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President's Voice

By Wayne Stinnett



While each New Year comes with new challenges, it also brings new tools to meet those challenges. I know a little about tools; I worked in construction for 20 years and in trucking for 13. A couple of years ago, the nominating committee asked me to serve as the 2018 president-elect of NINC, and subsequently, the 2019 president. I was both honored and puzzled. I'd only been a member for just over a year. I also lacked some of the qualifications that my predecessors had—most notably, a grasp on technology. I replied that I'd really like to talk to someone before I decided, and NINC's central coordinator Terey Ramin called me. Being a three-novel-a-year writer, with that being my family's only income, I wanted to be sure that my volunteer work wouldn't interfere with my earning a living. Family has to come first. Reassured that I could handle both, I accepted the challenge.

Through my association with NINC, I've met a lot of great people, and I look forward to meeting many more. The conferences have been mind-blowingly beneficial to my success, but it's the people that I've met that I found most rewarding. The after-hours get-togethers at the conference, where ideas and strategies were discussed on a much deeper level, brought new life to my writing and publishing.

Last year, I watched Julie Ortolon prepare for the 2018 conference. (It was great, wasn't it?) Well, watching from behind the scenes, I quickly realized I'd bitten off a big chunk. Julie put in a lot of hours to ensure a successful conference. I feared there was no way I could match her efforts. Fortunately, the board recently realized that running a conference of the magnitude of NINC was too much to ask of one volunteer. I'm happy to say that we not only decided to hire a conference organizing professional, but we will also be using BaseCamp, a professional group organizational software. Adding Mel Jolly to organize the conference and instituting a new organizational system took a huge weight off my shoulders.

We're also very fortunate to have a really organized incoming president-elect, Alyssa Day. Alyssa volunteered to chair the Programming Committee, one of the hardest NINC jobs. With

Alyssa organizing speakers, and Mel overseeing the whole conference, I feel very confident that the 2019 conference will be a great success.

Those are but two of the people working behind the scenes. There are dozens more. Thanks to all the volunteers in all the committees, many who are continuing to stay on in 2019. I look forward to leading this great organization and meeting a lot of new people.

Semper Fidelis,
Wayne

P.S. It's that time of year again. Membership renewals are due. Please go to <https://ninc.com/members-only/membership-renewal/> and sign in to renew your NINC membership.

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](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#).

Accessing the NINC Website

Not sure how to log in to the NINC website? Visit the login page here: <https://ninc.com/membership-overview/login-to-ninc/>

Wayne Stinnett writes your typical murder and mayhem in paradise. His characters and plots come from real people and situations he's encountered, fictionalized to protect the guilty.

Channeling Your Inner Superhero Through Goal Setting and Introspection

By Michele Dunaway



How many of you have seen *Sky High*? In this 2005 Disney movie, Will Stronghold, son of the world's greatest superheroes The Commander and Jetstream (played by Kurt Russell and Kelly Preston), enters his freshman year of high school without his powers. In fact, he doesn't get his powers right away. Until then, he's sent to sidekick class, much to the disappointment of his father. The whole movie is about discovering what being a hero really means and who your real friends are. And along the way everyone discovers that sidekicks often save the day.

I use this movie to teach Michael Hague's Six Stage Plot Structure to my novel class. It's seriously worth a watch, but for this article, I'm going to focus on how you are the superhero of your own world, even when you feel like a sidekick.

The purpose of this article is for you to discover something new about yourself through self-introspection.

First, think about the characteristics of a superhero. Use a piece of paper and sketch out your superhero. What is his/her appearance? What actions does he/she do? What attitudes does the superhero express and reveal? If you were with a group of people doing this exercise, I guarantee you that all of your pictures and descriptions would be extremely different.

There's a reason for this. Think about yourself as the hero or heroine of your own story. How would you describe yourself? Would you describe yourself

- As an extrovert?
- As an introvert?
- As a person who holds a full-time job (besides writing)?
- As retired or a stay-at-home mom (or dad)?

- As one who writes full time?
- As one who prefers to be indoors?
- As one who loves to be outdoors?
- As religious?
- As a person who likes things neat?
- As a person who can live with things cluttered?
- As a lover of scary movies?
- As a dog lover?
- As a cat lover?
- As an “I prefer vanilla ice cream” person?
- As an “I prefer chocolate” person?
- As a liberal?
- As a conservative?
- As one who runs from danger?
- As one who runs toward danger?
- As active?
- As passive?

Let me tell you a secret. (The secret is that we all have things that make us unique.) All superheroes go on a quest of self-discovery.

So how do you become super? You discover who you are:

- Step One—Size up your strengths
- Step Two—Prioritize
- Step Three—Set your Goals
- Step Four—Face your villains
- Step Five—Rely on your sidekicks
- Step Six—Put on your armor

Step one: size up your strengths

So what are your strengths? Make a list. Seriously. Right now. Now take a look at that list. Can your strengths also be weaknesses? Now I want you to rewrite those strengths. Start the sentences with the following:

- I am good at...
 - I can....
 - People look up to me because...
- (Hey, you’re pretty cool, aren’t you?)

So often we focus on what we can’t do. Focus on what you can do.

Step two: prioritize

What I want you to do now is to make a list of the top five things in your life with number one the most important and number five the lesser of the five. If you can, make a list of six through ten.

So what are your priorities? Most likely they involve some of the following:

- Writing/Writing career
- Taking care of health
- Politics
- Getting ahead
- Religion
- Car
- Food
- Family
- Friends
- Job/Career
- Hobbies
- Travel
- Exercise
- Money
- Standard of living

In 2007, when I presented the workshop I've based this article on, these were my priorities:

- Writing
- Job/Money
- Family/kids
- Friends
- Working Out

In 2009, when I presented it again, my priorities had shifted.

- Family/kids
- Job/Money
- Friends
- Writing
- Working Out

In September 2018, as I write this, my priorities have changed again.

