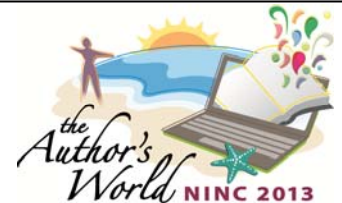


# N I N K

December 2013  
Vol. 24, No. 12

## Is Your Website Doing All It Can for Your Career?



BY CHERYL BOLEN

NINC conference attendees who passed on this Julie Kenner two-hour workshop because they thought it was just another how-to on websites really missed out. Kenner's dynamic presentation—necessarily expanded from a one-hour talk she gave at the New Jersey RWA conference weeks earlier—generated as much buzz as any at Myrtle Beach.

The goals for every writer's website, Kenner said, are to get eyes on your site, sell your books, generate passive income, get readers to sign up for your newsletter, and bring readers back.

"I don't think my website is the prettiest in the world," Kenner said, but it serves those functions well. "The take-away is that you don't have to have a \$5,000 website."

Kenner has a nut-and-bolts WordPress website, and she believes having a WordPress website is key to having functionality for the author. She is able to post every single entry herself and is able to continuously update it to keep it from being static.

A lot of us were silently groaning at the thought of moving our massive websites to WordPress, but she gave a convincing reason for doing so, and others in the room confirmed the veracity of her statement: websites on WordPress feed into search engine optimization far better than those static websites many of us have.

### Passive Income

An author's website can generate passive income through its links to e-retailers' associate accounts. At present, Kenner is earning over \$300 a month just from her Amazon Associate account, as well as Amazon gift cards from foreign Amazon sales (where cash cannot be given to associates). She plans to explore similar accounts at Barnes & Noble and iTunes.

A live link on an author's site to an e-retailer, like Amazon, does not mean that when a customer goes to

Amazon from that link and makes a purchase the author will get a percentage of the purchase. The Amazon associate's account must also be embedded into that live link. The associate ID must be incorporated into every link the author uses at her site or on social media. A purchase can be any item—not just a book—the customer buys in a certain period of time after clicking on the author's associate link. Items shipped to the address of the Amazon Associate member do not qualify for the associate fee, which can be up to eight percent of purchase.

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## Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

### Founders

Rebecca Brandewyne  
Janice Young Brooks  
Jasmine Cresswell

Maggie Osborne  
Marianne Shock

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

### 2013 Board of Directors

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Laura Parker Castoro  
Laurawrite@aol.com

#### Treasurer:

Ashley McConnell  
mirlacca@live.com

#### President-Elect:

Meredith Efken  
Meredith@meredithefken.com

#### Newsletter Editor:

Laura Phillips  
Laura@LauraPhillips.net

#### Secretary:

Sylvie Kurtz  
kurtzsy@aol.com

#### Advisory Council Rep:

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Patricia@PatriciaMcLinn.com

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Chair: David Wind

#### Blog Coordinator

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Complete committee member listings  
are available on the website:

<http://www.ninc.com>

#### Central Coordinator:

Tonya Wilkerson, Varney and Assoc.  
Novelists, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2037  
Manhattan KS 66505  
Fax: 785-537-1877  
Ninc@varney.com

#### Website:

<http://www.Ninc.com>

Address changes may be made on the  
website.

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

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permission.

## 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:** Tracy Higley  
tracy@tracyhigley.com

#### New Applicants:

Marliss Arruda (Marliss Melton), Williamsburg, VA  
Shelley Bates (Shelley Adina, Adina Senft, Shannon Hollis),  
Redwood Estates, CA  
Kay Bratt, Anderson, SC  
JT Ellison (Andrea Ellison, JT Ellison), Nashville, TN  
Sabrina Ingram (Sasha White), Edmonton Alberta Canada  
Christine Kling, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Lisa Naujoks (Lisa Mondello), Brimfield, MA  
Jean Rabe (J.E. Mooney), Tolono, IL  
M. Diane Vogt (Diane Capri), Tampa, FL  
Anna Zaires, Palm Coast, FL  
Dima Zales, Palm Coast, FL

#### New Members:

Patricia Burroughs, Garland, TX  
Antoinette van Heugten, Fredericksburg, TX  
Chris Keniston, Richardson, TX  
Erica Spindler, Mandeville, LA

#### NINC has room to grow...

Recommend membership to your colleagues.

Prospective members may apply online at

<http://www.ninc.com>. Refer members at ninc.com.

Go to Members Only, "Member Services" and click  
"Refer a New Member to NINC." Take NINC brochures to conferences. Email Pari Taichert with your mailing address and requested number of booklets:  
ptaichert@comcast.net.

**NINC Statement of Principle:** Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve.



Laura Parker Castoro

## December?

I'm caught between feelings of "Is it over already?" and "Whew, I made it!"

This is the time for looking back and thinking ahead. But I won't bore you with what we did this year. Let's talk about NINC's future.

NINC is riding the crest of the most significant changes in book publishing since the emergence of mass market back in the '40s. Unlike that last seismic shift, this one hasn't been a slow steady rise. It's been a solid rocket booster blastoff from the terra firma those of us in the business for a while knew so well. We've been shot straight up into space to catch the tail of a passing comet. What did NINC do? What we've always done, we sought out the best and brightest to pick their brains in order to understand what we're up against and how many ways we might navigate our course.

NINC members, both new and seasoned, are pioneers of this new publishing dynamic, the outriders, the scouts and ... okay, you get my point. Innovation is required to be and stay published, and the decisions about the business are more in our control than ever before. The one thing all NINC members share is the willingness to take a chance. Otherwise, we'd have found something else to do by now.

Yet, this is the thing about taking a chance. It can be scary. Sometimes an idea or experiment works, and sometimes it doesn't. That's not the same as failure, as we all know but sometimes forget when judging the effectiveness of a new idea that didn't get off the ground. I've been reading a book called *Ignorance*, by Stuart Firestein. It's barely 176 pages, with coda. Such a small book for so large a topic. The premise is that *ignorance* not *knowledge* drives true science. He says we can't have new ideas or better strategies if we continue to use only what we *know*. Experimentation is about what we don't know. He postulates that "Ignorance then is really about the future; it is a best guess about where we should be digging for data."

That's exactly what NINC has done over the past three years. We've been experimenting with our conferences, within our *Nink* pages, and individually to find out what we don't know about publishing, traditional and independent, in all its new variables. There are always hits and misses. Firestein writes that even disappointment can lead to better ideas and strategies. "Things happen, or don't, that redirect one's thinking.... Results from your own experiment are not what you expected and force new interpretations and new strategies. The goals may remain similar, but the path changes because the ignorance shifts."

