



MINK

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President's Voice

By Diana Peterfreund



We've entered the dreary season here in DC, when the fog and rain seem to settle in place forever.

But the damp weather will not dampen my spirits. My baby is finally sleeping through the night, my latest manuscript has gone off to copyedits after what seemed like endless rounds of rewrites, and the 2016 NINC Conference: Master Class is shaping up nicely.

Make sure to read Conference Chair Julie Leto's report in this issue to learn about the exciting new developments we have in store this year.

As the president of an organization filled with such accomplished and varied authors, I made it a point this month to visit the websites (or otherwise Google) each of our illustrious members and familiarize myself with your work.

Wow! I was blown away by the talent, creativity, and business know-how of the people who make up NINC.

I learned all kinds of interesting facts – did you know that 46 percent of our members are national bestsellers, with more than 180 on the *USA Today* bestseller list, and more than 160 who have listed with the *New York Times*?



THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
OF MULTI-PUBLISHED NOVELISTS

NINC BY THE NUMBERS

Our 700 members are innovators in style, storytelling, marketing, and bookselling. We have published in every genre of fiction and appeared on every major bestseller list. We have over a quarter century experience advocating on behalf of traditionally published novelists, and as frontrunners in the digital revolution, NINC was among the first writing organizations to welcome self-published authors as well. We now serve the needs of all career novelists, regardless of how they bring their work to readers.



All NINC members have published at least two novels, with an average of sixteen. Many have published over a hundred!



46% of our members have appeared on a national bestseller list, including:

- Over 180 USA Today Bestselling Authors
- Over 160 New York Times Bestselling Authors
- Seven #1 NYT Bestselling Authors



55% of our members are published in romance or women's fiction



30% of our members are published in science fiction/fantasy



20% of our members are published in mystery/suspense



14% of our members are published in young adult or children's fiction

"By far the most professional and established group of authors I've ever spoken to." - Jane Friedman, The Hot Sheet

Join us at ninc.com

How's that for inspiration?

I learned about all the exciting developments in our members' careers—new series, new publishers, bestsellers, movie options, collaborations—and that's just the book stuff.

Some of our savvy members are even moving beyond the realm of novels, from branching into the field of designing coloring books (Susan Gable) to having characters from her children's books turned into plush toys (Shirley Parenteau).

Honestly, if I named the exciting projects each of our members are leaping into, you'd never get to the meat of this newsletter.

And you certainly don't want to miss out. This month brings articles on adding tension to your dialogue, tackling line edits for advanced authors, hiring a freelance editor, more on blurbs and website marketing, and much, much more.

I hope you find their insights as inspiring and helpful as I did. Perhaps one of these articles contains the nudge you need to bring your writing or career to the next level.

If, like me, you are looking at 2016 as a “building year” (pregnancy and baby brain took a lot out of me), I hope the articles in this issue will help jumpstart your creativity and help you get back to work.

Spring is just around the corner, and if I squint through my rain-spattered window, I can just about see the sun start to peek out from behind the clouds.

Happy writing!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana". The letter "D" is large and circular, with the rest of the name written in a cursive, flowing script.

Diana Peterfreund is NINC's 2016 president. She writes YA and middle grade novels as Diana and new adult romance as Viv Daniels.

NINC Master Class

The 2016 conference will accelerate your business and hone your craft

By Julie Leto



Plans for the 2016 conference have begun in earnest and registration is progressing at an exciting pace. More than 160 people have already registered for the conference and the committee is gearing up to put on another amazing event.

Our first exciting announcement is that this year, we have not only opened registration to NINC member author assistants, but we are putting together a special track of classes just for them.

Although we're in the beginning stages of planning, we have an assistant-lead programming committee that will organize at least six workshops or panels (two each day) and at least two Night Owl panels for assistants only.

Notice that I said *at least*. We're trying to strike a balance between offering programming specifically for assistants *and* giving assistants the option of attending the main conference workshops that apply to their jobs.

Assistant registration will be capped at 50 because of space limitations. If you're thinking of registering your assistant, now is the time.

What is Master Class?

The main programming will be geared toward the conference theme "Master Class".

Given the level of experience of NINC members, it's clear that our members are "masters". We've written a lot of books, and produced and distributed them many different ways. We've had agents and we've gone out on our own.

We've read a lot of contracts. We've hired publicists, lawyers, accountants and support staff. (And sometimes, we've fired them.)

So for this conference, the committee will kick content up a notch to dig into the topics that make up the foundation of our business, doing so under the tutelage of people who will either teach us something new or guide us to see things in a new way.

NINC's conference has become famous for our focus on the business side of publishing—and that will not change.

However, members have been asking for workshops that explore areas of craft and

creativity. The only way we can do that is by focusing on these topics at a *masters* level.

NINC members don't want to hear the same concepts we've heard a hundred times before—but we're not a close-minded group. If we have a chance to hear something at a deeper level or a new way, we'll take it!

Who are these *masters*?

Ah, that's the question of the moment.

We intend to make speaker announcements very, very soon. To be among the first to hear, make sure you are signed on to the NINCLink email loop and, for conference registrants, the BeachNINC2016 loop.

Will beginners be left out?

Are you kidding? This is NINC!

We try to never leave any of our members out. While the majority of our members have published more than ten books (sometimes many more!) we are acutely aware that "new" is a relative term.

Some new-to-NINC members have only published the requisite two books before attending a conference. Some NINC members have published in one genre and are new to another. Many members have been traditionally published and are dipping their toes into the independent model, while others who have been indie since the get-go are considering (or are contracted for) projects with New York.

And, of course, most NINC members are in the middle, having published substantially with traditionally publishers before skating on the cutting edge of the indie revolution. This is a varied group. As hard as we try, NINC can never be everything to everyone—but that doesn't mean we can't try.

Also, we plan Night Owl sessions that will, when warranted, have tight descriptions of the experience level that the panel, speaker, or roundtable group aims to address.

We'll also be including a few "bootcamps," meaning down-and-dirty, this-is-how-you-do-it, hands-on coaching.

There's a flurry of activity behind the scenes in planning this year's conference. I want to introduce you to the team that will make it happen:

- Programming committee: Lou Aronica, Roxanne St. Claire, Diana Peterfreund, Julie Leto
- Registrar: Pam McCutcheon
- Speaker Liaison: Karen Tintori-Katz
- Night Owl Coordinator: Margaret Daley
- JOT/Moderator Coordinator: Karen King
- Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
- Sponsorships: Diane Capri
- Program Advertising: Rochelle Paige

We also have volunteers who haven't been connected to a specific task yet. If you would

like to serve, [drop a note to Karen King](#), our volunteer coordinator. [General questions should be sent to me](#).

See you on the beach!

[Julie Leto](#) is the immediate past president of NINC, current Conference Chair, and a Florida native. She graduated with degrees in Speech Communication and English (Creative Writing) from the University of South Florida and has published nearly fifty novels.

NINC Member Notes

Conference logistics updates

Industry guest registration for NINC's 2016 Master Class conference is now open. Who qualifies as an industry guest? See this description, which also appears on the website:

The NINC conference is a great place for industry professionals—publishers, editors, agents, freelance artists, and other author support services professionals—to meet the most professional authors in the genre publishing. Registration for industry guests is discounted to \$325 in hopes that interaction with our members will be beneficial to the conference experience.

Even if you work as a publisher, editor, agent, freelance artist, etc., **NINC members cannot register as industry guests.**

Some industry guests are invited to the conference as speakers, but many others attend on their own in order to interact with NINC members and take advantage of our programming. That's not to say we won't ask them to participate in a panel or workshop if the opportunity arises, but we open registration before we put the final touches on the programming.

Industry guests have access to all conference events *except* our Night Owls.

NINC's conference committee is automatically inviting all industry guests who attended last year, but if you know of someone whom you believe should receive an invitation to the conference, now is the time to speak up.

Send an email to [conference chair Julie Leto](#) with the invitee's contact information (email is preferable). Type "invite industry guest" in the subject line. You can also send the content of this section to them directly, with a personal note.

More conference announcements are coming soon, including information about author assistant registration and companion meals.

NINC Master Class is September 21–25, 2016 at Tradewinds, St. Pete Beach, Florida. Registration is open and filling fast, so [sign up now](#) to secure your spot and your room at our destination resort hotel. Member, assistant, and industry guest registrations are open, with multiple ways to pay.

So, where is everybody?

Take a moment to scan NINC's [map of members](#) near you. In instances where more than one member lives in a particular city, the city's dot on the map is shown only once.

Let's get together

Over on the NINC link Yahoo group, members are discussing ways to get together at various events and conferences this year. Here are some upcoming meetup opportunities:

Deb Stover is signing at the RWA booth at the [PLA Conference](#) in Denver, April 5-9. [Email her](#) if you'd like to get together.

Are you attending the Pikes Peak Writers Conference in April? [Contact Laura](#)/LB Hayden, who will be the director next year—the event’s 25th year—in Colorado Springs. If you’d like NINC to have a presence or specialty programming in April 2017, please get in touch.

Charlotte Abel would like to hear from NINC members attending RT in Las Vegas this year. [Email her](#) with “RT/NINC Get Together” in the subject line. Please share your phone number so she can send a group text to connect members.

[Allison Brennan](#) would like to hear from NINC members attending Thrillerfest in New York City on July 6-10.

Minnesota-based NINC members who’d like to meet up should [contact JoAnn Grote](#).

If you’re attending an author conference, event, or signing and would like to get together with other NINC members, or if you’d like to host a local meetup, [send a note to the editor of Nink](#) and information will be included in the next issue.

