

N I N K

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Nine Easy & Inexpensive Ways to Promote Your Audiobook

BY ERIKA LIODICE

As an independent author and publisher, I'm constantly faced with the challenge of how to compete in a crowded marketplace with titles that have big budgets and entire publicity teams behind them. Many shy away from the challenge, chalking it up as impossible, but I've learned that you can reach readers without spending big money; you just have to be creative.

Here are nine easy and inexpensive ideas you can try right away ...

1. Reviews

Just as there are reviewers for print and e-books, there are reviewers who specialize in audiobooks. There are traditional publications, like AudioFile Magazine (www.audiofilemagazine.com), which is published in print and digital formats and is dedicated solely to audiobooks, as well as a host of audiobook review blogs that are always looking for new titles. These reviewers can be found with a simple Google search or by perusing directories like the Book Blogger directory, Indie View, or the Book Blogger List. (<http://bookbloggerdirectory.wordpress.com>, www.theindieview.com, <http://bookbloggerlist.com>)

Don't forget about your own fan base. If you've produced your audiobook with ACX, then you will receive 25 promo codes that you can use to give away free copies of your audiobook in exchange for reviews.

Tip: As stellar reviews come pouring in, re-post them on your social sites to help spread the good word.

2. Interviews

Reach audiobook enthusiasts using other audio formats, like radio and podcasts. There are thousands of radio stations and podcasts that offer a variety of programs, which are often looking for guests and experts.

Think about the subjects explored in your audiobook and how they could translate into an interesting discussion or interview. Then, identify a list of shows that would benefit from having you as a guest and pitch yourself to the shows' producers.

For example, my audiobook, *Empty Arms*, explores teen pregnancy, forced adoptions, sealed records, and their devastating impact on an entire generation of women, so I've been targeting programs that deal with women's issues.

To find radio shows that might be a good fit for your subject matter, check out the Radio Locator database (<http://radio-locator.com/>). It's a useful tool that allows you to search for *Continued on page 5* ▶

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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:

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Amid Publishing's Changes, NINC's Strength Is You, Your Strength Is NINC



Meredith Efken

This is my last column, since the December issue of *Nink* will be all-conference, cover-to-cover. Serving NINC as president has been an honor and a very worthwhile challenge, and I'm so grateful to the board and to all our volunteers for making this year an incredible one for the organization.

I started out the year talking about the need for creative flexibility and the importance of supporting NINC in its 25th year—a year of great change both for the organization and for the publishing industry as a whole. NINC members have been demonstrating that creative flexibility, and the results are speaking for themselves.

In NINC, we're launching a new website, we're taking on the problem of plagiarism, and we're working through what it really means to be "writers united" no matter what publishing path we choose. Our conference has seen record attendance this year, and we have had incredible conversations about the industry there and on our email discussion loop.

I personally know of NINC members who have taken their writing careers in new directions or overcome creative and personal challenges. Some of you have taken risks or made difficult decisions. We're trying new things and refusing to accept the status quo as acceptable.

I applaud all of you. Change is stressful. It's not comfortable. And yet, NINC members show over and over that they have the ability to use change to their advantage, to find new opportunities, and new ways of accomplishing their goals.

As we move into a new year, I encourage NINC members to keep pushing forward, keep pulling together, and keep searching out new ways of making our industry work better for all writers. Here are my challenges to you as NINC members for the coming weeks:

1) Being an active NINC member is one excellent way of helping to make a difference. It's membership renewal season—be part of the community, be part of bringing writers together to help each other.

2) Be a NINC volunteer: from the board to the conference committee to the blog, NINC is mainly run by volunteers. There's no better way to feel a part of the NINC community than by getting involved. If you have a particular area you're interested in, or a special project within the publishing industry, we want to hear from you.

3) Get to know the board: 2015's will be Julie Leto (president), Diana Peterfreund (president-elect), Pamela Johnson (treasurer), Sylvie Kurtz (secretary), Laura Phillips (newsletter editor), and Lou Aronica ▶

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.

(Advisory Council rep). Say hi, send them chocolates—the board does an incredible amount of behind-the-scenes work for all of us.

4) Also get to know our volunteers. There's a lot of them, and I don't want to leave anyone out, so just go to the website and take a look at who is doing what. They all work very hard as well, and I'm sure they'd love an encouraging note or pat on the back.

5) Get to know each other. Community makes us stronger as individuals. Writing is isolating, and being too isolated weakens us, professionally and creatively. We need to watch out for each other and stand together. Pull in your writer friends who aren't yet a part of NINC, or who might be wondering if NINC is still for them.

And that brings me to my last challenge, which is too important to put as a number in a list. If you are one of those people who is wondering if NINC is still for you, let us know. I mean it. Instead of disappearing, we want you to stay—to be a part of making NINC stronger, better, and more capable of meeting the needs of writers. We want to help you to help NINC. It's hard sometimes—there are so many other demands on our time and energy. It's easy to feel discouraged or believe that no one will miss us if we leave.

But NINC is all about unleashing the power of writers to improve the publishing industry by combining our voices and efforts, supporting each other, and being innovative. Truth is, we can't do this without you because no one else has the same combination of perspectives, passion, and experience as you do. You are important and needed and valued.

I'm not going to end by saying that the future is bright and everything is going to be grand. I think the future is uncertain—as it always is. But it's full of possibilities. I think we have the potential to make it better, maybe even amazing, if we work together.

Thank you, NINC, for an amazing year. I'm looking forward to what you're going to accomplish next.

— *Meredith Effen*

Editor's Note

First, the good news: this year NINC's board approved a super-sized *Nink* conference issue with reports on each First Word panel and every daytime session from this year's 25th Anniversary conference "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." The bad news? You'll have to wait a month to get it.

On the plus side, you'll get all the coverage in one big issue—or at least all that will fit within 40 pages. The December *Nink* will be all conference, all the way through. No waiting until February or March for the last of the conference articles to appear. We've never done this before, but it's a changing world, and *Nink* needs to evolve, too. I hope this is a change you'll like.

Laura Phillips
Nink Editor

Nine Easy Ways to Promote Your Audiobook

Continued from page 1 ▶ radio stations by geography or format and then connects you to each station's website, where you can learn about upcoming show topics and find the producer's contact information.

For podcasts, visit the Podcasts section of the iTunes store and try searching for different keywords related to your book. You'll be surprised at the number of shows you find.

