

N I N K

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In Memoriam: Marcia (Marci) Evanick

BY KASEY MICHAELS

NINC lost a longtime member when Marci was so cruelly taken from us after a valiant year-long battle with what she called her “Unicorn ALS—because my doctors say my form of the disease exists, but nobody’s ever seen one.”

She knew what she was facing—writers will research anything—but that didn’t stop her from using one of her hospital DNR bracelets as a bookmark. She spent her last year easing the way for her family and friends, and made arrangements to donate her body to Johns Hopkins Hospital to further ALS research.

Marci wrote 42 books during her career, was honored by accolades and awards from several organizations, and reached the pinnacle, the *New York Times* Bestseller List.

Her contributions to NINC from 2008 to 2011, both as a conference volunteer and then two years as NINC Treasurer, changed the organization. It was Marci who first saw the need to totally revamp NINC’s financial accounting system. It was Marci who showed us how to institute changes that clarified the distribution of assets and allowed for the special one-day programs that now preface the conferences, enabled us to draw more industry guests, and made projects like *The NINC Binder* possible. She even found ways to feed attendees again! It was her explanation of proper bookkeeping that allowed us to enlarge the content and scope of *Nink*. And all while pinching every penny and staying true to NINC’s mission.

Even as her illness worsened, she remained on the Board, and assisted the incoming Treasurer, familiarizing her with the details of the job. When she could no longer hold the phone and her family had to assist her, she still refused to simply stop helping and resign, leave the job to others. “I finish what I start,” she told them.



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But, sadly, there were things left undone; there simply wasn’t enough time. In order to at least partially thank her, NINC members have volunteered to finish the job Marci began last year, that of converting and uploading the remainder of her books in e-format, where they will live forever; her legacy to her fans, her husband, her five children, her six young grandchildren. For writers never die, not as long as their words can be read.

During Marci’s illness, NINC members—even those who’d never met her—sent her books, silly cards, sillier little gifts, letting

Continued on page 5 ▶

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

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

2012 Board of Directors

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2012 Committees

2012 Conference

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Program: Karen Tintori Katz

Anthology

Editor: Lou Aronica

Authors Coalition Rep

Elaine Isaak

Elections

Chair: Sylvie Kurtz

Managing Electronic Rights

Chair: Open

Marketing

Chair: Elaine Isaak

Member Retention

Chair: Barbara Bretton

Membership

Chair: James LePore

Nink Online Index

Denise Lynn

Nominating

Chair: Open

Royalty Committee

Chair: Allison Brennan

Marianna Jameson

Volunteer Jobs List

Coordinator

Dianne Despain

Website

Chair: David Wind

Blog Coordinator

Patricia Rosemoor

Complete committee member listings
are available on the website:

<http://www.ninc.com>

Central Coordinator:

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Novelists, Inc.
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Manhattan KS 66505
Fax: 785-537-1877
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Website:

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Address changes may be made on the
website.

Members without Internet access may
send changes to the Central Coordinator.

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newsletter may be used or reproduced
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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: James LePore
leporej5@optonline.net

New Applicants:

Louise Bassam (Lucinda Brant), Penrith Plaza, Penrith,
New South Wales, Australia
Cheryl Bolen, Perland, TX
Karen Brown (P. J. Alderman), Kingston, WA
Chamein Canton, Amityville, NY
Diana Dempsey, Los Angeles, CA
Michelle Diener, Floreat, Western Australia, Australia
Virginia Farmer, Spartanburg, SC
Stephanie Mowery (Stephanie Julian, Stephanie Scott),
Shillington, PA
Michele Lang Palter (Michele Lang), Sea Cliff, NY
Rachel Schurig, Wyandotte, MI
Heather Snow, Overland Park, KS
Randall Sykes (V.K. Sykes), Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Camy Tang (Camille Elliot, Camy Elliot), San Jose, CA
Christine Trent, Leonardtown, MD
Bob Van Laerhoven, Oosterzele-Balegem,
East-Flanders, Belgium
Carrie Weaver, Chandler, AZ
Norah Wilson (N.L. Wilson, Wilson Doherty),
Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

New Members:

Sandra Balzo, Beach, FL
Barbara Freethy, Burlingame, CA
Candice Hern, Minneapolis, MN
Joyce Lamb, Herndon, VA
Marti Leimbach, Springfield, Wickens Corner, Beenham,
Reading, Berkshire, England
Pam Payne (Tori Scott), Wills Point, TX

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.

Cause for Reflection

Planning a conference like the upcoming NINC conference in White Plains is cause for reflection. Reflection, for instance, on why I agreed to become NINC president in the first place, since putting on a conference is a huge amount of work—and I'm not doing most of it (that, thankfully, is in the able hands of Meredith Efken and Kelly McClymer). More constructive reflection has come in the form of thinking about what's happening in our industry, how much of this is a real trend as opposed to a bit of ephemera, and how much of that truly affects our membership.

When Meredith, Kelly, and I started planning the theme for this year's conference, a meaningful shift was beginning. The e-book honeymoon was giving way to the e-book strong marriage that, like all strong marriages, requires hard work and compromise. The romance was still there, but it was clear that we were all beginning to notice the uncapped toothpaste tubes. Meanwhile, print books were hanging in there, but more and more of those sales were happening online, which meant that they increasingly mirrored the marketing properties of their digital siblings. This was true whether the books came from traditional publishers, a growing group of vibrant independent houses, or from the authors themselves.

What this indicated to the three of us was that the notion that writers could handle everything on their own was a flawed and potentially dangerous one. What writers needed to be able to do was forge strong partnerships. They needed to put themselves in the center of the process, but it was unwise to think they could be the only participants in the process. No, this wasn't true if Viking had just given you a seven-figure advance, and it wasn't entirely true if you had 18 hours a day to devote to publishing and promoting yourself, but it was decidedly true for everyone else, whether traditionally published or self-published.

Therefore, we set out to identify where those partnership points were most important. Certainly, one of them was quality, where outside assistance has always been necessary to get the most out of your work. Another was promotion, since there's only so much you can do on your own, regardless of how savvy you are with social media. A third was sales, as even at the beginning of the year it was obvious that bookseller dynamics were changing—and it's much truer now. And yet another was extending out to other markets, as there's so much potential income available from subsidiary rights sales, as long as you have the right partners.

We'll explore these partnership points in a variety of ways during the conference: during our First Word panels, in our Roundtables, our Workshops, and our Night Owls. What's the role—right now and in the predictable future—of the publisher, the editor, the agent, the salesperson, the bookseller, and the various marketing professionals? How do those roles match up with your needs? How much expertise must you yourself bring beyond your writing expertise? What makes them and, more importantly, *you* a good partner?

I'm not sure anyone else is having this conversation this way. I think it's a critical one to have, and I think we've invited the right people with whom to have it. I've been involved to various degrees in the programming of the past two conferences and, while I knew those were going to be hugely informative and entertaining, I also felt that, before those conferences began, I knew what people were going to say, what questions were going to be asked, and how they were going to be answered. I can't say that about this one. Because of what's happening in the business, I think we're all going to be surprised in a positive way by what this combination of voices generates. I hope you're one of them.