There are no innovations without risk. And that brings me back to why I love NINC. What we NINC members so willingly share is important, and precious, and far from the norm of competition and divisiveness of many business communities. It's more important than ever that we continue to share our disappointments as well as our triumphs. Because even an experiment that doesn't go the way we hoped might tell us something about the business.

### **NINC Means Business.**

It's about reaching forward, staying on top, finding new and different ways of staying current for our careers, our readers, and ourselves as business and creative persons. It's a privilege to be part of that experience. I'm forever grateful that I've had a chance to sit in the captain's chair for a while as we fly among the stars. I look forward to continuing to explore this new universe with you.

— Laura Castoro  
lauraninc@gmail.com



## Spread The Word of Novelists, Inc.!

NINC members have always rather delighted in saying our organization is “the best-kept secret in the publishing industry.” We certainly have always been the most unique: membership limited to multi-published authors of popular fiction; no awards, no fans, no unpublished members, or no tiers of membership. NINC is by writers and for writers with their full concentration zeroed in on the *business* of the business we’re all in ... because we all know, if you’ve qualified for membership in NINC, you already know *how* to write.

2014 marks the 25th year of what we all know is NINC Excellence. Now it’s time to let the writing, reading, and even more of the publishing world in on our secret.

So what does NINC offer?

A quarter-century of innovation, growth, and expanded member services. An annual conference with structure, content, and locales that set the standard for other writer organizations. A publishing world that increasingly comes to NINC because it knows our members are their partners, recognizes the mutual benefits of working together in this era of changes affecting all areas of the writing world.

*A publishing world that knows if it’s looking for dependable, proven talent, NINC is the place to find it.*

How do we spread the word ... and because we’re all working writers and our time is limited ... how do we make what we do mutually beneficial to both NINC and its individual members? Good question.

We have some answers; let’s call them our Fast Five. We’ll kick off with one that takes little time on your part, and has a huge promise of return on investment of that time.



**NINC logo here, NINC logo there,  
NINC logo everywhere!**



### NINC Fast Five !

1. Include NINC in your e-mail signature line (Log in on the NINC website, then go to Member Services for the NINC logo. If your e-mail settings specify “plain text,” the graphic logo won’t appear, so you’ll need to write out “Novelists, Inc.” instead.)
2. Add the latest NINC anthology title (*I Never Thought I’d See You Again*) in a tag line as well as your current book title.
3. List the NINC Conference on events on your website and Facebook page.
4. Mention your Novelists Inc. membership in your bio on your web page and in your book.
5. Add a shout-out to Novelists, Inc. as part of your book acknowledgment.

### Have NINC logo, will travel

Step Two of our campaign will be the Social Media “Wave.” Most of us use Facebook, Twitter, etc., knowing they’re a great way to spread the word. With member participation, we’re going to use social media to tell our story.

| Months for message | Authors Last Names starting with                        |
|--------------------|---|
| January/February   | A,B,C,D,E   |
| March/April        | F,G,H,I,J,K   |
| May/June           | L,M,N,O,P   |
| July/August        | Q,R,S,T,U   |
| September/October  | V,W,X,Y,Z   |
| November/December  | Everyone bragging about the 25 <sup>th</sup> conference |

Why call it a wave? We don't want everyone to send out the message at once.

In the January newsletter we'll even give suggestions as to what you might include with your messages.

But more on that next month, once the holiday season is behind us. We're starting slow and hope to grow and maintain our NINC presence during 2014. If we all work together, if we all kick in ideas, spread the word, by that time placing the NINC logo on the cover of your book may make you an "automatic buy."

— Sally Hawkes, Chair  
25th Anniversary Promotion

## Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

### E-books Now Normal



The Book Industry Study Group has released the last part of *Consumer Attitudes Toward E-Book Reading*, which has followed the growth of e-books over the last four years. They have declared digital books to be a "normal means of consuming content." This means e-books have passed the period of being a considered an innovation, but the rapid growth is slowing down. The latest figures for April-June 2013 put e-books at less than 30 percent of units and around 14 percent of sales. That equals the October to December figures in 2012.

<http://www.bisg.org/>

PW Daily

### More Amazon Projects—Kindle First and Kindle Matchbook

Kindle owners can now have pre-pub access to titles from Amazon Publishing. One title a month is available for \$1.99 (free to Amazon Prime members). Title lists are prepared by the trade division editors and listed in a monthly e-mail that includes background information on the book and the author. First titles include *Things We Set on Fire* by Deborah Reed and *Silent Echo* by J.R. Rain.

The Kindle MatchBook bundling program is now official. Did you already purchase a print copy or are you about to buy a print copy from a participating publisher? Now you can purchase an e-book edition for up to \$2.99. The 70,000 titles going back to 1995 come from Amazon Publishing and KDP authors, as well as participating publishers Chronicle Books, HarperCollins, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Macmillan, Marvel, and Wiley.

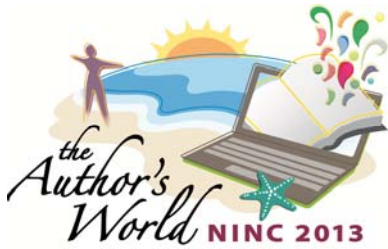
PW Daily

## It's Dues Renewal Time!

Renew your membership now and receive all the benefits of 2014 that NINC offers you.

Online renew at the website, and remember to fill in the Authors Coalition form so NINC can maximize membership benefits. For help with renewal, contact the Central Coordinator.





# Is Your Website Doing All It Can....?

Continued from page 1 ▶

Other sources of passive income for your website include allowing ads on your site. Kenner does this.

## Social Media

Yet another reason to go with WordPress is ease of integrating the website with all the other ways an author connects with readers. This not only includes blogging, but also social media.

Social media, in fact, accounted for a big chunk of Kenner's presentation. "I did hate it [social media], but now I don't." She now spends a maximum of 47 minutes a day on social media.

Until a little over a year ago, this former lawyer pretty much ignored social media. She was very busy. She had a successful career in traditional publishing, was the primary breadwinner for her family, and was home-schooling two children. Then her New York publisher dropped her series. She made the instant decision to carry it on by independently publishing it, and that's when she realized how helpful social media could be.

Not long after she made this decision, she sold an erotic series (under the name J. Kenner) which has taken her twice to number two on the *New York Times* list.

## Tweeting

In one year she did a 180 on tweeting. She now likes it. She acknowledged that while writers are too busy to read others' tweets, "our readers do read tweets." And they retweet for you. Another advantage of tweeting is that you can do it from your phone when you're not writing, like when you're standing in line at the grocery store. She takes screen shots at her stopping place so she can easily return to that spot without missing something when she returns many hours later.

