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



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President's Voice

By Tawdra Kandle



The NINC Board is closely monitoring the situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is too soon to make a final decision about the conference in late September, we are forming contingency plans in the event that we cannot move forward with an in-person format.

We will have a final decision on the status of the conference no later than July 15th.

Meanwhile, members who have already registered and cannot attend will receive the standard 80% refund through July 31st pending the board's decision, at which time the refund policy will be revisited if necessary.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these challenging times.

There is a saying, often erroneously described as a Chinese curse: *May you live in interesting times*. Regardless of its origins, that phrase has been on my mind frequently since January.

We are certainly living in unprecedented times. The pandemic and the stay-at-home orders and quarantines associated with it have affected most of us, whether we're accustomed to working from home or not. We've dealt with anxiety, uncertainty, and a flood of often-conflicting information from a variety of sources. And if the present feels uncertain, the future is downright murky.

Those of us planning the NINC 2020 Conference are in the midst of that haze of not knowing. The NINC Board will make the decision by mid July on whether or not the conference will go forward in a live, in-person format. Until then, we're operating under the assumption that the conference *will* happen in late September at the Tradewinds in St. Pete Beach. Even as we work with our speakers on workshop titles and descriptive blurbs, though, we're well aware that we may be shifting everything to a new forum. Consequently, even as we're doing our regular work, we're coming up with contingencies—the just-in-case plan.

We're also working to let our sponsors, speakers and registered attendees know what's going on and assuring everyone that we're keeping our collective eye on what's happening. Our

goal is to mitigate the impact of any change in format, to ensure that any consequence of a possible shift is minimized.

In the wake of the board's announcement this week, I received a number of messages and emails. Some were from members who said that they were not interested in a virtual conference and would not register if we move to that format. Others said they would love a virtual format as that was the only way they'd be able to attend. A number of members declared that they would be at the hotel, even if we cancel the in-person conference. And another group said that if we do hold the conference live, they wouldn't feel comfortable attending.

I understand all of these points of view. None are invalid. As the board works to make the decision this summer, we will be taking all the available information into account and choosing the path that best serves our members. Your safety, health and well-being are our primary concerns.

I'm well aware that some of my answers to your questions have been less than clear. Please know that we're not trying to hide anything; we're trying to find the answers, too. We are all working to determine the best path forward, and I don't want to make a definitive statement that might be misleading.

I've referenced the NINC Board several times both in this and in previous columns. It's come to my attention that not all of our members realize who makes up the board. The list is always here in *Nink*; it is also on the website. But in case you don't know . . .

The board is made up of the president, the president-elect, the secretary, the treasurer, our central coordinator, the *Nink* editor and one representative of the advisory committee. (The advisory committee includes most former NINC presidents.)

Currently, I am the interim president. Lisa Hughey is the president-elect. Hallee Bridgeman is our secretary. Pam McCutcheon is our treasurer. Terese Ramin is our central coordinator. Michele Dunaway is the *Nink* editor, and Lou Aronica is our advisory committee representative.

I am enormously grateful to the board as well as to the members of this year's programming committee (Assistant Chair Lisa Hughey, Second Assistant Annabel Chase, Trad Liaison Victoria Thompson, Hotel Liaison Karen Fox, Sponsorship Chair Rochelle Paige, Social Media Chair Jenna Kernan, and Conference Coordinator Mel Jolly) for their hard work during these very interesting times.

I'm also grateful to you, the NINC members, for your continued trust and support. I'm still hoping to see many of you in September. Until next month, stay well and safe.

—Tawdra Kandle

Tawdra Kandle is a USA Today best-selling romance author with over 80 books released. Her titles include new adult and adult contemporary romance; under the pen name Tamara Kendall, she writes paranormal romance, and under the pen name Tessa Kent, she writes erotic romance.

About NINC

NINC remains committed to serving all of our members, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

About *Nink*

Nink's goal is to provide our readers with high-quality articles that offer critical business advice, marketing how-tos, advanced craft coaching, or strategy to continue building a career, all geared to established authors. All members should feel confident that *Nink* provides something for them. We welcome pitches and submissions from all members; [propose an article](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#).

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](#).

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/>

September 23 - 27, 2020



- **Conference information:** <https://ninc.com/conferences/about-the-ninc-conference/>
- **Conference registration:** <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/>
- **Conference e-loop:** <https://groups.io/g/BeachNINC2020/>

Be Your Own PR Person

Getting your message across using home base messaging and message maps

By Michele Dunaway



You don't have to hire an expensive public relations firm to be able to stay on message with the media. With a little work, you can develop your own talking points, just like the pros.

I had the good fortune long ago to spend a full day learning from Tripp Frohlichstein, who ran Media Masters for over 30 years before his death. I have a master's in media communication, but it was his communication strategies that have stuck with me all this time, strategies I use in every interview I've ever done.

Strategy 1: "Home base" or your key message

Frohlichstein's home base method is a way for the person being interviewed to have control over the message, to ensure that your message gets received through the noise. While you have no control over who is interviewing you, you do control what message you put out in that interview.

You don't want the audience to get too many messages because they won't remember them. "Having a single message enables the audience to see why you do what you do—to help them," Frohlichstein said in an [interview with George Stenitzer](#), who worked with Frohlichstein.

Frohlichstein's home base messaging concept can be applied to all aspects of getting your point across: after you meet someone, after you've pitched, or after you've completed a press interview. A home base message is what that person takes away, a brief phrase or something you want that person to remember. Your home base message should be what Frohlichstein called "your single most important communication objective" as it answers the question "What's in it for me?"

If my home base is "entertaining St. Louis readers with historical stories," and I say, "I write good books," you could say "So what? So does everyone else. Why do I care? What's in it for me?" If I say, "I write books about St. Louis founders that will make you laugh even on a bad day," that is much more specific.

“It’s important to have a home base, because home base makes it easier for people to grasp what you are all about, as well as remember you,” Frohlichstein said in Stenitzer’s interview.

Chris Kuban, a former graduate student who studied with Frohlichstein, writes, “Your main message needs to be a simple, easy-to-understand phrase that can be used multiple times throughout your interview. Remember you have a limited amount of time to get a good sound bite. You might be interviewed for 30 minutes, but your final sound bite may be only 30 seconds long.”

Strategy 2: Positive points

Once you have your home base message, the next step is to develop what Frohlichstein called positive points, or “primary messages that support your home base.” In Stenitzer’s interview, Frohlichstein says, “Most interviews should use no more than three positive points—although you can have many more—to support home base.”

Let’s say the home base for me as a writer is “Crafting soulful, heartwarming reads.” I’m going to come back to this every time in my messaging, and my supporting positive points could be things like:

1. I write quality reads.
2. I have series continuity.
3. I maintain a sweet focus.
4. I strive for excellence.

Strategy 3: Proof positive points

To support the positive points comes something Frohlichstein calls “proof positive points.” These are your specific and measurable examples.