— Lou

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.

In Memoriam: Marci Evanick

Continued from page 1 ▶ her know she was in our thoughts. According to her family, nearly every day's mail delivery brought her another smile, another laugh. Her children set up a corkboard at the foot of her bed, and pinned the cards and such to it, so they were always close by. Her husband, Michael, wants all of NINC to know how much your kindness cheered Marci, and all of the family, and he's overwhelmed by the offers to help assist in getting the remainder of her reverted rights titles into e-format and up online. At Marci's memorial service, Michael asked that I thank everyone, and tell them he no longer wonders why NINC was so important to Marci.

I'd like to thank you as well. We're all a little better for having had Marci touch our lives, directly or indirectly. She remains the definition of courage, of grace under fire, of determination. And, oh yes, spunk! When she reluctantly gave in and took to her bed last fall, I was indulging in a pity-party about not having time to write up an idea I had. Marci matter-of-factly informed me that her own "some day" project now will never be written. "Nobody knows what's waiting around the corner for them, so damn well get off your butt, lady, and find the time to write that book!"

Or as we'd often joke, "Use the good dishes...what are you saving them for?"

Lessons for all of us, from one brave lady.

On the day of her memorial service, there was a *USA Today* story online carrying the headline "Possible Breakthrough in ALS Treatment."

They must have known our Marci was coming to help ...

If you wish to honor Marci, please go to any online bookstore listing her e-books, and "like" them. In this e-age you, her peers, will be lighting a candle to her memory. ▲

Worthy of Note

Take a Stand: Read a Book That's Been Banned

The 2012 Banned Books Week is September 30 through October 6. Since it was established in 1982, local libraries and bookstores across the nation have put on staged readings of banned and challenged books. Last year marked the first virtual reading and the online event is being repeated this year on a dedicated YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/bannedbooksweek>). Those wishing to participate may upload a two-minute reading of a banned or challenged book or an account of challenges to books in your community. Criteria for participating are available on the American Library Association website's Banned Books Week page (<http://www.bannedbooksweek.org/node/4>) and that organization's Office for Intellectual Freedom (<http://www.ala.org/offices/oif>). You must be signed in to YouTube to upload your video for the virtual read out, and instructions for uploading to the site are available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O7iUiftbKU

At <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedclassics>, a partial list of banned and frequently challenged classics is available.

At <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/21stcenturychallenged>, a list broken out by year is available



Profitable Partnerships: Publishing à la Carte

October 25-28, 2012

Crowne Plaza White Plains NY

Fee for NINC Members: \$375
(includes both First Word and Conference!)
Payable in one lump sum or three payments of \$125

Fee for Industry Professionals:
\$260 for First Word and Conference,
\$150 for First Word only,
or \$110 Conference only

Fee for Nonmember Writers:
\$195 for First Word only

First Word: Exploring New Publishing Partnership Opportunities

Thursday, October 25

Panel 1: Partnering for Quality: Sue Grimshaw, Loveswept Editor, Random House; Barbara Freethy, Author; Dominique Raccah, Publisher, Sourcebooks; Nita Taublib, Executive Editor, G. P. Putnam's Sons; Lou Aronica, Author and Publisher, The Story Plant/Fiction Studio Books

Panel 2: Partnering to Raise Your Profile: As readers turn to the Internet more and more to make their book-buying decisions—both for print books and e-books—an author's online presence is as crucial today as physical placement in a brick-and-mortar store used to be. Join us as we explore ways to give your books the same exposure as being on an end-cap. Barbara Freethy, Author; Julianne MacLean, Author; Thubten Comerford, CEO, WePost Media; Patrick Brown, Author Program Manager, Goodreads; Dan Slater, Author Relations Manager, Amazon

Panel 3: Partnering for Sales: Discoverability is the name of the game in today's book-buying environment. Understanding how books are discovered by readers is a key to increasing sales. Rachel Chou, Chief Marketing Officer, Open Road Media; Larry Norton, Senior Vice President of Business Development, INscribe Digital; Dominique Raccah, Publisher, Sourcebooks; Dan Slater, Author Relations, Amazon; Julia Colblentz, Senior Marketing Manager, Publ!, Barnes & Noble; Patrick Brown, Author Program Manager, Goodreads

Panel 4: Partnering to Expand Your Reach: New markets are expanding daily. The foreign market is just one area poised for explosive growth. Learn what's on the horizon and how to capitalize on these new opportunities. Robert Gottlieb, Chairman, Trident Media Group; Larry Norton, Senior Vice President of Business Development, INscribe Digital; Paige Wheeler, Founding Partner, Folio Literary Management; Jane Dystel, President, Dystel & Goderich Literary Management; Jen Talty, Partner, Cool Gus Publishing; Rachel Chou, Chief Marketing Officer, Open Road Media

NincThink Roundtables



► **Going Indie or Traditional?** Pros and cons of both paths. Does the choice have to be either/or, or can it be a combination? *Industry Guests:* Jennifer Brehl (William Morrow), Dominique Raccah (Sourcebooks), Wendy McCurdy (Berkley/Penguin), Jen Talty (Cool Gus Publishing), Dan Slater (Amazon), Barbara Freethy (Author)

► **Penny-wise, Pound-foolish:** Specific sales strategies in e-books. Pros and cons of exclusivity, free promotions, the timing of promotions, and coordinating with a traditional publisher. *Industry Guests:* Jen Talty (Cool Gus Publishing), Dan Slater (Amazon), Rachel Chou (Open Road Integrated Media), David Wilk (Creative Management Partners), Julianne MacLean (Author), Pat Ryan (Author)

► **Know When To Hold 'Em, Know When To Fold 'Em:** What to consider when making decisions in a new frontier. How do you evaluate your options? How do you know how hard to push? Who should be consulted and how? *Industry Guests:* Wendy McCurdy (Berkley/Penguin), Donald Maass (Author/Donald Maass Literary Agency), Jim McCarthy (Dystel & Goderich Literary Management), Nita Taublib (G. P. Putnam's Sons), Lou Aronica (Author/Story Plant/Fiction Studio)

► **Promotion Planning:** How do you decide what kind of promotion is best for you? How do you develop a marketing/promotion plan tailored for you? How do you evaluate what is working and what isn't? *Industry Guests:* Barbara Freethy (Author), Rachel Chou (Open Road Integrated Media), Julianne MacLean (Author), Larry Norton (INscribe Digital), Thubten Comerford (WePost Media), Julia Coblenz (PubIt!/B&N)

► **Role of the Agent in a Changing Marketplace:** What are agents doing to serve the needs of both traditionally published and self-published authors? What about questions re: conflict of interest? Agreements re: when a traditional author wishes to self-publish? *Industry Guests:* Jennifer Brehl (William Morrow), Nita Taublib (G. P. Putnam's Sons), Donald Maass (Author/Donald Maass Literary Agency), Robert Gottlieb (Trident Media Group), Jim McCarthy (Dystel & Goderich Literary Management), Paige Wheeler (Folio Literary Management)