Tip: It can be time-consuming to monitor all of the publicity opportunities out there. You might find it useful to subscribe to Radio Guest List, a free booking service that sends you a daily e-mail with current radio, podcast, and television publicity opportunities. (http://www.radioguestlist.com/blog_index.html)

3. Sponsorships

Unlike most radio shows, podcasts are often produced at the expense of the host. As a result, many are seeking sponsorships to help offset their production costs. Sponsorships are generally short messages that are either read by the host or pre-recorded by the sponsor and played during the show. Often times, the cost is nominal but the impact can be strong if you work with shows that reach your target audience.

4. Free Samples

Give people an easy, risk-free way to sample your audiobook. SoundCloud (www.soundcloud.com) allows you to create a free sample that you can embed on your website, in blog posts, and all throughout your social presence. Plus, it links directly to your audiobook's buying page to allow for easy conversion. This is different than the "free audio sample" feature on Audible because you don't have to send people over to Audible to hear it.

Tip: When creating your free sample, be sure to capture a compelling scene that leaves listeners wanting more, so they're more likely to buy your audiobook.

5. One-Minute Trailer

Many books launch with a book trailer, but where some go wrong is creating a book trailer that is too long. I saw one that was five minutes long! Five minutes is a lifetime, but most people have a minute to spare. By creating a one-minute book trailer, you are promising not to waste the person's time.

Tip: In addition to linking to your one-minute trailer on your website and social sites, try including it in your email signature (along with your free audio sample mentioned above) to maximize reach.

6. Collateral

Digital audiobooks can be challenging to sell in person because they're not a tangible product, but that doesn't mean they can't have a presence at an event. A postcard-sized promotional card can go a long way in telling people about your audiobook and reminding them to order it when they get home. I use them at book festivals, signings, and conferences, and I even keep a few in my purse to give to people I meet when I'm out and about. Online printing services like VistaPrint (www.vistaprint.com) make it fast and affordable to produce marketing collateral for your audiobook.

Tip: If you aren't skilled in graphic design, there are budget-friendly services like 99 Designs (www.99designs.com) and CrowdSpring (www.crowdspring.com) that allow you to submit a creative brief for your project and then have a pool of talented design pros compete for the job.

7. Affiliations

What groups, clubs, networks, or associations are you part of? Think collegiate, professional, religious, service, and hobby. Do any of your groups have newsletters? If so, find out if there's a section dedicated to member news. Opportunities like this are a great source of free advertising, yet they're often overlooked.

8. Social Media Advertising

Social media sites, like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Goodreads, offer low cost, highly targeted advertising opportunities. Ad campaigns are easy to create—they require a little bit of text and an optional image—and they're budget sensitive, so you can dictate how much you're willing to pay per click, set a daily budget cap, and stop your campaign at any time, giving you full control over how much you spend.

With regards to targeting, Facebook allows you to filter your audience by location, gender, age, and interests (which include categories like "audiobooks"). These filters ensure that your ad is only being seen ▶

and clicked on by people who might actually be interested in buying your audiobook. Since LinkedIn is a social site for professionals, it's a great place to target business travelers and commuters who might be likely to listen to audiobooks while they're on the road. Goodreads is another logical place to promote your audiobook because it's a community of readers. Plus, its ad platform allows you to reach your audience based on the genres and authors they like.

Tip: Create a unique ad headline and body copy for each audience you target to increase the chance that your ad will resonate and turn into a sale.

9. Awards

The Audio Publishers Association (www.audiopub.org) holds the annual Audie Awards (it's like the Emmys, but for audiobooks). The Audies recognize distinction in audiobooks and spoken word entertainment across 30 different categories. Entry fees for this award can be a little pricey (\$100 for APA members; \$175 for non-members), but this sort of recognition can go a long way in letting the world know about your audiobook.

Erika Liodice is the author of Empty Arms: A Novel (Dreamspire Press), which is now available in audiobook. She serves as Vice President of the MidAtlantic Book Publishers Association and is a member of the Independent Book Publishers Association. To read more about her publishing journey, you can visit her at erikaliodice.com. This article first appeared on the Writer Unboxed blog (www.writerunboxed.com) and is reprinted with the author's permission.

Still Not in Audiobooks? Tips for Getting Started

BY ERIKA LIODICE

When Audible launched its Audiobook Creation Exchange (ACX) back in 2011, my initial reaction was to ignore it. I wish I could tell you that this decision was rooted in sound logic, but if I'm being totally honest, the very idea of producing an audiobook just seemed overwhelming. This was at a time when I'd finally gotten the whole MOBI vs. EPUB thing straight and the thought of learning a new vernacular threatened to make my head explode. After all, how many times have we writers been promised that something is going to be easy only to learn the hard truth?

I can't pinpoint exactly when the shift occurred, but it seems like the digital publishing conversation changed from e-books to audiobooks overnight. Suddenly people were calling it "the next frontier in digital publishing," and it quickly became impossible to ignore this rapidly growing market segment, which, according to IBISWorld, currently represents about \$1.6 billion (up from \$480 million in 1997). I spent a lot of time thinking about my goals as a writer, one of which is reaching more readers, and I finally decided to take a serious look at audio.

Even though "talking books" have been available since the 1930s (they were originally intended for people with visual impairments), the confluence of digital audio formats, mobile devices, and our "on the go" lifestyle has made audiobooks more affordable, portable, and accessible to a wider audience than ever before, an audience who is embracing the format as a way to multitask. Last year *The New York Times* cited a Bowker survey

that revealed that “among people who have recently bought audiobooks, 47 percent listen while commuting in a car, 25 percent while working around the house and 23 percent while exercising.” Though the audiobook market is smaller than that of print and e-books, if you consider that only a fraction of books make the transition to audio, you could argue that the audiobook market might be an easier place to get discovered. Add to that the fact that audiobook listeners have the most diverse reading habits—“84 percent of audiobook listeners also read a print book in the past year, and 56 percent also read an e-book,” according to Pew Research Internet Project—and you can see how offering your work as an audiobook could translate to e-book and print sales of other titles.

With all of this in mind, I decided that I couldn't ignore audio anymore; it was time to embrace digital publishing's newest technology, vernacular and all. At the beginning of this year, rather than setting my usual resolutions about losing weight and saving money, I set just one: to turn my novel, *Empty Arms*, into an audiobook. It was a long road and it wasn't always easy, but my head didn't explode and I find myself with an approved audiobook to launch and a number of lessons to share with anyone who's thinking of making a similar journey.