In approximately a year, her Twitter following increased by 700 percent. She did hire a paid service for one month to help expand her reach. Her website feeds directly to Twitter via a free plug-in available at WordPress. "People will tweet your blog," she said, and she now has 15,000 blog followers. She tries to keep the number of characters in a tweet at 120 to allow for retweeting without cutting off her message.

Tweets can be organized by Hoot Suite (free). This offers searchable columns by category, names, or group.

Kenner uses bitly to condense the characters in her tweets, and as a bitly associate (free) she can track the tweets (or any URL using her bitly ID). This can show how many have clicked on your tweets and follow their history. Also, you can incorporate your Amazon Associate account code into your bitly link to assist in generating that passive income.

She also uses Tribbr as well as bitly bundles, where one URL when clicked on by a reader will offer them links to Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iTunes, Kobo, etc., but she does not bundle for Twitter. There she does separate tweets for each e-retailer (Amazon, B&N, etc.) when tweeting about her book because the author has to make it easy for the reader. The fewer clicks, the more likely the reader is to follow the link to find your book.

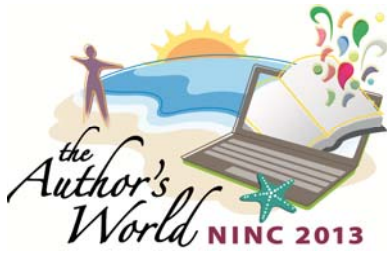
## Facebook

To restrict her social media minutes, Kenner schedules her Facebook posts as well as setting aside a specified time each day for responses. She said authors need a Facebook page and a profile. For one reason, a "page" cannot join a group. Unlike with Twitter, Kenner does not automatically feed from her website to Facebook because it's a different animal. Facebook posts should be exclusive to Facebook. She's obviously doing something right. Her likes increased by over 1,000 percent in about a year.

She has three days a week set aside for special attractions. An example of this is her "Hot Guy" day.

Both the Promote a Post feature and paid Facebook ads have value, Kenner said.

Continued on page 8 ▶



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## Roundtable: Writing for the Market or the Muse — Or Are Both Possible?

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BY JANIS SUSAN MAY PATTERSON

**Panelists: Cheryl Holt, author; Jim McCarthy, agent; Lisa Erbach Vance, agent; Lucia Macro, editor; and Kam Miller, writer**

When asked which—the market or the muse—was more important, the panelists almost unanimously agreed that the answer was both. Without the muse the writing becomes stale and formulaic, yet all on the panel agreed that the power of the market must be respected as well. Some very good books just cannot be expected to sell if they don't fit the current market.

However, all of the panelists agreed that the market is always looking for the next new thing or at the very least a new twist on the current trends. As one agent said, “You just can't sell the same-old, same-old.”

The general consensus was that the writer should write the book he feels passionately about. You can't force the muse, because you never know what the muse will do.

Some random quotes: You must believe in your book. You can't chase the market. “Written to order” fiction is obvious and generally not good; one must write to their muse. Each good book has a unique twist. Authors should be realistic about their schedules.

An editor commented that the perfect combo is where art and commerce meet. Also, that what is constant in genre fiction is expectation of great emotions and experiences. (This is not confined to romance fiction; every genre is based on some kind of emotion.)

An agent added that authors have to write the books they love rather than trying to predict what the “next big thing” might be because when someone tries to forecast a trend in publishing, they are usually flat wrong. The book not only has to be a great book, it has to be one the writer believes in passionately ... even as he is keeping an eye on the market. Another factor for the writer to remember is he must keep an eye on and be aware of both the audience and the competition.

So what can be done when the muse rebels or simply vanishes? All agreed that the best thing to do was take a break, anything from a day to a month or more. Writers must recharge their muse and be at a place where they can feel confident and can write. Good agents and editors will know their writers well enough to be able to direct, support, and help with this process—i.e., know when to urge them to take a break and when to urge them to get back to work. According to several panel members, the more experienced the writer, the less trouble they have getting back into writing.

Perhaps after a break the writer feels the muse pulling in a different direction, in which case he will probably have to cultivate a new audience, though there will be some carryover from his other genre(s).

The talk turned to the current popularity of series books and if all books could be spun off into series. One agent said some books yes, some books no. The strongest deciding factors are the characters—how many, how involved, how they interact—as well as the story lines, both main and secondary, and the setting. One editor said the main point of decision was that the characters had to be fascinating. What is the unique way the characters (especially the main character) interact with the world. How are the characters different, both from others in the book and from others currently available?

The primary question is can that book expand to support multiple books? The decision starts with the basic question of whether or not this book can generate enough stories and interest to expand to a series. ▶

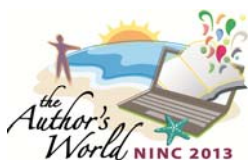
Most agreed that it is difficult to carry the energy of the first book to subsequent ones. It was also agreed that most editors and agents can tell if a book will be a good series or not. Writers should write the story as it should be told, but accept the fact that not all stories should be series. Especially in today's craze for series it takes courage for a writer to step away from the temptation of turning a book into a series if it's not right for one. Not every book is meant to be a series.

When the topic turned back to switching genres, one of the agents admitted to having a lot of authors who switch genres and said while that was wonderful both artistically and marketing-wise, it caused some difficulties in writing contracts. Pen name/same name, conflicting genres, and exclusivity/non-compete clauses can cause problems.

One of the agents admitted to liking having authors who didn't always know what was coming next. Several panelists made the comment that authors must trust someone else—agent, editor, manager, someone—to tell them that they are where they should be in their career. Writing may be a lonely business, but it's difficult to go it alone.

At the end of the session, one of the panelists asked the audience how we felt about the market/muse equation and which one was more important. The answer was overwhelmingly “the muse.”

*Writing romance and horror as Janis Susan May, cozy mysteries as Janis Patterson, children's as Janis Susan Patterson and nonfiction/scholarly as JSM Patterson, Janis Susan is a seventh-generation Texan, a founder of RWA, a member of MWA, Sisters in Crime, and Authors Guild as well as NINC. You can find her at <http://www.JanisSusanMay.com> or [www.JanisPattersonMysteries.com](http://www.JanisPattersonMysteries.com).*



## Is Your Website Doing All It Can ....

**Continued from page 6** ▶ For paid ads for her erotica series, she pays to appeal to fans of E.L. James, Sylvia Day, and Nina Bangs. On the Promote a Post, she paid \$100 to reach 49,000 people.

Another Facebook feature is a listing of book promo groups which can be accessed from a personal (profile) page. Evernote.com has a list of sites, too. A caution on sending multiple posts to these Facebook book groups: a poster can get kicked off the site for spamming.

