



# NINK

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The official newsletter of Novelists, Inc.,  
a professional organization for  
writers of popular fiction.

# *Nink* August 2017

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# President's Voice

*By Erica Ridley*



Happy August!

Last month, I spent an amazing weekend in Albuquerque, teaching a two-day hands-on master class on author newsletters. I had a blast and came up with a few new tricks to add to my arsenal. I cannot wait for the NINC conference to hear even more great insights.

## **Have you registered for the conference yet?**

The deadline is August 15—just two weeks away. If you're thinking about coming, now is the time to [sign up!](#) This year is going to be incredible.

## **Already have your ticket?**

If you're interested in being a reporter at this year's conference, let our newsletter committee know [here](#).

## **Want to contribute to *Nink*, but won't be at the conference?**

Propose articles and ideas to Michele Dunaway, our new editor, [here](#).

## **Tech savvy? Know your way around a website?**

NINC would love YOU to [join us](#) on the new technology committee!

Help keep the gears turning behind the scenes, and brainstorm with us on the best ways technology can serve NINC members in the future.

Join the Tech Committee [here!](#)

## **2017 NINC Conference: Discovery**

[Registration](#) for the **2017 NINC Conference: Discovery** is filling up fast. This year is going to be great!

I'll share some highlights below...

**A few of our featured speakers:**

- Cheryl Klein
- Chris Fox
- David Gaughran
- Delilah Dawson
- Fauzia Burke
- Findaway Voices
- Johnny B. Truant
- Kristen Painter
- Matt Buchanan
- Nisi Shawl
- Roxanne St. Claire
- Ryan Zee
- Sean Platt

**A few of our fabulous workshops:**

- 11 Ways to Earn More from Every Story
- 17 Steps to Revision
- 5000 Words per Hour
- Alternate Revenue Streams
- Creative Bad-Ass
- Estate Planning for Authors
- Exploiting Audiobooks
- Facebook Chat Bots
- From Midlist to Mad Money
- KU vs Going Wide
- Managing your Backlist
- Newsletters that Work
- Work with What Makes You Weird
- Writing the Other

**Workshops & panels with industry guests, including:**

- ACX/Audible
- Amazon
- BookBub
- BookFunnel
- Draft2Digital
- Goodreads
- Ingram Spark
- Vellum
- Written Word Media

## Get the latest conference news here:

<https://ninc.com/ninc-conference-2017/>

Can't wait to see you there!

To register, please LOG IN and visit:

<https://ninc.com/conferences/ninc-conference-2017/>

The important Conference FAQ can be found here:

<https://ninc.com/conferences/about-the-ninc-conference/ninc-conference-faq/>

And hotel information is here:

<https://ninc.com/conferences/ninc-conference-2017/conference-hotel/>

## NINC Member Benefits

Don't forget to sign up for the [email loop](#), [critique/brainstorming group](#), and the members-only [Facebook group](#) if you haven't already. The [Pro Services Directory](#), member [discount page](#), and [sample letters](#) are also great resources.

Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](#). You can also [propose an article](#), submit a [letter to the editor](#), or volunteer to [be a conference reporter](#) and become part of the team. You can also [buy a paperback copy](#) of the 2016 *Best of Nink!*

## Accessing the NINC Website

Not sure how to log in to the NINC website? Visit the login page here:

<https://ninc.com/login-to-ninc>

Your **username** is your email address, and your password was sent to you in an email with subject line "NINC: New website for renewals & more!"

If you didn't see it, be sure to check your spam folder, or email [admin@ninc.com](mailto:admin@ninc.com) and we will reset your password for you.

Thank you!



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*Erica Ridley is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author of historical romance novels. Her latest series, The Dukes of War, features roguish peers and dashing war heroes who return from battle only to be thrust*

*into the splendor and madness of Regency England. When not reading or writing romances, Erica can be found riding camels in Africa, zip-lining through rain forests in Costa Rica, or getting hopelessly lost in the middle of Budapest.*

## From the Editor

### Meet *Nink*'s New Editor

*By Michele Dunaway*



Hi!