Lesson #1: Listen Before You Jump

I'm one of the audiobook multitaskers mentioned above. You'll never find me cleaning the bathroom, ironing, weeding, or even running to the grocery store without being tuned in to a story. If you're thinking about producing an audiobook but you've never “read with your ears,” now is the time to do so. Jumping in without experience in this format will likely leave you feeling lost. You won't know how the opening or closing credits are supposed to sound, how character voices are handled, what makes for a good sample excerpt, or how fast the pacing should be. With that said, be sure to listen to titles in your genre because there are a host of stylistic differences between categories.

Lesson #2: There's No One Right Way

There are a few different options for financing and distributing your audiobook. When it comes to financing your project, you will either “Pay for Production,” which means that you will pay the producer up front and keep all of the royalties (less ACX's split) or you'll enter into a “Royalty Share” deal in which you don't pay anything up front but you split your royalties with the producer when your audiobook starts selling. Both options can be costly. Production quotes for my project started at \$4,000. However, with a royalty share deal there's no limit to how much you could pay in the long run. If your work is already selling well, paying for production up front might make financial sense because the project will likely end up costing you less in the long run. However, if you're a new author, or an author with a limited budget, a royalty share deal could mean the difference between producing an audiobook and not.

The other issue to consider is distribution. If you pay for production, you can choose to distribute your audiobook exclusively through ACX—which will make your title available on Audible, Amazon, and iTunes, and earn you a higher royalty rate—or you can choose non-exclusive distribution, which decreases your royalty but allows you to sell your audiobook wherever you want. As for the royalty share deals, they are automatically locked into exclusive distribution with ACX.

Deciding how to finance and distribute your audiobook is a highly personal decision that should be based on your budget and goals. There's no one right way to do it, only the way that works best for you. For my project, I decided to do a royalty share deal. Avoiding a substantial out-of-pocket investment was appealing, as was the prospect of working with a producer who would have a vested interest in the success of our audiobook. As far as distribution is concerned, I felt confident that *Empty Arms* would find its audience through Audible, Amazon, and iTunes, since they are such large players in the audiobook marketplace.

Lesson #3: Change Is Inevitable

If you use Facebook—or any service, for that matter—you're well aware that your service terms can change at any time, and not necessarily in your favor. Working with ACX is no different. When I first started my audiobook project, ACX promised to match me with a producer and facilitate the entire process—from legal contracts to royalty pay-outs to distribution—and give us a 50 percent cut, which could increase to ▶

Still Not in Audiobooks?

as high as 90 percent, depending on the number of units sold. Based on the value ACX was bringing to the table, that arrangement felt fair. Then, about two months into my project, ACX changed the rules. In a highly criticized move, ACX increased its own cut to a flat 60 percent, leaving rights holders and producers to split the remaining 40 percent, and it eliminated the sliding scale altogether. I was relieved to learn that my project was grandfathered in under the old royalty structure, but it left many people, including myself, feeling disenchanting and uncertain about their future in this format.

Lesson #4: Your Voice Is Not Necessarily the Right Voice for Your Audiobook

While the success of your print and e-books might rely on your literary voice, your audiobook relies on the narrator's physical voice. Even the best story in the world can be destroyed by the wrong voice. The decision to work with a professional narrator or do it yourself trips up many authors. It's one of the most important decisions you'll make, but it really boils down to two key factors: genre and skill. The general rule of thumb is that works of nonfiction are read by the author because it's thought to add authenticity (think of *David and Goliath* written and read by Malcolm Gladwell or *Bossypants*, which is narrated by its author, Tina Fey), while fiction is generally left to professional voice artists who are trained to convey a variety of emotions and character voices (look at *The Hunger Games* series, which was written by Suzanne Collins but narrated by Carolyn McCormick or the *A Game of Thrones* series, which was written by George R.R. Martin but narrated by Roy Dotrice).

With that being said, the author's skill level should also be considered. Not all nonfiction authors have voices that make for pleasant listening. Similarly, if you're a fiction writer who has had some success with public speaking or podcasting, listeners might prefer to hear the story told in your voice (think *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman or *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison).

In my case, the decision was easy. Fiction project + no recording experience = go pro.

Lesson #5: Act Like a Casting Agent

If you decide to work with a narrator, ACX will connect with you an entire community of professionals and allow you to filter the talent pool by certain criteria, like gender, age, language, dialect, and vocal qualities (e.g. raspy, nasal, shy). Since *Empty Arms* is told from the perspective of an infertile woman in her late 30s who is haunted by the baby girl she surrendered for adoption when she was 16, I searched for a female narrator in her 30s or 40s with a "wistful" voice.

Voice artists matching your criteria will audition for your project, using a script that you will provide. Don't just use Chapter 1 as your audition script because it's the easy choice; pick a section that contains several characters and some heated drama to really get a feel for how each narrator handles different voices and the level of their acting skills. And make sure your audition script is long enough to give you an accurate sense of what it will be like to listen to that voice for an extended period of time. I recommend a 10- to 15-minute read.

I ended up using Chapter 1 for my audition script because it featured multiple characters, an emotionally charged scene in which my protagonist and her husband find out that they can't have children, and it came in at just over 2,300 words, which translated into a 15-minute read. Whether you decide to use your first chapter or a scene later in the book, it's always helpful to give the narrator some context, so they understand the tone and aren't jumping in blind.

Once your project is open for auditions, don't just sit back and wait for people to take notice. Be proactive by searching ACX's database for narrators who would be a good fit and then send them a message describing the project and inviting them to audition.

As the auditions roll in and you narrow down your favorites, visit Audible to look up other books they've narrated and read the reviews. Audible has ratings and reviews specific to performance, as well as the story itself, so you can see how readers have responded to the narrator's past work.

Lesson #6: Your Narrator Will Also Be Your Business Partner

When choosing a narrator, don't just evaluate the person's vocal qualities and production experience, but also their ability to help you market your final product, especially if you're doing a royalty share deal. When I chose my narrator, Brooke Boertzel, it wasn't just because she had the right voice, an MFA in Acting from the Actors Studio Drama School, an in-home production studio, and 25 years of experience in the business, it was because I felt that she would be committed to the project's success, both during production and beyond.

My instinct about Brooke was proven correct when we hit a stumbling block in the middle of production. I wanted to add music to the opening and closing credits and dream sequences, but working with royalty-free stock music was proving to be complicated from a rights perspective. Rather than giving up and proceeding without music, Brooke circumvented the entire issue by composing custom tracks that we were able to use without limitation. And now that the audiobook is for sale, she's tapping into her resources and contacts to help spread the word.