So for quality reads, my proof positive points could be things like:

1. I’ve had 15 five-star reviews for my first book.
2. It sold 1.6 million sold worldwide.

The proof positive statements back up and support your message. So a proof positive for “I strive for excellence” could be “I edit my book six times before I submit to my editor.”

Strategy 4: Distinguishing points

Not all of your positive points may have proof positive points. Instead, you can use distinguishing points, which explain how you are different (and better) from everyone else. If I am targeting a local press, my distinguishing point might be that I am local. Personally, I always pitched that I was a teacher by day and romance writer by night to set myself apart. Your distinguishing point could be your why your zombies are better than anyone else’s (or that your vampires glitter).

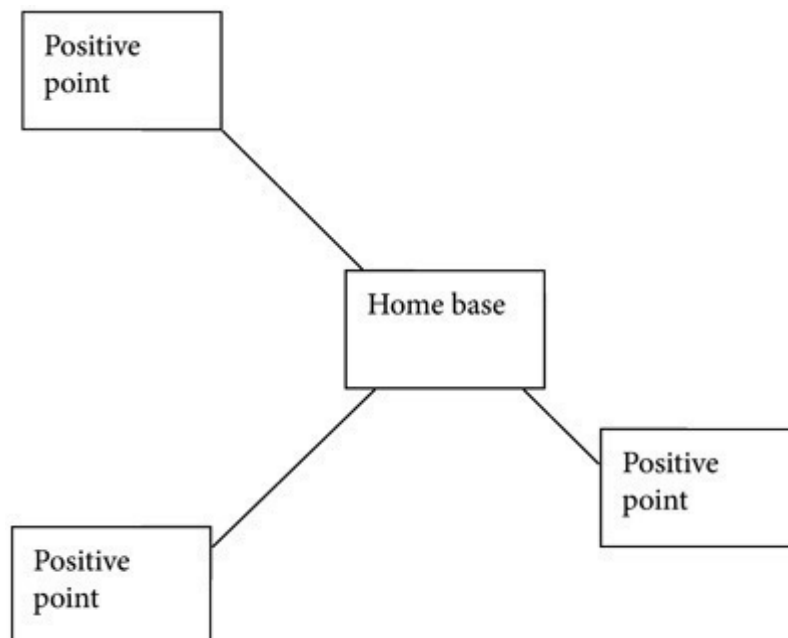
How to find these points

These positive and distinguishing points are often difficult to find. [Frohlichstein advised](#): “Remember the following when searching for positives: What is routine to you is not routine to me. In other words, something you do regularly may not seem worth mentioning to the customers or to your audience. But in fact, it might be fascinating to others, and worth mentioning.”

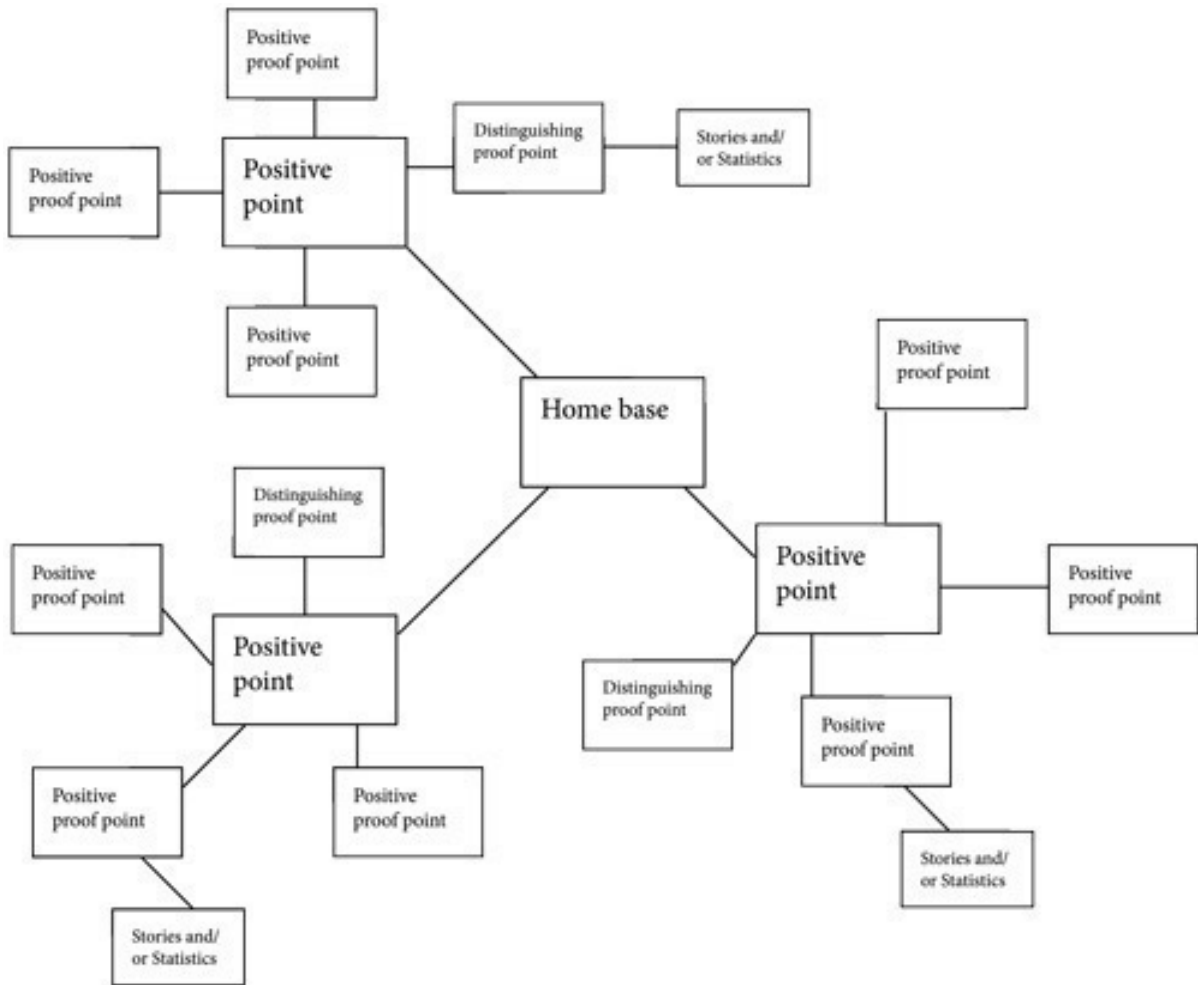
In his “Developing a Road Map: A Step-by-Step Guide to Message Mapping,” Frohlichstein wrote that the best way to refine your points is to think like an outsider. Most professional communicators will tell you the audience wants to know, “What’s in it for me?” but Frohlichstein wrote that your positive points also “should pass the ‘who cares’ test.”