Other social media, like Pinterest, are also recommended by Kenner.

### A Few More Website Pointers

Since one of the most important functions of an author's website is to acquire newsletter subscribers, Kenner said every single page on a website must have the subscribe link, preferably at the top and bottom of the page. She found that responses improved when potential subscribers had the opportunity to fill out a simple form. She uses Vertical Response.

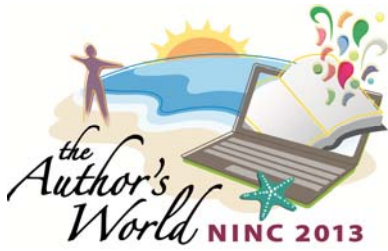
Lastly, she reiterated website principles driven into authors from all previous knowledge of successful websites, with one variation. Instead of having a drop-down on the navigation bar for each author's series, Kenner recommends putting each series in the navigation bar. The other principles are:

- ▶ Every page must go back to main page.
- ▶ The author's bio must be included.
- ▶ Provide a place for readers to contact author.
- ▶ Allow for interaction with readers.

And how does an author find out if any of this is working? Utilize Google Analytics, a free feature.

*A former journalist, Cheryl Bolen is the award-winning author of more than 20 titles (mostly historical) for Harlequin, Kensington, and Montlake as well as indies, and her books have been translated into seven different languages. Her popular series include the Stately Homes Murders (Montlake), the Regent Mysteries (indie), and the Brides of Bath (hybrid). More details are available at [www.CherylBolen.com](http://www.CherylBolen.com), which unfortunately is not a WordPress site.*





## **NINClalks: Experts on the Cutting Edge of the Publishing Future**

BY JOANN GROTE

In a new feature at the conference, NINClalks, industry guests gave short “Tedtalks” regarding what excites them about opportunities for authors today.

TV writer Kam Miller told us that, just as e-books have changed publishing, digital distribution is changing Hollywood. Digital production and distribution make it easier for artists and authors to create and distribute projects, but the need for content won't change. Twenty movies so far in 2013 are based on books and graphic novels. The television schedule is filled with shows based on books. In addition, niche markets will become more viable as ways to bring books to the world of screen in some form. It's an opportune time to be a content creator. “The changing world can be scary or it can be awesome. You choose.”

Lisa Cron is the author of *Wired for Story*, and has worked in television and for W. W. Norton, John Muir Publications, Warner Brothers, and the William Morris Agency. Cron believes, “Writers are the most powerful people on the planet, because story is the most powerful tool and motivator in the world.” People use story—not facts—to make sense of things. We can't use or remember facts if we can't see how the facts relate to us, and story allows us see that relationship. Facts can enlarge our world view or challenge what we believe. The logical brain pokes holes in everything that challenges us. The story format causes dopamine to calm the part of the brain that challenges ideas that don't fit with our current beliefs. Facts presented through story change how we see the world and how we act in the world. Story never comes in through our head, but through emotions, and that's why an incredible amount of power belongs to authors.

Mark Leslie LeFebvre is Director of Self-Publishing and Author Relations at Kobo.com, as well as a bookseller, an editor, and an author (writing as Mark Leslie). LeFebvre traced half a century of the writing life through his own experience. He went from writing longhand to using a typewriter and later a computer. His first novel, written at 13, was fan-fiction, a *Conan the Barbarian* fantasy. He sold stories to magazines, and eventually self-published books using print on demand. Later he self-published with KDP and Smashwords. Today he is traditionally published and self-published on Kobo and other venues. He understands writers' desire to control their publishing life because he shares that desire. With all the opportunities available and to come, it truly is The Author's World.

Lucia Macro, Vice President and Executive Editor at Avon, believes this is a great—and a divisive—time in publishing. Those who work with traditional publishing firms or are only traditionally published sometimes feel others think they are on the bad guys' team. Macro believes there is a place for both traditional publishing and for self-publishing and encourages a conciliatory spirit. “We are *all* part of the future of publishing and whatever it turns into. You are the story-tellers, the bringers of dreams, the people who say yes even when everyone else is saying no. That is so energizing and important. It's what's so vital for the world today. Embrace the future and be fearless, because that's what's going to keep the industry fresh and alive.”

Jim McCarthy is an agent with and vice president of Dystel & Goderich Literary Management. Within the last year, McCarthy was part of a panel of industry professionals. Authors in the audience expressed “rage at the old gatekeepers”—those who had always encouraged writers to “give them the keys to their careers.” McCarthy found the authors' anger encouraging, “an amazing sign of the shifting power and how authors are regaining control of their careers.” Authors are providing for themselves what they need. As an advocate of the author, that keeps him on his toes. The empowered author is the best person for an agent to represent because an empowered author knows what he wants. When an agent knows what his client wants, the agent can better help the writer reach his goal. ▶

Carrie Ryan is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of the *Forest of Hands and Teeth* series. Ryan stated that people aren't always allowed to push back when they have their dream job, but she agrees with McCarthy that authors should be allowed to assert themselves. There is a business end and an artistic end to the spectrum of the writer's job; we're allowed to make decisions based on where we are on that spectrum. Ryan believes authors are generally overachievers, and that is a good thing. We can demand and expect more of ourselves and our publishers and those who support us. She encourages writers to write down our goals—the ones that are most difficult to believe might be possible. Then reward ourselves when we reach those almost unbelievable milestones.

Dan Slater is the “director of innovative and groundbreaking online media and content ventures and pipelines” with Amazon. The innovation and globalization of the book industry are what excite Slater most about the new publishing world. On the print side, it's much easier and cheaper to sell online than in brick and mortar stores. Inventory control is easier. Funds saved in these areas are available for innovation. On the digital side, the cost is low, and immediate global reach is possible. Amazon sold more e-books than print books about four years after it introduced the Kindle. Digital discovery creates incremental demand, with readers able to download and read instantly a book that catches their interest. Statistics show that Kindle owners in general buy more books in both print and digital. In 2008, people who purchased Kindles were buying 2.7 times more books in both print and digital only six months after the Kindle purchase. In 2012 that figure grew to four times as many books.

Digital access ensures English language books are available globally. Although writers worry about finding a way to translate their books, Slater encourages them not to underestimate foreign sales in the English language. Many French, Italians, Germans, and others read English. Even so, Amazon is working hard to make translations easier for authors. Slater suggests going to Author Central on the Amazon site and creating a page in English for your books, and to use that page to create a place for discovery of your books.