- Job/Money
- Writing
- Family/kids
- Friends
- Travel

Now, it may seem that family/kids should always be first, but in 2007, I wrote six books for a major publishing house and worked full time. My kids were in middle school, and that meant they could take care of themselves. My mom lived up the street and that "it took a village" came into play. As silly as it sounds, because I saw some of the 2008 financial crisis coming, in 2007 I

was moving things around. In 2009, my mom started to get sick (she died in early 2013) and my family moved to the top burner, especially as my daughter spent half of her eighth-grade year at the middle school and the other half of the day being accelerated by taking classes at the high school.

Now in 2018, my kids are a lower priority. That doesn't mean that I ignore them, but one lives and works full time in New York City. She's on her own and doesn't need me like she once did. My youngest needed me this summer, but since she's back at college, she doesn't need me as much, either. So I'm using the sudden free time of an empty nest to work on earning money to pay for that tuition and to try and finish as many books as I can as I try to climb out of a career valley.

I also must say that I'm a teacher and I call my students my kids. So I love my job. Having it as a priority is not a hardship. I often go to work to relax (seriously) because that is where I'm always competent.

My point is this: your priorities will shift around and that's okay. True superheroes recognize this. They learn and grow.

Step three: set your goals

What is it that you want? I mean, really really want. Not a wish, but something concrete. I wish Dale Earnhardt Jr. had discovered I was his ideal woman. Or Chris Hemsworth. I also wish I would win the lottery. Wishing gets you nowhere. You have to take those wishes and turn them into goals. Goals are something you do. Wishes are something you make.

Goals should be SMART—simple, manageable or measurable, achievable, relatable/relevant and timely.

Take a moment to set one or two SMART goals. Write them in form of a statement: I will submit X book to a publisher/agent/self-published by XXX date. OR I will write 10 pages by the end of this week.

A sample goal: By January 10, I will complete *The Lazy Cat's Guide to Controlling the Universe* and send it to a freelance editor for line edits.

SMART Goal Steps:

- State them simply.
- Make them manageable and measurable (break them down into steps that are like mini goals so you know when you've completed each).
- Make them achievable. Be realistic as to your expectations.
- They must relate to your strengths.
- They should have a time limit.
- Post your goals somewhere you can see them.

So why is goal setting so important? Your goals help you define how you will spend your time. What do you need to accomplish each day? Some of us make a list. Some of us wing it. In addition, your goals allow you to plot action steps and do the things you need to do to achieve your goals. Goals can be long term, short term, weekly or hourly. The time limit is not to fail

you, but to force you to evaluate your progress. Another reason for goal setting is that your goals help you allot your resources wisely. If your goal is to take a trip to Paris, you have to plan, pack, and pay.

So if setting goals is so easy, why do we fail? Even with goal setting and blogs and loops to keep us on track, things get in the way. Sometimes we also set impossible goals, and sometimes it's easier to let the villains win, because often they are linked with our priorities.

Step four: face your villains

Take a moment now and make a list of your villains. What stops you from playing to your strengths? What stops you from meeting your goals?

Some villains you list might include:

- Guilt
- Not enough time
- Family priorities
- Laziness
- Procrastination
- Hanging out with friends is much more fun
- Rejection
- Discouragement
- Can't say no
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Disassociation/feeling that you don't belong

Villains are life stressors. How many of these villains are linked to your priorities? (e.g., Driving your family around eats into your writing time.) So what do you do? This is the hardest part and requires the most introspection. Like setting goals, you must come up with a plan to defeat your villains. You must really do some soul searching. You must find balance.

How do you handle stress? Make a list of how you handle stress. Some of your answers might include the following: Eat. Sulk. Drink. Exercise. Write. Complain to friends. Which ones are positive? Which ones are negative?

Defeating the villains ultimately comes from within. For me, it helps me to ask, "Why am I doing this? Why is this so important? How does it help me meet my goals? What can I do to help myself?"

Jealousy means you are dissatisfied with the timeliness of your goals. You aren't where you want to be. Someone has something you don't. To combat, reassess your priorities and rewrite your goals. There is nothing wrong with doing this. Focus on progress, not failure.

Let's look at my priorities and villains.

2008 Villain: Money and writing for \$\$\$. To combat it I downsized my car, cut my budget by eliminating non-necessary travel. I refinanced my house. However, I kept my cleaning lady and lawn guy because I hate clutter and didn't have enough time to do these jobs.

2008 Villain: Day job. Realized this was actually more important. Cut back 2008 writing schedule.

2008 Villain: Crabby kids. Moved them up the priority chain. Moved writing down.

2008 Villain: Loss of enjoyment in writing. Let's face it, being creative is hard. So I gave myself permission to be someone other than "Michele Dunaway, author." That might be one of my jobs, but not necessarily the legacy I want to leave the world. I always tell people I want "good mom, good teacher, and good friend" on my tombstone. So while my friends are lower often than writing, that doesn't mean we aren't there for each other. Which brings me to the next step.

Step five: rely on your sidekicks

Although you are ultimately the only one who can defeat your villains, your sidekicks are there to have your back. So make a list of all the people you know you can depend on. Look at how many of these people were actually on your priority list. My mom was my biggest sidekick. Losing her hurt. My best friend isn't a writer, and I call her my sister from another mother. Too often, superheroes try to protect those they love and take on all the jobs by themselves. Let your sidekicks help. Let them be there for you. Realize that your priorities can be a sidekick. This list keeps your focus on what is truly important. Don't get sidetracked by the small drama stuff.

Step six: put on your armor

Look back at your list of strengths. Now look at your superhero drawing. How would you change your superhero to better put him/her out into the world?

So think about what things make you strong. What things protect you? Play to these strengths. You need strategies for achieving balance (and these are not excuses). Make a list of what you do to recharge yourself. When you are feeling down, pull this list out and go do one of them.

One thing I want you to remember as you put on your armor: FEAR IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

It took me a long time to realize that fact. I also had to learn the following:

- You must be willing to fail.
- Never be afraid to simply say "now is not the right time" and give yourself a little more space.
- Never be afraid to play to your strengths.
- Never be afraid to ask yourself the hard questions as to why you are doing something or why you want something.
- Don't be afraid to change your priorities.
- Remember, it's okay to rewrite your goals over and over. They change as you change.