Message maps: putting them all together

All of these things, when graphed, form a message map based on a hub-and-spoke model with all points leading back to home base. A hub-and-spoke message map can be basic.



Then you build it out and can make it more complicated.



Frohlichstein used this University of Missouri Extension map as an example of a more detailed and professional message map.



Other examples and discussion can be found [in Kuban's article located here](#).

While Frohlichstein's shape of the message map is hub and spoke, your message map doesn't have to be fixed. It can be round, square, or rectangular or any combination.

Vincent T. Covello, Ph.D., simplified his message map template into what he calls the Triple T Model.

Stakeholder: Question or Concern:		
Key Message 1	Key Message 2	Key Message 3
Supporting Fact 1-1	Supporting Fact 2-1	Supporting Fact 3-1
Supporting Fact 1-2	Supporting Fact 2-2	Supporting Fact 3-2
Supporting Fact 1-3	Supporting Fact 2-3	Supporting Fact 3-3

Triple T Model

1. Tell people what you are going to tell them (key messages)
2. Tell them more
3. Tell people again what you told them

Message maps are important for helping you refine and tighten your pitch. As Kuban writes, news editors “look for Catastrophe, Chaos, Conflict, Confusion, Competition, Contradiction, Corruption, Crime, Crisis and Color (Human Interest)—And you cannot forget the ‘S’s” of news: Secrets, Sensationalism and Sex.”

Reporter cutbacks mean that often they need you to do the job for them, and your message map allows you to be on brand. It allows you to focus on the content of your message when responding to media.

Other tips for dealing with the media

1. **Be honest. Tell the truth.** [Janis Murray, owner of Murray Prep LLC writes in the Ladue News](#), “Use visual examples and positive points to prove what you say is true. If we can see it, we can believe it.”
2. **Be authentic in your emotion.** Kuban says, “What you say is as important as how you say it. Your energy, enthusiasm, excitement and entertainment factors will instill a strong connection with your audience.” Murray says, “Emotion without substance is hollow. Emotion with reason can be unbeatable.”
3. **Be brief. Brevity matters.** Kuban writes, “Your complete thoughts and statements in answer to a posed question should be 12-20 seconds long for television and 8-20 seconds long for radio and 40 seconds for print interviews. These are better known as sound bites.”
4. **Know your facts/positive points.** You will use these throughout the interview. Murray advises, “Start with ‘Here’s why...,’ ‘Here’s how...’ or ‘For example...,’ and then follow with facts.”
5. **Be prepared. Stay on prepared messages.** Murray says, “Home base is your safe place to go when stumped, so keeping it short makes it quickly accessible by memory when needed and nervous.” Covello advises to “Take advantage of opportunities to reemphasize or bridge to key messages.”

About “no comment”

Frohlichstein emphasized that you should always avoid the words “no comment.” You should answer the question directly, even if that means giving a yes or no. Then you can bridge to your home base. If not, answer and move on. Kuban advises similarly, “Always tell your story and do not exaggerate or lie. If you need additional time to compose your message, always ask for it ... funnel your comments back to your home base.”

See, that’s not so hard! Good luck in your next interview. If you follow these points, you’ll do great!

Michele Dunaway is in her final year as your Nink editor. She really will miss this and hopes you’ve noticed she changes up her bios just because.

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The Latest and Greatest

Identifying, timing or ignoring trends in publishing

By Trish Milburn



Supernatural academies. Billionaires. Mysteries with a slice of dessert. Indie publishing. Book trailers. Multi-author box sets.

What do all of these things have in common? They either were or continue to be trends in publishing, either from a creative or marketing standpoint. Whether you delight in the idea of identifying and capitalizing on trends or prefer to eschew them in favor of paving your own unique path, publishing trends have likely affected your writing career in some way.

Riding the wave

If you're not averse to benefiting from a trend, one of the most challenging aspects to doing so is correctly timing your entry into the trend. If you're too early, it might not yet be a trend that attracts readers. Too late and you face a glutted marketplace with a lot of derivative works. Even if your trend-riding book or series is wonderful, it will be harder for readers to find; or they might already be tiring of so many of that type of book and be seeking out the next new and fresh story instead. To take full advantage of story trends, you have to Goldilocks it—time it just right, which is every bit as difficult as it sounds.

Capitalizing on a trend in progress is easier for indie authors who are fast writers. For the traditionally published or those who can't write with epic speed, chances are the trends will be waning or totally kaput by the time your book is finished and sees the light of day.

"Think outside the box" is a phrase that one could say is past its prime, and yet it still fits when it comes to the process of identifying trends. Or, rather, you could say "think outside of publishing."

"I became aware of what happened in the music publishing world with the switch to digital downloads, and after Amazon debuted the Kindle I thought to myself, 'We're next,'" said [Lyn Cote](#). "I started investigating indie publishing in 2009. My first ebook debuted in 2011."

[Mindy Klasky](#) believes perceptive authors can glean trends from current news.

"I've been fascinated watching the growth in royal romances, which I'm convinced has its roots in Prince William marrying Kate Middleton (with a healthy new dose of enthusiasm when Harry married Meghan)," Klasky said. "I'm interested to see the effect on the trend as Harry and Meghan step away from royal duties."

Authors can sometimes catch on to something that is popular in other forms of entertainment and translate that into successful books.

"I believe the uberpopularity of the *Sons of Anarchy* television series years ago was a huge indicator that motorcycle club romance would be popular with readers," said [Cat Johnson](#). "That series is over on TV but readers still devour motorcycle club romance."

[Cynthia Sax](#) has worked in new business development and says she learned that looking outside the industry is often the best way to get innovative, yet semi-proven ideas.

"I saw a shift in reader preferences, for example, when *Game of Thrones* was the hot show," Sax said. "Deaths of secondary characters became more acceptable. A darker tone became more acceptable. Violence became more acceptable. I try to watch at least a few episodes of hot shows for this reason. I pick them apart and try to figure out what aspects of these shows viewers find appealing."

[Nicole Evelina](#) believes that identifying upcoming trends is only possible to a certain extent.

"If there are tie-ins to news stories or pop culture or anniversaries of famous events, we can use those to our advantage when querying agents or publishers," she said. "But I think the larger trends (vampires, domestic suspense, etc.) are nearly impossible to predict, even for those in publishing."

There is the possibility that by the time something becomes popular, it's too late to jump on that bandwagon.

"By the time a trend catches on and gets into the popular zeitgeist, it's over," said [Christiana Miller](#). "It's now only a trend for Boomers and oldsters because the young people have moved on to something else you haven't heard about yet."