NINC editorial policy

What guides our choices for Nink content? In February, the NINC board of directors approved an editorial policy to articulate our approach:

Nink is intended to serve members of Novelists, Inc., with relevant, actionable, sophisticated, and industry-leading content that helps them in all aspects of their author careers: writing and editing, writer’s life, business and legal, marketing and publicity, etc. It endeavors to serve all authors in membership.

Nink’s editorial judgment reflects the philosophy of NINC, which means:

- Declining to comment on other writing organizations and their activities
- Declining to distinguish members through awards
- Equally valuing all publishing routes (self, traditional and hybrid)
- Advocating on behalf of authors’ interests over publishers’ or platforms’ interests
- Emphasizing content relevant to all genres (and aiming to balance genre-specific information)
- Emphasizing industry-leading expertise and original content unique to Nink
- Refusing advertising placements and self-promotion from contributors
- Maintaining privacy by redacting new member applicant information from public issues of Nink.

If you have questions about the editorial policy, please contact Nink editor [Heidi Joy Tretheway](#).

NINC Member Notes and the NINC Membership Update are NINC member exclusive articles and are not included in the public edition of Nink that is posted online. Email addresses are included for the convenience of members and can also be found via the discussions in NINclink.

The Dialogue Sidestep Shuffle

Techniques for maximizing conflict and tension in dialogue between your characters

By Jim Thomsen



Breaking Bad is often called the best TV series ever. If you were a fan of it, you probably gave its spinoff, *Better Call Saul*, a try.

And if you did, and someone asked you why you stuck with it, my guess is you'd say, "I want to know what's the deal with Jimmy and Kim."

Briefly, Jimmy McGill is the original name of Saul Goodman, the breakout *Breaking Bad* character. He's a street-hustler attorney with an office in the back of a Korean nail salon.

Kim Wexler is an associate attorney in a glass-palace mega-firm for which Jimmy once worked in the mailroom.

The two care about each other. And, on the basis of that first season, are constitutionally incapable of verbally expressing it.

They stumble by on secretive kindnesses, coded banter and awkward silences that deflate into awkward exits. They exchange sad and wounded looks a lot. And they drive you happily nuts—making you wish something would happen while making you hope it doesn't because, honestly, the torture is so sweet.

In one scene, Jimmy is temporarily flush with money and considers leasing a giant suite of offices with magnificent city and mountain views. He shows it to Kim, then takes her to a corner office, and says, "I kinda thought ... this would be our ... your ... office"

Kim is stunned. She can't speak. Then she stammers. Nothing sounds right. There's another charged silence. Then: "I want to check out the kitchen." She scurries off.

For me, these scenes were like reliving every high-school infatuation I'd ever had: Does she like me too? Doesn't she see how awesome we are when we hang out? What will I do if she *does* like me? What will I do if she doesn't? What if I never find out? Will I have the guts to ask? I'm dying here!

(I rarely got an answer, which, of course, was an answer in itself.)

Early reviews of the second season of *Better Call Saul* mentioned that the Jimmy-Kim dynamic would take center stage in the series. So imagine my anticipation as I watched the opening moments of the first episode.

And imagine my disappointment less than five minutes in when I heard Jimmy say these

words to Kim: “So ... are we going to happen?”

Too obvious, or “on the nose”

Kim doesn’t answer the question directly, but the episode goes on to answer it for her. I didn’t like this, because much of the tension between the two was lost to this obvious question that cuts to the chase, robbing viewers of more delicious anticipation.

This was no wink-and-nudge Sam-and-Diane dynamic. Remember *Cheers*? The stakes were high: It wasn’t a question of *when* they would happen. It was a question of *if*. And a question of how much emotional skin in the game these two truly have with each other.

In *Better Call Saul*, the tension came from what Jimmy and Kim *didn’t* and *couldn’t* say to one another. Instead, they talked about everything else. And in doing so, they hinted strongly at depths of feeling that on-the-nose dialogue could never have artfully expressed. And they did it in the inarticulate way that was true to each character.

“So ... are we going to happen?” are words that Season One Jimmy would never have said. At least not in the first episode of the season.

Can you imagine your hero and heroine, facing numerous obstacles and opposing agendas, putting their wounded hearts on the line in, say, the first chapter of your second act?

To me, that’s a major writing-craft stumble.

Yes, I know, in any fictionscape there needs to be confrontation and resolution—eventually. I’ll hang in there with *Better Call Saul* because I know whatever happens, it’s going to be good.

But for me, some of the magic is lost. Now I’m just waiting to find out what happens between Jimmy and Kim, as opposed to having a heart-in-the-mouth level of emotional investment in it.

I believe maximum levels of conflict and tension between characters are good things in stories. It’s how characters establish their motivations and your sympathies.

And that max level, I believe, is arrived at by what you *don’t* say, rather than what you do.

On-the-nose dialogue is best saved for brief scenes in which essential information must be exchanged, and much of that should be paraphrased and converted into narrative to keep the story moving smoothly.

Scenes, at least in your first acts, should be saved for characters acting out different agendas. It could be a one-sided attraction, a desire to draw out information one character withholds from another, or a manipulative attempt to get somebody to comply.

I encourage clients to consciously choose different and competing agendas for characters before writing a scene. With this strong sense of conflict identified, you’ll never write a flat, tension-free scene.

Every exchange should crackle with what James Scott Bell, author of the essential Writers Digest book *Elements of Fiction Writing: Conflict and Suspense*, calls “pleasurable uncertainty.”

New writing moves: the Sidestep Shuffle

OK, you say. But if maximizing conflict comes from what you *don’t* say, then what *do* you say?

Easy. You do the Dialogue Sidestep Shuffle. Bell breaks it down:

1. One character prompts another for information.
2. The respondent gives a statement unrelated to the prompt.

There are many variations on the dance. In the movie *Pulp Fiction*, there's a scene in which Jules the mobster confronts Brett, who's in possession of some merchandise belonging to Jules's boss:

Jules: You remember your business partner Marsellus Wallace, dontcha, Brett?

Brett: Yeah, I—I remember.

Jules: Good. It looks like me and Vincent caught you boys at breakfast. Sorry about that. Whatcha having?

Brett: Hamburgers.

Jules: Hamburgers! The cornerstone of any nutritious breakfast. What kinda hamburgers?

Brett: Uh, ch-cheeseburgers.

See what was accomplished in just a few lines? One, the relationship between the two is established. Two, the imbalance in the relationship is established.

Three, like Brett, we have no idea if Brett is going to get killed or merely frightened into incontinence. Jules's sidestep has us nervously laughing, off balance, and needing to know.

Imagine this rendered in on-the-nose fashion:

Jules: You remember your business partner Marsellus Wallace, dontcha, Brett?

Brett: Yeah, I—I remember.

Jules: Good. So what happened, Brett? Why didn't Marsellus get what he expected?

Brett: Well, we were supposed to exchange the briefcase for cash last week, but the guys we made the deal with tried to renegotiate the terms, and Flock of Seagulls here helped himself to the supply, and ...

Jules: So do you have the briefcase here?

Brett: Yes. And most of the contents.

Jules: Good. Now I'm going to kill you.

How memorable is that? (An on-the-nose answer would be: it's not.)

Another Sidestep Shuffle variation: answering a prompting question with another question. For example:

"Are you going to stay away from Matthew?" she said.

Ophelia smiled. "So, I'm curious. Whatever happened to your first husband? Did he drown like they say?"

Silence is a powerful response, because few people can stand up to silence without rushing to fill it—or rushing away from it. Another example:

"Why don't you want to meet my parents?" she said.

Mike said nothing.

Are you wondering whether Mike is annoyed, terrified or somewhere in between? I'm know I'm on that hook.

The action response in lieu of dialogue can be just as powerful as the silence sidestep. Example:

"Do you really think you can take on all five of us?"

Reacher smiled and picked up a butter knife from the table.

Are you eager to find out what Reacher can do with a butter knife against five attackers? I am.

Re-read some of your favorite authors' novels. I'll bet one of the big reasons you're a fan is because the authors never let their characters respond directly to a question or demand, at least right away.

The answers are delivered in the spaces between words as much as in the words themselves. That amps up the tension, keeping us turning the pages in delicious anticipation.

Jim Thomsen is an editor of narrative fiction and nonfiction. Since establishing [Desolation Island Editing Services](#) in 2010, he has worked with nearly 300 clients. His specialty is combining a line edit, in which he cleans up storytelling and word-count issues after a developmental edit, with a straight Chicago Manual copy edit. A former newspaper reporter and editor, he lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

Line-Editing Insights

An editor unloads on mistakes best-selling authors are *still* making

By Eve Henry



"So I was asked to write about advanced line-editing techniques," I said to no one in particular as a cloud of worry blew across my face with a mighty great force.

"But I'm not sure I can do that!" I started to wail before a look of chagrin caused my eyebrows to fall to my chin in sadness.

"But I will persevere ... I will save the day!" I finally shouted to no one. The room was empty. Darkness descended, just like my mood.

—sound of record scratching—

Wait—what?

Here's the deal: I'm not going to blather on about using too many adverbs (I whine loudly as I roll my eyes exaggeratedly), unnecessary dialogue tags (I murmur with a sarcastic grin), or the employment of obscure words in loquacious tomes.

It hurt my soul to write all of that just now.

Instead, I come bearing line editing tips to help advanced authors tighten their writing. Every example was culled from one of my *New York Times*- or *USA Today*-bestselling clients' manuscripts (I've altered examples slightly to protect the guilty parties' identities).

Sounds should sound right

Writers deliver the creak, hiss and rustle of a story to readers' imaginations. But too often, the words chosen to describe a sound don't match reality.

For example, our hero cannot sneak up to a house in the country by creeping along a gravel road.

I see this in mysteries a lot. Gravel is *noisy*. Tires crunch and rocks pop. There might be an odd exception if it's raining and the gravel is well-packed, but a smart hero will park down the street, walk through grass, and *actually* sneak up on the bad guy.