So let me leave you with a few final thoughts: What is truly important to your superhero? Think about it. Superman: family. Spider-Man: family. Thor: family. Mr. Incredible: family. Will Stronghold from *Sky High*: family/friends.

Saving the world always comes second, and because you are a superhero, it always gets done.

Nink editor [Michele Dunaway](#) based this article on a workshop she gave over 10 years ago and because she made writing a priority. As for *The Lazy Cat's Guide to Controlling the Universe*, that's simply a fictional title she made up. But clearly from the photo below, Idgie, who supervised the writing of this article, has no need for a book on how to control the universe.



Building a Publishing Empire

By Nicole Evelina



“Someone once told me not to bite off more than I can chew. I told them I would rather choke on greatness than nibble on mediocrity.”

—Unknown

I'm of a mind that as an author—especially if you are an indie—the more places your name appears, the more likely you are to make book sales. Believe me, I long for the days when all authors had to do was write. But now it seems that your best bet is to “build a publishing empire,” which means writing novels is only a small portion of the available opportunities to authors.

Earlier this year, indie author Orna Ross made the prediction, “We will see more authors engaging with more formats and different kinds of writing,” and I totally agree. Think about your book as only the first of many monetizing opportunities. Whether you are traditionally or indie published, you should think about the wide variety of things the content of your book can become and exploit all the rights you possibly can. Here are some examples:

Books

Publishing should be our first priority. After all, telling stories is why we got into writing in the first place. But don't limit yourself to just your original books.

1. **Boxed sets** – These work great for trilogies or even to break up a longer series. Even though the physical “box” may not be feasible for indie authors, offer your books in a single-volume book, at least in ebook, but maybe in print as well. And when you are selling at events, you can mimic a boxed set by binding a trilogy together with a ribbon or even a rubber band and selling it at a discount.
2. **Audio books** – Audio is growing, but can be expensive and time-consuming to produce; however, you likely will make your money back. [ACX](#) is one option, with [Findaway Voices](#), [Blackstone Audio](#) and [Author's Republic](#) as popular alternatives.

3. **Anthologies** – Is there a subject, genre, theme, or even a character you are passionate about? Team up with other authors who feel the same way. Indie anthologies are traditionally offered for free or with the profits going to charity (partly because of the complexities of legal and financial issues), but they are great for exposure. Publishers often organize anthologies, so check into it if traditionally published.
4. **Companion guides** – These are the behind-the-scenes type of books such as for popular series like Harry Potter, Twilight, The Hunger Games, Mortal Instruments, etc. Tell your fans all the details behind your world, its characters and events, and share additional and never-before-seen information. Give your superfans something to squeal about by answering all of their burning questions and/or sharing things that didn't make it into the book.
5. **Other types of books** – Think about how your book or its topic might lend itself to a graphic novel, cookbook, children's version, how-to or non-fiction version, or a series of novellas. Chances are good there is a market for anything you can think of.

TV/movie/stage/video game rights

For the most part, you need an agent for these deals, but I've found a few reputable places that take unagented submissions, such as [TaleFlick](#) and [PassionFlix](#) (for romance), and [Screencraft](#) holds a book-to-movie contest. You may also want to think about sending your books to actors who have production companies. Granted, they may throw the books away (I ask them to donate to charity) but you never know if you don't try. Getting reliable contact information can be difficult, but I think it is worth the time.

Foreign rights

Here again, you usually need an agent, but there are ways to do it without one.

1. Exhibit at the [Frankfurt Book Fair](#), the world's largest international publishing rights fair. You can even do it without traveling by working with associations (such as the [Independent Book Publishers Association](#)) to get into these events.
2. There were French publishers at the 2017 Romance Writers of America (RWA) national conference, so don't ignore those opportunities if they present themselves.
3. You can also work directly with a translator, which is what some of my author friends have done.

Some additional resources:

[How Authors Sell Publishing Rights](#) by the Alliance of Independent Authors
[How Indie Authors Sell Foreign Rights](#)

Merchandising

This includes anything else tied into your books. Many authors start with jewelry that they make themselves to sell at events. T-shirts and other apparel are another popular entry point and they can be inexpensively made through [RedBubble](#), [Teespring](#), [Society6](#), [Zazzle](#) or even the company you use for your swag. Depending on your book, you may want to work with an

artist on calendars, buttons, posters, playing cards, tarot cards, smart phone cases, even toys. And the rise of 3-D printing will only make this easier in the future. Don't forget that you can sell these items on your website, at events, or even on Etsy.

Swag bags

No, I don't know how to get your book into the Oscar's swag bag. I wish I did. (It likely involves connections and lots of money, at least according to [this Entrepreneur article](#).) But there are companies out there who can get your books into the hands of influencers. I've worked with a company called [Bedside Reading](#) to get one of my books into a Memorial Day swag bag for people in the Hamptons. They also place books in five-star hotels. If you are traditionally published, run this idea by your publicist. My friend, author Chris Cannon, got her books into the gift bags of the FOX Teen Choice awards.

Speaking

Don't underestimate the power of a speaking engagement, even if only to a local audience. Depending on the venue's rules, you may or may not be able to sell books, but you can always project your expertise on a topic. The more you become known as *the* person to speak to about your niche, the more your following will grow. Libraries, schools, and local writing groups are a great way to get your feet wet. Maybe apply to speak at local or regional conferences. As your confidence and name recognition grows, so will your speaking opportunities. Don't forget panels can be just as valuable as solo presentations.

Add a speaker section to your website outlining your topics. Many organizations and traditional publishers have speakers' bureaus, so check to see if they apply to you. If you're afraid to speak or need some practice, try taking an acting or improv class, lector at your place of worship, or join your local [Toastmasters](#) group.

Articles

The media interviews experts on a wide variety of subjects, so don't be afraid to put yourself out there and share what you know. A popular site for connecting reporters with experts is [Help a Reporter Out](#) (HARO). There are free and paid versions, depending on your level of interest. If you have an idea, don't be afraid to pitch it. The worst media can do is say no. Don't underestimate local city magazines (though be aware they often run up to three months ahead in their editorial calendars), suburban journals/township newspapers.