Lesson #7: Get on the Same Page Before You Start Recording

Your readers don't necessarily imagine your characters the same way you do, so why would your narrator? Avoid being surprised by your narrator's interpretation of what your characters sound like by sharing your vision up front. For *Empty Arms*, I told Brooke that I wanted the evil nurse to have a rough, smoker's voice, while one of the doctors needed to sound elderly and hard of hearing. I thought my protagonist's best friend should sound cheerful with sadness brewing right beneath the surface, and I envisioned the detective that my protagonist hires to find her long lost daughter sounding like an arrogant used car salesman. By knowing these things up front, Brooke was able to bring my characters to life in a way that sounded authentic to me.

Lesson #8: Develop a Clear-Cut Process for Reviews

Edits can get messy. There's pacing, inflection, pronunciation, and a whole host of other issues that will need changing. And since this is a digital audio recording, not a manuscript that can be marked up with a red pen, communicating these changes can be a nightmare. To ensure it goes smoothly, work with your narrator to develop a clear-cut process for identifying, communicating, and implementing changes.

For us, it was all about workflow. When Brooke was in "narrator mode," she didn't want to disrupt her flow by switching to "producer mode" to make edits. So we agreed that Brooke would record the entire first draft and then go back and work on my edits. We also decided that she would send me the chapters as she recorded them, rather than in one big batch. I knew that I wouldn't have the stamina to review the entire recording in one sitting, so I tackled it three to four chapters at a time.

To capture my feedback, we developed a form that identified the time stamp in the recording, the word or phrase that posed a problem, and my direction about the editing that needed to take place. Here's what it looked like:

<u>Time Stamp</u>	<u>Word or Phrase</u>	<u>Edit</u>
0:58	But she is forever out of reach.	Could you make your voice trail off at the end of this sentence? I think that will help set this apart as a dream and make for a nice transition.

In addition to reducing confusion on Brooke's end, capturing my feedback in this format made it easy for me to listen to the updated recording and verify that all of the changes had been made to my satisfaction.

Lesson #9: It Takes Longer Than You Probably Expect

When you begin producing an audiobook, ACX requires you to set timelines and milestones to keep everyone on track. Knowing that I tend to underestimate these sorts of things, I decided *Continued on page 11* ▶

The New “It” Media Opportunity

BY SHARON BIALLY

Around the time blogs first started catching on, writer Julie Powell decided—just for the heck of it—to cook every recipe in Julia Child’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and chronicle the experience on her blog.

We all know her story’s happy ending.

Soon every writer was launching or joining a blog. So was every mom, every foodie, every fitness buff, bibliophile, and investment guru. For fun and fulfillment, but also, quite often, in the hopes of increasing discoverability. And we also know this story’s ending: a blogosphere that wound up as bloated and oversaturated as any literary agent’s slush pile.

Luckily the one constant in today’s media, which includes the online world, is change. And as media outlets have gone increasingly digital, a whole new category of outlets has emerged: the highly visible, online-only publication. Consider, *The Millions* or *The Huffington Post*. These outlets have all but replaced personal blogs as a means for getting your name out there. Most offer superb opportunities for writers to submit and publish articles, opinion pieces, and blog posts. And publishing one guest piece in an outlet like *The Huffington Post* can be equal to years of blogging in terms of the number of readers who stop by, comment, and tweet.

In fact, as the media landscape continues to change, contributing pieces to big online outlets is becoming the new “it” media opportunity. It’s also one of the hands-down smartest ways to build a strong and enduring media platform. There are a few important reasons. First, landing a published piece in a high-profile online outlet is a lot more accessible than say, landing a TV, radio, or newspaper interview. Even as costly air time and space for printed news becomes painfully limited, online publications are hungry for good content. Their livelihood usually depends on traffic and clicks, and content—lots of it—is needed to generate both.

Second, there’s the SEO factor. The internet has become the world’s main source for general research. That includes both consumers looking for their next vacation spot—or, ahem, book—and the media itself scouting for good news stories and sources (meaning people who can comment on those stories in an interview). Publishing articles on sites with high search engine rankings vastly increases the likelihood that your name—and your ideas, your story, your book—will be picked up by consumers or reporters searching for someone like you.

There’s also the cachet these articles add to your bio. It’s a huge plus when you can say to literary agents, publishers, or journalists that you’re a regular contributor to *The Huffington Post*. Or *Forbes*, *The Atlantic*, *Cognoscenti*, *Slate*, or *Salon.com*—to name just a few. For example, recently a self-published author whose PR I’d handled, Joe Burgo, landed an impressive publishing deal for his next book. Among other things, our work together had helped him become a regular contributor to *The Atlantic*. After his deal was set—and featured in Publishers Lunch Deluxe—Joe told me that the fact that that he contributes regularly to *The Atlantic* had made a big difference. Its prestige gave him instant credibility, and an editor at Simon & Schuster had actually read Joe’s articles and knew who he was before his agent sent in his proposal.

Through our work together, Joe had also become a regular blogger for *Psychology Today*, and when he sent out email queries, he mentioned this in his subject line. Within a few hours he had more than 10 agents

ready to read his proposal. Both of these gigs have also helped generate press opportunities for Joe in outlets like *USA Today*, *Vogue*, and Canadian national TV.

Of course, as with anything, there are caveats. The first one relates to the word already used here several times: “regular.” While it never hurts to submit and publish the occasional article here and there, it’s best for your media platform if they appear fairly frequently and continue over time.

The other caveat has to do with topic. To write your way to a media platform, you need to focus on topics that’ll interest broad groups of people. Unfortunately, writing about writing just doesn’t cut it: it’s far too small of a niche. Joe, who’s a psychotherapist, writes a lot about narcissism and its role in high profile news stories like bullying and Lance Armstrong. Narcissism also happens to be a strong theme in both his fiction and nonfiction work. Author Ron MacLean has written about social change movements and father-son relationships, both of which are central to his latest novel, *Headlong*. Writer Rosanna Fay crafts both fiction and guest articles about aging.

While you most likely won’t become the next Julie Powell, authoring articles and guest posts also happens to be one of the rare areas of publicity where you stand a good chance of coverage, can control your message without it getting snipped into meaningless sound bites, and—bonus—get to write!

Sharon Bially is a professional publicist with over 20 years of experience and the independent author of the novel Veronica’s Nap. This article first appeared on her website, BooksSavvyPR (www.booksavvypr.com) and is reprinted with the author’s permission.

Still Not in Audiobooks?

Continued from page 9 ▶

to set my project completion date three months out. To me, that seemed like ample time to produce an audiobook.