It's August, and by the time you're reading this, I've been editor for about three weeks, and I've been fully immersed in teacher meetings for three days. I'm excited to take on the responsibility of being your *Nink* editor, and I wanted to take this time to introduce my committee and myself. We have great things planned moving forward, and we thank you for your patience during this transition, and for overlooking that this is a shorter issue than you are used to receiving. We promise that won't be the norm.

One of my assistant editors is Susan Anderson, who writes as Lindsay Randall. She's going to be working with me on responding to your queries, because we want you to write for *Nink*. Accepted articles of 800-1,000 words pay .20 a word, for a cap of \$250, unless cleared with me first for exceptional longer works or two-part series. When you send in a submission idea via NINC's website, I will be reviewing it and forwarding it to her. You're in good hands. She is a member of the American Copy Editors Society and the author of more than a dozen romance novels and two dozen magazine articles. Currently, she spends her days coordinating, creating, and editing a variety of development communications. You can reach her directly at [ninkassistanteditor@gmail.com](mailto:ninkassistanteditor@gmail.com).

Another of my assistant editors is Heather C. Leigh. A retired pharmacist, after writing her bestselling Famous Series, she left the daily grind to work full-time as both an indie author with 20 published titles, and as an author for Dreamspinner Press under her Leigh Carman pen name. Heather is particularly fond of chocolate (except white chocolate, it doesn't count), the Red Sox, and French bulldogs.

The minion who will get *Nink* formatted, processed, and into your hands is the one and

only Laura Resnick, who writes for *Nink* as the Mad Scribbler. Laura is a full-time writer, cat wrangler, and Cincinnati underground tour guide.

I'm the author of 26 books with traditional publishers, mom of two daughters, pet parent of cats (but Laura's cat tales are much better than mine), and full-time high school English and journalism teacher who advises the newspaper, yearbook, and online. I've also contributed to multiple professional teaching publications and hold a master's degree in Media Communications. Your articles will be in good hands. You can reach me either at [newsletter@ninc.com](mailto:newsletter@ninc.com).

We have a wishlist of things we'd love to see, so if any of those on the list below interest you, please contact us. We will also put out a call on the email loop for the monthly question, where we're going to ask you to share a nugget of pro-bono advice. We hope you participate, for the more that do, the stronger the connection we can forge.

Best,  
Michele

#### **Wish list:**

- How to retain readers and keep them engaged while waiting for your next book.
- Deep insights from various advertising platforms, including Facebook, Instafreebie, BookBub, and more.
- New tools to track books or marketing campaign performance.
- How to make the most of working with a freelance editor, publicist, or other author support professional.
- Trends in book cover design and packaging your book.
- Tips and how-to guides for ebook and print book production.
- How to write a more enticing author bio, with lots of examples.
- Maximizing Amazon Affiliate income.
- Emerging changes in contracts from traditional publishers; pitfalls and recommendations.
- Genre-specific trends.
- Series marketing techniques.
- Bridging from one series to another to earn crossover readership.
- Borrowing craft concepts from screenwriting to improve the plot and pace of your novel.
- Setting deep hooks throughout your novel to drive readers on.
- Scrivener tips for plotters and pantsers; advance uses of Scrivener.
- Compare/contrast various ebook production tools (Jutoh, Calibre, Scrivener, etc.).
- Marketing a backlist and refreshing old titles for current readers.
- Front and back matter recommendations to gain more reviews, newsletter signups, and clicks to purchase the next book.
- Making the most of NetGalley; working with a co-op.



- Fresh ideas for author newsletters.
- Recommendations for recently published books on author business, author marketing, and craft.
- Industry insights on what's changing in traditional publishing and for the major ebook distribution platforms.
- Great research sites to go deeper into the story.
- Tips for choosing and launching a new pen name.
- Advanced craft techniques that are applicable to all genres of commercial fiction.

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You can contact Nink editor Michele Dunaway at [newsletter@ninc.com](mailto:newsletter@ninc.com).

# Green With Envy

## Tools for Mastering Unproductive Jealousy

*By Denise A. Agnew*



*“If you are going to write, you are probably going to have to deal with it, because some wonderful, dazzling successes are going to happen for some of the most awful, angry, undeserving writers you know —people who are, in other words, not you.”*

*—Anne Lamott, Bird By Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*

All creative people have those days where creativity isn't flowing and the rest of life is kicking them in the pants. So many things can extinguish a writer's desire to write just one more page... or any pages at all. One emotion can put the kibosh on creativity faster than almost anything else. Envy.