Genre and writers' organization newsletters/magazines are a great way to start building up your credentials, and many of them pay for articles. You can also write letters to the editor or opinion pieces for local and national media. You have nothing to lose by sending in articles. If they don't get used, you can always repurpose them on your blog, which is a great way to position yourself as a subject matter expert.

The Huffington Post changed its rules, only allowing [opinion pieces](#) and [HuffPost Personal](#), both of which you have to pitch. If you don't like that idea, you can try writing for places like [Medium](#) or [Thought Catalog](#), which are pretty open. If you have a fun Top 10 List or meme-related list, try [Buzzfeed](#), [Salon](#), [Slate](#), or [Bustle](#). I suggest linking to articles you've written from

your website, so if any editors are curious about your credentials, you have them there.

Online classes

Regardless of whether you write fiction or non-fiction, take your knowledge and share it online! You can use third-party companies like [Teachable](#), [Coursera](#), [Udemy](#) or [Thinkific](#), or you can sell directly from your website. Some people record videos and create handouts, while others only sell their PowerPoint deck. You may want to post videos on Youtube and offer a subscription to your channel.

Another option is becoming instructor for [The Great Courses](#) or [Writer's Digest University](#). Many colleges and universities are also looking for adjunct faculty to teach online courses, so investigate those as well.

Podcasts

It seems like everyone has a podcast nowadays. There are reasons they are popular. Your podcast could be about anything related to what you write—a theme, a genre, a topic, or even your own books. The main things you must have are quality (in sound, editing and content) and regularity.

There are tools that turn blog posts into podcasts. [Amazon's Polly](#) is for Wordpress blogs (business level accounts only) and Medium uses a [Play Chrome Extension](#). Other tools include iSpeech and Play.

While this isn't an exhaustive list of all the things you can do with your content, I hope it got you thinking about opportunities that might apply to you and your books. I wish you all the best of luck!

I was not paid to mention any of the companies in this article. They are ones I have personally used/ researched or heard good things about. Your mileage may vary.

[Nicole Evelina](#) is a historical fiction, non-fiction, and women's fiction author whose six books have won three Book of the Year designations. Her fiction tells the stories of strong women from history and today, focusing on biographical historical fiction, while her non-fiction focuses on women's history, specifically little-known figures.

You Thought You Knew What Being a Hybrid Means?

By Patricia Burroughs



One of the great benefits of being a NINC member is access to the wealth of knowledge and experience available in the NINCLINK email loop from writers of all different backgrounds. Recently someone presented a confusing question, “What is a hybrid *publisher*?”

Most of us know what hybrid authors are. But it took some Googling to discover that there actually is such a thing as a hybrid publisher.

It primarily boils down to financial risk, and who is taking it.

Until the 21st Century, most publishing was what we now call traditional publishing. The publishers took all the financial risks from editing, to publishing, to marketing, to shipping. And the author usually got paid an advance up front!

The opposite of traditional publishing was vanity publishing. These publishers fed off a writer’s vanity (or more likely, desperation) and promised the sky—but the author had to pay all the publisher’s expenses, plus more, and then ended up with boxes of books to market and ship. Vanity publishing was rarely a good idea and almost always ended in frustration for the author.

But after the turn of this century, authors gained the power and ability to skip the traditional publishers and publish their own work profitably. Yes, self-publishing.

We all know the term “hybrid author” as a writer who combines both publishing paths in her or his career. Publishing has evolved its own hybrid, not to be confused with “hybrid authors” any more than it should be with “hybrid cars” or pluots, a hybrid of plums and apricots.

A hybrid publisher is a publisher that—in a perfect world—brings a lot of value to the table that the author usually can’t provide. Namely? Marketing and sales through established access and relationships with libraries, schools, and brick-and-mortar stores.

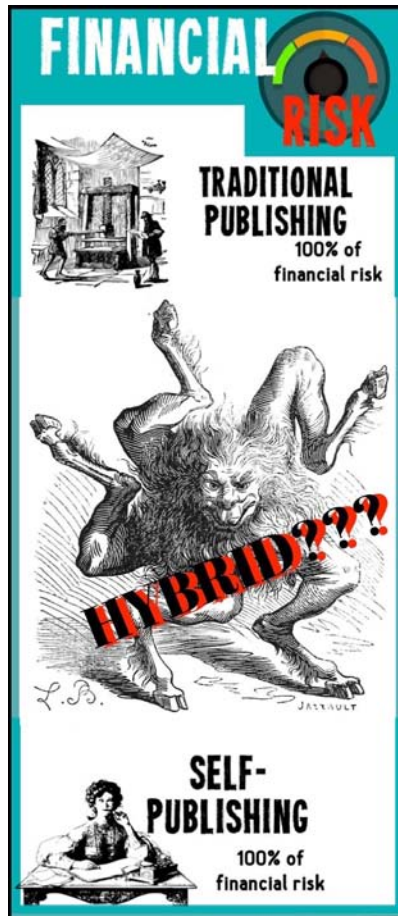
But it’s not that easy.

One reason there are so many definitions and descriptions of hybrid publishers is because they have widely different business models. Also, different companies that range from

legitimate to scammers are using the term.

It's up to writers to know what to look for and what to avoid.

The simplest and most accurate definition of hybrid publishers is that they combine aspects of traditional publishing with aspects of self-publishing.



In general, the author often provides the book and the money to cover editorial and production costs. This is usually far more than the typical self-published author pays for the same services, even if they hire them done. Thus it's even more important that the publisher can hold up its side of the bargain.

The publisher provides the knowledge and experience to publish and market the book. This can include providing developmental editors with a background that matches the author and book, as well as later editing, professional layout and covers, and of course—selling books.

How do you get this magic on your team? You pay high publishing expenses up front and then split the royalties with the hybrid publisher, hopefully at least 50/50. Unless your financial investment is low, anything less than 50/50 is not a good deal.

So the author pays huge expenses up front. How is this any different from a vanity press? The publisher *should* then market and sell the book with a vastly wider reach than the given author could do alone.

This sometimes works.