Likewise, high heels tap on hard floors. Fabric swishes, keys jangle. You've read those depictions before, right? And perhaps tried a different descriptor? While I applaud originality,

getting sounds *right* is every bit as important as making them sound *fresh*.

Silence is a common challenge for advanced writers; with too-frequent comparisons to tombs, churches or libraries.

Instead, borrow a film technique to create the *atmosphere* of silence. In movies, sound engineers amplify tiny sounds such as a faucet's drip. If your character can hear a minute sound, we understand how *truly* quiet a scene is.

Move them—in the right ways

Related to inappropriate sound is impossible movement.

"His love poured through me slowly like hot syrup," was the drafted line, but it's impossible. Hot syrup doesn't pour slowly—heat makes it pour rapidly. If you want *slow*, try honey, molasses or the week between *Walking Dead* episodes.

In the lead-in to this article, "my eyebrows fell to my chin in sadness," this is likewise impossible. While body parts are often given facility of their own, such as eyes trailing the hero out of the room, be sure an impossible motion isn't so jarring that it distracts the reader from your narrative.

Ticking clocks, time, and tension

I am befuddled when authors bend the time-space continuum. Their story clips along, a zillion things happen, and then the story reveals that only three hours have gone by.

Humans are simply not that efficient.

Our hero can't go to lunch with his best friend, take a car-crash victim to the hospital, check in with his lawyer, make phone calls for work while driving to his girlfriend's house, have a fight with said girlfriend, buy groceries, walk his neighbor's dog, stop at the drugstore to stare blankly at greetings cards while wistfully missing his grandmother who died the week before, and arrive at the bank in time to catch the criminal singlehandedly, holding him by knifepoint until the cops arrive—all in three hours.

So bust up that to-do list. Give your *action action action* some breathing room by filling out your story with a more vivid details or backstory that better establishes motivation.

While it's great to put a ticking clock on your plot to escalate the tension, readers will actually *feel* greater tension if you raise questions in their minds or make them worry for your character.

Building a better sense of place and pace

The environment has an enormous effect on decisions and actions. As you craft a setting, consider all the ways it could affect the character.

Is it hot? Maybe sweat is dripping into your hero's eyes as he digs his knee deeper into the back of the bank robber.

Is it cold? Your main character might see her breath as she runs, crunch through a salted sidewalk, or slip on ice.

Another mistake I frequently see is simultaneous action. While our minds can handle more than one thing at a time, our hands are typically limited to one task. Therefore, our actions are

sequential, not simultaneous.

For example, a character can't cough *and* speak dialogue. You might be able to walk and chew gum at the same time, but large motions such as slamming the door typically interrupt dialogue.

So slam, then shout. Otherwise your character's accusations might not be heard over the sound of the slamming door.

As you write, sequence actions one at a time: lead your characters up to a situation, allow them experience it, then react to it ... *then* hit them with the next wave of, "Oh, crap!"

It's a roller coaster ride, not a tsunami.

Research is only a click away

Know your seasons and their accompanying flora—especially when you have never been to your setting.

Planning a March wedding in a rose garden in Skye sounds very, very fancy. I can see it now ... but, wait, roses don't bloom in March. Certainly not on Scotland's northwest coast.

In their haste to churn out books, many established authors skip search engine research that adds essential credibility to a setting. Yet readers who *know* a place or a profession will be quick to point out when a detail doesn't ring true.

A corollary to this is to know your distances. I lived in a best-selling book's setting for five years and got twitchy every time the book mentioned its teen-aged characters driving from their small town to a larger town after school for dinner, shopping, or movies.

The distance between the towns is a minimum four-hour round trip. Most teens couldn't afford the gas. And even if they could, they'd be leaving after school at 3:30, arriving at 5:30, shopping until 6:30 (can teenagers shop in less than an hour?), slamming some food, movie from 7:30 to 10, and home after midnight.

On a school night? How does that work?

It doesn't. The timeline doesn't add up.

As you plan a contemporary character's journey, Google Maps now integrates flights and train times, which can help you decide your character's mode of transportation if a plot clock is ticking.

In just a few seconds, search will reveal that London to Manchester is an hour's flight, two and a quarter hours by train, or almost four hours' drive. Go forth and calculate!

Choosing the right word from a heaping pile

When writers choose to write about a profession or specialty, they might not know its nuances and jargon. I advise them to work with beta readers in that profession.

For example, a chief of police shouldn't also be called a sheriff. His squad of police *officers* shouldn't be confused with sheriff's *deputies* who typically handle law enforcement in the *county*, while the chief of police ensures law and order within the *city*.

Don't even get me started on state troopers. That's a whole different stack of badges.

Likewise, a law enforcement officer wouldn't make the mistake of calling a burglary (theft from an unoccupied home) a robbery (theft using force against a person).

Learn about professional terminology and hierarchy so you don't make readers crazy. The Associated Press Stylebook is a good resource to disambiguate some of these tricky words with specific definitions.

Also, I often find that groups of related words—such as arrow, bow, and quiver—are often mixed up. I sent up a red flag when an author wrote, “like an arrow shot from a quiver,” because arrows are carried in a quiver, withdrawn by the archer, and then shot from a bow.

Are we talking Gotham?

I've noticed that authors sometimes endow their small towns with all the conveniences of a major metropolis. But a town might not have its own school, grocery store, or Main Street.

Even if a small town is incorporated, it wouldn't have a budget to pay the mayor a full-time salary. People in tiny towns typically volunteer for elected office and have light duties.

If you're writing small towns, get to know how they really work. A tiny community newspaper is a great place to start.

Send your characters to city council meetings, let them ride in parades alongside Miss Butter Queen, but don't give them cushy offices (chances are, there's no town hall) or a steady paycheck.

Eve Henry moved to the Pacific Northwest before it was cool. She studied English lit and forestry in college, married a forester, and worked as a newspaper reporter and editor for 15 years. Two kids and one internet later, she gave up on newspapers and began writing books. Eve spends the rest of her time [copy editing](#) fiction and nonfiction, and house hunting from the comfort of her Tardis-blue minivan.

Finding the Right Freelance Editor For You

By Rhonda Stapleton



The label “independent” author is often a misnomer—many authors build teams to produce their books, and this typically includes one or more editors.

A lot of writers who are interested in working with a freelance editor don’t know where to start. What questions should you ask before hiring one? What expectations should you realistically have? What happens if things go south?

This article covers the most frequently asked questions about working with an independent editor, which can be a substantially different experience than working with an editor at a traditional publisher.

Questions to ask

If the editor has a website with a FAQ page, some of your questions might already be addressed about how they work. Before hiring a freelance editor, you should find out:

When are they booking?

Most editors book anywhere from weeks to months in advance, so plan accordingly! Reach out as soon as possible to get on their schedule. That said, make sure you’re able to deliver the project if it isn’t finished yet.

How will they give feedback?

Some editors write an editorial letter, while others offer feedback directly in the manuscript, via comment bubbles. There’s no right or wrong way, only what works for you and for them.

What are their rates?

Money is important, of course, but it’s not everything. If the editor’s prices seem to be on the super-low or super-high end of market rates, it’s worth asking why.

What is their expertise?

Check out their bio, who they’ve edited, what their background is in publishing. Talk to other clients the editor has worked with, as well. Reputation matters.

Do they offer a free or paid sample?

Honestly, if an editor won’t oblige you on this, I’d probably run. Seeing their work on your own manuscript pages will be one of your best indicators to how suited they are for you.

Do they offer the type of edits you’re seeking? Are they comfortable with your genre and

manuscript length?

Not all editors do all types of edits (and that's a good thing, because each type requires a different skill set/expertise). There are proofreaders, copy editors, line editors, and developmental editors. Some do just one; others do part or all of them. I only do developmental and line editing.

Do they require a deposit?

Also, how do they accept payment? Check? PayPal? Do they require the full final payment before sending the edits to you? These are things you want to know upfront so there are no surprises. Some editors may also require signed contracts.

What is their editorial process like?

How many rounds of editing will there be, and how long will a project of your size and desired edits take?

What's their procedure on incompatibility?

What happens if they decide your project isn't right for them after they've already taken you on? Do they refund the deposit, or will they do a partial edit to cover the deposit amount?

How long does it take them to respond to emails?

Obviously, this will vary by person, but you want someone who will be reasonably interactive with you.

What is the editor's policy on missed deadlines, refunds, etc?

Will they reschedule if you're late delivering the manuscript? What if they're late returning the document to you?

Setting expectations

Sometimes it's hard to know what to expect from a freelance editor, especially if you've never worked with one before, such as for authors branching out from traditional publishing to begin self-publishing or hybrid careers.

Here are a few things to consider. Put it in writing so that both the editor and writer understand their mutual expectations.

Timeline

The editor should be able to tell you when he/she will start and finish edits. Experienced editors know how fast they work and how long your project will take. Hopefully they're working off a calendar.

Type of edits being done

Be aware of what each type of edit is and don't expect more—or less. A developmental editor won't also fix typos. A proofreader won't offer commentary on characterization or setting. Know what you're buying, and that it's your responsibility to round out your additional editing resources.

Compensation

Editors will tell you how/when they expect payment. Be aware, some may require you to send full final payment before you get the manuscript back.

Communication

Your editor should be reasonably responsive and let you know when edits are starting and

finished. They should also be available to answer questions you have about those edits after returning the document.

Problem-solving

So, what do you do if things start going badly? Here are a few scenarios and my suggested recommendations:

You miss a deadline

Of course, the ideal situation would be for you to email the editor when you know you're going to be delayed in delivering the manuscript.