Almost everyone feels a twinge of envy from time to time. Authors create fiction where jealousy is often a prime emotion. In real life, however, almost no one admits feeling envy or jealousy, yet everyone *has* felt it. Talking about envy is almost taboo. Even if they believe their writing world isn't falling into place the way they wish, writers want to project confidence.

Is all envy bad? Of course not. Envy can motivate a writer to do a better job next time, or to keep on writing, or to accomplish their best work ever. Yet extreme envy or jealousy can eat away at a writer until the damage is done and creativity is shot; often the writer doesn't realize the problem until it is too late. In order to challenge and defeat the green-eyed monster, a writer must first admit they are envious/jealous and understand that hanging on to envy/jealousy isn't creatively healthy.

### **Shades of Green**

Writers need to determine which shade of green is hog-tying their creativity. Many people have known a writer who isn't a great person and yet has phenomenal success in terms of sales and royalties. Let's call them Ms. Success. Deep inside, based on intuition or on actual evidence, an envious writer might believe Ms. Success isn't very nice personally and professionally. One day the inevitable happens. Ms. Success receives an ugly review or her books don't sell well.

Ah, here it comes. The envious writer feels a rush of deep satisfaction when Ms. Success isn't doing well. *Uh-oh*. Envious writer basks in Ms. Success's lack of good fortune. For a minute, envious writer permits the satisfaction to flow, and then perhaps later feels self-disgust at enjoying Ms. Success's misfortune.

A second example is that most writers have known a writer who is kind and respectful to everyone and has phenomenal success. Let's call them Good Author. Despite this knowledge, envious writer wonders why they don't have as many book sales or don't always get amazing reviews, or people aren't slobbering over their novels at a book signing. The envious writer doesn't look at what they personally need to change. The envious writer instead begrudges the other author her success and whatever she's done to accomplish that achievement. One day the inevitable happens. The Good Author gets an ugly review or her books don't sell well. Ah, here it comes. Envious writer suddenly feels a rush of satisfaction that Good Author is no longer at the top of the stack.

What has happened here? It doesn't matter whether Ms. Success is rotten and Good Author is an angel. The envious writer is still receiving a rush of satisfaction when these two authors have a turn of bad luck. In both cases, envious writer is concentrating on the fortune or misfortune of others when it would be more productive to focus on what they need to do/change/be in order to satisfy their goals and expectations. But, wait. There is a way for envious writer to pull up their bootstraps and march forward to triumph.

## **How to Slay The Green Dragon**

1) *Drop The Negativity*. Few writers have become enormously creative or successful spewing negativity. As a general rule, even if the envious writer does find success through pulling others down, this always catches up with them in the end.

2) *Don't Whine On Social Media*. Writers sometimes take to social media to lament about their perceived lack of success. It's usually better if envious writer works with what they can do and resists whining about what they believe they haven't done. This isn't to say that all creative people don't have those times where venting to a friend is a good thing. Sometimes letting off steam is healthy.

3) *Kill That Envy With Kindness*. Praise Ms. Success and Good Author when they trumpet a success. Wishing them the best and complimenting them when they do well can help envious author to feel better.

4) *Stop Counting*. There will always be someone who sells more books and/or makes more money. Not liking it doesn't change a thing. The less envious author doesn't fixate on Ms. Success or Good Author's successes and instead concentrates on their own endeavors, the more achievement comes to the envious author.

5) *Don't Wallow*. Wallowing in career misfortunes gets envious author nothing. A determination to climb from the quicksand and move forward is the best policy. A devastating career event sometimes makes an envious author say, "I'll never write again." Yes, whatever they've experienced hurts a lot, and fear motivates them to avoid more pain. A creative life is filled with the possibility of disappointment and setbacks. There is no publisher, or agent, or magic button an author can push that will eliminate the possibility of future failure. The

question becomes does the envious author truly want to create? If they do, they must get back up on their feet and move forward and create.