Trendsetters

Trends have to have a starting point. Writers often start those trends by writing something that they can't find as a reader, likely with no thought whatsoever to launching a trend. They eventually become shorthand for when a reader is looking for a type of book. We see this in play in ad copy for other books, tag lines that compare a title to the Harry Potter series, *The Hunger Games* or *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

"The books that people talk about for years (i.e., *Gone Girl*) are usually a unique idea the writer came up with that also touched a chord with readers," said [Victoria Thompson](#). "I used to think that Stephen King invented horror until another horror writer set me straight about that. What King actually did was bring horror right into our personal life in a unique way that touched readers. This brought horror from being a niche market into the mainstream. I owe Caleb Carr a debt of gratitude because *The Alienist* reached readers in a unique way that created a market for historical mystery. I was lucky in that I could write historical mystery, and 25 books

later I'm still doing it. I don't think an author can do this on purpose though, because too many factors come into play. All authors can do is keep creating and hope that one idea really sticks."

Sometimes an author hits a trend in such a way that even though they didn't start it, many readers may believe they did and the author ends up benefiting in a big way.

"I think trends serve a growing need and this need quietly builds until the trend reaches a tipping point," Sax said. "Then BOOM, everyone hears about it. The author who is the most popular in the trend when it reaches a tipping point tends to become the face of it, but that trend often started long before they wrote in it. There were plenty of BDSM romances before *Fifty Shades of Grey* released, for example. Billionaire romances existed. Fan fiction existed. Trilogies featuring the same couple existed. *Fifty Shades of Grey* combined these growing trends (plus more) at the right time. I expect the next big trend in romance currently exists. It is building toward its tipping point."

Exploring down yet another avenue, we find opportunities to capitalize outside the boundaries of our native language. What is popular in other countries/languages that could be adapted to a different audience?

"Authors such as Aleron Kong saw early on what some Russian authors were doing in the LitRPG space and brought that to an English-speaking audience to great success," said [Skyler Grant](#).

My current series set in the world of K-pop music is a mixture of something that was popular in another language, Korean, but was simultaneously beginning to gain in popularity with Western audiences. The stories are still very much rooted in South Korea with mainly Korean characters, but the stories are written in English with a spattering of Korean words and phrases in dialog to appeal to the English-speaking audiences who are fans of K-pop music. Though my audience is English-speaking, however, it was important to me to center Korean characters as well as South Korea and its culture. I do have one white heroine and one bi-racial heroine, but all the other main characters are Korean.

Another way of creating a new trend is taking something old and making it new again, as [Wayne Stinnett](#) did with his sea adventure stories. We'll talk about that next month.

*Trish Milburn is the author of more than 50 novels and novellas, including her current *Idol in Love* series set in the world of K-pop.*

Four Ways to Building an Online Community

By LaShaunda C. Hoffman



Building an online community takes time, consistency and knowing it's not going to happen overnight. Below are some ways I used to build my online community over the years.

Website/blog

Your website is yours, and you can share whatever you want or when you want on your site. Even if you hire an assistant or have someone or some company maintain your site, never let someone else have full control of your access to your readers. You should always have final control over your content as your website is your asset.

When I started building my online community for my magazine, *Shades Of Romance Magazine* (SORMAG), I started with a website. It wasn't the most beautiful website, but it did its job to showcase the magazine.

Your website should at the minimum host information about your books and about you. I recommend keeping the readers on your site as much as possible versus sending them to various social media sites to interact with you. You can do this by adding a blog, forum, or membership area to your website.

Give your readers a reason to visit your site daily, weekly or monthly. What you share on your site is what brings the readers back. Here are a few ideas:

- **Share what you share on social media**, like what's going on with you and your writing. Put this also on your site.
- **Share resources** such as tools you use to write or podcasts you listen to.
- **Share tips** like articles on world building or how to plot your next book.
- **Host workshops** on topics that appeal to your audience. If they are aspiring writers, you might offer a workshop on how to write your first book.
- **Host events**. Monthly book discussions and interviews with writer friends are popular.
- **Host contests**. Readers love to win prizes, so you might want to choose a Reader of the Month or give a prize to the first person to post a review or buy a copy of a new release.

One of the things that hurt my promotion of SORMAG was when I focused more on social media instead of the blog for the magazine. The blog used to have a lot of engagement, but when I focused on social media, the blog slowly started to only have visitors and no comments. Having visitors was good thing, but I know now that the interactions and engagement was what made the blog work for the magazine. I learned the hard way that when you when you move your readers off your website, they usually don't come back mainly because it's easier to be on one platform instead of visiting multiple sites.

Social media

Even though I'm a fan of websites, I know many writers choose to use social media as their home base because it's easier to maintain. It's also a fun way to build your online community — and you don't have to leave home to do it! I tell my clients to find the platforms where their readers hang out and go have fun. I recommend starting with one or two platforms.

In this article, I will focus on one platform — Facebook. I'm a fan of Facebook because it lets you create communities with your profile, fan page or group. I call my FB community my FB Fam. Some of the people who follow me I've known over 20+ years when I first started online.

There are three main ways to interact with your fans on Facebook:

- 1. Profile page** – You can build a community with your profile page. However, you are limited to 5,000 followers, so you might have to be picky on who you let follow you.
 - Your profile is more for building relationships, so be careful with doing a lot of selling posts or you could end up in Facebook jail or worse, kicked off Facebook.
 - One of my favorite ways to engage my community is to ask questions. I ask at least three questions a day. This keeps my engagement up and often introduces me to new people.
- 2. Fan pages** – If you can get the engagement started on your fan pages, this is a good way to build your community. It's open to everyone to see and you can have unlimited followers.
 - I see this as more of a billboard to showcase who I am and what I do.
 - I invite people to like my pages which helps grow my following.
 - I post at least three times a day. This helps my posts show up in my follower's feed. I also try to ask questions to get the engagement going.
 - Your fan page is where you promote your book by using boosts or ads. Look at your results to see if you reached your promotion goals for your ads.
- 3. Groups** – My favorite way to build a community using social media is groups because you can make them private and be selective of who is in your community. I like that I can see who is inside the group and who is engaging or not.
 - I use my groups for learning, networking and sharing content.
 - The downside to groups is that they are time consuming and a commitment you must be ready for. It's your duty to keep your members engaged.
 - I create promotional campaigns to invite new members to the group.

I'm a huge fan of using social media because it's a fun way to build relationships with your readers and to make book sales. I use it to get to know my readers by asking questions and sharing things about myself. I've learned it is an important part of my promotion plan but it's not the only thing.

Videos

If you aren't camera shy, video is another way you can build a community. My favorite form of video is live streaming because I enjoy the live interaction with my fans. They can ask me questions and I can do the same with them.

You can go live on many social media platforms (like Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram) and engage with your community. Each one has time limits so check each platform for specifics.

Another option is to record your videos and post them on your social media platforms and wait for views and comments. It's helpful to be able to record in batches and create a bunch of videos you can schedule for later.

- You can use videos to teach workshops, read excerpts from your books, conduct interviews or just share news about your writing.
- Make sure to add the link to your email list to your videos. You can also put this in the written descriptor and comment section of your video platform, so you can get new subscribers.