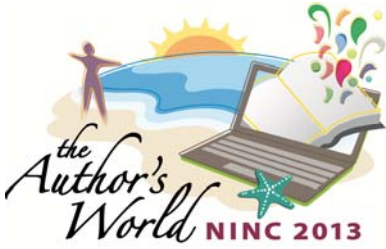
Slater considers the three biggest factors in selling books to be:

- 1) Pricing—how you price books internationally; pricing e-books less than print versions;
- 2) Availability—ensure books are available globally;
- 3) Discoverability—using tools, services, and programs available within and outside Amazon.

David Symonds is General Manager of CreateSpace, an Amazon company focused on providing independent publishing opportunities to authors and publishers. Symonds grew up in the 1970s watching his uncle attempt to create a career as an author. His uncle wasn't commercially acceptable. Today his career and life might be entirely different. Fourteen indie-authors have sold over a million books. Twenty-three KDP authors sold over 250,000 copies in 2012. The most successful self-published authors consider themselves not only writers but also business people. As a business owner, the writer is the boss, the one who makes the crucial decisions. Most successful bosses make those decisions in consultation with others. There's a lot of help available today. Symonds suggests getting recommendations from other authors regarding what services they've found most helpful.

Mark Coker is the founder of Smashwords. We are at the beginning of the publishing reformation, he said. In the world in which most NINC members began writing, the traditional publishers held all the power. The publishers were the only viable path between a printed book and readers. When Coker began Smashwords six years ago, many still considered self-publishing an option only for failed writers. He argued that every writer had a right to be published. Many of the pioneers in self-publishing were romance writers and NINC members. They showed the rest of us how to take control of our destinies. Writers are the source of all that is wonderful about books. Writers now decide when and how their manuscripts become published books. Traditional publication and self publication are both options. The power of publishing has shifted to the authors.

*JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children's nonfiction. Contact her at [jaghi@rconnect.com](mailto:jaghi@rconnect.com).*



# The Evolving Role of the Agent in the Publishing Landscape

BY JOANN GROTE

Agents, like authors, face new challenges in the current publishing landscape. Jim McCarthy, agent with—and Vice President of—Dystel & Goderich Literary Management (DGLM), shared his thoughts on the agent's role in the evolving publishing world.

McCarthy believes the agent's primary role is the same as it's always been: the agent is an advocate for the author. In this changing world, the agent can provide support regardless of whether an author is only traditionally published, only self-published, or a hybrid author (an author who publishes traditionally and self-publishes). Agents help authors stay on top of what is happening in the publishing world and can help authors make decisions, find new opportunities, and negotiate contracts.

What does an agent do that's worth the agent's percentage? The intent is that the agent do well what the client cannot do, or chooses not to do, for himself. "I don't want to take a percentage of everything an author earns," McCarthy said, "I want to take a percent of everything *I earn* for an author. People don't write in a vacuum, and I don't believe they can publish in a vacuum."

Jane Dystel, founder of DGLM, years ago determined that the hybrid author was the future of the industry, and the agency must work with that vision in mind. Agencies which believe that the old way of doing business is the only way are not going to make it in the future world of publishing. Traditional publishing is here to stay. Self-publishing is here to stay. The agent can help a client reach his or her goals within one avenue or both. The agent needs to look at each author individually to know how to best help him or her. Authors may need to remain flexible to reach their goals, and an agent must also remain flexible.

Traditional publishers fill a need. They publish books well and can support the books and the authors well. Agents have long filled a need for authors working with traditional publishers.

But self-publication is a legitimate option, too. At Dystel, there is an individual whose only job is to help authors transfer their backlist to e-books. Assistance includes getting rights back, working editorially to get a project to its best point, putting the books up, and making sure they reach every distributor. There is also a rights director who will help with translation and audio rights and a person who works on film rights. Even though an author can do all of this on his own, he may prefer to use his time to write and allow others who are experienced in these areas to handle these aspects of the business.

Dystel has negotiated contracts for its clients with Amazon's publishing arms. "It can be a great choice or an incredibly frustrating choice, the same as with any other publisher. If the author has a good editor, if Amazon really commits and makes the book a priority, it can be a great choice."

Although Dystel assists individuals who want to self-publish, Dystel does not publish, and McCarthy stated he was therefore unable to address the issue of agencies which operate as publishers.

How does the current publishing landscape affect contract negotiations? McCarthy says contract battles are more drawn out than ever before, but there is more willingness by publishers to negotiate. Authors are winning more battles because they are more willing to walk away. The non-compete clause is the most difficult to negotiate because so many traditional publishers want to publish all of an author's work. McCarthy has negotiated print-only deals with publishers for those who have other outlets for their works but want better distribution. A number of companies, including Penguin and Harlequin, have agreed to print-only deals. When McCarthy negotiates a print-only deal, he usually keeps translation rights for his client. Sometimes clients only want the agent to negotiate translation or film rights, and McCarthy is open to working with these clients.

Continued on page 13 ▶



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

## Not Your Usual Writing Advice

By JoAnn Grote

# The Power of Words

*“Your own words are the bricks and mortar of the dreams you want to realize. Behind every word flows energy.”*

— **Sonia Choquette**

No one needs to convince novelists that words are powerful. If we hadn't learned early in life that words make up stories that transport people into different worlds, we probably wouldn't be novelists today. Still, words may be more powerful than even most novelists understand.

It's common for gardeners to speak to their flowers with words of appreciation and admiration, and to insist those words cause the flowers to grow faster and healthier than those which are not spoken to, or are spoken to harshly. A fellow student I knew in college majored in biology. He performed experiments on plants, measuring vibrations plants gave off when spoken to with different words and tones. Kind words produced calm, even vibrations. Vibrations went wild when he brought shears into the plants' room and threatened to cut off the plants' leaves.

Dr. Masaru Emoto shocked and delighted the world when he revealed his experiments on the effects of music and words on water in his book *The Hidden Messages in Water* (Atria Books, 2005). Classical music resulted in well-formed crystals, while “water exposed to violent heavy metal music resulted in fragmented and malformed crystals at best.”

After observing music's effects, Emoto tested the power of words on water. He put distilled water into bottles. Then he wrote a word or words on papers and taped the papers to the bottles with the words facing the water. “It didn't seem logical for water to ‘read’ the writing,” Emoto said, “understand its meaning and change its form accordingly.” Yet the results astonished him. The word “fool” resulted in crystals similar to those created when exposed to heavy metal music. The “most beautiful and delicate crystal” he had seen was created by exposure to the words “love and gratitude”. The photograph of this crystal shows a perfectly balanced, intricate crystal that appears gold. That crystal changed Emoto's life. Because we choose the words we speak and the attitudes from which we speak, Emoto believes “The life you live and the world you live in are up to you.”