### **There's So Much More!**

The tips above seem excessively simple. They are. Hopefully, this short piece will provide food for thought and maybe a boost to drive every author forward with their career. Remain focused on the best. All the rest...FUGETABOUTIT!

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*Denise A. Agnew is the award-winning author of over 65 novels. Denise's novels Love From The Ashes and Blackout were optioned for film/TV by Where's Lucy? Productions. Denise is a writer/producer (Happy Catastrophe Productions/Bright Frontier Films), a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, Certified Creativity Coach, and RT Academy Mentor. As a creativity coach, Denise assists anyone in the creative arts to maintain lifelong creativity. You can find her at [www.deniseagnew.com](http://www.deniseagnew.com) and [www.creativepencoaching.com](http://www.creativepencoaching.com).*

## NINC Advice Column

*This is a new monthly feature that crowdsources writer-to-writer advice. Questions will be posted on NINCLink by the end of each month. Answers of 100-words-or-less are due to the editor by the 10th of the following month.*



**QUESTION: What is the best piece of advice you've received or found to help you combat writing burnout and fatigue?**

I learned many things from doing the Artist's Way program years ago, but the most valuable advice I gleaned from it was this: Treating myself like a precious object will make me strong. I think we drive ourselves relentlessly, thinking that's the way to succeed, and then we're surprised when we burn out or collapse in exhaustion. I need to take as much care of myself as I do of those I love. In fact, I need to take even better care of myself because if I can't function, I can't care for those I love, either. So the best advice is to be kind to myself and considerate of my needs, physical and emotional, so I avoid burnout and fatigue in the first place.

—Victoria Thompson

If I am feeling burned out, I stop trying to write and read other people's books. Reading something good makes me want to write my own stories.

—Rebecca York

Best advice: Give yourself permission to write rubbish and carry on writing. It won't be rubbish but it may need a little more polishing. I say this to myself regularly and I will have 80 novels published come September. It works well for me because I'm not a planner; I'm an organic writer.

—Anna Jacobs

The best piece of advice I can give on this subject is to remember writing isn't your life. It's part of your life, but take time to take care of yourself and take time to be in the moment with those you love. The deadline won't go away, but your life could slip away. When you hit that wall, you want someone to be there to help you climb over it or knock it down.

—Lenora Worth

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*Please send answers to the September question of "What is the best advice you could give someone suffering from writer's block, besides just write?" to [newsletter@ninc.com](mailto:newsletter@ninc.com) by August 10.*

# Empowering Your Inner Artist

By Michele Dunaway

## Fear.

A four-letter word, beginning with an F, as foul as its better-known, curse-word cousin. In fact, perhaps even more deserving of ire, because unlike the words that burst forth with dismay and venom, fear immobilizes. Paralyzes. Makes us go out “not with a bang, but a whimper.”

As children we fear the dark, but we become fearless in our teens and early twenties—invincible—believing that no bad will come to us as we experiment with life.

Then comes life. We fear for our families, our jobs, and our finances. We fear failing. We fear rejection. We fear we’re not good enough.

We fear risk.

Last spring, the students in my novel class decided to read Andrew McCarthy’s young adult novel *Just Fly Away*. We tweeted him, and he agreed to visit my classroom while he was in St. Louis for an event. He’d come and discuss the book with the kids—his target readers. They had no idea he was Andrew McCarthy of *Mannequin* or *Pretty in Pink*, or Andrew McCarthy, travel writer. To them, he was the author of the book in their hands, and dad to a kid their age.

He talked to the kids for 45 minutes, and they loved it. They provided their feedback regarding the book, and then he gave them advice: travel the world, face your fears, and take risks.



His advice resonated with me more than anything else I’d heard from a writers’ workshop that year. Andrew McCarthy described himself as an introverted kid who’d started to discover himself through high school drama. But to know that he’d also faced fear...after all, I’d dubbed 2017 my year of no fear. So far it wasn’t going well.

Somewhere, that girl who'd jumped off a bridge 30 feet into the river below, who'd sung musicals on a New York City subway, who'd talked a bartender into a bottle of wine 20 minutes past last call, somewhere along the way that gutsy girl had disappeared. She'd faltered. Sure, she was a successful high school English teacher, but writing—the thing that had called to her soul since first grade—writing had taken a back burner.