► **Subsidiary Rights and Tie-In Products:** Foreign rights and foreign markets are on the verge of exploding, along with other subsidiary rights. What opportunities await, and how can authors poise themselves to be ready? *Industry Guests:* Larry Norton (INscribe Digital), Paige Wheeler (Folio Literary Management), David Wilk (Creative Management Partners), Dominique Raccah (Sourcebooks), Elizabeth Jennings (Author/Translator)

► **What Does "Quality Fiction" Mean?** This is a continuation of the panel topic from Thursday about "quality." What does quality look like in a digital world without traditional gate-keepers? *Industry Guests:* Lauren Abramo (Dystel & Goderich Literary Management), Jen Talty (Cool Gus Publishing), Lisa Stone Hardt (LSH Editorial Services), Pam Headrick (Author/Owner, A Thirsty Mind EBook Design), Kim Killion (Author/Creative Director, Hot Damn Designs), David Wilk (Creative Management Partners)

► **In the Other Person's Shoes—How To Work With Support Teams:** *Industry Guests:* Barbara Freethy, (Author), Thubten Comerford (WePost Media), Jen Talty (Cool Gus Publishing), Lisa Stone Hardt (LSH Editorial Services), Kim Killion (Author/Hot Damn Designs)

► **Creatively Connecting With Readers:** What is working and what isn't when it comes to connecting with and finding new readers? How do e-books and the Internet change how we interact with and grow our reader base? *Industry Guests:* Larry Norton (INscribe Digital), Rachel Chou (Open Road Integrated Media), Dominique Raccah (Sourcebooks), Pam Headrick (Author/A Thirsty Mind EBook Design), Sue Grimshaw (Random House)

► **Nurturing the Creative Spirit in a Number-Crunching World:** We had some member requests to discuss the creative process and how to handle burn-out, or discouragement, etc. We're addressing these issues in terms of how the creative process affects the author and the publishing team. *Industry Guests:* Dominique Raccah (Sourcebooks), Sue Grimshaw (Random House), Barbara Keiler, (Author), Melissa Rosati (Creativity Coach/Pace University), Jane Dystel (Dystel & Goderich Literary Management), Lou Aronica (Author/Story Plant/Fiction Studio)

General Session Workshops

- ▶ **Dan Slater, head of Author Relations at Kindle Direct Publishing.**
- ▶ **Emotional Landscape and Inner Journey:** A NINC-exclusive sneak peek at Agent Donald Maass' new book, *Writing 21st Century Fiction*, focusing on the techniques that give literary and commercial fiction their emotional force. *Speaker:* Donald Maass (Author/Donald Maass Literary Agency)
- ▶ **Jennifer Brehl (William Morrow)** (topic TBA)
- ▶ **Reports from the Marketing Boot Camp:** Five authors took part in a four-month marketing boot camp and will report on what they learned, what they did, and how it affected their sales. *Boot Camp Participants:* Kelly McClymer, Barbara Keiler, Patricia McLinn, Julie Kenner, Liz Maverick. *Coaches:* Thubten Comerford (WePost Media), Julie Ortolon (Author/Marketing Strategist)
- ▶ **Forming Your Life-Boat Rowing Team:** Nine authors share their experience with how to expand your reach and discoverability by combining efforts. What makes a team effort successful and what could potentially sink the boat? *Speakers:* Julie Ortolon, Pat Ryan, Julianne MacLean, Shelly Thacker, Lori Devoti, Kathryn Shay, Wendy Lindstrom, Patricia McLinn, Barbara Keiler
- ▶ **Creative Power: Coaching Techniques for Your Personal Development and Professional Success:** In your quest to be successful a writer, the elusive competitive advantage you seek lies within you. In this workshop, learn how to notice, claim, and own your creative power. *Speaker:* Melissa Rosati (Creativity Coach/Adjunct Professor of Publishing, Pace University)
- ▶ **How Access to Data Can Rock Your World:** How do you know when you're working wisely with online promotion? This workshop provides an overview of Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, and effective website design as building blocks to increasing your sales. *Speaker:* Julie Ortolon (Author/Marketing Strategist)
- ▶ **Subsidiary Rights:** *Speakers:* Lauren Abramo (Dystel & Goderich Literary Management), Elizabeth Jennings (Author/Translator)

While You're at NINC-NY...



Restaurants within a few blocks of the Crowne Plaza White Plains include Morton's Steakhouse, the Brazen Fox, Elements, the Black Bear Saloon, Cabo, Cafenani, Korova Milk Bar, the Fair Deal Café, the Cheesecake Factory, Starbucks, Au Bon Pain, Master Work, Abatino's Pizza, Reka's Thai Restaurant, the Ritz-Carlton Westchester, White Plains Coach Diner, Patrick's Pub, and Muza Café.

The Crowne Plaza White Plains is adjacent to the **Westchester Mall**, which houses Crate & Barrel, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Thomas Kinkade Gallery, Apple, Crabtree & Evelyn, David Yurman, Eileen Fisher, Gucci, J.Jill, Kate Spade, Sephora, Steve Madden, Stuart Weitzman, Tory Burch, White House Black Market, Premier Atelier Salon, and Elizabeth Arden Red Door Salon & Spa, as well as numerous other stores and restaurants. A complete directory of the stores can be viewed at <http://www.simon.com/mall/malldirectory.aspx?id=105>

The Crowne Plaza White Plains is also just a few blocks from the **Galleria at White Plains**, which houses Aeropostale, Charlotte Russe, H&M, Macy's, and Old Navy, as well as numerous other stores and restaurants.

A complete directory of the stores can be viewed at <http://www.simon.com/mall/malldirectory.aspx?id=1246>

Compiled by Marianna Jameson



Make the 2012 NINC-NY Conference Your NINCation!...

Or, A Few Dozen EXTRA Reasons Why You Should Come To White Plains In October

BY MARIANNA JAMESON

Still on the fence about coming to the conference? Before you get any more splinters where you need them least, make that leap, take that plunge...and while you're at it, plan to spend a few extra days in the area. You won't be bored—or sorry.

Did you know...it's only a 30-minute train ride from White Plains to Grand Central Station and the Crowne Plaza White Plains has a shuttle to and from the train station? And once you're in the city, the world is at your feet.

You could go to the U.S. premiere of *Audience*, described as “a marathon of theatrical surprises” at the NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts; or see *Grace* (Paul Rudd, Kate Arrington) at the Cort Theatre; *Cyrano de Bergerac* at the American Airlines Theatre; or *Once* at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre. Or you could see some long-running favorites, such as *Mamma Mia!*, *Jersey Boys*, *Matilda*, *Evita*, *Mary Poppins*, *Wicked*, or *Chicago*. Ticket information for Broadway, Off Broadway, and Off Off Broadway shows, as well as cabaret shows, concerts, and other events is available at <http://www.theatermania.com/broadway/shows/>.

If museums are your thing, you can go to the Museum of Modern Art (<http://www.moma.org/>), the Guggenheim (<http://www.guggenheim.org/>), or the Museum of Natural History (<http://www.amnh.org/>), or the many, many other museums that abound in Manhattan (<http://www.ny.com/museums/all.museums.html>). My personal favorite is the New York City Police Museum (<http://nycpolicemuseum.org>), which is located at 100 Old Slip, in the 100+-year-old First Precinct building on a cobblestoned street tucked away in the Financial District. (And they love writers!)