I keep a picture of the “love and gratitude” crystal on my computer screen, and another on my refrigerator door, to remind myself to choose with care the words I use with those I love. Human bodies are fifty to ninety percent water, depending upon age, health and other factors. If words printed on paper have such an enormous effect on water in bottles, how much more might words in any form have upon humans who are at least half water?

More to the point for novelists, how deeply might our words affect our readers, who immerse themselves in our words and the stories those words make up?

Lisa Cron, author of *Wired for Story*, told NINC members at the 2013 conference, “Writers are the most powerful people on the planet because story is the most powerful tool and motivator in the world.” Cron says that when facts or ideas that challenge our beliefs are presented as fiction, the facts and ideas bypass the logical brain that puts up defenses to protect our beliefs. Stories we create allow readers to experience ideas

that are outside their normal comfort zone. Many readers have told NINC members that their stories inspired them, gave them hope, courage or joy—substantiating the power of words in story.

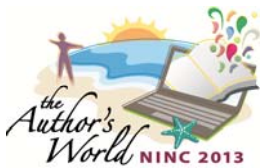
Most Novelists, Inc. members write or have written genre fiction. Many genre stories contain violence and/or characters filled with anger and hatred. But most genre stories also include heroes and heroines with high ideals and the courage to fight for what they believe is right. A happy ending is common—whether it’s a couple taking a chance on love, a murderer or kidnapper brought to justice, or a selfish and cruel leader brought down. Readers live through the harsh, sometimes violent experiences our words create to the place of resolution and hope at the end of our stories.

Words; just ink on paper, or squiggles on a screen, or sounds on a tape or a CD, yet with them novelists create story, “the most powerful tool and motivator in the world”.

*Note: An article on Dr. Emoto’s experiments, including photos of water crystals formed by the words “happiness” and “love and gratitude,” may be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/pusa89m>.*

*Emoto’s book is available in print and e-book. Many videos featuring interviews with Dr. Emoto and/or including his photographs of water crystals are available on YouTube.*

*JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children’s nonfiction. Contact her at [jaghi@rconnect.com](mailto:jaghi@rconnect.com).*



## The Evolving Role of the Agent

Continued from page 11 ▶

What does McCarthy see ahead for authors? He believes the common 25 percent royalty on e-books is too low, and that it will become larger in the future, but the growth in rate will take time. He believes eventually traditional publishers will realize they cannot insist on licensing all rights; that breaking point will happen when enough top authors—the authors the publishers can’t afford to let go—say “give me the e-publication rights or I walk.”

A hybrid author in the audience voiced what McCarthy is seeing in his practice: “Being a hybrid author makes me much more confident to walk away from a contract.”

*JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children’s nonfiction. Contact her at [jaghi@rconnect.com](mailto:jaghi@rconnect.com).*

### Business Briefs



#### HarperCollins Unbound

HarperCollins is providing a free app for Apple and Android smartphones. This links print titles to digital content. The first two titles are *The Pioneer Woman Cooks* by Ree Drummond and *You: The Owner’s Manual* by Dr. Mehmet Oz and Dr. Michael Roizen. Mostly nonfiction will be included.

PW Daily





## Celebrating the Best of NINC

Tradewinds Hotel, St. Pete, FL  
October 22-26, 2014

# *Ahem...see this?*



## **Now put yourself in the picture:**

The lavish Saturday night banquet on the beach.

The sun setting in a huge orange ball out over the Gulf as we watch.

The multi-color flower leis blink-blinking while we sing Happy Anniversary to NINC as we wrap up another wildly successful, productive St. Pete Beach conference.

(Yes, there will be cake!)

Okay, now take a deep breath, put down the umbrella drink, get up from that virtual hammock, and re-

member a NINC conference means business. Our business, our livelihoods, our hopes, our ambitions. Our futures.

So, yes, in 2014 all that once again comes along with the marvelous TradeWinds Island Grand Resort in St. Pete Beach, Florida (<http://www.tradewindsresort.com/properties/island-grand.aspx>). But just ignore that for now (hey, eyes on your paper, stop looking at the photograph!), and let's talk about those workshops.

We may have already announced at least three more speakers we're in the process of signing now, as I write this at the beginning of November. We've already announced the fabulous Carolyn Pittis and the sure-to-be fantastic Lee Lofland. Their bios are up on our conference website page ([http://ninc.com/conference\\_center/](http://ninc.com/conference_center/)). You'll see other confirmed speakers as well by clicking on "Conference Speakers."

For our 25th anniversary, we're going to look back, we're going to be sure we're current with what's going on today, and we're all going to look into what appears to be an even better tomorrow for career writers of all genres of popular fiction (again, that would be us).

Our First Word program will be open to everyone and included with the conference fee; a fact-filled day nobody wants to miss.

In addition, more and more authors, snowed under by all the social networking, writing front list, converting OOP books for e-versions, etc, are looking to family or other small businesses for support. In-house help ... literally. NINC wants to help with that. As we have reserved space for three workshops per hour, we have the time and the room to set aside an afternoon (or entire day) devoted just to those new assistants, and also useful for writers who are thinking about hiring or coercing or marrying or giving birth to an assistant.

Since the conference was announced at the General Meeting in Myrtle Beach, we've had what you could call a small run on the bank, and are already (remember, in early November, eleven months before the conference!) closing in on 30 registrations. Because of this unusually high early response, we have already increased our room block at the TradeWinds, but we all know the best rooms will be the first to fill up—not that there is a bad room at the TradeWinds.

Members are planning on extending their stays, using the "shoulder dates" for our members, keeping room prices at the conference rate. Members are bringing family with them, to combine conference with vacation. Members are arriving early to brainstorm together—possibly at the Beach Bar. In other words, hey, we're not filling up yet, but we're certainly ahead of the curve on registrations, so be warned.

And if you're still in doubt ... take another gander at that photograph.

— Kasey Michaels, Chair



***Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow***  
***TradeWinds Island Grand Hotel***  
***St. Pete, Florida***  
***October 22-26, 2014***

**Member fee \$375, payable in three E-Z payments of \$125 before August 31, 2014:  
Hotel reservation information forwarded upon receipt of first payment.**

Sign up for the 2014 BeachNinc Yahoo Loop, whether registered or still thinking about it, to talk about ideas for speakers, workshop topics, or if you want us to bring back the yoga and belly dancing lessons. We aim to please, and give members the biggest bang for their conference buck in the industry. Just email me at [kcmi@aol.com](mailto:kcmi@aol.com).

***Don't Delay! Sign Up Now ... Recommit to Your Career in 2014***



## **WRITING is TAXING**

*By Diane Kelly*

# **The Affordable Care Act**

The Affordable Care Act (“Act”) includes a provision requiring each individual to have minimum essential health coverage for each month, qualify for an exemption from coverage, or make a payment when filing his or her federal income tax return. The payment is sometimes called the “individual responsibility payment,” “individual mandate,” or penalty.