Maybe it started when she'd been cut from her series line like so many others, when her editor had said, "If you weren't publishing, you'd lose part of yourself." (Seriously.) Maybe that's the defining moment, the one when I decided to focus on my mother's illness, my children's graduations, and my teaching job. After all, the fact that I'd written some good books isn't a tombstone line compared to good mother, friend and teacher.

But my artist soul wasn't to be denied. However, diving back into the writing soup is hard. During that lull, publishing changed. I'm older, but not necessarily wiser. My three, single-title ebooks out a year or so ago did well, but not well enough. My agent and I said goodbye.

As I evolve again, I returned to a workshop I attended in St. Louis, presented by [Bob Baker](#), author of the self-published work, *The Empowered Artist*. What he said resonated, and it's applicable to all parts of our careers, so I'm going to share it with you. He maintains that artists make three big mistakes that keep them from a thriving career.

### **Mistake One is not realizing the value you bring to the world.**

This struck me. I know how good of a teacher I am. The plaques on the wall of my classroom drive it home. But when I write, I see myself as not-as-good-as-X-author. I won't win an award. I won't see a *New York Times* bestseller moniker beside my name. Yet, as Bob pointed out, how many times do we get stuck into negative thinking? My series romance books brought joy to the readers who read them. For those few hours, I took them away from their pain and sorrow and transported them to another world. So don't ask for permission to be part of the publishing world. Take risks. Make an action step of keeping a love letters file: grab screen shots of emails and read them when you don't think your work has value, or when another agent or editor says "No." Keep a tin of handwritten letters and reread them when you need a boost. You bring value to the world.

### **Mistake Two is that most people stay stuck in hobby mode instead of career mode.**

Now for many of us at NINC, we are career writers. But my series advance didn't mean I was going to be a full-time writer. The year I did six books for my line almost did me in—and I still made less than one year of teaching. So I've kept the day job because that's been my retirement and health insurance. According to Bob, there are four reasons people create: 1) self satisfaction; 2) recognition; 3) for the benefit of others; and 4) money. When you create for only reasons one and two, you're in hobby mode. When you create for reasons one through four, you're in career mode. Creation for the benefit of others means you want to inspire, or entertain, or simply reach people. Your writing serves others. It benefits others, even if only allowing for an escape from reality. When you write for money, it's because you deserve to be paid for what you do. But ask yourself, what's your big why? What motivates you most? I like telling stories. I like seeing my name on the cover. People talk in my head, and I must get them out. When I do,



they vanish, and I don't remember them or hear them anymore.

### **Mistake Three is not getting support or asking for help.**

Success starts from within, and I've been guilty of this. Give yourself permission to be successful. Often we hold ourselves back (that fear) and don't take risks. Many thought my writing a cute hobby, until I sold my first book and the dynamic changed. Ask for help. I sold that first book because naïve me emailed two of my favorite authors and asked them which editor I should make an appointment with at RWA. I was new. Didn't realize you aren't supposed to do that. But they emailed me back, told me what I needed, and I sold because of that appointment. You'll hear of all these authors being best friends and buddies, and you may be outside of that circle. That doesn't mean you can't ask for help. I'm ever so grateful to the [NINC Critique loop](#). Be sure also to support yourself by refilling the well. Support is something you give and get.



We've all been deeply touched by someone else's music, words, performances, or art. We create beauty and experiences. It's selfish to keep our talents to ourselves because we don't feel worthy. We are worthy. We are empowered. Take risks.

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*Michele Dunaway is the author of 26+ books for major New York publishers. A self-described woman who does too much and doesn't want to stop, she's a full-time high school English and journalism teacher, a mother of two, and your new Nink editor.*

# The Mad Scribbler

## Unputdownable

By Laura Resnick



*"The oldest books are only still just out to those who have not read them."*

—Samuel Butler (1835-1902), novelist & essayist

Languishing here in the dog days of summer, where the combination of heat and humidity in the Ohio Valley make me long for frigid arctic wastes and frozen tundras, I recently remembered what I loved best about summer when I was growing up: reading time.

Throughout the school year, I bitterly resented that, in addition to the hours I spent in class, I also had to spend my evenings doing homework. As a student, I frankly hated math and science, though the subject from which I was most delighted to be freed at the end of every school year was English—because I hated reading the books they assigned.