The sooner, the better—hopefully, your editor will try to help you out and squeeze you in at a future date. Communication is key here. We're all human, and things happen in life.

Your editor is MIA

This one really stinks, I know. But if your editor goes missing, you have a couple of options. One, keep emailing, of course—and if possible, reach out to an alternate email address. It's possible something happened where the editor's email has gone awry or missing (this happened to me through my website server), or the editor might be sick or injured.

Check their social media to see if they posted since you emailed, and feel free to message them through social media. If you still don't hear back, you could either wait for a response or try to find another editor to do the work. If you paid a deposit, I'd push to get it back if no work was done; hopefully the person will be reasonable.

The edits aren't what you hoped

First, review your expectations—did they give you what they told you they would? Is it a matter of quantifiable quality (as in, did the proofreader miss typos that you later found), or were you thinking something else would be included/discussed that wasn't?

It's important to iron out expectations as much as possible beforehand and know what you're paying for. If you know you have particular issues with craft or content, let them know to look for those upfront.

If it's a matter of the editor missing errors that were supposed to have been caught, you could ask for a partial refund. Of course, they may not choose to give one to you, but it's worth a request, especially if you can prove to them how they fell short of reasonable expectations.

It can be scary to hire an editor, since it can be costly and they vary widely in price, work product, and style. But legitimate editors know that reputation matters.

Ask around widely and take your time before hiring. Remember, you don't have to stay with the same editor if they didn't satisfy your editorial needs. This isn't a one-size-fits-all scenario.

Editors should be open to any and all questions, so if you can't find information on their website, don't be afraid to email them to ask. You have a right to feel comfortable and knowledgeable about the whole process before entering into an agreement.

Rhonda Stapleton has a Master's degree in English and is published with Simon Pulse and Kensington. She's edited

first-time authors, multi-published authors, and NYT and USA Today bestselling authors. In 2015, Rhonda edited a Romance Writers of America RITA© award-winning romance, a RITA© award-nominated romance, and a Romantic Times© award-nominated romance. Rhonda's been a professional, full-time manuscript editor for several years. She's an editor with Harlequin's digital-first imprint, Carina Press, and a freelance editor. She welcomes questions about editing from NINC members, and she's on Twitter at @rhondaedits.

Using a Facebook Funnel to Grow Your Email List

Ad targeting finds ideal readers to expand your sales opportunities

By Lacy Williams



Why do I focus on building my email lists? Let me start out by saying that my undergrad degree is in accounting. I have a love-love relationship with Excel spreadsheets.

When my first book was published in 2011, I tracked every marketing effort I made to see what worked and what didn't. And I kept on doing it for the 10 traditional and 15 indie releases that followed.

I've tried a lot of different things and found that my email list sells more books than any other channel except BookBub.

Also, my home life is an adventure. I have three small children and one on the way. I don't have much (make that any) time to play on social media. I don't have extra money to throw at marketing efforts that don't work.

By using a Facebook funnel, I can "set it and forget it," and that really works for my crazy life.

What is a Facebook funnel?

Here's how it works from the reader's perspective: she is browsing her News Feed and sees an ad posted by your author page. The ad has a nice picture and says, "click here and get a free ebook!"

She clicks.

She lands on a simple webpage that tells her a little more about your book and asks for her email address. She wants the ebook, so she enters her email address and joins your mailing list.

Within minutes, the ebook is delivered to her inbox and she starts reading. In a perfect world, she starts reading your book immediately, gets hooked into the series, and goes on to purchase your entire backlist.

More realistically, you must realize that using a free ebook in this way is similar to having a BookBub ad for a free book: your book won't resonate with some readers. But if you've done your ad targeting right, you should end up with a good percentage of real, buying readers who

are interested in your new releases.

How it works

First, you'll need a book you can give away for free. It's perfectly fine if the book is a permafree and available on retailer sites. I've found that there's not a lot of crossover from BookBub readers or those who browse the Amazon bestseller lists with those who will find your ad on Facebook.

Next, you'll need a landing page. This is where your reader will land after they click your ad. I use Leadpages to create my landing pages (they make it easy because they deliver the free ebook and integrate with many email providers), but if you are techie or have a good web designer, you can set up a page hosted on your own website.

You can also use Facebook's Power Editor to create a Lead Generation ad. I haven't used this feature, but it's supposed to eliminate the need for a landing page.

Your landing page should be very simple. I recommend a plain white background and one image: your book cover (in 3D, if possible). The landing page should have only one action for the reader to take: join your email list.

No other links, no distractions. [Here's a link to mine](#), if you'd like to see it.

Free Ebook: Mistletoe Cowboy

He's a washed up bull rider. She's a pre-med student chasing big dreams. They have one Christmas to fall in love...

What readers are saying:

- ✓ "Characters that seem true to life, people you can envision being friends with and rooting for."
- ✓ "...a Christmas novella that can be enjoyed any time of the year."
- ✓ "Heartwarming and inspirational."
- ✓ "Are you looking for the sigh factor? You just found it. This series is going into my reread list."
- ✓ "Extremely well written."
- ✓ "Couldn't put it down."

About the book:
After suffering a career-ending injury, bull rider Justin Michaels has stalled out. At twenty-seven, he's back in college to try and find direction for his life. Valri North is a few credits away from completing her pre-med degree. She's got her life planned out, until a disastrous assignment in class and a distracting cowboy threaten to derail her carefully-ordered plans.



Download the Ebook

Download Mistletoe Cowboy - an Inspy Kisses novella and start reading now!




Download Now

Last, you need a kick-butt ad. Check out other authors and the images they use for their ads. I've found that 3D images of book covers work better than flat ebook cover art.



If you aren't good at writing sales copy (the text part of your ad), you'll need to work on it. Ask for help. Look at what others are doing with successful ads.

I like [Canva](#) for creating ad art. They have different templates, stock images, and text options. Many are free, but even those that aren't usually cost \$1 each. If you'd like to see one of my ads, you can [view it here](#).

 **Lacy Williams books**
June 17, 2015 · 🌐

He's a washed up bull rider. She's a pre-med student chasing big dreams.
One Christmas will bring them together...

Download this cowboy Christmas novella absolutely free.



Free Ebook: Mistletoe Cowboy
From USA TODAY bestselling author Lacy Williams, readers can download a free contemporary cowboy novella.

WWW.LACYWILLIAMS.NET [Download](#)

Mark Dawson is an author who is very successful with the Facebook funnel, and he offers three free videos on [how to create one for yourself](#).

Some considerations

You'll want to watch your statistics closely. If your cost-per-click (CPC) is too high, it will cost too much to add new readers to your list. Not everyone who clicks will sign up to get the free book.

My most successful funnel ads brought readers to my mailing list at \$0.38 each. I know that only a small percentage of these readers will buy/read my backlist and new releases. This marketing strategy is profitable for me because I'm now all indie, and because I have multiple releases each year.

Even though only a small percentage will buy, I can make a good return from those few readers because I make \$2.00 or more on each ebook sold. These are readers who I'd never have "met" without using the Facebook platform.

Facebook offers many different ad targeting options, from targeting people who like other authors' Pages, to using a tracking code and creating Lookalike audiences from users who have interacted with your ads or website.

Get familiar with these different options. Sometimes one will provide better returns, sometimes it will be another.

It may take some practice, but using a Facebook funnel is a great way to build your email list.

USA Today bestselling author Lacy Williams works in a hostile environment (read: three-point-five kids age 6 and under). In spite of this, she has somehow managed to be a hybrid author since 2011, publishing 25 books & novellas. She is also the managing editor for Redbud Press, an inspirational romance publisher. Connect at www.lacywilliams.net.

Blurb Writing Lab

How to make readers wild to one-click, part 2

By Heidi Joy Tretheway



I believe the best blurb critiques are from people who haven't read a book yet. They don't let love for the book color their opinion, and they often call out confusing details in a blurb that are explained in the story.

I also find that I take blurb criticism less personally if the person critiquing my blurb hasn't read the book. He or she reads the blurb more from the perspective of a potential buyer than reading as a fan who already knows the book's characters and world.

As you revise your book blurbs, seek help from someone very familiar with the genre. Find a fellow author, a book blogger, or a voracious reader such as a member of your street team. They'll help you weed out weak phrases that appear too often your genre.

Last month in the blurb-writing lab, we talked length and tone and critiqued two blurbs. This month, we're digging into a new blurb (used with the author's permission) that has the typical patter of a blurb, but it didn't make me want to buy yet.

Why not? Specificity. The first draft didn't provide enough unique, visual anchors to paint a picture in my mind. It also didn't create empathy to connect me with the characters' plights.

Case Study: *The Fiction of Forever*

Here's the "before" version of a sexy, saucy romance:

A hot reality show. A hotter romance behind the scenes.

Gunner Parrish knows better than anyone that forever is a lie. Even family members don't stick around in the long run. Especially the ones you love the most.

Moving back to Nashville set his life on the right track. A home, a business, and old friends. He thinks he has it all, until an encounter with Kiley Vanderbilt shows him what he really wants—a chance to rekindle his high school flame. The one who got away.

Kiley Vanderbilt. Society darling and former beauty queen. Daughter of a television producer. Her goal? Prove herself by succeeding as the hostess of the reality show, *Forever*. There's one major problem. She needs to match this season's bachelor with the woman of his dreams. It's too bad she wants Gunner Parrish for herself.

A girl used to getting her way. A guy who'll never surrender his heart. One believes in forever. The other believes in today. Tune in to the show *Forever* to find out who wins.

From this first version, I didn't get the snappy snark that author Brinda Berry delivers in *The Fiction of Forever*. Authors who slave over 80,000 words naturally want to cover all the high points of plot, but my advice was to chuck it.