I'll be honest, at first I was intimidated by video. I thought I had to be perfect: hair done, face flawless, and my words not tumbling out of my mouth.

But when I started doing it, I learned that I missed one key point. With video that's not live-streamed, you get a million takes to get it right. Editing is your friend. If you're like me, don't be intimidated. Get your hair done, your make up flawless and get in front of the camera and do your thing, then get a good video editor (or become one yourself).

Recognize & reward your community

Who are the people engaging with you?

- Do you have someone who opens all the emails you send?
- Do you have someone who engages in all the social media posts?
- Do you have someone who shares all of your videos?
- Do you have someone who is highly engaged in your group?

These are the people you offer a thank-you gift to — gift certificates, free books, or book swag. Let them know you appreciate them and their support.

I've learned over the years how important your community is. As I grew SORMAG's community, I saw how loyal the readers were to the magazine. They attended the events and joined the social media community. They enjoyed the SORMAG goodies I sent out. I always

wanted them to know they were appreciated. For the last few years, I've hosted a free online book festival for readers and writers with workshops, panel discussions, book discussions and prizes. Consider doing a Reader Appreciation Day or event for your readers.

Readers are loyal to writers they enjoy and these readers will stay a part of your community if you treat them like you appreciate them. Make time for them — respond to emails, reply to comments, and answer direct messages. Get to know them and you will see your readership grow.

Now, are you ready to start building your community? Go showcase your wings, social butterflies.

LaShaunda C. Hoffman created Shades Of Romance Magazine (SORMAG) and published it for 20 years. In 2015 she wrote a book about book promotion, Building Online Relationships — One Reader At Time, featuring lessons she learned while promoting SORMAG Digital. [Join her community](#) and receive a copy of SORMAG's Literary Directory.

Going Retro in the Digital Age with Paper Planners

(a.k.a. You got this)

By Patricia Burroughs



"It's for writing something down. Then doing something about it."
—Merlin Mann

In 2004, American writer, blogger, and podcaster Merlin Mann decided that the Blackberries and PDAs so many people lived with 24/7 were harder to use than a simple stack of index cards clipped together with important info on them — a way to write stuff down so that later you could do something about it. For him, it was just easier to whip out the index cards and scrawl on them rather than deal with the PDA. Oh, and he called this the hPDA — the hipster PDA. His explanation, bottom line, of the hPDA: It's for writing something down. Then doing something about it.

Despite the size of his audience, this suggestion did not kill the electronics business or even put a dent in the PDA market. In fact, most people didn't ditch their PDAs. But some thought he was on to something: a pen and something small and portable to write on was simply faster and easier.

Now, some 16 years of tech-explosion later, there are more people using paper than there were before. [In fact, AP News even featured a story about this "digital detox" in January.](#)

Which brings up one simple question: Why paper? (By the way, if the idea of using a paper planner has no appeal for you at all, time for you to bail on this article. Just saying.)

Benefits of paper planners

- You don't just plan your future, but you also have a diary-like record of your past, which can come in handy. Most importantly, the time you spend with paper and pen helps you get the most out of the present because you are able to bring together differing demands on your time and resources before they are on top of you. You can create a schedule or set aside specific days for specific tasks. Once you've done this, your tension will ease

because instead of carrying around the stress of All the Things, you can focus on what is in front of you, knowing that you will be addressing the other needs on Thursday, or next month. Sometimes you even recognize that you can't do everything and that it's time to be more realistic about priorities and the demands you're making of yourself.

- Studies show that the physical act of writing instead of typing engages your whole brain, resulting in deeper comprehension, increased focus, and unleashed creativity. This effect can be strengthened by enhancing your planning time with a scented candle or music that calms or energizes you. And whatever else you do, don't forget to take a few deep cleansing breaths before you begin!
- The act of transforming thought through hand and pen and onto the page, watching the words appear, is textural, sensual, and an act of creation. Some have even compared handwriting to sigil magic, where the act of putting an intention in writing gives it more power. (Sigil magic, however, involves symbols rather than text.)
- Paper planners don't provide the temptations and distractions digital ones do, since almost anything you use digitally also has social media, email, internet access, etc.
- There's just something intensely satisfying in lining through a task when it's completed or giving yourself a gold star as a reward!

But with so many options to choose from, where do you begin? Follow your gut.

Choose tools that make you want to use them

The number one thing you should look for in a planner is that makes you want to pick it up. Choose a planner that makes you want to open it, one that pleases you. This simple yet vital aspect will make the difference in how much you use it. And the more you use it, the more you'll want to use it.

By the way, the same goes for the instruments you plan with.

If writing in purple ink means you enjoy looking at your planner more than if it's a totally business-like grid, don't second guess yourself. Buy a pen with purple ink. A fountain pen, if that's what you want. Or the sharpest pencil you can sharpen — an entire tin can full of them — if that's what floats your boat. Ballpoint pens or gel pens or an 18th century dip pen — never underestimate the motivating power of loving your tools.

How do you want to use your planner?

From bullet journals to to-do lists and daily calendars, there are as many ways of using your planner as there are people. When considering which planner to buy, ask yourself:

- Do you want something you can carry with you everywhere? A desk-sized planner that stays open beside you on your desk all day? Both?
- Is it specifically for your writing business and projects, or do you want to keep all your life's appointments and organizing under the same cover with your writing?
- Do you want a planner that helps you set goals and work toward them or a business planner that is primarily for schedules and organizing?

- Do you want a daily, weekly, or monthly planner?
- Do you want to have room to doodle, sketch, or decorate in the margins?
- Do you want a planner that is decorative right out of the box?

If all these questions make you dizzy, you can narrow down your choices by surfing websites and watching videos. Some planners will excite you and make you want to try them. Others may overwhelm or bore you. But either way, you'll begin to see which aspects you love and which ones mean nothing to you. Jot down the terms for things you like so you'll be able to find them when you get ready to do your serious planner shopping.

The great news is that you can find just about any type of planner you want available for all budgets.

Want to [DIY it](#)?

Videos and websites, like the one linked in the subhead above, will provide many ideas for creating the system that is perfect for you.

You can easily customize loose leaf binders or [discbound systems](#). Even if you buy a complete planning system kit, you may decide you would prefer your sections to be in a different order, or you may want to leave some out, or create sections that are specific to your project.

[Bullet journals](#) [aka bujos] are the ultimate DIY, a spiritual descendant of the hPDA, in that instead of bulging with everything you might ever need, these small pocket-sized notebooks will only contain what you think is important.

And don't forget the [printables](#)! Whether from Etsy or planning blogs, an array of printable planning pages are available, many specific to the business and creative sides of writing. Many are free, though you'll often have to sign up for a newsletter to get them. Print out the type you're drawn to for a test drive. Once you see what you like the best, you'll shop with more confidence and knowledge.