I was an avid reader from a young age, but I was enthusiastic about the books I chose, not the books I was forced to read for school. ("Forced" in the sense that I had to comply if I wanted to get decent grades and eventually graduate.)

The fiction my teachers assigned was almost never work I'd have chosen voluntarily, and it was very rarely stuff I would have finished if I were reading for my own enrichment. I felt that every hour spent plodding through that material was time stolen from the books I wanted to read.

I still vividly remember my disgusted outrage, when I was 15 years old, at having to drag myself through *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (Thomas Hardy), *Silas Marner* (George Eliot), and *Ethan Frome* (Edith Wharton).

Although those authors are widely admired, those works did not speak to me at all. (Well, actually, they did. What they said was: "You're growing very drowsy. Your eyelids feel heavy...")

Sometimes authors were permanently ruined for me, or at other times temporarily spoiled, by being assigned when I was the wrong age. Yes, I eventually recovered from reading William Shakespeare and T.S. Eliot at age 14, and I later became a fan of both of those writers, but, you know, some people never get over that traditional miscalculation in their education.

Sure, over the years, out of the many, many fictional works my teachers tortured and bored me with, there were a few wonderful books assigned—some that were even age appropriate at the time I was instructed to read them. Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, when I was 12, John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*, when I was 15, and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, when I was 18, are all examples of assigned books that I loved when I read them.

But most of the assigned fiction felt like punishment and persuaded me the educational system's goal was to convince people to hate reading.

So one of my great summer pleasures throughout my youth was reading whatever I wanted to read, rather than reading what I was required to read. And the best experience in those summer seasons of voracious reading was discovering books that were "unputdownable."

When I was 15, for example, I remember picking up John Bellairs' *The Face in the Frost* (a fantasy novel), thinking the cover copy seemed engaging ... and putting it down many hours later, having skipped dinner and missed my favorite TV shows, because once I picked it up, I couldn't stop reading until I got to the end. Around that time, I also discovered police procedurals (specifically, Ed McBain's 87th Precinct novels), and I spent many nights staying up much too late reading them. A decade later, I would go through a similar phase with spy novels, devouring books by various British genre masters.

I remember multiple occasions in my twenties, after I had finished college, when I went to work groggy and exhausted, having stayed up all night to read the newest mystery or romantic suspense novel by Elizabeth Peters, a.k.a Barbara Michaels. I also did that on occasions when I got my hands on her older titles, which were hard to find back then. No book needs to be new to be unputdownable; after all, regardless of release date, it's new-to-you if you haven't read it before.

These memories, and others like them, came to mind recently when a friend of mine asked the readers of her blog what they thought made a book unputdownable.

For a writer, obviously, this leads to a related question: How can I make my own books unputdownable?

My favorite compliment (and maybe yours, too) is the reader who tells me they stayed up all night reading one of my books. I love it when readers curse me because my books make them show up late to work and drag themselves through a sleep-deprived day. One of my all-time favorite reader emails appeared in my in-box around 2 a.m., sent by a man who was halfway through my fantasy novel, *In Legend Born*. He told me he had to get some sleep before going to work in the morning, and he couldn't possibly do that without knowing the answer to several story dilemmas. So he was writing to beg me to give him the answers so he could go to bed. (I refused. He cursed me to the gods and kept reading. We went through a similar ritual with the next two books in that trilogy.)

The unputdownable book—the one that leads you to apologize to your family for not making dinner, cancel social plans so you can stay home reading, and guzzle caffeine at work the next day—is the experience that most (all?) of us crave as readers. It's the book that totally engages, absorbs, and transports you to a fictional world—to such an extent that the world of the novel takes priority over your actual world for hours at a time. It's also a book you go

around describing to your family, co-workers, and friends (and sometimes bemused strangers, too), encouraging them to read it.

As a reader, it's what I hope every novel will turn out to be. As a writer, it's what I hope my own novels will be for readers.

So what makes a book unputdownable?