Let's just accept that sometimes this actually works out satisfactorily for the author who earns back initial expenses and more. Some hybrid publishers can point to at least a few true successes and connect a prospective client to authors who are willing to recommend said publisher. (If not, it does not bode well to assume that with your book they will suddenly break through and sell thousands or tens of thousands of books when they haven't before, no matter how flattering it feels to be told your book is special, 'the one' they have been waiting for.)

So, again, hybrid publishing can be a good deal. But in all actuality? It's a long shot.

Beginning with—there is no association or body to monitor or penalize hybrid publishers who are simply vanity presses with a clean, unblemished new term to call themselves.

An author interested in hybrid publishing has a lot of research ahead. Here are some questions to ask and things to investigate.

Are their books editorially curated?

Do they have a gatekeeper and standards a book must meet or do they take anyone who sends them a submission?

Do they provide sound, professional editorial support?

Do they provide developmental editing, copyediting, proofreading, and all the steps expected from a reputable traditional publisher?

Do they produce quality books you'd be proud to have your name on?

How do you know? Read as many free samples on Amazon and elsewhere as you can find. If those pass muster, buy some in digital and print, if the publisher does both. Read complete books to see if they maintain the quality you expect. Hold actual print books in your hands and don't just read them. Compare them to good traditionally published books.

Do they provide a higher than standard royalty since you are subsidizing production of the book?

Assuming the author investment is significant (as it seems to be in most if not all cases) that should be at least a 50/50 split of net royalties.

What rights does the publisher want to claim?

As publishers, they may want more than you want to give. An important question is, do they exercise all the rights they want to keep? Do they actually create quality audiobooks that are selling and getting good reviews (or at least no bad reviews) on sites like Audible? Do they actually market print books to libraries, schools, stores, etc.? If the answer to these or similar questions is no, it's incredibly difficult to justify a publisher keeping them, no matter what traditional publishers might do. You have more clout in this situation than you do with a traditional publisher. Carefully consider whether you want to let them sit on your subsidiary rights, hoping someday they'll be able to use them—or better, that they'll be worth something

because of your later success (which may have little to do with this particular book or anything this publisher did).

Perhaps one of the most important questions is what do they offer in terms of marketing and distribution?

Does the publisher have an actual print catalog of their books? Do their books get reviewed in *PW*, *Library Journal*, or specific publications and websites that have an authoritative voice and reach in your book's genre or niche?

Do they have an actual marketing or sales team that will be actively attempting to sell your book, in the way you would expect a traditional publisher to do? Do they buy ads in places that count or promote their list in other ways? Do they have a marketing and sales strategy for your books? Did they and/or their sales team come from marketing at a reputable publisher in your genre or niche? If not, how are they going to be able to sell more books than you can on your own? Being able to point to books in an Ingram online catalog is not proof of their connections. You can do the same thing yourself. Being in the catalog means your book is available for books, libraries, and bookstores to order. But if the publisher can't actually stimulate sales, how are they holding up their part?

Remember...

A hybrid publisher should bring a lot of value to the table that the author can't provide. That means not just producing books but selling them.

A publisher that isn't every bit as vested in making money from your book as you are is a publisher whose business model is based on getting money from writers.

There is no standard definition of a hybrid publisher, what they offer, or what expenses they expect the author to cover. Do your homework and you may find that special situation that will **actually** make a positive difference to you. Just remember that in this, like many aspects of publishing (whether traditional or self-pub), the odds aren't in your favor until you've done your due diligence and made smart choices.

The IBPA (International Book Publishers Association) has a helpful and informative webpage with downloads, which states their [IBPA Hybrid Publisher Criteria](#) and details the IBPA's "[Industry Standards Checklist for a Professionally Published Book](#)."

Patricia Burroughs is a Screenwriting Fellow of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, an award-winning romance writer, and in this phase of her career writes SFF. The last book in her YA Dark Fantasy series, The Fury Triad, will be published in late 2019. Her first cozy mystery, Mourning Chorus, will be published by Sweet Promise Press November 30, 2018.