To decorate or not to decorate

Many writers will know if they want to decorate or not. If you wonder if decorating is frivolous, the answer is an emphatic no!

The time spent setting up the week with stickers, washi tape, or stamp-art is an activity that slows us down, releases tension, and allows the brain to work in the background. Doing one creative thing can stimulate your writing. If you're artistic you may want to use watercolor pens and markers to create your own designs. But those of us who aren't artistic can get just as much a creative satisfaction by choosing colors, stickers, tapes, and themes for the day, week, or month.

Don't be afraid to experiment. If you're in love with an expensive binder and system available online, check out Walmart, Target, or any discount store near you. You're likely to find one similar enough to take for a test run to see if it's working for you. Then invest in the more expensive brand.

Before I invested in my first Franklin Planner back in the early 1990s, I bought their [one-month trial](#). I loved it so much that not only did I dive into the complete system, I also bought one to use for each trip I took overseas for research. It was an amazing organizer and I also treasure it for the running commentary and notes I jotted down.

One last tip

Don't get overwhelmed by All The Things!

Isolate one thing, *The Thing*. The Thing that is the one overwhelming you, or The Thing that seems the easiest place to begin. Start there.

Whether you end up using a broad-strokes system with a few lists and schedules or a detailed system that holds all your needs in one place — planners work.

Finally, remember the first rule of planners: *You're the boss of the planner. It works for you.*

You end up building trust and faith in yourself. *You're telling your brain, "We got this."*

And you do.

Pooks (a.k.a. Patricia Burroughs) is a novelist, screenwriter, occasional short story writer, and short story anthology editor. She is also an Academy Fellow, having received the Academy Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting (awarded by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences). She and her high school sweetheart husband (a.k.a. The Resident Storm Chaser) are living happily ever after in Dallas. She loves Pratchett, Aaronovitch, Dunnett, and Heyer and is unable to contain herself within a single genre.

Writing Through Hard Times

Part Two

By Denise A. Agnew



Editor's Note: Part One published April 2020

This month features authors who found a way to power through some of the most difficult times of their lives in order to create.

Scary symptoms interrupt a book

For [Rachel Hauck](#), her physical health upended her creativity unexpectedly.

"In 2014, menopause knocked me out. Literally. I passed out in the bathroom at 2 a.m.," she said. "I didn't know what was happening for about two weeks, but my heart would race at night, I'd tremble, and I became very melancholy. All the while I was writing the third book in a royal wedding series, and it was *not* working. A visit to my doctor along with a blood test told me I was super menopausal but not crazy."

Knowing she had a medical diagnosis gave Hauck the will to overcome her physical fatigue.

"I felt as creative as a rock, but every day after a few hours of sleep, if any at all, I'd climb the stairs to my office and wrote 5,000 words a day. I made my deadline, but because my spring was packed, and I was emotionally out of sorts, the publisher agreed to delay the book three months," she said. "Letting them know what was going on with me helped them understand my struggle. Although, to be honest, outside of my husband and doctor, I'm not sure anyone really understood."

Hauck urges other authors in similar situations to put mind over matter.

“Don't let fear of the page, or the blankness of your soul keep you from your job. At some point, you have to march to your computer, open your story and say, ‘We're getting it done today.’ The muse doesn't hide from us so much as we don't work to awaken it,” she said. “Rule over your emotions even though they, and your body, seem to be disowning you. Yet, in the midst of it all, be kind to yourself. If you need a break, take it. But also, guard your time and desires. Find that balance of healing, self-preservation with good ole fashion “Get 'er done.”

Hauck also suggests reaching out to your friends, family and faith, if you have one.

“For me it was prayer,” she said. “Desperate prayer. But I'd say, find your spiritual strength and bolster yourself.”

Lessons learned over years of adversity

Prolific author [Jacqueline Diamond](#), who has been writing for over 40 years and sold over 100 novels, experienced a significant string of different challenges over her long career.

“I've faced my share of life's complications. These include cancer, losing loved ones, economic setbacks, the death of my longtime agent, and simply growing older,” she recalled. “Plus more rejections than I can count — literally.”

She said the secret to her success lies in taking chances and addressing a challenge head-on.

“I've never wanted to be one of those people who, on their deathbeds, said, ‘If only I'd dared to....’ I did dare, even if I fell on my face doing it. To me, a loss of creativity reflects either physical and mental exhaustion, or depression. The first step to overcoming it is to acknowledge the source of the problem and address it if possible,” she said.

Part of that process was mindfulness, which kept her in the present and reduced worry that could have derailed her.

“It's important to push aside worries, fears and hopes, and simply look at what you're doing right this minute,” she said. “A technique that's helpful to me is to jot down my ideas in a notebook or computer file, and keep jotting while I travel to wherever those ideas take me. Pruning and editing and assessing can come later.”

Keeping in touch with the writing community, and not obsessing about writer's block, also bolstered her ability to continue creating.

“Attending writers' groups, lectures or discussions can get the juices flowing again. If you've hit writer's block, don't obsess about it. Accept that this happens, take care of your physical and mental health, and trust your instincts,” Diamond said.

And definitely don't worry about aging. Hauck can attest that though it may slow her down, age made her a better writer.

“Is my creativity as wild and crazy at 70 as when I was 20? No, it isn't,” Hauck said. “My writing is more skillful and focused, with more depth — and that takes extra time.”

Emotional pain leads to inspiration

[Wayne Stinnett](#)'s health could have severely impaired his creativity, but he refused to let it keep him down.

“Over the last couple of years, I've had a few medical procedures, including five eye surgeries to arrest the degeneration of optic nerves due to glaucoma, and surgery to remove my

gallbladder," he said. "Those were easy to push through. I'm a touch typist and the eye surgeries weren't on both eyes at once. With some pain meds and a laptop, I was writing the day after each one. Physical pain is easy to endure and easy to get over. At least for me," Stinnett said.

Emotional roadblocks proved a more difficult.

"Emotional loss is a different story. It stifles the creative process. While it's been years since the loss of anyone close, we did lose two of our senior dogs, Ginger and Bill. I held Bill in my arms as he died and for days afterward, I was in a funk and couldn't concentrate on anything," he said.

A change of weather and scenery led to a breakthrough.

"On the fourth day, I went to the office to pay some bills," he said. "It's on the top floor of a marina building, overlooking a salt marsh. A sudden electrical storm came up, and the power went out, along with the internet. Bill loved to sit on the porch and watch thunderstorms. And I loved to sit with him. I sat down at my desk and opened my work in progress. My main character had just arrived at an island in the Bahamas. I changed the weather and wrote the storm as it happened. The dockmaster at the marina my protagonist was arriving at had a dog. His name was Bill. I wrote 5,000 words during that storm."

From death to creative new life

Patricia Rosemoor's story sounds like something out of novel. She was riding high on every author's dream — five contracted books — when she learned her husband had a terminal illness and her father was murdered.