It wasn’t. From a production perspective, if you’re working with an experienced narrator/producer, you can expect one “finished hour” of audio to take about four hours of editing. This means that an audiobook that takes ten hours to listen to took 40 hours to produce. Less experienced producers can take much longer. You also need to account for all of the time you’re going to spend listening to the recording, identifying changes, and re-reviewing. On top of that, you’ve got to factor in time for ACX to perform its quality check, which is upwards of 10 to 14 business days. If they come back with changes—which they did a couple of times for our project—you’ve got to add in more editing time and another 10 to 14 business days every time it goes back to ACX.

What seemed like a reasonable timeline in the beginning is humorous to me now. Despite Brooke’s experience and the fact that we worked together like a well-oiled machine, the project that I thought would take three months ended up taking six.

Lesson #10: It’s More Rewarding Than You Imagine

Not only did it make good business sense for me to release *Empty Arms* as an audiobook, I also thought it would be pretty cool. I never imagined how moved I’d be to hear my characters and their journeys brought to life in this way. Though the process had its ups and downs, nothing surprised me as much as the immense pride I’ve felt about the product we produced.

Erika Liodice is the author of Empty Arms: A Novel (Dreamspire Press), which is now available in audiobook. She serves as Vice President of the MidAtlantic Book Publishers Association and is a member of the Independent Book Publishers Association. To read more about her publishing journey, you can visit her at erikaliodice.com. This article first appeared on the Writer Unboxed blog (www.writerunboxed.com) and is reprinted with the author’s permission.

Define Your Reason For Writing

BY DENISE A. AGNEW

Why Are You Writing?

Have you thought about why you're writing? Most likely you're writing because you love it and it makes you happy to bring stories to life. Everyone's motivations for writing are different, no matter the genre or literary aspirations. You may not have taken the time to think of your creative goals. Why are they important? Because if you don't define why you're writing and what you want to do with that writing in the future, you may be led around by the nose and not even realize it. As a creativity coach, I believe a writer should decide for themselves what they value about writing and being a published author. Unfortunately, a large percentage of people become disillusioned by the publishing world when they realize their goals don't match up with what they're told they "should" value as a writer.

The writing world is changing, to use a cliché, by the minute. Over the last ten years or more, the publishing landscape has morphed from "my way or the highway" thinking to a myriad of possibilities and options for writers who want to publish their work. Just because the writing world is changing doesn't mean that organizations or writers themselves embrace the changes. How writers can navigate this new world without losing their minds is a question worth exploring. If you know what you want and don't allow other people to tell you what you should want, you'll be a much happier writer.

The Shoulds, Absolutes, Truths, and Falsehoods

You may not have given much thought to what the publishing world says you should want. Some messages you might hear include:

You should aspire to be a New York Times best-seller. Maybe. Maybe not. Ask yourself why it is important. Not all New York Times best-sellers make oodles of money. Understand why this is important to you if it is at all. There are things you may have to do to reach *New York Times* best-seller status that you'd rather not do.

You should want to be traditionally published. Perhaps in the old days this was true. Not always true now. There are advantages and disadvantages to traditional publishing.

You should hate traditional publishing houses and have nothing to do with them. This can be debated. A traditional publishing career is a wonderful fit for some authors and not for others. Self-publishing can be wonderful, and yet it isn't a fit for everyone.

You should write anything if there's enough money attached to it. As long as you're aware of your motivations and believe you're happy writing that article/book/whatever for money, there's no problem. If it makes you happy, it's all good. Pay attention to your satisfaction/happiness level. Is there a book you want to write but you keep putting it off to satisfy a "should?" Maybe your creativity is sinking into the toilet. It could be because you're continually ignoring your creative desires in favor of more "shoulds."

You don't need an agent. Sometimes you don't. If you are self-publishing or working with a small publishing house, you probably don't need one. If you're trying to break into the traditional publishing houses, you might need one. It ups your odds of a traditional house paying attention to your manuscript if you have an

agent. Also, it depends on your skills/knowledge of contracts. Sometimes you're better off running a publishing contract through a literary lawyer who you pay for advice a single contract at a time. Again, define why you want an agent.

You must have an agent. False.

Having an agent will ensure you get a traditional publishing contract. False. Though it can increase your chances, there is absolutely no guarantee. Many times an editor may love your story, but if the marketing department can't decide where to slot the story you may not get the contract.

A good book will always find a home with a publishing house. False. Sometimes it won't. Publishing is a business. If your book is outside the box, the chances are less likely it will find a home. A falsehood bandied about in the publishing world is that editors are looking for fresh and new. What they really mean is fresh but not *too* fresh or *too* different. An individual editor may genuinely desire a truly unique story, but that doesn't mean they can sell it to the powers-that-be. A twist on the same-ole-same-ole can be a big hit if you find the right editor at the right time and the marketing department believes the publishing house will make good money with the book. Don't ever assume that there was anything wrong with your book just because it was rejected or didn't make gobs of money. There's a possibility there was absolutely nothing wrong with your book. Remember there are no absolutes. There could be as many reasons why your book hasn't been published as there are stars in the sky.

You can't make any money being self-published. Sometimes you can't and sometimes you can.

You can't make any money in traditional publishing (and/or small press). Sometimes you can. Sometimes you can't.

These points are only a small number of the shoulds and absolutes. Cogitate on these points and use them to help you define why you're writing and what you wish to get out of it.

What Matters To You

Questions to consider:

Why do you want to be published? I know this sounds like a no-duh question, but think hard. Do you want to be published so that others can read your work? Do you aspire to make the *New York Times* best-seller list? Why? Yeah, I asked that out loud once before. Consider your reasons and make a list. Why do you believe it is important to make a best-seller list? Is it because everyone says it is, or because you value it?

Are you writing for the love of your art and creativity? Do you feel as if something is missing or that your life has less meaning when you aren't engaging in your creativity? Or could you be just as happy not writing and doing something else where you could make a living? There is nothing wrong with writing and making money, of course, but if you are writing only to make money and aren't enjoying the endeavor, it may be time to reassess.

The Highway Is Open

Now is a wonderful time to be an author. If you're going into the writing world with eyes wide open, armed with understanding, you'll go far. Enjoy the open road!

Denise A. Agnew is the author of over 57 novels. Romantic Times Book Reviews calls her romantic suspense novels "top-notch," and she's received their coveted TOP PICK rating. Denise has written paranormal, romantic comedy, contemporary, fantasy, historical, erotic romance, and romantic suspense. Archaeology and archery have crept into her work, and travels through England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have added to a lifetime of story ideas. A paranormal investigator, Denise looks forward to exploring the unknown. Denise is also training to be a creativity coach. Visit Denise's website at www.deniseagnew.com.