I suggested starting from scratch. Think of the best lines from the book, the ones that still make her chuckle, and bring me the *flavor* of the book. In terms of plot, give me just the first 40 percent of the book—up to the fun and games, not the climax or the all-is-lost moment. Give me the premise without too much backstory.

Brinda's first blurb does a great job of stating the second-chance romance trope and the theme. I took a step back and considered the total package: title, cover, blurb. Her title is dramatic but not snarky, and her cover is pretty and sexy. As a result, I needed to see more lightness and snark come out in the blurb.

I also advised her to pare back the blurb and break up the sentences to be shorter and punchier, suggesting a standalone sentence between two graphs.

I like long walks on the beach

The lead-in lines, "A hot reality show. A hotter romance behind the scenes," were too generic to snag my interest. I see a lot of lead-in lines in book blurbs, but they must be specific enough to be memorable.

"An even hotter romance" feels akin to "I like long walks on the beach" from dating websites. It gives me no real information and could apply to any contemporary romance.

So let's get specific: Is this book panty-melting? Deliciously indecent? Skin-pricklingly wicked? I asked Brinda to use alliteration or a witty description of the couple's chemistry to reinforce the book's tone.

Also, what about the book is hot? Does the hero have a filthy mouth or do they do it in a broom closet? A memorable example was the blurb from Diana Peterfreund's (writing as Viv Daniels) *Hear Me* disclaimer: "Contains magic spells, true love, and the hottest scene ever set in a greenhouse."

That's memorable and specific enough to pique my interest. For those who write mystery or fantasy or thrillers, words like "secrets" and "danger" and "shocking" are of the same ilk as "hot." By substituting a word that could describe any book in your genre for a specific, short, and ideally visual cue, you're helping your reader differentiate your book.

You're helping them buy.

One way we considered amping up the specificity and snark in Brinda's blurb was to put it in first person point of view. (She improved one of my blurbs immeasurably by suggesting a POV change.)

However, readers who see a first person POV will be thrown for a loop with a book in third person. As an exercise, I suggested she attempt to write her blurb in first person just to mine her brain for great snark nuggets.

Extreme blurb makeover: before and after, line by line

Before: “Gunner Parrish knows better than anyone that forever is a lie. Even family members don’t stick around in the long run. Especially the ones you love the most.”

This first line, which is pretty generic, should be immediately followed with something painfully specific.

Example: “Gunner Parrish knows better than anyone that forever is bullshit. When his backstabbing brother swipes his girlfriend and cash stash, he’s forced to crawl back to Nashville to lick his wounds. But instead of healing, they festered.”

I’d like the blurb to immediately paint a picture of what’s happening. Just as writing advice emphasizes action before reaction, a blurb should show us action first, then reaction, such as Gunner’s sadness about family members not sticking around.

Here’s a stripped-down version: “When [inciting incident] happens, character must [take action] toward a [goal]. BUT, it can’t be achieved until character handles [hurdle].”

As another exercise, consider writing that structure for your blurb in a plain vanilla way. Then pick each piece apart and rewrite it in a memorable way that speaks with your unique voice.

Before: “Moving back to Nashville set his life on the right track. A home, a business, and old friends. He thinks he has it all, until an encounter with Kiley Vanderbilt shows him what he really wants—a chance to rekindle his high school flame. The one who got away.”

The first part of this (home, business, old friends) isn’t thrilling, but the trope is my cue to one-click. I suggested making this part of a book’s one-liner. *Example:* “She’s the girl who got away, and he’s got a do-over, but the cameras are rolling.” Or “He’s got a second shot at the one who got away—but it’s on national television, and she’s calling the shots.”

I think a one-liner at the top of a product description is especially important since Amazon reduced the amount of copy that is shown to readers before the “read more” click prompt.

I found that changing my *Tattoo Thief* blurb to feature the line “A rock star on the run meets his match in the house sitter who wants to bring him home” worked well. The “rock star on the run” phrase was my gold nugget.

Before: “Kiley Vanderbilt. Society darling and former beauty queen. Daughter of a television producer. Her goal? Prove herself by succeeding as the hostess of the reality show, *Forever*. There’s one major problem. She needs to match this season’s bachelor with the woman of his dreams. It’s too bad she wants Gunner Parrish for herself.”

In working through this blurb, I had to confess something: I didn’t like Kiley. Not one bit. I didn’t relate to her. I didn’t want to be friends with her. As far as I could tell, she’s a beautiful, spoiled rich bitch who got a job via daddy. On top of that, she wants more.

I suggested Brinda flip this description on its head. What makes Kiley likable? What makes Gunner fall for her? Is she pretty but klutzy? Is she tortured by a Pageant Mom? I want to believe Gunner sees more in her than money and good looks, or else I’ll think he’s stupid for liking her. If I don’t care—passionately—what happens to Gunner and Kiley, I won’t buy the book.

However, if the blurb tells me Kiley's got problems, frailties, worthy goals and some sweetness, I'm all about reading this love story. I want to cheer for her!

This rule applies beyond romance. It's akin to Blake Snyder's "Save the Cat" rule: it's not enough for characters to be cool or powerful. They must be likable or else we won't be emotionally invested.

*Before: "A girl used to getting her way. A guy who'll never surrender his heart. One believes in forever. The other believes in today. Tune in to the show *Forever* to find out who wins."*

I disliked Kiley more here. This blurb needs me to empathize with her, for example: her ass is on the line, her father always underestimates her, she had to beg for this job, and nobody expects her to succeed. Most people assume there's more hairspray than brains in her pretty little head. On top of that, the resentful would-be host who lost the job to Kiley is determined to torpedo her.

Also in this graph, there are too many sentences. It feels like I'm reading a reality show narrator's script, which comes off as too on-the-nose.

After several rounds of revision, here's the final published blurb:

He has a second chance at the one who got away—but it's on national television, and she's calling the shots.

Kiley Vanderbilt wasn't just fuel for Gunner's teenage dreams about the curvy pageant queen. She was the one who got away.

Until now.

When Gunner returns to Nashville, his high school fantasy in heels challenges him to accept a spot on the dating reality show *Forever*. And although she's the show hostess and off-limits, he's going to prove once and for all that she wants more.

But when Kiley—untouchable, jeans-tightening Kiley—proclaims she's unwilling to compromise the show's integrity, he vows to throw a twist of his own into her behind-the-scenes plotting.

That's going way, way off Kiley's script.

Giving in to Gunner would torpedo her plans to prove to her manipulating ex-fiancé and her producer daddy that she has more on her shoulders than pancake and hairspray. She must make him play by her rules on camera in spite of his sexy whispers behind the scenes.

Especially when a social media shitstorm brews on the horizon.

Fourteen days of filming. Six camera crews. And a minefield of hidden cameras. This time, no one's getting away.

Heidi Joy Tretheway is a sucker for campfires, craft cocktails, and steamy romance in books and real life. She sings along with musicals (badly), craves French carbs, and buys plane tickets the way some women buy shoes. Her first career as a journalist took Heidi Joy behind the scenes with politicians, rock stars, chefs, and detectives, all of whom inspire her stories. She is currently working on her eighth book from her home near Portland, Oregon.

What's Next for BookBub

The book advertising platform shares expansion plans and pricing tips

By Jennifer Stevenson



With Eve Henry

Since BookBub continues to deliver tremendous returns on investment for many authors' discount campaigns, the NINC World panel featuring BookBub was packed, with NINC members spilling onto the floor.

At the 2014 NINC conference, BookBub focused on selection criteria. In 2015, BookBub's Director of Business Development, Katie Donelan, turned the focus to what's new and next at BookBub, and how authors can best choose their discount price point.

BookBub will expand into non-price-promoted books

"Our long-term goal is to tackle the book discovery problem at large," Donelan said. "All we do is about this. Long term, we want to be the go-to site for worldwide readers to find a book, where authors and publishers know they can run successful ROI [return on investment]-improving targeted campaigns ... beyond price promotions."

In the past year, BookBub has introduced the BookBub Partners Blog, raised \$7 million from its original investors, increased its headcount from 28 to 54, and added nine new categories to optimize targeting capabilities. Engineering and product teams make up one-third of staff at the tech-focused firm.

BookBub had just five categories when it started, but is now approaching 40. Its newsletter subscriber database has grown to 5.5 million subscribers in the U.S.; 469,000 in the U.K.; 279,000 in Canada, and 245,000 in India.

Spend marketing dollars on a qualified audience

"If the signup rate for a new cat [category] is really high, we make a new cat," Donelan said. "If we see a certain subgenre underperforming compared to other cats, our editors choose either not to select books for that cat, or they break it into smaller cats."

In 2015, BookBub broke mystery into cozy, historical, and crime fiction. The email subscriber count for each of these subcategories starts falsely high, but declines as readers opt out of the subcategories that don't interest them. In response, Donelan said, BookBub reprices

the category's ad.

New ways to request ads; new ways to inform readers

BookBub is busy making changes for its featured authors and subscribers. Its new submission dashboard is an automated single page.

"Now you have to have an account, your information is stored, and you know if and when you had a campaign last, and how well it did," Donelan said.

BookBub is also betting big on becoming an information resource for authors by hiring a content writer and curator, Diana Urban, for its blog. Posts include what's working for subscribers in certain categories and what's working in marketing in publishing. The BookBub Partners blog also publishes information about new BookBub features.

"We started 'Author Follows' so that anyone who follows you and who gets daily mail that includes your deal, gets an email about your new discount book," Donelan said. They also get new-release emails, even if the book is not in one of their usual categories.

BookBub also rolled out author profiles in 2015, so readers can now search BookBub for authors. Donelan urged NINC members to "claim their profiles" as soon as possible, making sure all of your books are listed on your profile, and removing any books that aren't yours.