You could take the ferry to Ellis Island and look up some ancestors (<http://ellisland.org/>) or head to Liberty Island and get an up-close and awe-inspiring view of the Statue of Liberty (<http://www.nps.gov/stli/index.htm>).

Visiting some of the city's myriad ethnic enclaves can give a quick cultural and gastronomic trip around the world. (<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/12/12/answers-about-new-yorks-ethnic-neighborhoods/>)

I could go on—everyone knows there is always a lot to do in Manhattan. *But the conference is in White Plains—what if you don't want to deal with trains and crowds?* The good news is that you don't have to head into “the city” to have fun before, during, or after the conference. The Hudson Valley region is overflowing with opportunities to have some fun, learn some history, or soak up some culture. True, you'd have to rent a car for a few hours to get to most of them, but the good news is that Avis, Budget, and Enterprise have offices about two blocks from the hotel (<http://www.avis.com>, <http://locations.budget.com/ny/white-plains/wp2.html>, and <http://www.enterprise.com>), and most major rental car companies have a location at the airport in White Plains/Westchester.

If strolling through historic homes is your thing, you have plenty of local sites to choose from, including the Thomas Paine Cottage in New Rochelle (<http://www.thomaspainecottage.org/>); Lyndhurst (<http://www.lyndhurst.org/>) and the Old Dutch Church and Burying Ground (<http://www.odcfriends.org/>) in Tarrytown; the Rockefeller estate Kykuit in Sleepy Hollow (<http://www.hudsonvalley.org/historic-sites/kykuit>); the Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson (<http://www.hudsonvalley.org/historic-sites/van-cortlandt-manor>); the John Jay Homestead-State Historic Site in Katonah (<http://www.johnjayhomestead.org/>); and the Horace Greeley House in Chappaqua (<http://www.newcastlehs.org/historic-new-castleour-history/horace-greeley-house>).

If legend and lore get your imagination churning, you won't want to miss a trip to Sleepy Hollow to see the Sleepy Hollow Light House (<http://www.villageofsleepyhollow.org/>) and the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery (<http://www.sleepyhollowcemetery.com/>). You can also visit Washington Irving's Sunnyside (<http://www.hudsonvalley.org/historic-sites/washington-irvings-sunnyside>) in Tarrytown. Other excellent sites include the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers (<http://www.hrm.org/>) and the Jay Heritage Center in Rye (<http://www.jaycenter.org/>).

Are you a Revolutionary War buff? Then brace yourself for a rich slice of history *within walking distance!*

The White Plains National Battlefield and Battle Hill are a short walk from the hotel, and there ought to be something going on over there while NINC is in town. After all, the Battle of White Plains began on October 28, 1776—how's that for a great coincidence?—when General George Washington's army of American patriots was licking its wounds and retreating north from Long Island and Manhattan. Although the American colonists did not win the battle—it's generally considered to have been a draw—it's considered a turning point because the Continental Army succeeded in frustrating the advances of British forces led by General Sir William Howe. After the battle, General Howe returned to Manhattan and captured Fort Washington. General Washington retreated to Morristown, New Jersey, from which he famously led his troops across the Delaware River two months later. Make sure to visit another historically significant place right in White Plains: the Jacob Purdy House, (<http://www.whiteplainshistory.org/jacobPurdyHouse.html>), which was George Washington's headquarters during the Battle of White Plains.

Other historical sites in the region that you might want to see include the Sparta Cemetery in Ossining; the Square House Museum in Rye (<http://ryehistory.org/square-house-museum/history/>); the Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow (<http://www.hudsonvalley.org/historic-sites/philipsburg-manor>); and Saint Paul's Church National Historic Site, (<http://www.nps.gov/sapa>) in Mt. Vernon. The church was used as a hospital during the Revolutionary War.

The African American Heritage Trail offers insight into the historical contributions to Westchester County made by people of African descent. A brochure identifying the sites along the trail is available for download at <http://www.visitwestchesterny.com/images/pdfs/Heritagetrailbrochure.pdf>.

If your tastes run to entertainment more modern, check out the calendar of events at the Tarrytown Music Hall (<http://www.tarrytownmusicall.org/>), in Tarrytown. On October 26, The Machine performs Pink Floyd. On October 27, Dar Williams and Loudon Wainwright III will be performing, and multiple Grammy winner Keb' Mo' will be performing on October 28.

A night of Haydn, Beethoven, and Korngold is slated for October 27 at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in Katonah (<http://www.caramoor.org/about>). The evening will feature Pamela Frank, Artistic Director and *violin*; Peter Wiley, *cello*; Gary Graffman, *piano*; Ben Beilman, *violin*; Nikki Chooi, *violin*; and Jeong Hyoun Christine Lee, *cello*. On October 28, the same performers will present works by Mozart, Schnittke, and Dvorak.

The White Plains-based Fort Hill Players will present Paul Rudnik's fresh-from-Broadway *Regrets Only*, described as a "modern day social comedy of Manhattan manners" on October 26 and 27. (<http://www.forthillplayers.com/1213season.htm>)

Celebrate Halloween a bit early by taking a nighttime stroll through the 4,000 hand-carved, illuminated jack o'lanterns that will be on display at the Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson October 25 through 31. (<http://www.hudsonvalley.org/events/blaze-4>)

Don't miss the chance to see the last work created by Henri Matisse before his death in 1954: the breathtaking rose window in the Union Church of Pocantico Hills in Tarrytown (<http://www.hudsonvalley.org/historic-sites/union-church-pocantico-hills>). The church also boasts nine (*nine!*) glorious stained-glass windows by Marc Chagall.

Nature-lovers in the mood to see some spectacular autumn color must check out the

Distance from White Plains to sites mentioned:

Scarsdale – 3 miles
Tarrytown - 7 miles
Rye - 8 miles
Sleepy Hollow - 8 miles
Chappaqua - 10 miles
New Rochelle - 12 miles
Ossining - 12 miles
Mt. Vernon - 13 miles
Yonkers - 15 miles
Croton-on-Hudson - 16 miles
Katonah - 19 miles

Greenburgh Nature Center in Scarsdale (<http://www.greenburghnaturecenter.org/>) and the Teatown Lake Reservation in Ossining (<http://www.teatown.org/>).

For a more complete listing of local cultural activities—music, art, performances—and destinations, please go to ARTSWestchester at <https://www.artswestchester.org/>.

Additional information on places of interest in White Plains can be found at the White Plains Historical Society website <http://www.whiteplainshistory.org/index.html>

When she lived in nearby Connecticut, Marianna Jameson used to dash over to the Westchester Mall in White Plains for some occasional Nordstrom therapy. She's counting the days to the 2012 NINC-NY conference in her old stomping (and shopping) grounds.