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

Not Your Usual Writing Advice

By JoAnn Grote

Turning Tides

“If I had to select one quality, one personal characteristic that I regard as being highly correlated with success, whatever the field, I would pick the trait of persistence.

– Richard DeVos, Amway Co-founder

Back in the Dark Ages, before I was published in book format, I attended a writers’ workshop led by NINC member Judy Duenow. Judy shared more than one piece of wisdom on the writing life that day. One gem was, “I think too many people give up right before they reach the goal.”

The goal she spoke of was publication. Judy’s reference wasn’t to the many wanna-be writers who think writing would be a lazy way to make a living, those who want the books to write themselves, those who never take the time to study and practice writing, or to learn about the publishing world. She was speaking of those who gave up their dreams after years of hard work learning and perfecting their craft, after years of money and time spent attending conferences to learn the business and to make contacts. Where it appeared to the writers that doors weren’t opening, to Judy it appeared the writers had built up years of steam and speed and energy, like an old-fashioned locomotive puffing up a hill, and had finally reached the place for the doors to open—but they turned and walked away before they saw them open, so never enjoyed the results of their efforts.

You might be nodding in agreement as you read this, recalling a time your dream to be a published writer would have vanished if you had quit when exhausted from the struggle, or remembering unpublished writers who struggled alongside you in pursuit of their first publishing contract (or for our indie-only published members, to finish and upload their first book), but who felt they’d fought the good fight and lost. They quit, you didn’t, and that made all the difference.

Yet publication is never the true goal. For most writers, the basic goal is to write our stories, and to find readers who love them. The first step on the writer’s journey isn’t publication, traditional or indie. The first step, the one that makes the rest of the journey possible, is putting the first words of the first story on paper or screen. All the way through one’s writing career, it remains the same: the first step (and the second, and the third, ad infinitum) is to put the words down, to make the stories tangible in order to share them with readers. The first agent, the first contract, the first upload, the second contract, a contract with a certain publisher, the best-sellers list, making a certain amount of money from our books—these aren’t goals, but markers.

Every NINC member has discovered that reaching the marker of signing that first contract or uploading that first book was only replaced by another marker, by more to learn, and more ways to grow in craft. Judy’s theory applies to every marker in the writing life (and all other areas of life).

The theory applies when one’s writing world is turned upside down by things within the publishing world that are outside one’s control: an editor leaves, a line is dropped, or a type of story is no longer popular. Such events can cause a writer to enter a period where every proposal is returned without an offer, and to spiral into despair.

Many writers who hung on by their fingernails to the hope of climbing out of the deep hole into which their careers appeared to have plummeted have been rewarded for their persistence by reconnecting with readers through indie-publishing. To enter the indie-publishing world required (or perhaps more accurately, requires, as this and all areas of publishing continue to morph) its own form of persistence through learning the ins-and-outs of a different publishing world.

Judy's theory also applies when the deep need to change the type of book one writes can throw a writer into yet another period of learning, questioning whether he or she will ever master a new style, and finding a way to reach new readers or draw former readers into a different story world.

In every case, Judy's theory applies: Hold on, and a door will eventually open, the locomotive will reach full steam/power, or the tide will finally turn.

But how does a writer persist after exhausting every avenue he/she knows to reach the next milestone? For many writers, remaining a member of NINC or other writers' groups was one of the ways they hung on through the years that felt like the end rather than a transition period.

We may have put all kinds of restrictions on how we can continue to travel along our paths as writers, but that's usually because we've bought into the idea that those restrictions are necessary. Sometimes, we believe the only way to reach a specific milestone is through what we have (or someone else has) identified as the "right," or the "only," door. Yet rooms often have more than one door, and there's often more than one door available to reach the next milestone. Maybe what a writer thinks is a door isn't a door for him/her at all. The famous fashion designer Coco Chanel advised, "Don't spend time beating on a wall, hoping to transform it into a door." If you are waiting for a specific door to open, consider stepping back far enough to take a good look. Are you pounding on a wall? Maybe you need to take a few steps down the hall to reach the door. For that matter, the hallway may be filled with doors that will help you reach the next milestone. Indie publishing is a door that's always been available, but most of us did not recognize it as a viable door until the last few years.

If one can't see the next step to take, the best thing to do is go back to the very first step in a writers' career: write. Write the story for which you've only written a synopsis, or write a new story. Isn't that the actual goal anyway, writing your stories?

Using our creativity to develop our stories also creates excitement within us. That energy itself opens doors, according to the Law of Attraction. The joy of making a story in your mind come to life on the page also replaces, at least for a while, the energy spent worrying whether the story will sell. The jazz musician Duke Ellington said, "I merely took the energy it takes to pout and wrote some blues."

I don't know where Judy discovered the theory, but she wasn't the first to see it. It's been around a long time. The famous author of the mid-1800s, Harriet Beecher Stowe, advised, "When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you till it seems you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

No one can make a tide to turn, but in its own time, it *will* turn, and that is a force no one can stop.

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.

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes

Perseus Books Group & Amazon

While not confirmed by PBG, sources are reporting an agreement on new e-book terms has been reached with Amazon and over 400 independent publishers in the Constellation e-book distribution service. Amazon would not comment when contacted. There is much speculation on the agreement since Amazon v. Hachette continues. Has PBG signed on issues that Hachette will not?

PW Daily



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

Classifying Income

Although every dollar you earn might look just like the next, when it comes to the IRS all income is not created equal. The IRS distinguishes between salaries/wages, self-employment income, long-term/short-term capital gains, interest, dividends/qualified dividends, royalties, and passive income, just to name a few categories.

Different types of income are taxed differently. For instance, the IRS applies ordinary income tax rates to self-employment income and wages, while qualified dividends and long-term capital gains are subject to lower capital gains tax rates. Moreover, some types of income, such as wages and self-employment income, are subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes. Other types of income, such as rental income and certain royalty income, such as royalties for celebrity endorsements, are not subject to Social Security or Medicare taxes. Still other income, such as income on municipal bonds, is exempt from federal income tax.

Wages and self-employment income up to an annual wage base limit are subject to Social Security taxes of 12.4 percent. The limit for 2014 is \$117,000, meaning no Social Security tax is owed on wages or self-employment earnings above this amount. Unlike Social Security taxes, the Medicare tax of 2.9 percent applies to unlimited amounts of wages and self-employment income. Thus, it is to a taxpayer's advantage to shift income out of the self-employment category and into categories not subject to these taxes when legally possible.