An enthused reader talks about and focuses on a number of qualities after finishing a book she couldn't put down—things like plot, conflict, story arc, character development, and relationships, which I'd say are all crucial for a good book. But I would argue that those things, when done well, make a book memorable rather than unputdownable. After all, you have to keep reading a novel to the end—or nearly so—to find out if those aspects fulfill their early promise, work throughout, and are consistently handled well.

"Unputdownable," I assert, refers instead to the qualities that get you to that point—especially the qualities that get you staying up until the wee hours, reading the book in the fervent hope (or steadfast belief) that its key elements will resolve in a strong and satisfying way.

For me, what makes a book unputdownable can be summed up as the *way* the writer tells the story. It's a combination of voice, tone, style, sensibility, flow, and pace.

I also find the exact opposite is true of the books that I *do* put down. Books which I bounce off within a few chapters, or that I find a slog to get through (even if I'm interested in the subject matter or intrigued by the story idea), are always instances where the way the writer tells the story doesn't appeal to me, grab me, or draw me in.

The subject matter or genre of books I find unputdownable is often a good fit with my usual range of interests and tastes. But sometimes there are books that I race through and, afterwards, am a little surprised to have loved. Some examples are *Riders*, by Jilly Cooper; *The Submission*, by Amy Waldman; and *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society*, by Annie Barrows and Mary Ann Shaffer.

In each case, I was unfamiliar with the author(s), I read the book by chance, and I was skeptical I'd even like it, let alone find it unputdownable. In each instance, there were major aspects of the book that made it not my usual sort. Yet in all three novels, something about the way those authors told those particular stories immediately drew me in and held me captive, thoroughly engaged until the very end.

So I think "unputdownable" is a direct connection between the reader and the author's storytelling, and it may well be a connection that's specific to the way the author tells just that one particular story. I found W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* unputdownable, for example, and yet I don't care for most of his books.

Above all, I would summarize the "unputdownable" book as one that makes you feel, while you're reading it, that a compelling person is speaking directly and specifically to *you*.

Sadly for you and me as writers, though, I also believe that's a very individual and elusive quality, a special instance of alchemy between author and reader. It's something that, like an unexpected cool breeze on a steamy summer night, we embrace and appreciate when it touches us ... recognizing that it comes and goes in its own unpredictable way.

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*Laura Resnick is a past president of NINC, a former NINC conference chair, and the brand-new production manager of Nink.*

# Membership Benefits

**Need industry intel, software, or legal help? We've got you covered.**

Are you taking advantage of all your member benefits?

As a NINC member, your benefits include industry discounts, newsletter and website articles, professional services directory, networking opportunities, and more.

We've compiled all of these—which you can also find on our website—into this list as a helpful reminder.

## Networking

Join our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/>

We offer a critique/brainstorming group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NINKcritique>

## Conference

Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/ninc-conference-2017/registration/>

Conference loop: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/BeachNINC2017/info>

## Newsletter

Propose an article: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/propose-an-article/>

Submit a letter to the editor: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/submit-letter-to-editor/>

Newsletter archives: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/news-archive/>

*Best of Nink* in paperback: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/best-of-nink/>

## Website (you must be logged in to access these services)

Legal Fund: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/legal-fund/>

Pro Services Directory: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/pro-services-directory/>

Sample Letters: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/sample-letters/>

Articles & Links: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/>

Welcome Packet: [https://ninc.com/system/assets/uploads/2017/01/2017\\_New\\_Member\\_Welcome\\_Packet.pdf](https://ninc.com/system/assets/uploads/2017/01/2017_New_Member_Welcome_Packet.pdf)

## Member discounts

Find them on our website: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/member-freebies-discounts/>

**Author, Author:** NINC members may purchase their own books at deep discounts. Discount range between 34-55% depending on source and quantity. We have accounts with all the major publishers and many mid-sized ones as well as Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Perseus and

more. We also report to the NYTimes for list consideration. We can ship to you, to a conference location, to a contest—wherever you need them. Domestic US only.

**Author Buzz:** Get exposure to over 875,000 readers, 12,000 librarians and 10,000 booksellers, plus 10,000 bloggers and other industry professionals as well as readers and leaders of more than 47,000 book clubs. We are also the only way for authors to buy premium ads at Goodreads, Amazon and [BN.com](#). NINC members get a \$50 discount.