"You must have a dashboard account in order to claim your author profile," added Carlyn Robertson, a BookBub account coordinator. "There are separate author profiles for separate pen names. If you have two, let us know."

Expansion into foreign markets

BookBub is expanding globally—first Australia and New Zealand, where they are currently testing the best way to reach new markets.

"Our consumer marketing team tries to acquire new members in those regions," Donelan said, "to make sure they're really engaged readers, not day-trippers. Once we confirm Australia and New Zealand are healthy markets, we will start that."

In 2015, BookBub targeted English-speaking markets, but in 2016 watch for them to target non-English-speaking markets.

Given the presentations at NINC World's First Word, Germany might be a prime target.

New ad sales opportunities

Donelan said the biggest complaint she hears from authors is that competition from the limited amount of advertising available via BookBub means many authors can't actually buy an ad. The BookBub business development team wants to change that by expanding their subscriber base.

For example, authors can now purchase international region ads. Books that might not be accepted for a US promotion might be accepted for UK, Canada, or India subscribers.

"This is a way to get traction if you're not a rock star yet. Also, the price is significantly lower for the foreign regions," Donelan said. "I don't recommend leaving the US off your ad request; but definitely click on all four regions. The editor will consider you for all."

Pricing strategies and the power of free

“Before you choose your price point, you need a specific goal for that specific promotion,” Donelan said. While all authors want as many eyeballs on your ad as possible, their specific goals might be to market a series, launch a new release, hit a bestseller list, or double their income on a certain book.

At BookBub, the volume of downloads is ten times higher than even the 99 cent discount price. “If your goal is exposure, you should run a free ad,” said Donelan, adding that making books permafree on multiple retailers works better than free on a single platform.

“Go permafree on book one if your goal is to increase sales of a book series. This results in five times higher sales of other books in the series when the first is discounted, versus any other book in series.”

For a new release, a BookBub ad might also hold value. Donald said 63 percent of BookBub readers purchased other books by the author they discovered through a BookBub sale. “They read a book a day. They’re willing to try out a new author. They will willingly buy at full price if they like the new author,” Donelan said.

BookBub recommends discounting a popular book—the one with the best reviews, the most reviews, or the most sales. Before the sale, optimize your backmatter by a link to the next book in the series or a new release immediately at the end of the story.

For example, you could run a price promotion after a new release comes out, and then drive readers to your backlist—75 percent of BookBub authors see increased sales of their other books after a free promotion.

When does 99 cents make sense? Response rates for books priced at 99 cents during a promotion are 75 percent higher than prices at \$1.99 or \$2.99. To hit bestseller lists, you want to drive as many units as possible, so that’s when running a 99-cent promotion trumps free.

“To drive series sales, if you’re reluctant to go free, this is the next best option,” Donelan added.

Higher prices (\$1.99 to \$2.99) on BookBub can drive revenue—\$2.99 promos make 142 percent more money, but BookBub’s editors only select \$2.99 books from among bestsellers. Especially long books, cookbooks, and box sets are good candidates for a \$2.99 price point.

Whatever your price, concentrate all of your other marketing during the week of your BookBub ad, Donelan advised, including buying complementary Facebook ads.

Q&A with BookBub

Q: If you run an ad internationally, does that mean you’re ineligible for US ads for six months?

A: No, they’ve ended that policy.

Q: How many people are buying off the site versus the email?

A: Predominantly it’s email, but now that we have different content on the site vs. the email, we will start driving users to the site.

Q: Will BookBub share data with authors?

A: BookBub shares total clicks and total sales across retailers. We can only track this data from BookBub subscribers, but there is often a halo effect. You might get 60 percent to 80 percent of sales from people who hear about your book secondarily. With the new reporting, you'll get an explicit idea of how much of your sales bump came from BookBub.

Q: How do you encourage readers to follow authors?

A: We will invite users who have clicked on a deal or category to follow the author. If you go to your author follow page, there will be a list of suggested authors on the page. It's on the reader account settings page. Now that the site is searchable, they can search on your name and follow from the profile. When we're ready to drive massive amount of traffic to the website, we'll do that.

Q: I haven't done an indie BookBub, but my publisher has. Can I claim my page?

A: Yes. Your publisher can't claim it for you.

Q: How are you going to get cozy mystery readers to move over to that category?

A: By auto-subscribing the mystery readers to cozy and allowing them to self-select out. We're sending proactive emails to fans of relevant sub-categories that say, "Hey, we have a true crime page."

Q: Is there a saturation point for BookBub ads? Do we see "email fatigue"?

A: Shockingly, no. After the initial two weeks, reader engagement drops off, but even after two years their engagement is the same as that post-two-week level.

Q: Is there a saturation point for the same title?

A: Yes. Originally it was three months, now it's six months, and we're considering making it even longer. We want to be sure there are enough new subscribers on the list to keep it fresh for a repeat ad. We're working on ways to make it possible to send the second ad for a given book only to subscribers who didn't see the first ad.

Q: Would you consider allowing multiple-book ads, such as, "First one's free, second one is 99 cents?"

A: Yes and no. We've never featured more than one book in a single listing. It's a bad user experience, because multiple buttons are confusing. For example, early on we featured multi-author box sets, but we stopped running them. We do run single-author collections/bundles.

The reason is that for those two box sets in 2012, there were 10 books in each, and both hit the *New York Times* list. We knew that if we continued to feature box sets, everyone would want them, and it was a bad way to sell individual books—we sell one author at a time.

Anthologies of short stories with multiple authors are fine, as long as the page count is over 150 pages and the anthology has a flat cover. There are a lot of rules around collections relative to other promotions for the same author.

Q: How can BookBub reactivate books that subscribers download but don't read?

A: I don't think we have thought about it. We don't own the devices or the content, but we know who has clicked on the books, at least. We could maybe allow you to email readers who have already downloaded your earlier books.

Q: Does original price matter on discount success?

A: We don't show the original price in the email. But the larger the difference in price, the better the sale works.

Q: How long does revenue come in after a sale?

A: Most sales from a BookBub ad come in over four days—the day of the sale, and three days afterward.

Q: I notice that non-book advertisements are appearing in the email.

A: This is a product we're testing. We're hoping to make it available to everyone (for books) and figure out what it's good for. It wouldn't be editorially driven, though. So you could just flat-out buy the ad.

Q: What's the reasoning behind not letting authors write a draft description?

A: We run a lot of A/B tests of blurb copy, testing engagement rates. So we let our editors write blurbs because they know what works, but let us know if you see a mistake.

Q: If I'm successful in one category but my application is for another category, how do I get into the other category?

A: Editors will only shift your book if they see similar books do better in new category.

Q: Do you accept co-authored books?

A: Yes, but BookBub's restrictions on timeframes apply to both authors.

Katie Donelan from the BookBub business development team is a former member of Random House's editorial team and Conde Nast's digital advertising department. Carlyn Robertson is a recent Amherst graduate with digital advertising experience. Robertson and Donelan work with both small and major publishers as well as thousands of indie authors. Their [Powerpoint slides](#) from this presentation are available for download.

Jennifer Stevenson writes comedy: funny fantasy, funny paranormal romance, romcom, and funny paranormal women's fiction. Her series are Hinky Chicago, Slacker Demons, Backstage Boys, and, coming soon, Coed Demon Sluts. She is a founding member of Book View Cafe.

Eve Henry also contributed to this article.

Forensic Files

Do tight corsets cause medical problems?

By D. P. Lyle, MD



Question: In my story, set in 1908 Toronto, a 35-year-old woman who has been using corsets strenuously for many years (perhaps 20) suffers the ill effects of the tight lacing common at that time. One of the problems may be that she tied the corset to flatter her figure as much as possible (creating the wasp waist), but it had dire bodily effects.

I want the effects to be sudden and dramatic, to threaten her within an inch of her life or kill her. However the result, she is rushed to the hospital and doctors try to save her.

In the weeks leading up to the emergency event, her face should foreshadow the the impending crisis. When the emergency occurs, her dress is torn off and the medical effects, or at least their exterior consequences, are revealed.

Answer: Medical problems with corsets are exceedingly rare but there are a few things that could happen.

If the corset was so tight that it fractured a rib, it could puncture and collapse a lung—we call this a pneumothorax. Though this is not typically lethal, in 1908 it very easily could have been.

Today, we treat these with chest tubes—plastic tubes inserted through the chest wall into the space between the lung and the chest wall. The tube is attached to a suction device and left in place for a few days until the lung heals and re-inflates. These weren't available in 1908.

Also, a tight corset can restrict breathing so that the person does not take a deep breath for extended periods of time. This can lead to areas where the lung tissue collapses—we call this atelectasis. This can serve as a location for pneumonia to develop, which could be lethal, particularly in 1908 as there were no antibiotics available to treat it.

The binding effect of the corset could also cause chronic gastroesophageal reflux, where acids are constantly pushed up into the esophagus. This happens in people who overeat and go to bed and then wake up with heartburn.

With a corset, this external pressure will keep pressing on the stomach and pushing the undigested food and acids up in the esophagus. This can lead to esophagitis—an inflammation

of the esophagus. This in turn can lead to bleeding, which could result in death.

If the corset was extremely tight and the victim moved in certain positions, she could damage internal organs such as the spleen, liver, or bowel. The spleen, which sits in the left upper part of the abdomen, is particularly vulnerable to this type of injury.

It is often injured in motorcycle and bicycle accidents and could be injured by a corset if the victim bent over suddenly. A ruptured spleen, liver, or bowel often causes severe internal bleeding that can be deadly.

Corsets can also cause a reduction in blood return to the heart through the major veins of the abdomen and lead to dizziness and fainting. Here, the victim could fall down stairs or strike her head on the floor or furniture, leading to death from bleeding into and around the brain.