Many of you have likely heard about the pending lawsuit between author Karin Slaughter and the IRS. If not, the pertinent facts can be gleaned from this *Forbes* article:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/janetnovack/2014/09/05/tax-thriller-best-selling-crime-writer-karin-slaughter-versus-the-irs/>

At issue in this case is the classification of income paid to the author. The IRS contends that amounts paid by the publisher represent compensation for the author's personal services in writing novels and that, because the author is regularly engaged in the business of writing, the author must report the earnings on Schedule C and pay the applicable Social Security and Medicare taxes. The author contends that a significant portion of the payment represents compensation for the use of her name, image, fan base, and intellectual property rights. The author has argued that such compensation should be reported on Schedule E rather than Schedule C, and that such earnings are not subject to self-employment taxes.

Who's right in this case? Only time will tell. Unfortunately, there is apparently no legal precedent specifically involving a writer, and the attorneys for both sides are having to look outside the publishing world, to cases involving musicians and athletes, to argue their cases. Still, though there is no definitive case law regarding authors, the existing case law indicates that there are various factors the court is likely to consider in this type of case.

The court will surely take a look at the terms of the contract between the author and the publisher. If the terms clearly state that a portion of the payment from the publisher to the author represents payment not for personal services in writing the books, but rather for the use of an author's name and image, it is more likely the court will find in the author's favor. Keep in mind, however, that a court is free to ignore contract terms if they do not reflect true economic reality. If the court is convinced the arrangement lacks true substance and is a mere tax avoidance strategy, the court can and will ignore contract terms purporting

to establish the character of income.

In determining whether an author has truly been paid for the use of the author's name or image, the court would consider how well-known the author is. An author whose name is recognized by many would be more likely to prevail than an author who is new to the writing world and/or not well known. More and more, we are seeing well-established authors lend their names to works produced, either entirely or in part, by other authors. In such cases, where an author's name has become a brand of sorts, I would expect the IRS and courts would be more likely to treat part of the author's income as payment for use of the author's name rather than for the author's personal services.

If the cases involving athlete endorsements are any indicator, the IRS will consider how critical the author's name recognition and reputation are as compared to the author's writing skills. For example, the courts have considered whether payments to a well-known athlete depended on his athletic performance. When actual performance has little or no bearing on the amount paid to the athlete, the payment is more likely to be treated as an endorsement royalty rather than a payment for personal services. Similarly, the more the payment represents compensation for name recognition or reputation as opposed to writing skill and actual book sales, the more likely it is that the payment will be treated as Schedule E income rather than royalties for the author's personal services in writing books.

Whether the Slaughter case will be settled or will play out in court is anyone's guess, but it's definitely something to keep an eye on. Should she prevail, many popular writers may wish to use the precedent in contract negotiations with their publishers.

Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney who writes romance and humorous romantic mysteries.

Business Briefs

Writer v. Publisher

The story continues with Ellora's Cave and author Jane Litte. EC filed a libel and defamation suit against Litte in September. The suit asks for injunctive relief from the author's blog posts and \$25,000+ in damages. This suit was filed by CEO Patty Marks and Tina Engler aka Jaid Black, EC's founders and Marks' daughter. Jane Litte's September 14 blog, *The Curious Case of Ellora's Cave*, covers the history of the publisher and the recent financial problems. (<http://dearauthor.com/misc/the-curious-case-of-elloras-cave/>)

PW Daily

Simon & Schuster takes Sweden

Hurra & Leve! SS has signed with the Scandinavian e-book service Mofibo for Denmark and Sweden. This will cover 20,000 backlist titles in English and local languages. Mofibo has a 60 percent share of the Danish e-book market and expanded into Sweden at the beginning of October. Titles include multiple types, including crime, romance, and children's.

PW Daily

High Royalties & HC?

HarperCollins has devised a plan for higher royalties in direct sales. Authors are being offered the option of selling directly from the recently revised HC web page. The authors would place an HC shopping cart button on their own web page and receive an additional 10 percent royalty rate on print, e-books, and physical audio products.

PW Daily

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Animal House

“Cats were the gangsters of the animal world, living outside the law and often dying there.

— Stephen King, *Pet Sematary*

“The most affectionate creature in the world is a wet dog.”

— Ambrose Bierce

I wash my hands with disinfectant soap for the 50th (or so) time today, then trip over the puppy as I exit the bathroom and go in search of the cup of coffee I made to help me stay awake and finish my overdue *Nink* column.

I go into my office and immediately find a suspicious trail of cat litter leading to the closet door. Coffee-hunt forgotten, I open the closet and see that, sure enough, the puppy has discovered the kitty litter and kitten chow I’ve been trying to keep a secret from her all week. She looks at me innocently, tail wagging, pretending she doesn’t even know that closet is *there*.

I glance at my neglected keyboard and the computer screen where my barely-started column, due days ago, looks back at me. Then I sigh and go downstairs to get the dustbuster. (I am a neat freak. Although having five cats and a dog in the house this month means my standards are slipping, I definitely cannot focus if there’s kitty litter all over the floor of my office.)

While I’m downstairs, I let the puppy out, let her back in, and wipe her paws (it’s raining and muddy out there). Then I wipe her chin and the kitchen floor after she takes a drink. She, of course, takes one more sip of water and dashes off, dribbling all over my house as I run after her with my towel, crying, “Wait! No! Stop!” (Today I broke down and ordered a special water bowl for messy drinkers.)

I trip over a kitten and stagger sideways into the puppy crate. By the time I’m standing upright again, the yowling kitten is long gone, but an adult cat is now standing before me. He glares in silent accusation and meows reproachfully. I realize that I have completely forgotten to visit the bachelor pad today—the area of the basement where the three adult male cats have their litter boxes and dry food. I go down to the very bottom of this tall, narrow Victorian townhouse and find that, sure enough, the cat bowls are empty, and the litter boxes need cleaning.

After these tasks are done, I go back upstairs, hoping to find my coffee and get to work. I’m already past the extension of the extension for my column deadline.

I find my coffee in the bedroom. It’s cold, of course. The puppy jumps on the unmade bed, and I realize that I meant to make it thirteen hours ago, so that dirty paw prints, large and small, would get only on the top cover rather than on the sheets I sleep between. I tell the puppy to get off the bed, so that I can make it now (better late than never). Riona is a six-month-old golden retriever who weighs close to 50 pounds, and she deliberately flattens herself into the mattress now, turning into a giant furry pancake that I have to peel off the bed. I deposit her on the floor, and as I turn around to start making the bed, she jumps back on it. I peel her off again and scold her. While I am doing so, Achilles, the largest of the adult male cats, jumps on the

bed. A moment later, so does Silkie, one of the kittens. As I remove them from the bed, Riona jumps back on. And so on.