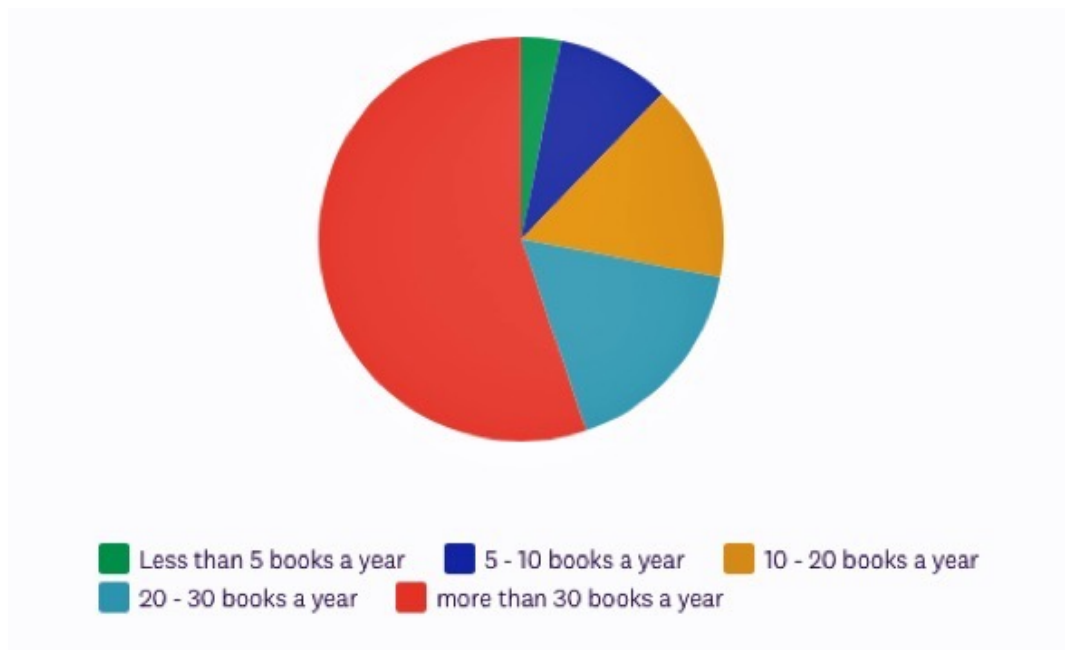
What, Why, and How Readers Read

10 Highlights from a 2018 reader survey

By MK Tod

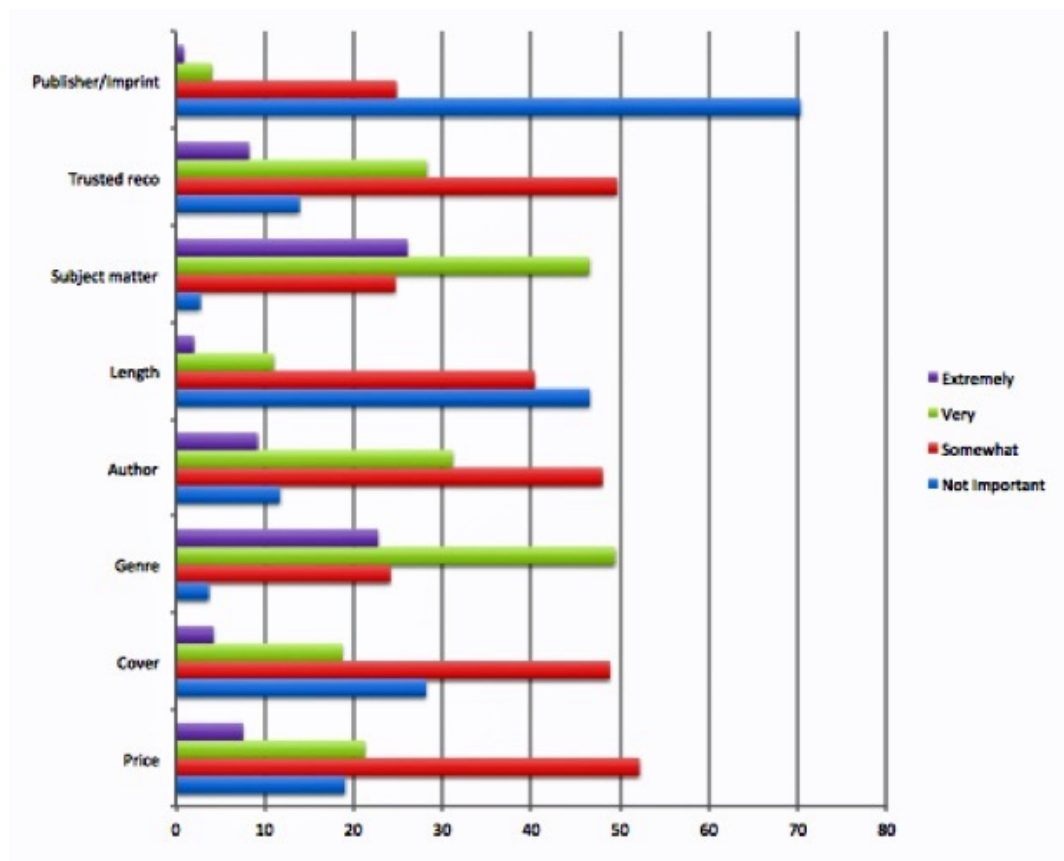


Last summer, a total of 2,418 participants from various parts of the world weighed in with their opinions about reading. As in prior years, the survey attracted high-volume readers with 72 percent reading more than 20 books a year. Survey participants love fiction—most say they read more than 50 percent fiction.



So what else did we learn?

- Forty-nine percent of participants use social media regularly to support their reading.
- Top five genres for women are mystery/thriller, romance, historical fiction, women's fiction and literary—a caveat here as I am a member of a robust group of historical fiction fans; top genres for men are mystery/thriller, science fiction, military/war, historical fiction, and fantasy.
- Gender makes a difference, and among the differences are that women read more than men and use social media more regularly in support of reading, and men and women prefer different types of stories and different non-fiction.
- Print books remain popular. Of 2418 participants, 75 percent frequently or exclusively read print books.
- Not surprisingly, "entertainment" is the dominant reason for reading fiction, followed by "to appreciate other places and people in the world."
- Readers say that feeling immersed in the novel's world is the most important factor for their reading.
- The top two factors when choosing a book are subject matter and genre.



- Age makes a difference—interest in fantasy decreases with age; the highest use of phone-based ereaders is for those between 30 and 50.
- Friends remain the top source for book recommendations—chosen by 61 percent of participants when asked for their top three sources.
- For reading purposes, connecting with the author of a book is the social media functionality most valued by participants.

You can read the [complete report](#) and peruse previous reader surveys at M.K. Tod's award-winning blog [A Writer of History](#).

M.K. Tod writes historical fiction. Her latest novel, [Time And Regret](#), was published by Lake Union. Mary's other novels, [Lies Told In Silence](#) and [Unravelled](#) are available from Amazon, Nook, Kobo, Google Play and iTunes. She can be contacted on Facebook, Twitter and Goodreads or on her [blog](#).

Unearthing Hidden Clues About Your Creativity: Answers Part Two

By Denise A. Agnew



Last month I discussed the process of discovering hidden clues to what might impede your creativity. If you've had the opportunity to answer the questions in the last article, grab those answers. Let's analyze these questions and provide insight on how to stamp out the negativity leading you into writer's block.

What Do You Tell Yourself?

Your first question to answer was: What do you say to yourself about your writing? Are you critical or supportive?

Someone experiencing full-fledged writer's block probably says negative things either about the writing itself and/or them as a person. A writer's doubts sometimes begin with frustration and eventually the situation evolves into a desire to give up. In your answers, did you say things like:

- I don't have a clue what I'm doing, and I never did. It's all a farce and I'm kidding myself.
- I'm a horrible writer.
- Maybe I've lost the ability to write. I've lost my talent.

Many writers won't say these things out loud, but they certainly believe them. While these beliefs may not be constant, they crop up if the writer encounters a real or perceived setback.

Even the successful writers can harbor these thoughts, and all are damaging if repeated ad nauseam. As a creativity coach, I find it can take some digging to discover where each negative statement originates. There are concrete steps you can employ, which start with recognizing that most of the negative stuff you say about your writing is a complete myth.