Your lady could also survive any of these events. If she had a collapsed lung, it could heal itself and she could do fine. If she contracted pneumonia, she could survive even without antibiotics. If she had a bleed from esophagitis, the bleed itself could stop on its own and she could be fine.

If she ruptured an internal organ, surgery could be performed to repair the injured organ or, in the case of a ruptured spleen, to remove the spleen—the spleen is almost always removed when damaged because we do not need it to survive and it's very difficult to repair.

If she struck her head and suffered bleeding into or around her brain, she could be unconscious for a few hours or a few days and yet survive even though there was no real medical treatment at that time for this type of injury.

With a bleed around the brain—called a subdural hematoma—the one technique your 1908 doctor could employ would be the placement of what we call Burr holes (trepanning).

This is simply opening a hole in the skull with a drill or similar device, which allows the doctor to remove the clot and relieve the pressure that builds in the brain with this type of injury. If a secondary infection didn't arise, your young lady could survive even this event.

*D. P. Lyle, MD, is a regular contributor to Nink. His book *Forensics for Dummies* released its second edition in February. [Learn more about his work](#) and see his [blog](#). You can also hear him on [Crime and Science Radio](#).*

Ask the Creativity Coach

Writing emotionally charged scenes when you're drained

By Denise A. Agnew



Is your creativity getting rusty? Let's see what creativity issues the members of Novelists, Inc., are encountering this month.

Question: I've been dealing with a family crisis recently, and I feel like it sucks the creativity right out of me. I don't want to write a deeply emotional scene when I've already had an emotionally rough day. How can I use creativity-inspiring techniques to recover from the real-life drama that drains me and brings creative drive back to my work?

Answer: Any sort of crisis in a creative person's life can make a deep impact on their ability to create. You may be expecting too much of yourself too soon. Give yourself permission to deal with the crisis and put your project on hold until you are ready to create again.

Consider using tough love on yourself. Are you afraid that allowing yourself to create an emotional scene will make you feel worse? It might actually help. Some writers have found they can exorcise the drama or crisis emotions through writing.

You mention that you don't want to write a deeply emotional scene when you've already had a rough day, but if you're creating a story there's a good chance that sort of emotion will be required of you while writing the novel at some point. In other words, to create with genuine emotion, you have to allow yourself to get messy.

Have you ever written a scene that made you tense and filled you with the emotions the characters experienced? Or, while writing, did you feel as if you were on the outside looking in at what the characters were doing, but not feeling their emotions as genuine? Deep empathy with a character, experiencing their feelings as your own, can provide you a tremendous resource for writing genuinely and with passion.

Writers will sometimes use this technique when the rest of the world is complicated. Experiment with letting yourself feel the emotions you don't want to feel while you're creating and see what happens.

Question: I'm having trouble titling my book. It seems like everything I come up with has either been used before—sometimes several times—or it feels awkward. What are some creative ways to brainstorm titles that will best connect with readers?

Answer: Are you attempting to choose a title for a book before you've written the book? Relax. The title might come to you at some point during the story creation or shortly after finishing the book.

If you stress about picking a title, there's a good chance you'll block the creative flow you used to create the book. That's why, while there are plenty of clinical ways to find the perfect book title, I recommend trying something more instinctive.

Sit somewhere calm and tranquil or at the very least quiet. Have pen and paper handy rather than a computer. Start scribbling down ideas. Trust yourself to find a great idea. See if this doesn't free up the "play" part of you that sees this as recess rather than "work".

Of course, there are other, more conventional things you can try.

Have you tried brainstorming with a trusted writer friend? Many times a new perspective can also spark a title idea.

Have you thought through all the elements of your story? Is the title genre-specific? Using a title that's more literary sounding might give readers the wrong idea of the book content if you're writing genre rather than literary.

Discern whether a character's name, the setting, or something unique about the plot would spark an idea for a title.

Finally, have fun. If you tighten up about choosing a title, you can almost guarantee you'll cut off your creative flow.

Question: It seems like a lot of advice on "how to be more creative" is conventional wisdom that I've heard before. Do you have some creativity advice that isn't conventional or advice that specifically applies to professional writers?

Answer: I have so many unconventional ideas on how to create for a lifetime that I could talk your ear off. Bottom line is that creativity is messy (as I mentioned in another answer, above) and doesn't like being downgraded and ignored.

What do I mean by downgraded and ignored? Writers do this to themselves all the time.

Creativity comes from a deep well of frequently irrational and contradictory places rather than a cut-and-dried mathematical part of our brain. Because the outside world wants to tidy things up, allowing your creativity to flourish without paying too much attention to convention can be a challenge.

I see so many authors think that if they just had the right way to jam their creativity into the conformity box they'd have the answer. Unfortunately, creativity doesn't often thrive under those conditions.

Creativity has to be nurtured, loved and trusted. To begin that process, I tell authors to remember creativity is play and also to trust themselves.

If you're thrilled by an idea, it is never a wrong idea. Even if you can't pursue writing that

story immediately, never ignore the idea itself. Write it down and acknowledge to the creative side of yourself that it is worthy.

This is something all writers can do to stay creative for life.

As a final note, each question can be answered differently depending on the writer. That's why I work with authors individually in more intensive coaching sessions, assisting them in analyzing their particular situations.

Denise A. Agnew is the author of over 65 novels. She has written paranormal, romantic comedy, contemporary, fantasy, historical, erotic romance, and romantic suspense. Denise is also a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, and Certified Creativity Coach. Visit Denise's websites, www.deniseagnew.com and www.creativepencoaching.com.

Not Your Usual Writing Advice: Tragedy or Transformation?

By JoAnn Grote



"Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts."
—Winston Churchill

Most NINC members understand rejection—virtually all of us have had a manuscript rejected.

There's a tendency to wallow in pity or anger or frustration, worry that our writing isn't and will never be "good enough," and to use the rejection as an excuse to not work on the current manuscript, at least for a while.

But there are also writing-world rejections that are more traumatic. For example, what if a writer has reached her goal of being a multi-published popular writer, and is multi-contracted for future books—but then something happens and she is derailed from her planned career track?

By now, the writer's books are paying all or part of the bills. The writer defines her career and purpose as "writer." Other people define her as a writer. All the feelings associated with rejection are multiplied.

Sometimes, authors manage to get back on track. Sometimes they find a better track, one they wouldn't have tried without a derailment from the first. In this column, I'm bringing you two stories of writers whose apparent career tragedy brought about a career transformation.

From tarot and erotica to "bonnet-rippers"

Former NINC secretary Charlotte Hubbard is my first example:

"When I sold *Law of Attraction* to Dorchester in 2009, it was a story I was totally into: it involved Tarot, ragtime music, Craftsman-style architecture, and was set on the Oregon coast where we love to vacation.

"I was so happy to be writing this story—the first book of a fun New Age series—that my toes were tapping to the syncopated beat of the local ragtime band as I wrote.

"Alicia Condon, my editor, loved the concept and the story. Even though the advance was

more paltry than usual (first red flag), I accepted the contract because I so wanted this series to succeed. I even had my website redesigned with the new look of the series.

"Who knew that Dorchester was starting to go under then—of course, authors were the last to know—and my book was dead in the water before I even turned it in? Alicia saw the writing on the wall and took Kate Duffy's place at Kensington, so *Law of Attraction* was not only orphaned, it had rigor mortis.

"Right around this time I also received my pink slip for writing erotica as Melissa MacNeal at Kensington. I was feeling stung. I began brainstorming with my agent about what I might write next and where we might sell it . . .

"And along came the Amish romance genre—'bonnet-rippers,' we called them with a chuckle. Alicia noted that writers in this new genre were doing quite well, and that Kensington needed to get on the gravy train. My agent reminded her of the four well-received faith-and-family historicals I'd written for her at Dorchester, before we tried the New Age series.

"Bang! I immediately got a contract for my new Seasons of the Heart Amish romance series—and I sold a four-book Amish series to NAL, as well. These initial books sold so well that Kensington recruited more writers; they have six of us writing Amish romance/mystery now. My agent tells me these books are outselling a lot of other genres, and unlike most hot topics that get glutted and then tank, Amish romances appear to be holding their audience and their appeal.

"Since 2010, I've sold or completed 17 Amish titles, I have two new series debuting this year, and I'm contracted back-to-back for books up through 2018. I'm writing a special edition/gift Amish romance for Mother's Day—which was the publisher's cool idea. It's a single title, similar but not hooked in to any of my series, so they intend to bring it out year after year for Mother's Day.

"Who knew? For once in my writing career, I was in the right place at the right time with the right mindset. I believed from the get-go that I could write these uplifting stories. It seems the 'law of attraction' was at work for me in a totally unexpected way!"

From traditional historicals to indie success in sci-fi

Former NINC president Brenda Hiatt traditionally published six Regency romances in Harlequin's Regency Romance line, one Harlequin Superromance (a time travel), and eight historicals with Avon/HarperCollins. Then her successful career took a twist.

"By the time I turned in my last traditionally published historical romance in 2004, I was well on my way to burnout. Three back-to-back deadlines and an editor whose vision was distinctly different from my own had gradually turned writing from a joy into a slog.

"When Avon elected not to pick up my option book a couple of months later, I actually felt more relief than disappointment. I didn't have to write the blasted thing after all!

"I walked away from writing for almost two years before I was again bitten by the bug. Hoping to bring the fun back, I wrote something just for me—a contemporary, humorous, suspenseful women's fiction story in first person, completely unlike anything I'd done before. It was fun, but of course it didn't sell. (Not until much later, anyway, after I'd parted ways with my agent and sold it myself to a small press.)

“Meanwhile I’d begun another fun project, a young adult science fiction idea I’d had in the back of my mind for years. It also didn’t sell. I couldn’t even interest an agent in taking it on.

