a church bulletin. Although the church is a qualified organization, the advertising services you receive in return for your payment means the expense should be classified as a business expense.

Although a charitable contribution deduction sounds great, it’s better for an expense to be classified as a business expense. Business expenses reduce your net business income and thus reduce not only your income tax but also your self-employment taxes (Medicare and Social Security). A charitable contribution deduction reduces your income tax only. For this reason, it might be tempting to characterize cash contributions to qualified organizations as business ▶

expenses. However, unless you receive a business benefit in return, it would be incorrect to deduct such contributions as business expenses.

Now that we've discussed cash payments, let's look at the contribution of services and goods.

The contribution of a critique or editing service is not deductible as a charitable contribution even if given to a qualified charity. The IRS does not allow deductions for the value of donated services. This stinks because the donated service obviously has real value or someone would not have wanted it. But tax law is strict in this regard because, if a deduction were allowed for donated services, there'd be lots of room to "fudge" the value of the services.

Another reason why services aren't deductible is because there is no related recognition of income. When you make a charitable contribution of cash, that cash was reported as income by you, so the charitable deduction merely zeroes out that income for tax purposes. When you donate your services, however, you have not reported the value of the service as income. Where there has been no related reporting of income, the IRS won't let you claim a deduction.

What if you are offered a speaking fee but waive it? In cases in which a fee is waived, the IRS will not require you to include the waived fee in income, but you will also get no charitable contribution deduction for the waived fee. Again, no income means no deduction.

What if you allow the winner of a charity raffle to name a character in your book or you agree to name a character after the winner? Such a right clearly has a market value. Nobody would have vied for the right if it were worthless. Unfortunately, however, the IRS would likely treat this benefit as a service and deny a deduction for it. Or, if the right were considered a type of intangible property, the IRS would allow a deduction only for the lesser of its fair market value or your cost of the property. Because you paid nothing for the right to name your character, you would get no deduction for contributing the right to a qualified organization. Like the "no income, no deduction" theory noted above, here the theory is "no out-of-pocket cost to you, no deduction for you." Again, the underlying theory is that no tax benefit should be allowed without a corresponding financial detriment. No pain, no gain.

What if you give away autographed books? An autographed book has a higher fair market value than one that is not signed. But here's the problem again. Even though the autograph increases the book's value, the IRS allows a taxpayer to deduct only the lesser of the taxpayer's cost of the property or its fair market value. Because you paid nothing for the signature you added to the book, the signature does not increase your cost. Thus, you get no deduction for the added value of the signature.

What if you donate books or promotional items such as pens or bookmarks? Because these items promote you and your books, they would be a business expense rather than a charitable contribution even if given to a qualified organization. But remember that these items are deductible as a business expense when you purchase them. You don't get a second deduction when you later donate them. That would be double dipping.

Diane Kelly, CPA/Attorney at Law, writes romantic mysteries for St. Martin's Press. Her debut novel, Death, Taxes, and a French Manicure, will be released in September 2011.

Business Briefs

Fearsquare

The Lincoln Social Computing Research Centre (LiSC) at the University of London has taken the concept behind the location-based mobile platform Foursquare (<https://foursquare.com>) and created a new application called Fearsquare, which lets users see the crime statistics for the places they've visited recently. Using Fearsquare, a Foursquare user can map his or her last ten check-ins against information in Britain's crime database to see the number of crimes committed in those places over the previous month. The developers designed the app because they consider "the way crime data is currently presented [doesn't allow] for an intuitive understanding of the real levels of crime people are exposed to on a daily basis This application represents a unique opportunity to evaluate people's perceptions and fear of crime against the real Police statistics." They believe the project will be of interest to social psychology researchers. Not to mention tourists and, of course, crime novelists. Find out more at <http://fearsquare.com/about.php>

NINC Bulletin Board

COMPILED BY SUSAN LYONS

**Do you have info
for the Bulletin Board?**
Send it to Susan at
susan@susanlyons.ca

Next Page Needs New Volunteer

NINC is seeking a volunteer to step into the role of compiling Next Page listings for the web. Please read the complete details on page 8. Neff Rotter will guide you into the process. NINC ... and Next Page ... need you!

Travel Is Educational

Interested in foreign travel this summer? How about one of these tempting workshops? Learn and play at the same time—and at least a portion of the expense will be tax deductible.

Note: The following is provided for member information and does not constitute an endorsement by NINC of the organizations or activities.

Crete, Barcelona, or Florence: Creativity Workshops – various dates in June and July. Helps you develop creativity and use it in life, work, and creative expression; a unique series of exercises in creative writing, drawing, memoir, and storytelling.

For info: <http://www.creativityworkshop.com>

Paris: Writing Workshop – July 1-29. In addition to taking classes and amassing writing portfolios, students will participate in one-on-one critiques with professional writers, give readings in Parisian bookshops, and receive “survival” French lessons. For info: <http://pariswritingworkshop.com/>

Adventures at the NINC Website

Want to make someone laugh or cry? We do it all the time to our characters. But do we know what those expressions look like, so we can show rather than tell? Check out the Grimace Project to see the facial expressions that accompany different emotions. <http://grimace-project.net>

Do you need to know what a Creole or Farsi accent sounds like? You can listen to samples at The Speech Accent Archive. http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php

These are two more of the terrific resources you'll find under the Reference tab in the Members Only section of the NINC website.

*Remember to vote on the
Bylaws Amendment change.
We need a quorum!
We need you!*

NINC Online

NINC's Blog

NINC's blog is a large part of our online presence and a great way to promote your work. Please sign up to blog by going to the YahooGroups NINC Calendar. We also feature industry professionals, so pass along suggestions—e.g., your own agent, editor, publicist, website designer, cover artist, etc.

NINC on Facebook

Don't forget we're on Facebook, too. Please visit often and share your news and ideas. It's another great place to promote yourself and help expand NINC's public profile.

Just So You Know

BY SARAH ADDISON ALLEN

You fall in love with every book you touch. You never break the spine or tear the pages. That would be cruel. You have secret favorites but, when asked, you say that you could never choose. But did you know that books fall in love with you, too?

They watch you from the shelf while you sleep. Are you dreaming of them, they wonder, in that wistful mood books are prone to at night when they're bored and there's nothing else to do but tease the cat.

Remember that pale yellow book you read when you were 16? It changed your world, that book. It changed your dreams. You carried it around until it was old and thin and sparkles no longer rose from the pages and filled the air when you opened it, like it did when it was new. You should know that it still thinks of you. It would like to get together sometime, maybe over coffee next month, so you can see how much you've both changed.

And the book about the donkey your father read to you every night when you were three, it's still around—older, a little worse for wear. But it still remembers the way your laughter made its pages tremble with joy.

Then there was that book, just last week, in the bookstore. It caught your eye. You looked away quickly, but it was too late. You felt the rush. You picked it up and stroked your hand over its glassy cover. It knew you were The One. But, for whatever reason, you put it back and walked away. Maybe you were trying to be practical. Maybe you thought there wasn't room enough, time enough, energy enough.

But you're thinking about it now, aren't you?

You fall in love so easily.

But just so you know, they do, too.

*Sarah Addison Allen is the author of five bestselling novels. Her latest, *The Peach Keeper*, is now available from Bantam Books. She lives in Asheville, North Carolina and brings the full flavor of her Southern upbringing to bear on her fiction—a captivating blend of fairy tale magic, heartwarming romance, and small-town sensibility. Her website is www.SarahAddisonAllen.com*

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