Even though it may seem like it, writer's block doesn't just begin one day when the previous day, authors were able to write. More than likely a small frustration, setback or a criticism starts you down the road to developing writer's block. If you've allowed frustrations or criticisms to build and/or some part of you believes the negative publicity, that's a recipe for a block. You don't even need other people to criticize you because you're already determined (even unconsciously) to self-destruct.

When you say things like you don't know what you're doing and you're a horrible writer, you can immediately ask yourself questions that can help short circuit the monster you've created. Make no mistake, much of writer's block is created and strengthened by the things a writer says to themselves on a regular basis, which is why I asked you to write it down.

Now answer these questions

1. Is it really true that you're a horrible writer? Have people besides family and friends praised your writing? Have you received some great reviews? How many books have you written? One? Several? A dozen? There is your evidence. You've had successes and all of these things prove that you can write. Very few people who say they are going to write a book will even write one. Pat yourself on your back. You deserve it.
2. Can you remember when you first had a negative thought about your writing? It may have happened way before you ever published anything. Pinpoint the time and place and take note of it. What was the thought? Is it really true?
3. Can you recall when you first thought something *good* about your writing? What was it? Remind yourself of that good thought and keep that in mind whenever your negative side tries to tell you that you can't write or that your writing isn't quality.
4. Do you weigh negative reviews higher than you weigh positive reviews? It is common for writers to take the glass half empty approach and ignore great reviews in favor of the bad. Give more attention to good reviews. Print out a positive review and tape it where you can see it. Use the review as wallpaper for your computer so you can see it often. You can even record the review on your phone's voice memo app and play it back to yourself. Whenever the negativity monster rears its head, grab that great review.

Frustrations

In December 2018, I also asked you to list frustrations you have about your writing. Frustrations come when high expectations haven't come to fruition. You may have goals you feel you haven't met. A list of frustrations can be vastly different from writer to writer, yet there are some common ones I see as a creativity coach:

1. You haven't sold a book to a traditional publisher and that's your goal.
2. The royalties aren't rolling in no matter whether you self-publish or go the traditional route.

Things you can do

If you haven't sold a book to a traditional publisher, but you've been trying for some time, it doesn't mean there is anything faulty in your writing. You may have written a wonderful novel that doesn't fit with the trends. Traditional publishers may have bought something similar just a short time ago. There are many reasons manuscripts are rejected that have absolutely nothing to do with the writing itself. You'll need to make a decision on what you wish to do with that novel.

1. Shelve the book for a few weeks and continue with another project. Let the original, rejected project breathe. Come back later with fresh eyes. See what you think of the project at that time. Perhaps there is something you want to change—a new excitement you'll feel in the project. Maybe your worries will be lessened. Worry often gets in the way of a writer's ability to see a project clearly.
2. Obtain a critique from a trusted writer who has your best interests at heart and who understands/enjoys the genre. Make sure this person hasn't read the manuscript before. Ask them for an honest but constructive critique. Look over this critique with a willingness to think deeply about what they've said. See if there is anything that helps you improve or tweak the novel. You may discover, however, that there is nothing new you need to do/improve. Perhaps it is time to look for other publishing avenues. Whatever you decide, it is always in your power to decide what to do with that manuscript. Whatever you do, don't chuck the manuscript because of a publisher rejection.

If you haven't sold as many books as you would like, there are things you can do. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Are you linking number of sales to quality? While some try to equate big royalties to the quality of a manuscript, if we are honest with ourselves this often isn't the case. It could be marketing, word of mouth, the cover of the book—there are many, many factors affecting sales. Most of them have nothing to do with the quality of writing. Big royalties can be a great motivator to write the next book, but if that is the top reason for writing, chances are much higher you'll have a writer's block problem along the way. Ask yourself why you started writing in the first place. What was your real reason and goal(s)?
2. Examine your marketing plan and see what you might be able to do to boost the "discoverability" of the book(s).

Join me next month for discussion on the next two questions in this series: do you compare yourself to other writers and do you have a burning desire to write in a different genre?

Denise A. Agnew is the award-winning author of over 67 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/Where's Lucy? Productions), a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, Certified Creativity Coach, and RT Academy Mentor. As a creativity coach, Denise assists anyone in the arts to maintain lifelong creativity. You can find her at www.deniseagnew.com and www.creativepencoaching.com.

The Mad Scribbler

Authors Coalition of America

By Laura Resnick



“There is always strength in numbers. The more individuals or organizations that you can rally to your cause, the better.”

—Mark Shields, journalist

When you renew your annual membership in NINC (and it’s that time of year right now, folks!), you’re also typically asked to fill out a survey for the [Authors Coalition of America](#) (ACA).

I know what you’re thinking: Why does NINC make me do that? What is ACA? What does it do? Why does it matter? Also, what secrets are concealed at Area 51? And does a character played by Sean Bean ever live to the end of the story?

I can answer at least some of these questions.

The Authors Coalition of America is an association of organizations whose members are creators of written and visual copyrighted works. In ACA, all such creators are referred to as “authors.”

In addition to NINC, other ACA member organizations that focus on fiction include the following: Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America; the Romance Writers of America, the Mystery Writers of America; the Western Writers of America; Sisters In Crime; and the Horror Writers Association. Various other organizations in ACA represent garden writers, textbook writers, travel writers, journalists, playwrights, songwriters, photographers, graphic artists, science writers, and illustrators. The Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators, the National Writers Union, and the Authors Guild are all members, too.

Overall, ACA represents roughly 100,000 copyright holders. The coalition is a limited liability partnership that collects money from foreign and domestic Reprographic Rights Organizations and distributes those funds to its member organizations, which use the money for the benefit of authors.

I know what you're thinking: What's a Reprographic Rights Organization (RRO)? Where are they getting that money? Why do they give it to ACA?

Bear with me.

For decades, copyrighted works have been copied and distributed without permission—and without paying a royalty or licensing fee to the copyright holder—in the fields of government, education, and business. Technology developments in the 1980s turned this into a large-scale enterprise in many countries, and so authors were collectively deprived of increasingly larger sums of revenue for use of their copyrighted material. Various governments (and, in some cases, publishers) addressed the growing problem by chartering RROs.