To ensure that you properly report any payments due under the Act, it is important that you know your responsibilities.

The Act applies to all individuals regardless of age, including children and senior citizens. An adult or married couple who can claim a child or another individual as a dependent for federal income tax purposes is responsible for making the payment if the dependent does not have coverage or does not qualify for an exemption.

The provision is effective as of January 1, 2014, and applies to each month in the calendar year. The amount of any payment owed will be based on the number of months in a given year that an individual lacks minimal essential coverage or an exemption.

### **Minimum essential coverage includes the following:**

- ▶ Employer-sponsored coverage (including COBRA coverage and retiree coverage)
- ▶ Coverage purchased in the individual market, including a qualified health plan offered by the Health Insurance Marketplace (also known as an Affordable Insurance Exchange)
- ▶ Medicare Part A coverage and Medicare Advantage plans
- ▶ Most Medicaid coverage
- ▶ Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage
- ▶ Certain types of veterans health coverage administered by the Veterans Administration
- ▶ TRICARE
- ▶ Coverage provided to Peace Corps volunteers
- ▶ Coverage under the Non-appropriated Fund Health Benefit Program
- ▶ Refugee Medical Assistance supported by the Administration for Children and Families
- ▶ Self-funded health coverage offered to students by universities for plan or policy years that begin on or before Dec. 31, 2014 (for later plan or policy years, sponsors of these programs may apply to HHS to be recognized as minimum essential coverage)

State high risk pools for plan or policy years that begin on or before Dec. 31, 2014 (for later plan or policy years, sponsors of these program may apply to HHS to be recognized as minimum essential coverage).

Coverage that provides only limited benefits, such as coverage only for vision care or dental care or coverage only for certain diseases, does not qualify as minimum essential coverage. Plans that offer only a discount on medical services also do not qualify. Similarly, Medicaid plans that cover only certain benefits such as family planning, workers’ compensation, or disability policies, do not qualify as minimum essential coverage.

### **Exemptions from coverage are available to certain individuals, including:**

1. Members of religious sects recognized as conscientiously opposed to accepting any insurance benefits
2. Members of a recognized health care sharing ministry

3. Members of federally recognized Indian tribes
4. Those whose income is below the minimum threshold for filing a tax return
5. Those who went without coverage for less than three consecutive months during the year
6. Those who have a hardship certified by the Affordable Insurance Exchange
7. Those who can't afford coverage because the minimum amount payable for premiums is more than eight percent of household income
8. Those who are incarcerated
9. Those who are not a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or an alien lawfully present in the U.S.

You will not have to account for coverage or exemptions or make any payments until you file your 2014 federal income tax return in 2015. The IRS will release information later this year that will give specific instructions for reporting payments due. Beginning in 2015, insurers will be required to provide everyone that they cover each year with information to help them demonstrate that they had the required coverage.

### **The 2014 penalty will be the higher of the following amounts:**

1) **1 percent of the taxpayer's annual household income**, up to a maximum penalty in the amount of the national average yearly premium for a "bronze plan;" or

2) **\$95 per person for the year, with a reduced amount of \$47.50 per child under 18**. The maximum penalty per family under this computation method is \$285.

The penalty will increase every year. In 2015, the penalty will be 2 percent of income or \$325 per person. In 2016 and later years it will be 2.5 percent of income or \$695 per person. For the followings years, the penalty amounts will be adjusted for inflation.

If an individual is uninsured for just part of the year, 1/12th of the yearly penalty applies to each month the person is uninsured. If a person is uninsured for less than 3 months, he or she does not have to pay a penalty. Thus, if an uninsured person enrolls by March 31, 2014, the individual won't have to pay the penalty. Moreover, if an individual enrolls in a health insurance plan through the Marketplace by March 31, 2014, the individual won't have to pay a penalty for any month before coverage began, even if coverage begins later. For instance, if you enroll in a Marketplace plan on March 31, but your coverage does not begin until May 1, you will not have to pay a penalty for January through April of 2014.

It's important to remember that payment of the penalty is not a provision of coverage. The individual is still responsible for obtaining coverage and paying the cost of the insurance.

After open enrollment ends on March 31, 2014, individuals will not be able to obtain health coverage through the Marketplace until the next annual enrollment period, unless they have a qualifying life event, such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, certain changes in income, or a move to a different state.

*Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney and the author of the humorous Death and Taxes romantic mystery series and a self-published romantic comedy.*

## *Business Briefs*



### **Macmillan Entertainment Expands**

Macmillan Films has now become Macmillan Entertainment. This new endeavor will look at all titles from the publisher and not be limited to titles from the Thomas Dunne Books imprint. Branden Deneen, executive editor, has projects already in development, including *Reviver* by Seth Patrick and *Seal Team 666* by Warren Ochse.

*PW Daily*



# The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



# Suffering for My Art

*“Writing fails because the writer does not know enough about his material. If he knows enough he will feel enough.”*

— William Sloane (1906–1974), *s/f writer*

They say that home is the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in. The corollary of that is that family are the people who, when you call them at 4:00 a.m. and say, “Come get me,” have to get out of bed and come get you.

Thus it was that my parents sleepily drove across town a few days ago to collect me in the dark and the cold and the rain. And then they blearily complied when the first thing I said to them was, “Give me all your money.”

Being related to a writer—or at least to *this* writer—isn’t always an undiluted pleasure.

I had spent the night ghost-hunting with a paranormal investigator, something I’ve been doing lately as hands-on research for my fiction. When I emerged from a haunted rectory at 4:00 a.m., eager to go home, scrub Victorian dust off myself in a hot shower, and hit the sack .... I discovered that my car tires had been slashed.

It’s always something.

But despite this, and even if we include some eerie experiences I’d just had inside the rectory, far and away the most disturbing part of my night was the tow truck driver who finally showed up at 5:00 a.m. He was angry, armed, and contagious (a viral infection). My autoclub membership entitles me to free towing, but Angry Tow Truck Guy demanded payment at the end of the ride, while also refusing to show me a bill or give me a receipt. I was alone on a dark, deserted street with an exceedingly angry man who had a gun in his truck, and without my wallet (which I had left at home). So I gave him all my parents’ cash (and later complained to my auto club).

Oh, the things I do for my art.

Participating in all-night paranormal investigations was something I stumbled onto almost by chance a few months ago. Like many of my peers, I like to do hands-on research when possible, to provide texture and veracity in a fictional story. So I figured that if I ever write a book with ghosts or spirits (which I probably will, since I write urban fantasy), then going on some ghost hunts with a paranormal investigator seemed like a good opportunity to learn and experience things.