**BookFunnel:** BookFunnel has generously offered a coupon for new subscribers that will take \$50 off their Mid-List or Bestseller yearly plans. If you are already a basic subscriber who would like to upgrade, you may be able to work out a discount, but you will have to contact BookFunnel individually and explain your situation.

**The Hot Sheet:** Porter Anderson and Jane Friedman, editors of The Hot Sheet, an industry newsletter delivered every other Wednesday, are offering NINC members a discount of 20% on subscriptions. Add NINC2017 at checkout to receive the discount.

**House of Design:** Shaila Abdullah has over a decade of experience designing websites for authors. Being an award-winning author herself, she understands the industry, and will provide you with a content management website that reflects your unique style, genre, and personality. NINC members get 10% off.

**Literature and Latte (Scrivener):** Literature and Latte is offering NINC members a 20% discount on their popular Scrivener writing software. This is for Mac version 2.x or Scrivener for Windows version 1.x. A free trial is also available at <http://www.literatureandlatte.com/trial.php>. **Note:** An updated version, Scrivener 3, is in the works for Mac users, as is a Scrivener version for Windows users.

Peter Senftleben, **Editor:** 10% discount for NINC members. Services include manuscript evaluation, structural edit, extensive edit. All new clients receive a complimentary ten-page trial edit.

**Publisher's Weekly:** Priced at \$174.99 for a print + digital + online subscription or \$154.99 for a digital + online subscription. Contact PW Subscriber Services at [pw@pubservice.com](mailto:pw@pubservice.com) or 800-278-2991 between 5 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific.

## Volunteer

One of the greatest benefits of NINC is the opportunity to volunteer your talents to benefit other members—which pays incredible and unexpected dividends in networking and knowledge. Learn more about volunteer opportunities here: <https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/>

Open positions include:

- Technology Committee
- Social Media Coordinator
- *Nink* Conference Reporter
- Conference Promoter



*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.

### **Founders**

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

### **2017 Board of Directors**

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

- President: [Erica Ridley](#)
- President-Elect: [Julie Ortolon](#)
- Secretary: [Gillian Doyle](#)
- Treasurer: [Mindy Neff](#)
- Newsletter Editor: [Michele Dunaway](#)
- Advisory Council Representative: [Victoria Thompson](#)

### **Advisory Council**

- Lou Aronica
- Brenda Hiatt Barber
- Linda Barlow
- Georgia Bockoven
- Jean Brashear
- Janice Young Brooks
- Laura Parker Castoro
- Meredith Efken
- Donna Fletcher
- Kay Hooper



- Barbara Keiler
- Julie Leto
- Pat McLaughlin
- Kasey Michaels
- Diana Peterfreund
- Pat Rice
- Marianne Shock
- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
- Steven Womack

## 2017 Committees

- *Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.*
- 2017 Conference **Chairs**:
  - Programming: Julie Ortolon, assisted by Diana Peterfreund
  - Sponsorship: Rochelle Paige
  - Logistics: Karen Fox
  - Registration: Pam McCutcheon
  - Communications: Laura Hayden
- Authors Coalition Reps: Pat Roy & Leslie Thompson
- Social Media Coordinator: **Open**
- Membership Chair: Ann Jacobs, Sarah Woodbury
  - Boyd Craven
  - Renee Flagler
- *Nink* Newsletter Editor: Michele Dunaway
  - Assistant Editor: Susan Anderson
  - Assistant Editor: Heather C. Leigh
  - Copy Editor: Cynthia Moyer
  - Production Manager: Laura Resnick
- Nominating Committee Chair: Laura Castoro
  - C.J. Carmichael
  - Phoebe Conn
  - Pam McCutcheon
  - Laura Phillips
  - Steve Womack
- Technology Chair: **Open**
  - Nick Thacker
- Discount Program Chair: Emilie Richards
- Volunteer Jobs (Just One Thing) Coordinator: Lois Lavrisa

## Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Terese Ramin  
 P.O. Box 54, Hartland MI 48353

[admin@ninc.com](mailto:admin@ninc.com)

*Address changes may be made on the website. Members without internet access may send changes to the Central Coordinator.*

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To request reprint rights or to submit an article proposal, please contact [the editor](#).

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