“Around that same time, my two former traditional publishers began releasing my older books digitally. Those weren’t selling, either—but when I heard about other authors, in NINC and elsewhere, self-publishing their reverted backlist to good effect, I started the process of getting back the rights to as many of my books as possible.

“In late 2010, while still trying to sell my YA series traditionally, I put up my first indie e-book—the only historical I had rights to. It languished, selling a handful of copies a month. Still, it was something. As I pried more books away from Avon and Harlequin, I put those up as eBooks, too, learning as I went.

“By the end of 2012, I’d reclaimed and self-published all but two of my backlist titles. Totaling up my earnings for that year, I was amazed to discover it was more than I’d ever made in any one year as a traditionally published author—enough that, for the first time in my life, I could actually have lived (frugally) on my writing income!

“At that point, with two books in my YA series written and a third begun, I abandoned my fruitless agent search and self-published those as well, releasing the first in late 2013 and the fourth in early 2015. They’re currently outperforming my historicals, but I finally wrote another one of those too—and had fun doing it (*Gallant Scoundrel* released Feb. 29).

“To say I’m happy as an indie is an understatement. Last year marked the first six-figure year of my 20-plus-year writing career and it might never have happened if Avon hadn’t turned down my proposal for an option book, way back in 2004.”

I love the saying, “Rejection is God’s protection.”

It reminds us not to focus on the rejection, but on possible futures instead; a future that might turn what appears to be career tragedy into a career transformation.

The author interviews in this column were used with permission. 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.

The Mad Scribbler

Empathy, violence, love, and pain

By Laura Resnick



"The wine flowed, the food was shared, I talked with everybody, I felt at home. I got into long conversations about empathy, violence, love, and pain with handfuls of strangers at a time."

—Amanda Palmer, *The Art of Asking*

Amanda Palmer is an indie-rock musician who captured the media's attention in 2012 when she broke the crowdfunding record on Kickstarter by raising \$1.2 million dollars from 25,000 backers for her next album, *Theatre is Evil*.

I'd heard of Palmer prior to that because she had married a prominent writer in my genre, Neil Gaiman, whose critically acclaimed and mega-selling works include science fiction/fantasy novels, children's books, graphic novels, and screenplays.

But I knew nothing about Amanda, except that she was a musician, until I saw her TED talk. (TED is a nonprofit organization that, among other things, hosts fascinating speakers and posts the videos on [its website](#).)

In her talk, Palmer demystified the stunning success of her Kickstarter campaign by describing her longtime habit of engaging directly with her fans via social media and in person, as well as exchanging favors with them and asking for their help.

Although surprised and gratified by the sum she had raised with her Kickstarter campaign, she had spent years cultivating a *real* relationship with her fan base—and that, she said, was the key ingredient in her crowdfunding success.

I found Palmer's talk thought-provoking, so I recently read her traditionally published autobiography that explores her career in detail: *The Art of Asking: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Let People Help*.

It's an engaging book, and Palmer's relationship with her fans was indeed active and intimate for years before the Kickstarter campaign. It included extensive online engagement, spending time with fans in person, staying in their homes when on tour, and discussing personal things with them.

When Tweeting from a café or similar place, she sometimes specified her location in case any fans in the area wanted to connect in person with her. Operating for years on a very tight

budget, Palmer was often creative about solving logistical problems, getting publicity, arranging meals and lodging, attracting audiences, and bartering mutual exchanges of services or favors. There was a lot for me to learn from this book.

What I mostly learned, though, was that I'd rather clean kennels than emulate Palmer's tactics. (I speak from experience, having cleaned kennels for years.) Even to someone like me, also routinely forced by a meager budget to find creative solutions, Palmer's professional life sounded exhausting.

Then again, she certainly seems to be a gregarious extrovert, whereas I am someone who chose a profession where I spend most of my time alone in a quiet room with imaginary characters—and it suits me.

It's clear throughout her book that Palmer genuinely enjoyed engaging constantly and intimately with her fans on social media, spending personal time with them, and mingling with audiences.

In one memorable incident in the book, she met with fans in Germany and, as an act of amity and trust, wound up stripping to the waist and letting them write all over her naked torso with colorful markers.

That kind of thing isn't really me.

I am not the sort of person who, if attending a gathering where I don't know anyone, winds up having long conversations with handfuls of strangers about empathy, violence, love, and pain. Rather, I am the sort who wanders around the edges of the room pretending rapt fascination with the art.

At a large party I attended a few weeks ago where I didn't really know anyone but the hosts, I made stilted conversation here and there with a few people, and then I retreated to the laundry room for the rest of the evening, where the dog occasionally visited me. I don't want to increase the frequency of such occasions in my life.

That said, yes, of course I appreciate my readers. I am thrilled—and I always will be—when someone at a convention or public event approaches me to tell me they like my work. I'm delighted when I get reader mail. I write to be read, and I appreciate every person who lets me know they're reading what I write.

But I don't want to get more personal with them.

I also participate in social media—though my cats are more popular on Facebook than I am. (Really.) However, I don't want social media to consume more of my time, which it would if I got more engaged with my readers there.

More to the point, though, I genuinely don't want to get more involved with my readers online. What I actually like about social media, in fact, is that it's such an easy way for me to stay in touch with the many far-flung people in my real life. That readers can also find me there is a nice add-on feature, rather than the main attraction.

I also never share anything online that I wouldn't want my parents to hear—since I have learned from experience that they will indeed hear about it.

Seriously. My mom left a message last year saying she needed to hear from me immediately, because someone told her they'd read on Facebook that I'd injured myself. After that, I increased the percentage of cat photos I post on social media and decreased what I say

about myself.

There's a lot I don't want my parents to hear, after all. (Getting naked in public in Germany would certainly fall under that heading.)

But I digress.

I know that any number of writers have used social media as an effective tool to engage their readers and build sales, and this weighs on my mind. I've sat through interesting, informative sessions at NINC conferences where writers with much bigger audiences than mine describe the details of their very active relationships with readers and their extensive social media interaction with fans and street teams.

I briefly imagine myself emulating them, and then I think, "I'd rather go back to cleaning kennels."

I've thought about this a lot lately, because in this new and evolving market, there is so much emphasis on the writer cultivating a relationship with readers. I recognize the importance of that; and Palmer's book is rich with examples of how a real relationship with fans ultimately led to her \$1.2 million Kickstarter success.

But I also think that playing to one's strengths and avoiding too much pressure on one's weaknesses is usually the viable long-term strategy.

I don't write novels in poetic, lyrical prose, for example, because that's a style I find so difficult to sustain that I'd burn out halfway through a book.

I don't try to build an author identity based on startlingly original premises, because my mind doesn't come up with such story premises, so it would be a short career.

And thus I perceive an inherent flaw in supposing that a low-energy misanthrope like me should cultivate engaged, personal relationships with readers.

I have no intention of shunning readers, obviously, but I'm realizing that the type of relationship I'd be comfortable with, the one I want to encourage and cultivate, is one between readers and my work, rather than between them and me.

Laura Resnick, author of fantasy novels, romance novels, nonfiction, and short fiction, is not a people person.

You Might Have Missed This

Great links for enlightenment or procrastination

By Ashley McConnell



I am always amused to see reports that Germany or the UK or various other countries allied to the US are *shocked, shocked I tell you* to discover that the US is spying on them.

Like they aren't doing exactly the same thing to us.

But intelligence analysis is an old and honorable (really!) profession, as this report dating from 1423 from Venice on [the power and economics of various medieval states](#) shows.

Marketing [models for self-publishing success](#): not to be clickbait-y, but I thought number four was particularly interesting.

Marie Force's 2016 [schedule of virtual workshops](#) is now up. I haven't taken one of these myself, but those who have give them a definite thumbs-up.

For the library geeks among us, a virtual visit to several of the Oxford and Cambridge libraries:

Oxford:

- All Souls – [Codrington Library](#)
- Jesus – [Fellows' Library](#)
- Merton – [Old Library](#)
- [Somerville](#)

Cambridge:

- [Gonville & Caius](#)
- [Newnham](#)
- [St John's](#)
- [St John's – Old Library](#)

[Victorian servants](#), or, "Who Does What When in the Gracious English Home?" Also see: [male servants in the wealthy New York home](#).

The “Oh Let’s Just Cover Manners Generally,” [Etiquette, 1922](#).

Kris Rusch says there’s a new version coming out soon, but until then, there’s [Deal Breakers 2013](#), contract terms writers should know about.

It’s awards season, so let’s hand out some awards here. The “I Think I’ll Publish My Fanfic Myself Award” goes to [this article](#). Meanwhile, the “In Praise of (Good) Contracts Award” goes [here](#).

Hugh Howey holds forth on the [state of the industry](#).

New York is not the center of the universe. No, really. [Not even for food](#).

John Scalzi, wildly successful science fiction/fantasy writer, talks about his business team, and he [names names](#). I find it interesting that he not only has a literary agent, he *also* has an entertainment lawyer. Definitely belt-and-suspenders, this guy.

Passive Guy provides information in the [February 2016 Author Earnings Report](#). Go look.

Ashley McConnell has published seventeen novels and several short stories, including one in the first NINC anthology, Cast of Characters. Her first novel was nominated for the Bram Stoker Award. She was the Registrar for the 2011 NINC conference and was the NINC Treasurer in 2013 and 2014. In addition to her fiction work, Ashley has written nonfiction about writing, science, research and development negotiations and acquisitions, corporate policies, physical security, and the culture of large companies. She is currently engaged in backlist publishing and developing a new mystery series.



Founded in 1989

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.

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- Rebecca Brandewyne
- Janice Young Brooks
- Jasmine Cresswell
- Maggie Osborne
- Marianne Shock

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