Ghost hunting is an amazingly popular activity, far more so than I realized when I first started looking into this. In fact, when I mentioned my paranormal adventures on Facebook, I promptly learned that one of my readers is an experienced paranormal investigator, and he was able to recommend some good books and websites on this subject.



Quite apart from the deluge of reality shows on TV these days about paranormal investigators, there are multiple ghost hunting groups and paranormal societies right here in Cincinnati (and no doubt in your region, too), as well as a number of famously haunted local sites. There are also numerous paranormal conventions all over the country where researchers, investigators, and enthusiasts share their experiences, show off new investigative equipment, discuss paranormal theories, and explore local sites with supernatural reputations.

The way a paranormal investigation works is, in short: You choose a site—based on its reputation, or on a request from someone who's experienced strange phenomena there, or on your own curiosity about it. You go there at night with your partner or your team (going alone is ill-advised, for purely practical reasons) when the building or site is empty, and you wander around in the dark, with flashlights and investigative equipment, hoping to witness paranormal phenomena and trying to make contact with paranormal elements (ex. ghosts, spirits, remnants, revenants, demonic entities, etc.).

Paranormal investigators use a wide range of technical equipment, depending on their budget and their preferred techniques. Since cold spots are frequently associated with paranormal phenomena, investigators use digital thermometers to measure shifts in temperature. Various types of hand-held meters measure changes in electromagnetic fields, which may be affected by the presence of paranormal entities. Digital audio and visual tools record sounds and images that the human ear and eye tend to miss. The "spirit box" is a device which theoretically allows spirits to communicate via radio static. And so on.

I've gone on three all-night investigations to date. One was at the abandoned Sedamsville Rectory (where my tires got slashed), which has a dark history. It was acquired by preservationists 2-3 years ago, who promptly began having disturbing experiences while working on its restoration. Since then, ghost hunters have been crawling all over the place, and it's been featured on several national TV shows.

Another investigation was at an old school; built in the 19th century, it was abandoned a decade ago. Although there's no ugly history associated with the building, various disturbances have been reported there in recent years, as well as contact with paranormal entities via EVP (electronic voice phenomena, spirit voices which are detected through audio devices).

The most notorious haunted site in this region is Bobby Mackey's Music World, a honky-tonk on the banks of the Licking River. Many dark tales are associated with Bobby Mackey's, and various famous ghost hunters have based whole shrieky episodes of their TV shows on *spending all night* there.

Well, I've spent all night there on one of these investigations, and all I can say is, oh, big fat hairy deal.

I'm a confirmed skeptic, and three long, dusty, uncomfortable nights of ghost hunting have not changed that. However, I didn't go on these outings to make others feel self-conscious, to denigrate their views, or to spoil their night. So, although I didn't pretend to see or hear things I did not see or hear (other people kept saying, "Whoa! Did you see that? You saw that, right?") and I kept saying, "No"), I did throw myself into the investigations. I talked to the spirit box (though I felt sure I was just conversing with AM radio signals). I encouraged communication from spirits I did not sense (though some of my companions said they did). I talked to wavering ultraviolet lights (which I think were reacting to ordinary energy fields or movement, rather than to spirit manipulation). And I followed bleeping EMF (electromagnetic field) detectors around in circles for hours in hopes of finding a demonic entity.

I can be a good sport when the occasion calls for it.

Although the school we investigated is nowhere near as notorious or "active" (in the paranormal sense) as Bobby Mackey's or the Sedamsville Rectory, I found it the most atmospheric location and well worth visiting, from a fictional perspective. I could readily envision ghost stories and supernatural incidents in the school, which had delightfully spooky gothic architecture. The place was also full of creepily suggestive props: abandoned toys, random scatterings of tiny chairs, chalkboards and notepads where the writing stops with eerie abruptness.

By contrast, Bobby Mackey's is a seedy roadside bar that's open several nights a week, with live music, and its infamous 19th century cellar (where we spent much of our time) just strikes me as, well, a dirty, junk-filled old cellar. Also, some of the dark lore of this place is based on fabrication, unconfirmed legend, mental instability, and substance abuse. The scariest thing about this place, I think, is its reputation for housing demonic entities that attach to ghost hunters and follow them home. Even a skeptic would like to think that *leaving* a haunted site is all it takes to be safe, after all. ▶

My most interesting experiences, however, occurred at the abandoned rectory. I found the building to be a pleasant old manse, albeit dusty and in need of restoration, with no particular atmosphere ... except for the cellar. Whereas I was indifferent to the famously evil ambience of Bobby Mackey's cellar, I found *this* cellar very disturbing, I experienced cold spots and foul odors that no one else was sensing, and I eventually felt unsafe there—and was relieved when the lead investigator said *he* felt unsafe and suggested we exit the cellar immediately. Later on upstairs, in a completely *unmenacing* incident, we also had several minutes of what some investigators might interpret as communication with an entity responding to yes/no questions via an investigative device.

I found these incidents interesting, food for thought, and great fodder for fiction—which was the whole point. I'm not seeking a new world view, just a good story, after all. So I'm still a skeptic. I think there are various mundane explanations available for those couple of incidents in the rectory, and they seem much more likely to me than "paranormal phenomena." I also think that my imagination, like almost anyone else's, is bound to get over-stimulated by wandering around inside of dark, spooky, notorious buildings all night while asking over and over, "Is there someone here? Can you give a sign of your presence?"

In any case, three long nights of grimy, uncomfortable conditions and quite a bit of boredom in exchange for a few minutes of eerie excitement and a couple of slashed tires ... isn't an overall experience that's likely to turn me into a paranormal enthusiast—apart from the research value of these jaunts, which I definitely appreciate.

*If any demonic entities did follow Laura Resnick home, they deserve our pity rather than our scorn.*

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## Explore More at:

### The Sedamsville Rectory

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

### Bobby Mackey's

[http://www.bobbymackey.com/h\\_paranormal.htm](http://www.bobbymackey.com/h_paranormal.htm)

### Some recommended books on ghost hunting:

*The Other Side: A Teen's Guide To Ghost Hunting and the Paranormal*, by Marley Gibson, Patrick Burns, and Dave Schrader

*So You Want To Hunt Ghosts? A Down-To-Earth Guide*, by Deonna Kelli Sayed

*Picture Yourself Ghost Hunting*, by Christopher Balzano

*Ghosts of Bobby Mackey's Music World*, by Dan Smith

### Some recommended websites:

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

<http://theshadowlands.net/ghost/>

[http://www.ap-investigations.com/Home\\_Page.html](http://www.ap-investigations.com/Home_Page.html)

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