I give up the idea of making the bed and take my cold coffee back to the office. I must finish my column!

This menagerie is not (thank God!) my regular lifestyle. If it were, I'd have to leave home. I am not up to the demands of five cats and a dog, three of them underage and sick.

Speaking of which, as I re-enter the office, I realize that it's time to give the kittens their various medications. I set down the cold coffee, turn my back yet again on the keyboard, pause briefly to investigate what the puppy is eating (I think it used to be a cat toy, but now it's just a drooly glob), and start dosing the kittens. There is much yowling and scratching (also much panting and whining, since the puppy persists in thinking these nasty medications are treats in disguise). We've been doing this several times a day since the kittens arrived. Happily, they're getting healthier, and we should be finished with all this in a few days.

(Pause to squirt Hector, a greedy adult cat, with the water bottle. He knows damn well he's not allowed in the office closet to raid the kitten chow.)

As recounted in this column in March, I currently volunteer as a puppy foster for a nonprofit organization that trains service dogs for children. My first foster puppy, Snap, now works as a seizure-alert dog for a little girl in Florida.

After Snap finished his six-month foster period with me and returned to his training center, I adopted two young black cats, Hector & Achilles, from a local rescue group. (When researching cat adoption, I was shocked to learn how much superstition still surrounds black cats in the 21st century and how many of them are abandoned, killed, abused, and/or never adopted.) A month or two later, I also adopted an extremely shy black tuxedo cat named Poe. He may always keep his distance from me, but he's a polite housecat who gets along well with the other animals, and it somehow seems fitting there's a formally dressed fellow named Poe lurking and skulking in my 19th century house.

With those three cats as the permanent residents, I finished my latest book via the usual long hours of focused, frantic writing to get the book done before the last-ditch date for delivery. There were some days that my work schedule fell apart, such as the night Hector dismantled a screen on a second floor window and fell out of it—a drop of twenty feet. But such mishaps notwithstanding, I am able to maintain my workload with three cats in the house.

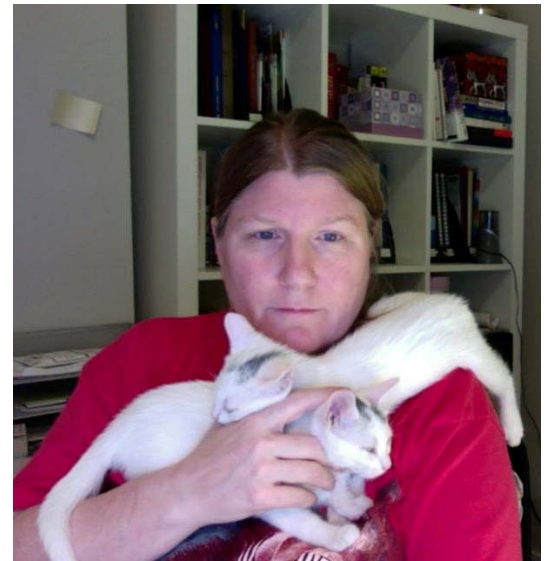
It's the *additional* three animals that have pushed me over the edge. Fortunately, though, they're all short-term residents.

(Pause to go investigate feline screeching downstairs. Find Pixie stuck in the puppygate that keeps Riona out of the adult cats' basement lair.)

Pixie and Silkie are two white female kittens rescued by the group from whom I adopted my cats. They urgently needed a foster home, and I decided to take them. One key reason is that once they're vaccinated, spayed, and healthy, cute white kittens are highly adoptable, so I knew they wouldn't be moving in here permanently. They mostly live in my office, though they're allowed to mingle with the rest of the household now that their health is much improved. So I've been writing all this month with one kitten on my shoulder and another clinging to my chest (and if I don't cooperate, I wind up with horribly clawed legs), which slows me down quite a bit.

(Pause to go investigate cobra-like hissing in hallway. Find nothing there. On my way back to the office, I make a slight detour to open the washing machine and look inside. I found Hector in there a few nights ago—about 90 seconds *after* I started the wash cycle—and I'm still not recovered from that.)

At some point after adopting the three male cats and before getting the kittens, I got my second foster puppy, Riona. She was only here briefly before it became apparent that she was very sick (I spent the time constantly cleaning up diarrhea, vomit, and urine) and needed to return to her organization for medical treatment.



Intrepid columnist models latest in cat boa attire.

(Pause to investigate why Achilles is screaming as if dying in agony. Discover that he's upset I've closed the office door in an attempt to get some writing space.)

Riona is much better now and has returned here to continue her foster experience, but she's still got some lingering health issues I'm dealing with. I'm also discovering that keeping a mostly-healthy puppy out of multiple cat bowls and litter boxes on multiple floors of the house is a task that would defeat Patton and Eisenhower, never mind *me*.

(Pause to extract tiny needle-like kitten claws from my leg.)

I know there are superbeings among you who can whelp a herd of wildebeest, raise a dozen kids, volunteer for the fire department, hold down a day job, and still get all your writing done—and on time!

(Pause to remove something unidentifiable from Riona's mouth.)

I, however, am stretched to the limit of my abilities by caring for six domestic animals (two of them almost microscopically tiny) in my little townhouse while trying to maintain some semblance of a work schedule.

(Just realized that I still haven't given Silkie her icky-sticky yellow medicine yet. Wish Achilles would stop crying in the hallway. Must walk Riona again.)

I reach the end of my *Nink* column with a sigh of relief, hit "send," and then tell all the critters that Mommy needs a big glass of wine and some QUIET TIME now.

At this point, Laura Resnick doesn't even remember what her next release is or what she's working on now.

Business Briefs

Authors United and DOJ

At the end of September, Douglas Preston (facilitator for Authors United) stated the group will be contacting the Department of Justice concerning an antitrust inquiry against Amazon business practices. This is the third step in the AU program. The first step was a full page ad in the *New York Times*, August 6, signed by the 900 members of the group, urging letters be sent to Jeff Bezos, which was followed by the group sending a letter via FedEx to the Amazon board of directors to determine if they approved the book sanctioning policy. In a related story, Authors Guild notified members that AG hosted a meeting in August between authors and the Department of Justice over the same issue.

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