"My husband had just gone through surgery for a brain tumor that would kill him. He was in radiation and I called my dad, but I couldn't get him on the phone. I had the police go for a wellness check and they found someone had broken in through the basement and knifed him to death," Rosemoor said.

An only child, Rosemoor's responsibilities included overseeing the welfare of her aunt who had just entered a nursing home and had no one else to take care of her.

"Writing was the only time I could remove myself from the horror I was going through," she said. "I actually met four of the five deadlines before my husband died."

Rosemoor used a purposeful strategy to fit in writing along with her husband's doctors' appointments.

"I had to convince myself I didn't need to take him to every appointment — doctors yes, but five types of therapy and radiation, no. I took him the first few times, then arranged for hospital transportation to take him. I walked him out to the bus and later back from the bus into the house," she said. "That gave me a few hours most weekdays in which I could quiet my mind and take myself to my fictional world. We had a mortgage and other bills to pay, plus nearly 20 medications and food to buy, and I needed to make money for all that. I couldn't just 'take the time.' Plus, when I tried to take time for myself, all I could think about was my father and husband. I needed the fictional world because there were days I thought I wouldn't survive."

Turning adversity into advice

After helping her teenage son through four major illnesses in five years, author [Allie Pleiter](#) wrote a book for writers detailing how they could make it through struggles and still create.

“I was under a multiple book contract when my son was diagnosed with the second of four life-threatening illnesses. It was a deeper dive into what became a six-year journey of illness and recovery. I discovered that the internal well that tended to my son and cared for our family was the same well from where my creativity had drained. To survive, I needed to learn how to guard my creativity and re-spark it while still caring for our family.”

Allie discovered how she could make things work, and included her friends in a strategy.

“I learned to write in smaller batches and to physically separate myself from the situation while writing. I recruited friends to call and text me with daily doses of encouragement. I distinguished tasks I could do distracted and stressed from tasks that required more concentration, and scheduled them accordingly. I kept a journal, writing about my situation when I couldn't escape it. I also allowed myself to escape into my writing guilt-free when possible. I built a toolbox of these and other tactics to keep my writing self afloat while we navigated the storm of my son's illnesses.”

Allie acknowledged the plan didn't work every time.

“These tactics didn't work all the time. There were epic failures. But there was also beautiful work created that saved that time from being all about illness and trauma. I wrote the book to share what I'd learned with other writers going through difficult times.”

The result was Allie's book [How to Write When Everything Goes Wrong: A Practical Guide to Writing Through Tough Times](#).

Allie's book is a practical guide for authors experiencing stress or personal crisis. She teaches the writer how to use stress to inspire their writing and other tactics to find their way through the storm.

Every writer approaches hard times differently, so it is inspiring to see how others found a way through darkness into the creative light. Thank you so much to the authors who contributed.

Denise A. Agnew is the award-winning author of over 69 novels and screenplays. Denise's novels Love from The Ashes and Blackout were optioned for film/TV by Where's Lucy? Productions, Bright Frontier Films and MDR Entertainment. Denise is a Writer/Producer (Where's Lucy? Productions, Happy Catastrophe Productions, Bright Frontier Films), a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, and Certified Creativity Coach. As a creativity coach, Denise assists anyone in the creative arts to maintain lifelong creativity. You can find her at www.deniseagnew.com and www.creativepencoaching.com.

The Mad Scribbler

Quarantine Brain Fog

By Laura Resnick



“Several people who have never had mental illnesses may manifest them during and after the quarantine because this is a new challenge for brain circuits that have never been stress-tested like this. In others, the usual intellectual performance may be somewhat blunted.”

—Tade Thompson, psychiatrist & novelist, April 29, 2020

For the past few years, I’ve had a part-time job as a tour guide in a historic neighborhood of Cincinnati called Over the Rhine. I take visitors into underground caverns that were built by 19th-century German immigrants to age and ferment their lager. I love this job. I enjoy the interesting places I get to go, the people I meet, and the fascinating neighborhood I’ve grown to know and love. Guiding tours gets me out of the house regularly, in presentable clothing, engaging with people, and doing something that’s both interesting and physical. (Climbing in and out of underground lagering tunnels multiple times a day has given me quadriceps worth boasting about.)

Today, well into our second month of shutdown here (it began mid-March), I recognize how healthy a balance that part-time job created in my life—as did various other aspects of my normal existence that are also in suspended animation now while COVID-19 ravages the global community.

Writers are better equipped than most people to weather weeks or months of coronavirus quarantine and shutdown isolation. Most of us are quite accustomed to spending a lot of time at home, whether that means being alone or having a family member who’s also usually at home.

By contrast, I could see among non-writing friends, acquaintances, and strangers online that the initial adjustment to stay-at-home guidelines was challenging. Lots of

recommendations circulated on both major media and social media. These advised people to maintain their usual office schedules, to dress as if they're going to work, to set up a sacred work space that no recreational activity would be allowed to sully or soil, and to continue to shower and shave each morning.

Meanwhile, untold numbers of people vowed (or were urged by "influencers") to use this period of isolation to write a novel! Learn a language! Get fit! Read *War & Peace*!

But for many, alas, such ambitions have mostly devolved into giving up personal hygiene and binge-watching streaming video in their pajamas while eating too much ice cream.

And, as it turns out, pandemic isolation is pretty challenging even for people used to spending acres of time at home — including writers.

Somewhere in April, I started losing track of the hours, then the days. (For those of you who didn't know: April is over now.) I began regularly asking myself, "Why did I just enter this room?" On multiple occasions, I started to make dinner... then realized, oh, wait, I ate dinner an hour ago. I'd get up from my desk, absolutely exhausted, convinced I'd just put in nine hours of work... only to look at a clock and discover I'd been working at my desk for barely three hours. Writing seems harder lately than performing dental surgery on oneself.

At first, I thought it was just me. After all, when I browsed social media, I saw various writers talking about their steadily growing word count on the current novel, the short story they'd just finished writing, and the revisions they were doing after hearing back from their editor. But I eventually noticed some writers talking about the same problems I'm having: fatigue, loss of focus, poor concentration, and an uncharacteristic compulsion to keep baking bread from scratch.

I also realized after a while, it's not just that I'm having trouble working. I'm also not reading — certainly not the way I thought I would when this whole thing began. I read news articles every day, but I haven't finished reading a *book* in weeks.

It turns out I'm not alone in this, either. I learned a few days ago that publication of a collection of some of my late father's short stories is being postponed because of current conditions.

"We're holding off on the release date for [this] book until things improve," Alex Shvartsman of [UFO Publishing](#) (which focuses on sf/f humor) told me. "Right now, the ebook sales are atrocious and the print sales will be hurt since so many book stores are closed. So I'd rather wait a little bit longer."

I was surprised about ebook sales. After all, a lot of readers are currently at home full-time and can't engage in their usual social and recreational activities. I thought they'd be devouring ebooks.