Reasons I'm Going to NINC-NY:



In Alaska, I learned Grizzly bear safety (be alert, make noise, avoid bears, and carry a really big gun). In the Florida Keys, I learned shark scuba etiquette (continue to breathe and swim the other way). Fossil hunting in Southern rivers, I learned alligator safety (stay out of the water, but if you do go in you should pray because alligators recognize only two things: other alligators and food. You are not another alligator.) While swimming in the dangerous waters of publishing, I find it necessary to learn safety tips to continue my perfect record of never being eaten by a dangerous predator. *Jenna Kernan*

Besides the fact that every NINC conference is a total pleasure fest and great opportunity to hang out with my friends plus meet new ones, I'm coming because there is never any telling how much I'll learn that I didn't expect to, even when the lineup is already as impressive as this one. Based on past experience, yes, there will be reports later, but there is no substitute for being there and talking to others. The sessions look kickass, but there's always so much more that happens in hallways or in the bar or over lunch etc. As someone who's experienced a decent amount of both trad-published and indie-published success, I know there are many paths one can follow and sometimes you just have to find your own way. I'm okay to rock along like I have been, but in the final analysis, I looked it this way: maybe I won't learn one thing I don't already know, but past conferences have taught me that that never happens. And if I don't go, I definitely won't learn anything new. (Or get the aforesaid pleasure fest of hanging out with some fascinating folks.:-)) *Jean Brashear*

So I can finally meet Lou Aronica!

Tracey J. Lyons

I'm coming to NINC for revenge! (Or maybe just to thumb my nose at my past.) I grew up in the North-east—Connecticut to be exact. Graduated from UConn. Throughout my childhood and adolescence I was very shy, quiet, felt invisible. I longed to be **SOMEBODY**, to show that I was special and had accomplished something worthwhile. Returning to that part of the country is like a reunion for me. Inside I'm shouting, "Look at me, guys! I'm an author!" *Kathryn Johnson*

When we gather for the conference, the sun will have just entered the intense, passionate sign of Scorpio. The moon will be in her gibbous phase, almost full, sending the message that any day now, something big is about to happen. I can't miss that! *Zita Christian*

Because my husband just applied for membership in NINC and we can go to the conference together. We can have a romantic getaway AND support our writing! *Vanessa Kelly*

Bright Lights...Big Names...Big Fun....Ballots!

The candidate biographies for the slate of 2013 NINC Officers and Nominating Committee appeared in the August 2012 issue of *Nink* and remain available online at the NINC website.

Completed ballots must be **received by** October 31, 2012. If you will not be attending the Annual General Meeting at the conference, please take a moment to complete a Proxy form (See page 12) and submit it to the Central Coordinator before September 15, 2012.

Ballot

Member Signature: _____

Member Name (Please Print): _____

Please print out this Ballot, complete, and mail to:

Ballot c/o Novelists, Inc.
P.O. Box 2037, Manhattan, KS 66505

Ballots must be received by October 31, 2012

Save Time and a Stamp, and go Green!
Vote online at
www.ninc.com
In the Members Only section

ITEM 1: Election of Officers for 2013

Yes	No	
_____	_____	Terri Brisbin, President-elect
_____	_____	Sylvie Kurtz, Secretary

Item 2: Election of the 2013 Nominating Committee (Vote for no more than five [5] candidates)

_____ Binnie Syril Braunstein	_____ Janna DeLeon	_____ Charlotte Hubbard
_____ Phoebe Conn	_____ Lori Devoti	_____ Diana Peterfreund
_____ Tanya Ann Crosby	_____ Greg Herren	_____ Michele Ann Young

Annual Business Meeting

NINC Bylaws require that an Annual Business Meeting be conducted at the conference. No vote is anticipated at this time, but your presence—in the form of a proxy or physical appearance—is required to ensure a quorum is attained. If you will not be attending the Meeting, please send your Proxy to the Central Coordinator by September 15, 2012.

Proxy A

To appoint the current NINC Board of Directors as your agent:

The undersigned hereby appoints Lou Aronica, Laura Castoro, Denise Agnew, Trish Jensen, Pat McLinn, and Marianna Jameson, each of them as his/her true and lawful agents and proxies with full power of substitution to represent the undersigned on all matters coming before the membership at the Annual Business Meeting of members to be held at the Crown Plaza White Plains, 66 Hale Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601 on Sunday, October 28, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

Member Signature: _____

Member Name (Please Print): _____

Proxy B

To appoint a fellow NINC member as your agent:

The undersigned hereby appoints (print member's name) _____ as his/her true and lawful agent and proxy with full power of substitution to represent the undersigned on all matters coming before the membership at the Annual Business Meeting of members to be held at the Crown Plaza White Plains, 66 Hale Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601 on Sunday, October 28, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

Your Proxy will be distributed at the Annual Business Meeting to the NINC member you have designated.

Member Signature: _____

Member Name (Please Print): _____

Proxy A or Proxy B, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner you directed. If no direction is given with respect to any particular item, this proxy will be voted in favor of the proposals put forth by the Novelists, Inc. Board of Directors.

Please print out this Proxy form, complete, and mail to:

Proxy c/o Novelists, Inc.

P.O. Box 2037, Manhattan, KS 66505

Your Proxy must be received by September 15, 2012.

Save Time and a Stamp, and go Green!

Indicate your Proxy preference online at

www.ninc.com

In the Members Only section

There's Gold In Them Thar Bergen

BY ELIZABETH JENNINGS

Here are the names of some of the biggest names in European publishing: Michael Connelly, George R. R. Martin, Lara Adrian, Susan Elizabeth Philips, Lisa Kleypas, J.R. Ward, Suzanne Collins...sound familiar? Looking at Amazon genre bestseller lists on a random day (July 26, 2012) in Spain, eight books out of 10 in the general fiction department and eight books out of 10 in the fantasy and SF section are American. Fantasy and SF in Germany: eight books out of the top 10 are American. The list goes on and on.

Romance, in particular, seems to be a wholly-owned American genre. A survey carried out by *JuneRossBlogspot*, an Italian romance reader blog, showed readers overwhelmingly preferred U.S. romances. Lyx Verlag, Germany's largest romance publisher, counts 380 Americans out of its stable of 400 authors and even then two of the German romance authors write stories with U.S. Navy SEAL heroes! Alexandra Panz, editorial director of Lyx, thinks that European readers are so taken with American romances that "A Stefan or Holger of the Wiesbaden Police Department simply isn't as sexy and cool as Jack of the NYPD."

Just as Hollywood dominates the cinema scene worldwide (almost 60 percent of all Hollywood film box office sales are from overseas), so do American books dominate bookstores. As Ethan Ellenberg of the Ethan Ellenberg Literary Agency puts it, "One of the great things about being a published novelist is the financial multiplier effect of each book. You wrote it in English and you published it in English, but its earnings potential goes well beyond English. Every book has the potential to generate additional income streams in translation, audio and even performance. Translation rights are a big business and top-selling authors often see 40 percent or more of their income generated overseas."

Europe is digitalizing quickly, as well. The Italian romance blog *Isn't It Romantic?* carried out a survey of its readers and found that 70 percent read books on their e-reader. Alexandra Panz estimates that for popular titles, as much as 10 percent of sales are of e-books. One thing everyone agrees on: the trend is sharply upward.