An RRO studies who is copying what sorts of material and in what quantities, then it uses that information to collect funds from those same sources to compensate the copyright holders. However, this is all done on a statistical basis rather than a title-specific or author-specific basis. So the money collected is identified as being owed to authors of different types of material on a percentage basis.

Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, such funds collected on behalf of American creators were paid to the American RRO, the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., and the money was spent on copyright enforcement.

Then in 1994, 10 American author organizations banded together to form a coalition to receive and distribute that money; this way, the money collected on behalf of copyright holders could be used to benefit such creators more directly. Marianne Shock, one of the five founders of NINC, served as ACA's first administrator, a role she held for 20 years before retiring. (This paid position is currently held by her successor, Dorien Kelly.)

This is why it's so important for members to fill out the ACA Survey every year. The information from those forms determine NINC's share of the yearly sums collected by ACA for member organizations. The money, in turn, makes it possible for NINC to fund projects that benefit novelists—such as *Nink*, which acquires the excellent and informative content it publishes by paying for it.

In the years after ACA's founding, the sums that the coalition collected from RROs grew significantly.

“According to [Shock's] thinking—which proved prescient—the more writers' organizations that belong to ACA, the more representative it would be of American creators at large and the more foreign reproduction rights organizations would therefore want to send it funds,” wrote Beryl Benderly, a science writer, in a [tribute to Shock](#) upon her retirement. That conviction is in large part how ACA grew from 10 member organizations in 1994 to 22 today. Benderly's piece describes Shock convincing her in 2001 to persuade the National Association of Science Writers (NASW) to join ACA, cites the benefits her organization has experienced as a result, and also discusses the path NASW traveled to qualify for membership.

In order to qualify for ACA, an organization must be national (not local or regional), must have at least 500 professional members, and authors' professional advancement must be the organization's primary focus. Additionally, the organization cannot discriminate among its potential members on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or national origin.

Each member organization can have up to two ACA representatives. Reps attend monthly ACA meetings, which take place via conference call. A rep speaks for her organization at the meetings and reports back to her board of directors with relevant questions or information. There's also one in-person meeting per year, usually in New York City, and ACA covers all expenses for one rep from each organization to attend.

The rise of digital technology and the internet have brought about major changes in the large-scale copying habits of the 1980s that led to all of this in the first place. So much material is accessible now without copying or violating copyright. ACA revenue is decreasing as a result, and administrator Dorien Kelly said at October's in-person meeting that this trend will continue.

Meanwhile, ACA's role is evolving. Most of the conference call meetings now focus on exchanging information about advocacy issues that various member organizations are working on, as well as discussion of ways that this coalition can use its strength-in-numbers to benefit authors.

In November, for example, NINC circulated a survey to members about health insurance after learning in an ACA meeting that there's an organization exploring the possibility of group insurance for authors if a large enough pool of people is interested.

The Romance Writers of America and the Authors Guild reported in ACA meetings about their ongoing legal battle against a writer who attempted (unsuccessfully, in the end) to trademark a word in common use ("cocky") and prevent other writers from using it in their book titles. This was about more than just one novelist causing problems (and suing other writers), of course; it was the forerunner of more writers trying this out, and legal opposition to those instances was also reported in ACA meetings. The National Writers Union also reported on their work to overcome the ongoing reluctance of various major magazines to pay the writers to whom they owed money. And so on.

There is some discussion of ACA forming a subcommittee to study the ongoing issue of reversion clauses (specifically, the egregious and "non-negotiable" long-term rights grab that too many publishers make when acquiring a book) or the perennial problem of royalty statements (impenetrably complex, opaque, and/or inaccurate).

Some of the issues discussed in ACA are cutting edge and complex, such as the latest proposed changes to copyright law, how freelance writers are affected by a 2018 California court ruling about misclassifying workers as independent contractors, and new controversies in digital rights.

Precisely because ACA comprises very different kinds of creators (ex. novelists and graphic artists, textbook authors and media photographers, songwriters and garden writers, etc.), our organizations don't all share identical interests or problems. When discussing reversion of rights, for example, the needs and interests of NINC members aren't well aligned with those of songwriters or textbook authors—or even necessarily with the specific interests of other fiction organizations. Also, many of the issues that NINCers regularly discuss at length don't get mentioned at all in ACA.

Nonetheless, the age-old benefit of strength in numbers has led ACA members to start considering what else, in addition to collecting and distributing monies from RROs, these 22

members organizations might do together to benefit tens of thousands of authors, while remaining within ACA's official parameters.

If you think you might be interested in serving as one of NINC's representatives in the Authors Coalition, now or in future, contact NINC's president. It's a volunteer role that any willing member can fill, and it's an interesting one, offering a window into the broad range of issues that authors face and how various organizations are confronting them.

And P.S., in *National Treasure*, Sean Bean's character is arrested and hauled off to jail. But he's alive. I can't help you with Area 51.

Novelist and longtime NINC member Laura Resnick has just stepped down as one of this organization's ACA representatives, and she encourages you to consider stepping up.

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

The email list for Novelists, Inc. Members: <https://groups.io/g/NINCLINK>

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

We offer a critique/brainstorming group: <https://groups.io/g/NINKcritique>

Follow NINC on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Novelists_Inc

Conference 2019: Planning For Success

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

Conference Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2019-member-registration/>

Conference e-loop: <https://groups.io/g/BeachNINC2019>

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: http://ninc.com/system/assets/uploads/2017/01/2017_New_Member_Welcome_Packet-public.pdf

Member discounts

NINC members are eligible for certain professional discounts. A complete listing of these can be found at <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/member-freebies-discounts/> along with other member discounts.

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:

- Social Media Committee
- Tweet Team
- Recruiting New Members
- 2019 Conference Promoter
- Anything!



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

2019 Board of Directors

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

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- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
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2019 Committees

- *Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.*
- 2019 Conference Committee:
 - Conference Director: Mel Jolly
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 - Sponsorship: Rochelle Paige
 - Logistics: Karen Fox
 - Registration: Mindy Neff
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- Social Media Coordinator:
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Address changes may be made on the website.

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