"Anecdotally," Shvartsman said, "many people are reading less because their schedules and routines are upturned. But also, light reading ebooks like the UFO series are often bought and consumed on the commute to work. Same with audio books (where sales are also down). Not to mention one-fifth of working-age Americans applying for unemployment, which means spending money on books isn't really an option for them right now."

Yes, audiobook sales, often hailed as the fastest-growing segment of the publishing market before the crisis, have been hit hard.

“[It] turns out that people mostly, almost 100%, listen to audio books while they commute to work. Sales of audio books [have] collapsed,” according to Beth Meacham, a longtime senior editor at a major publisher. “Fortunately, there isn’t a physical supply chain there, so theoretically that business can restart immediately upon resumption of commuting.”

However, Meacham says, hardcover and paperback books are still the vast majority of business for traditional publishing. And that entire supply chain has been devastated by COVID-19.

Commenting as an individual, not as a representative of the company she works for, Meacham explains, “Selling books is a very long and complicated supply chain... It really starts with the paper. Storing paper for the big presses takes an enormous amount of warehouse space, which costs money. Printers don’t store a lot — they rely on a ‘just in time’ supply chain so that when a book is scheduled to go to press, the paper is delivered to the printer. Most of that paper is manufactured in China. Guess what isn’t coming from China? Anything, for the last [few] months.

“So, we don’t have adequate paper supplies. Then consider, big printing plants are not ‘essential businesses.’ There are only a couple printers in the US that can handle the book manufacturing business. One of them shut down [in March]. COVID-19. We started rescheduling books like mad to deal with that.”

Distributors and bookstores are also closed. Warehouses and transportation services are operating at reduced capacity. And in many instances, bills aren’t being paid, and cash flow is grinding to a halt.

“So given all the above, it’s not a good time in the publishing industry,” says Meacham. “The damage is going to last for a long time, the effects will be felt for at least a year to come, even if we do go back to business as usual in May. Or June. Or July...”

And, realistically, no one knows when we’ll go back to business as usual.

The corona-induced entropy of the supply chain in traditional publishing is probably irrelevant if your writing career is 100% indie and your sales are almost entirely digital. Many NINC members, though, are traditionally published or hybrid trad/indie authors, and are therefore affected by these conditions.

Since my quarantine-fog hasn’t completely turned me into an overcooked stalk of broccoli (yet), I recognize that now would be a good time for me to focus much more on indie publishing than I have. Time to write that indie series I keep thinking about! Or learn a language! Get fit! Read *War & Peace*!

But my brain fog is such that I’m frankly struggling just to stagger through writing this column, and I’ve asked for an extension on a short story that was due yesterday. The story is for a humor anthology, and I currently feel about as witty as the yeast that wouldn’t rise in my latest loaf of bread.

It is at least some comfort to know that this is yet another thing in which I am not alone. A current study at the University of British Columbia (you can apply [here](#) to participate) “is tracking how respondents are dealing with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. They’ve had more than 5000 responses so far, with people reporting sleep disturbance, anxiety, agitation, and depression.”

As the pandemic grows and the unusual level of isolation continues, and the foreseeable future remains highly uncertain, our stress hormones increase. The psychological and physical response to this stress keeps accumulating, until we're overloaded.

"That accumulation is called the *allostatic load*, essentially the damage on our bodies when they're repeatedly exposed to stress," and it's the cause of pandemic brain fog, according to Emily Baron Cadloff's recent article in *Vice*. The brain, aware there is danger, is on constant alert, in high-octane survival mode around the clock. Therefore, she writes, "while it feels like I'm doing nothing most days, my brain is still dealing with the anxiety and strain of this pandemic. I'm exhausted not because my body is working hard, but because my brain is."

In a recent Twitter [thread](#), British psychiatrist and science fiction author Tade Thompson discusses "Quarantine Brain Fog." He uses enough chemistry vocabulary to seem menacing to someone like me, who barely survived high school science class, but I do at least understand his conclusion: "Bottom line: longstanding stress is bad for your ability to think."

There is good news, though, which is that this fog is not permanent. (Well, not necessarily.) Our body and brain chemistry can recover when the stress recedes. And in situations like our current one, where it seems unlikely to recede any time soon, the usual wet-blanket advice still applies: It helps your mental health if you eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep. The catch, of course, is that when you're feeling stressed, you sleep poorly and often just want to binge-watch streaming video in your pajamas while eating too much ice cream.

Since it'll be some time before I am once again climbing in and out of old German lagering tunnels deep beneath the city, I've been doing a lot of yard work lately (and my yard really needs it), which helps alleviate some of my stress and wears me out enough to ensure I sleep well. But, frankly, there's no chance I'll get through *War & Peace* before this is all over.

Laura Resnick writes fiction, nonfiction, and short fiction.

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 2020:

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

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

Conference e-loop: <https://groups.io/g/BeachNINC2020/>

Newsletter

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

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

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

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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.

Did you know members receive a discount for **Scrivener**? Information on how to use it is posted under “Literature and Latte” on the [Member Freebies and Discounts page](#). You must sign in first. The discount has just been updated to include Scrivener 3 for macOS.

Thanks go to Literature and Latte and our other vendors for their continued support.

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
- 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.

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

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- Marianne Shock
- Wayne Stinnett
- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
- Steven Womack

2020 Committees

Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.

- 2020 Conference Committee:
 - Conference Coordinator: Mel Jolly
 - Programming Chair: Tawdra Kandle
 - Asst. Prog. Chair & Trade Show: Lisa Hughey
 - Sponsorship & Trade Show: Rochelle Paige
 - Traditional Publishing Liaison: Victoria Thompson
 - Annabel Chase
- Authors Coalition Rep: Laura Phillips & Sue Phillips
- Social Media Committee:
 - Chair: Jenna Kernan
 - Rick Gualteieri
 - Lisa Hughey
 - Christine Breen
- Membership Committee
 - Sarah Woodbury
 - Boyd Craven
- *Nink* Newsletter
 - Editor: Michele Dunaway
 - Assistant Editor: Nicole Evelina
 - Copy Editor: Cynthia Moyer
 - Production Manager: Laura Resnick
- Nominating Committee:
 - Tanya Anne Crosby
 - Kathy Carmichael
 - Kristine Smith
 - Jenny Gardiner
 - Rick Gualtieri

- Technology Committee
 - Nick Thacker
 - Elizabeth Ann West
 - Jamie McFarlane
 - Erica Ridley
- Discount Program Chair: Emilie Richards
- Volunteer Jobs (Just One Thing) Coordinator: Lois Lavrisa

Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Terese Ramin

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Address changes may be made on the website.

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Nink's goal is to provide our readers with high-quality articles that offer critical business advice, marketing how-tos, advanced craft coaching, or strategy to continue building a career, all geared to established authors. All members should feel confident that *Nink* provides something for them. We welcome pitches and submissions from all members.

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