Given that American books—particularly the major genres—sell so well in Europe and given that the European market is shifting so quickly to e-books, it makes sense for authors who are self-publishing their backlist or indie publishing new books to look to these new, very lucrative markets that will pay them anywhere from a 35 to 70 percent royalty.

A market of over 500 million relatively prosperous readers who are already primed to love American books and who are moving quickly to e-books is like low-hanging fruit for U.S. authors who up until now have had their royalties filtered down through sometimes two publishing houses.

Amazon's Kindle is now available to German, Austrian, French, Italian, and Spanish readers. Kobo is now expanding into Europe as well with a strong self-publishing platform. Through Amazon's CreateSpace you can even offer your readers the print version of your books if you want.

Furthermore, as Alexandra Panz says, "High prices are still acting as a bit of a deterrent to acceptance of e-books, the exception being of course for self-publishing authors, who decide their own prices and can dominate the lower price ranges."

Everything is in place to finally make a lot of money off the books Americans write and Europeans love. Except for one hitch. Your book must be translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish. And, while you're at it, into Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese—you name it. All big markets, but all of which require taking that one step which is incredibly daunting: having yourself translated.

Those who are indie publishing relish that feeling of control over all aspects of their books, but having yourself translated means relinquishing control and being unable to judge the quality of the work ▶

you have commissioned. It's enough to make you quake in your boots. As Ethan Ellenberg says, "If you go solo, it's much more complex and difficult. Conceptually, translation can work. Practically, you would have to find a way to surmount the barriers."

A few particularly brave authors are doing just that.

It is difficult to find good translators. Translation is a delicate art and a bad translation will lose you readers forever. Furthermore, translations are expensive. A good translation can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and if you have an extensive backlist, having yourself translated into several languages can be quite an investment, with no guarantee of a return. The potential rewards are so high, however, that many authors are experimenting with various business models.

First of all, there is crowdsourcing with companies like Kickstarter and Pubslush. Jesse Potash, CEO of Pubslush, describes the process:

"Pubslush is a global, crowdfunded publishing platform for authors to raise funds, gauge their readership, and publish successfully. The process is simple: 1. Authors submit a summary and excerpt of their work, setting a fundraising goal and campaign duration. 2. Readers financially support their favorite submissions, in exchange for a reward. 3. Authors raise money and use supporter analytics to publish successfully via any publishing route they prefer.

"Authors are free to use the money they raise to facilitate any part of the publishing process (from editorial to translations and publicity). The goal is to introduce readers into the publishing equation and provide authors with the tools (access to capital, audience demographics, publishing resources) they need to be successful. In the instance of crowdfunding specifically for translation, an author would simply indicate on their book page that their manuscript is completed and that they wish to raise funds for a high quality translation."

Two authors have successfully refined a profit-sharing translation mode: David Gaughran and Scott Nicholson.

Scott Nicholson is perhaps the pioneer of this trend. This is what he has to say about indie translating: "Germany is the strongest European market right now. Italian is also growing steadily. The others seem a little behind, but I am highly optimistic about the Portuguese market this Christmas and hope to explore the Japanese markets next year. The Latin Spanish market has barely been tapped.

"I have about a dozen titles out in various languages and have more underway. I think Kobo's strong push to expand will spur other markets like Amazon to be aggressive as well, and current digital markets in Europe will be forced to open up to self-publishers.

"I pay the translator a 20 percent royalty of net proceeds, no advance. I have since developed a model where I have one agency handle everything from selecting/assigning translators to the proofing and editing, for a 25 percent cut (that includes the translator cut). In some languages, I have a project manager who oversees and proofs/edits for a 5 percent cut. I am still new in this model but I like it a lot because it ensures consistency, the participants have a vested interest in quality products, and my quarterly payments are far simpler. I know a lot of translators are reluctant to try such a model, but that's fine with me. I only want to work with the most progressive and bold people anyway!"

David Gaughran shared his experience with indie translating on his blog, *Let's Get Digital*: "I have been slowly but steadily building a foreign catalog by working with independent freelance translators... I pay a 20 percent royalty to translators and get the proofreading done through various means, often in trade for promotion. I treat my translators as partners, because they are part of the studio and they are taking a risk with their time and talent... I am most optimistic about the Brazilian market and Portuguese e-books as the next Amazon frontier, as well as Kobo's aggressive improvements... The way I look at it is I still have six billion potential readers out there. And I can reach them from my desktop with the click of a few buttons. The same advantages of self-publishing in English apply anywhere in the world."

A very, very successful example of self translating is Tina Folsom, an indie romance writer who was generous enough to share some figures with me. Her most successful market is Germany. "In Germany I've already recouped all my investment so far and am making a tidy profit each month (between \$15k and \$20k per month). In June 2012, I've sold over 4,200 e-books in Germany on Amazon alone, *Continued on page 16* ▶

The Story Plant: Growing Authors

BY ELAINE ISAAK

[Editor's note: Our series on small presses that have strong connections to our membership concludes with this look at The Story Plant, run by NINC president, Lou Aronica. Lou's other publishing concern, Fiction Studio, recently published NINC's first fiction anthology *Cast of Characters*. While Lou was surprised to be included in the *Small Press* series, he graciously answered some questions to fill in this profile.]

Small
PRESSES,
BIG
PRESENCE

Founded by authors and industry professionals Lou Aronica and Peter Miller, The Story Plant is a small press with a commitment to nurturing authors' careers in the way (in days of yore) the big houses used to. The intent of the press is to bring out each author in-depth, with multiple titles, to create longevity for the authors, rather than to produce single works by a broad section of authors in the hopes that one or two will make it. In addition to his publishing background, Miller also has a background in Hollywood and works toward taking the novels published by The Story Plant and marketing them as film or television properties.

The firm's latest title, *Betty's Little Basement Garden* by Laurel Dewey, is emblematic of the firm's strong commitment to authors. It's Dewey's seventh book with The Story Plant—and the others have been part of a thriller series. For this new title, Dewey drew upon her other professional interest—herbs and how to grow them (one particular herb in this case), and a visit to TheStoryPlant.com reveals that she's coming out with a humorous herbal companion as well. While many publishers are happy to commit to book after book in a series, allowing the author to explore other areas, especially under the same name, is often a problem. At The Story Plant, this diversity is part of the plan.

The Story Plant focuses on mainstream, commercial fiction, with offerings ranging from love stories to thrillers and contemporary fantasy. A visit to the website provides information about six authors, most with five or more titles each—and that's in only four years of publishing. Lou and Peter started the press with two titles in 2008, with the goal of supporting authors through multiple projects—a mutual commitment between author and publisher. They choose to limit the number of titles to 16 to 20 per year, to focus all of their strengths on promoting this smaller list. If you visit their Twitter feed, you'll find links and enthusiasm for three current titles, including giveaways through the company's Facebook page.

A little Googling shows that the books are widely reviewed by bloggers and traditional venues. At the start of the digital wave, shortly after the Plant's launch, the founders made the vital decision to go digital-first, though they maintain a strong print distribution system. Digital-first publishing allows Story Plant to position its titles for an interested readership, with less concern over initial bookstore orders. Lou says, "Our bestselling book last year came from an author whom physical bookstores had written off because his previous book took heavy returns."

So what does it take to be a Story Plant author? Because of the tight list and personal attention of the principals, Lou and Peter need to love the author's work. Past sales performance is no longer critical to the decision to sign, as some of their successful authors have seen. However, in order to create the market presence and career depth they desire for their authors, Story Plant looks for writers who are able to commit to two or more books a year. Right now, their focus is on suspense and contemporary women's fiction, but they are considering expanding into other genres in the next year or so.

With the recent enthusiasm for indie publishing, is an author, especially one who may already have a following (albeit a small one) better off going indie? Small presses like the Story Plant offer an attractive al- ▶

ternative, with a focus on marketing and the goal of partnering with the author to position the work for a wide audience. While they encourage authors to have a hand in promoting the work, the Story Plant makes a commitment to marketing its authors, aiming to do something to promote every author every day. Lou understands the author's frustration with feeling shut out of the design and marketing process in traditional publishing, so The Story Plant invites author input on a variety of issues. As a result, the relationship of authors to their marketing process from an author who designs his or her own covers, to those who aggressively market through their own social networks, to those who are happy to let the press take charge of these efforts. Also, the small size of the company makes it possible to direct energy into each new project, experimenting with tactics and changing direction in this changing marketplace. The Story Plant offers an e-book royalty rate of 25% on net receipts that ramps up to 32% after sales of 3,500 copies.

Lou also runs the imprint that brought out our own *Cast of Characters*, Fiction Studio Books, a private venture founded to create an outlet for his own work that now publishes other authors by invitation only. Intended as a writers' collaborative, Fiction Studio offers the infrastructure of book production while the author handles the entire process of getting the book publication-ready and promoting the work—as well as earning most of the profit. Fiction Studio expanded aggressively for a while, but Lou is scaling back while he focuses on growing The Story Plant.

It seems fitting to give Lou the last word: "I've tried to make The Story Plant as much as possible like the kind of publishing house where I'd like to be published. I think this might be the biggest difference between us and everyone else. I've run big publishing houses and I understand the challenges inherent in being a major publisher. I've also made my living as a writer for more than a decade now, and I understand the challenges and needs of writers. We don't make a single meaningful decision for The Story Plant without looking at it from both a publisher's and a writer's perspective, and we understand those perspectives because we've lived them."

Elaine Isaak recently joined the indie-publishing fray by seizing control of two reprints and producing them as e-books, along with epic fantasy novellas, The Tales of Bladesend.

There's Gold in Them Thar Bergen

Continued from page 14 ▶ another few hundred on Apple iBookstore and Ciando/Thalia/Buch.de. I also sold about 400 paperbacks in June. That number exceeds what I sell in paperbacks in the U.S. (U.S. is about half that on nine titles instead of five). My novels are priced €4.99.

"My plans in Germany: By the end of 2012, I will have six novels and one short story out. I expect my sales to rise to about 30 percent of my total income because of these two new releases, projecting an annual income of between \$300k and \$350k in Germany alone after that."

Indeed, there's gold in them thar Bergen!

Elizabeth Jennings writes romantic suspense and spicy romantic suspense as Lisa Marie Rice. Her 23rd novel, Heart of Danger, by Lisa Marie Rice, will be published in November 2012 by Avon Red. She has lived in Europe all her adult life. She currently lives in southern Italy which is...interesting. The food is very good. She also runs an international literary festival/writers conference, The International Women's Fiction Festival—www.womensfictionfestival.com—which affords her a bird's eye view of publishing on both sides of the Atlantic. That's interesting, too.

Exercise Your Membership Rights...Vote Now! See pages 11 and 12.



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Ooops!

When I speak with clients or other writers, it's not uncommon for them to mention an item they claimed as a deduction on their tax return that isn't actually deductible. Most of the time, the person sincerely thought he or she was entitled to the deduction and simply made an honest mistake. Other times, the person was trying to get away with something.

Some common items that people have taken business deductions for that are not actually deductible are:

1) the full amount of business-related meals. Per tax law, only half of the cost of business-related meals is deductible. After all, we must eat to stay alive so there's always a personal element to our meals.

2) clothing costs. The cost of clothing worn for business events is not deductible. The only exceptions to this rule are for items in the nature of a costume or uniform that could not be appropriately worn elsewhere.

3) grooming costs. The costs of having your hair cut or styled, getting your nails done, and other costs associated with our appearance are considered to be inherently personal and are not deductible.

4) charitable contributions. Unless you receive a specific business benefit in return for a contribution to a charity, the cost is not deductible as a business expense and should instead be claimed as a personal itemized deduction. An example of a specific business benefit would be advertising services in a church bulletin in return for a contribution to the church.

5) the full cost of items or services used partially for personal purposes. Many people deduct the full costs of their computers, printers, and similar equipment even though they use the items for both business and personal purposes. The same goes for cell phones and Internet service. The cost of these items and services should instead be pro-rated based on the relative business to personal use. It can be difficult to estimate the relative percentages with 100 percent accuracy, but as long as a taxpayer has a reasonable basis for the allocation, the IRS is not likely to challenge it.

6) travel costs for friends or family members who attend events with the taxpayer. While it's common for writers to bring a spouse or significant other along to writers conferences and similar events, the costs of that person's travel are not generally deductible. The fact that the person may help you in incidental ways, such as lugging your books to a signing, helping you set up for a presentation, or zipping up the back of your ball gown isn't enough for their travel to constitute a business expense. In order for the person's travel expenses to be deductible, his or her assistance must be significant and essential. If you could have traveled alone with no real problems, chances are that person's expenses are not business-related.

7) meal costs while eating alone near home. While many writers hang out at local coffee shops or eateries to write, the cost of food and drinks consumed alone near your home location are considered personal and therefore not deductible. In order for a local meal to be deductible, you must eat the meal with another person and engage in a substantial business discussion with that person before, during, or directly after the meal.

If you discover that you wrongfully deducted some expenses, it's not too late to make amends. You can correct a previous year's tax return by filing Form 1040X, which can be downloaded from the IRS website at www.irs.gov. Be sure to explain in Part III of the form why you are amending your

Continued on page 20 ▶

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



The Dunce Cap

“Somewhere out there was a village I’d deprived of its idiot.”

— *Summer Knight*, Jim Butcher

A while back, a stranger approached me for professional advice. This was a successful new writer who had signed an agreement with a literary agency, which contract was now causing considerable problems. The writer didn’t know what to do about it and was referred to me by a mutual acquaintance. (To clarify, the “literary agency” had entered the picture only recently and had not contributed in any way to the author’s career, income, or opportunities.)

The problem was that the agreement entitled the so-called literary agency to an unusually large percentage of the writer’s income from all subsequent deals. I confirmed that this was a terrible contract, but it was indeed a *contract*. That made this a legal problem, so I referred the author to a good literary lawyer. The upshot was that, although appallingly egregious, the contract was legally binding and could not be broken with impunity. Fortunately, though, the agreement had an expiration date; so the writer decided not to make any deals until after that expiration date had passed—a decision that meant walking away from a good offer which (wholly unrelated to any action of the so-called agency) was on the table at the time.

I advised the author to treat this incident as a learning experience: “Never again sign a professional contract or agreement that you don’t understand and haven’t negotiated effectively.”

You may imagine the writer said: “Absolutely! Lesson learned. I won’t make this mistake twice.” But not so much, really. The writer got defensive, resisted my characterizing that “agency” agreement as a bad decision, and started justifying to me the reasons for signing it and explaining why the choice had made sense at the time.

This sort of reaction happens a *lot*.

It’s not behavior that’s unique to writers. I think it’s just human nature. But since I’m exposed a lot to writers, I particularly notice it in that context: Having made a bad professional decision, it’s not unusual—even when seeking advice about how to fix the problem—for writers to get defensive about a bad choice being characterized as such, and then to waste time and focus arguing that point.

In an effort to encourage others to abandon this tiresome practice (otherwise, one of these days, I’m going to wind up shoving someone’s head into the nearest toilet), I will now acknowledge some of the most idiotic things I’ve ever done as a professional, without trying to pretend these were anything other than **really bad decisions that I should never repeat**.

By way of disclosure, this is easier for me than for some, because all of the stupidest acts of my career have involved literary agents—and I quit the agent-author business model almost six years ago. Although I’ve certainly made professional mistakes since then, none of them have been *embarrassingly* foolish since I stopped dealing with literary agents.

Anyhow, here we go.

On numerous occasions—and despite having candidly discussed with them, before becoming a client, my opposition to this practice—I let literary agents talk me into paying them a full 15 percent commission on

deals for which I either didn't want their involvement at all, or for which I had gotten an offer on the table myself and wanted them to negotiate the deal for a fee that reflected their reduced effort or involvement (particularly if, for example, the deal was for a project that the agent had refused to send out).

I estimate that during the years I worked with literary agents, I thus paid nearly \$20,000 in commissions that, in retrospect, I should not have paid at all. That's a lot of money to throw away—especially since the agents didn't get me more money or better contract terms on those deals. Worst of all, this is a mistake that I made *multiple times*. I did this again even after *telling* my next agent, during the hiring process, that I wouldn't do it again. And then, with the agent after *that...* yet again!

I am the poster-child of village idiots.

Then one day my final agent (who, like the others, was prone to declining to send out my work, thus leaving me with no reasonable choice but to market it myself) announced that I had to pay her 15 percent of any deal I made, whether or not she was involved in it. Since the perceived value of her services to me had already fallen to a level somewhere below “non-violent mugger,” this blanket statement made it easy for me—finally!—to break my enduringly stupid habit of giving in to this demand, and I fired her.

And if *I* can learn, then there's hope for us all.

Meanwhile, one of the reasons I so often emphasize the need for writers to *read, understand, and negotiate* the contracts they sign is that one of my most enduring business problems arose from failing to be thorough enough in that respect.

One day I fired a literary agent—who promptly stopped sending my royalty statements to me. We went through multiple rounds of me asking for my statements over and over before finally getting them weeks or months late. This was a serious problem because the agent refused to consent to split-payments, and the publisher declined to split our payments without the agent's consent. I couldn't even get a duplicate copy of my royalty statements from the publisher when the agent wasn't providing them to me, because (wait for it!) the publisher insisted that it could only report my sales to the agent-of-record, not to *me*. So I was stuck with my fiscal statements and, when there were payments, also my **money** being sent to this agent. And this went on for *years*.

Then one day, when reviewing the relevant publishing contracts prior to sending them to the *fourth* lawyer whom I consulted in my attempts to get this literary agent's hands *off* my money... I finally noticed that one of the crossed-out-and-replaced clauses was the publisher's original agency clause. And that clause—the stricken clause, the publisher's own boilerplate clause—had guaranteed that if I left the agency, *the publisher would automatically split our payments*.

[See Resnick bang her head against her desk until she nearly passes out.]

I could have prevented this problem! If only I had reviewed the *stricken* clauses before signing the contract, rather than ignoring them, I could have said to the agent, “Hang on. Let's use the publisher's agency clause, not yours. This makes more sense for me.” And we could have discussed it (and had a relationship-ending argument when he explained that he intended to maintain control of my money if I ever fired him) at a time when I still had a *choice* in the matter... Rather than unnecessarily allowing this agent to spend *years* disruptively messing with me (and costing me legal bills) after I fired him.

Give me the dunce cap. I have *earned* it.

(Fortunately, the rights to those books recently reverted to me, at long last eliminating that literary agent—as well as that publisher—from the life of those titles.)

The only time I was ever placed with an editor by an agent, it turned out to be the worst editorial relationship of my career. And the agent repeatedly refused my request to be reassigned, claiming it “wasn't possible...” even though, years earlier, as a brand-new unagented writer, I had requested and gotten a smooth reassignment away from a bad editor. Yet, even knowing there was something inherently *wrong* with my big-shot agent being unable to solve a problem identical to one which *I* had solved as an absolute beginner, I put up with this disastrous situation.

Until I later reached my breaking point, so afflicted by this mess that I was very depressed and suffering from chronic stress illnesses. I finally informed the agent that I was prepared to torch my career rather than endure this editorial relationship any longer. At which point the agent casually admitted he had *lied* to

me about reassignment being “impossible.” Since *he* liked the editor, he said, he had just been trying to get me to drop the subject.

And yet... I *still* didn't fire that agent! (Well, not then. I fired him later, for even worse offenses.)

I'm not just stupid; when it counts, I can be *tragically* stupid.

I also allowed that agent to talk me out of a deal offered to me by an editor who approached me and with whom I was interested in working. But it wasn't the sort of project the *agent* was interested in... and on *that* basis, I finally turned it down. The *inexcusable idiocy* of that choice became even more apparent when, within a year or two, thanks to following the agent's advice, I was completely broke and applying for a part-time telemarketing job.

I could go on, but you get the picture. These are mistakes I'm still kicking myself for years later—precisely so that I will always remember that they were, without excuse or justification, **really bad decisions that I should never repeat.**

Fantasy novelist Laura Resnick deeply regrets that none of her worst mistakes ever included a mad weekend in Rio with a sultry stranger.

Ooops! *Continued from page 17* ▶ return. A simple statement that you erred in computing the deductible amount of your business expenses should suffice. You will also need to include revised Schedules C and SE since both of those forms will change due to the decrease in deductible business expenses.

Per the Form 1040X instructions, so long as you pay the balance due on the amended return within one year of filing the amended return, no interest or penalties will be assessed. Be sure when you make your payment to clearly designate that the payment is to apply to the amended return and note the applicable year that is being amended.

Diane Kelly is a CPA/tax attorney and the author of the humorous Death and Taxes romantic mystery series from St. Martin's Press.

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

AAP Stats are Up and Down

AAP StatShot reports both adult fiction and nonfiction increased by 9.6 percent in April, with e-books up 38 percent. Trade paperbacks were up 10 percent and hardbacks rose .5 percent while mass market paperbacks were down 15.6 percent.

The comparison for January through April showed adult fiction and nonfiction up 3.5 percent with an e-book increase of 27.5 percent. Hardbacks were up 4 percent with mass market down 19.8 percent and trade paperback down 5.6 percent.

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