

N I N K

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The Business Rusch: Marketing and Readers (Or . . . Why Your Marketing Mileage May Vary)

BY KRISTINE KATHRYN RUSCH

As writers, we have been “raised” in the business to believe that readers are one gigantic mass of creatures, all the same. Yet as readers, we know that’s not true. Just because Gillian Flynn’s book *Gone Girl* spent weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list doesn’t mean all of us will like the book. Some of us will love it and some of us will wonder what everyone else saw in it, even if we bought it. Some of us will look at it and wonder who the heck would buy it at all. Some of us will buy the book after the movie comes out in October because we hadn’t heard of this major bestseller until New Regency Pictures started advertising the movie. (Because, y’know, traditional publishers don’t spend money on TV advertising. That would be so . . . last century.)

We readers know that’s how it works. We writers forget it. And traditional publishers never think about it. They treat all books by advance level. The amount of marketing dollars put into books varies according to the advance paid to the author, not how many fans the author has. In theory, advance and fans should correlate, but in reality, they don’t.

Traditional publishers don’t really pay attention to a fan base. Publishers sell books to distributors and bookstores, and so target their advertising to those companies. When the chain bookstores took over the business, traditional publishers only had to convince a handful of book buyers to take tens of thousands of

copies of certain books, based not on the author’s sales record, but on what was “hot” or a “great cover” or a “new concept.” Independent booksellers bought what their customers wanted, but independent booksellers, who do not buy in bulk, have very little clout with traditional publishers.

So when you’re thinking of marketing for books, realize the models you’ve seen for it (traditional publishing) aren’t based on attracting *readers*. They’re based on attracting *book buyers* for major corporations, a hidden little industry. As *Continued on page 4* ▶

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Introducing...

The following authors have applied for membership in NINC and are now presented by the Membership Committee to the members. If no legitimate objections are lodged with the Membership Committee within 15 days of this Nink issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of NINC. For further information or to recommend eligible writers, contact:

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Information

NINC has room to grow...

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Go to Members Only, "Member Services" and
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In Memory of Trish Jensen (February 24, 1959 – February 17, 2014)

BY DEB STOVER



A shining light went out on February 17, 2014. Trish Jensen's death wasn't a surprise, but expecting it makes it no less tragic. There are some people in this world who really are larger than life. Former NINC treasurer Trish Jensen was one, and her loss leaves a void in hearts and lives all over the world.

Though she lived and wrote her romantic comedies in the same state where she was born, she managed to befriend people everywhere by sharing her wit and warmth online. She graced chat rooms dating back to the early days of IRC when many of us first met in #writers, #booktalk, and #noveltalk. The format was awkward and often crashed, but Trish cheerfully logged back on—usually as trishj in lower case—and continued to dazzle us all with her charm.

She joined GENie's Romance and Women's Fiction Roundtable (RomEx) in late 1993 and won us all over with her sense of humor and sweet nature. A short time after joining, she sold her first novel. We celebrated online, of course. By then our chats had moved to a more sophisticated format, and Trish evolved with every change. She was always there to help others make the transition to new technology, and she did so with grace and humor.

In 1994, Trish joined some readers and authors to form a group called READ. We recognized a need for a group without so many rules where readers and authors could interact without having their hands smacked all the time. Trish reigned on READ. She was, without a doubt, the most popular and most loved member of a group that now has over 300 members who all miss her. She leaves a legacy with her dedication to readers and writers alike.

Her service to NINC is another example of her dedication to others. She never failed to step forward when needed, even when her health wasn't at its best. Her loyalty and enthusiasm for NINC, her readers, her pets, and her friends persists and will never leave us.

Trish Jensen's 14 beautiful novels live on, as does her legacy of love and laughter to bring a smile to our lips and to our hearts. And all the puppies in Heaven are getting a belly rub about now.

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Information

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.

The Business Rusch: Marketing and Readers

Continued from page 1 ▶

a result, no one has broken down the retail side of the business with the idea of targeting the advertising toward the actual final customer—the reader. No one has except, of course, the romance writers (and later, the mystery writers organization Sisters in Crime).

A bit of history here —

The romance genre is a “young” one in terms of existing as a stand-alone genre. Yes, romances have been around since the dawn of time, but marketing books under the genre title “romance” has only happened since the 1970s. Before that the books were broken into categories like “love stories” and “Gothic.” Genre is a fashion, folks, not an absolute.

Because most of the romance genre is mostly written by women and sold mostly to women, the notoriously sexist publishing industry of the 1970s and 1980s did not believe those books sold. Remember, publishing would target booksellers, not actual readers, and many bookstore owners refused to carry “that stuff” in their stores. I bought my romances back in the day at drug stores and through Harlequin’s subscription service.

It wasn’t until 1982 or so that romance began to make an impact, and that was because the romance writers started banding together and *proved* to the industry that their books sold. Romance Writers of America was founded in 1980 with this kind of advocacy in mind.

And because bookstores refused to carry many of these books, romance writers were the ones who developed all kinds of marketing techniques that many of you still believe you need to use now. Some of the techniques are absolutely valuable, like newsletters and fan-based activities. Some have seen their day, like bookmarks and flyers.

But what you need to know, what’s important to know, is that the *romance writers* were the first ones to do a reader survey for the point of marketing books.

(A sidebar here: it was an education for me to Google every term I could think of for reader statistics/reader surveys. Because I found a million of them. For e-reading devices. For various magazines and online nonfiction publications. For schools and libraries, to see if kids are learning. But for book publishers? Nada.)

The last Romance Writers of America survey that I found, which is on their website, comes from a couple of years ago. I’m going to cherry pick some of the information there because it’s evergreen. Some of the information is probably dated, particularly the social media and e-book stuff. Still, I think you should look at it, especially if you’re targeting readers. (www.rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=582)

The survey labels readers like this:

Avid readers who are always reading a romance novel

Frequent readers who read quite a few romances.

Occasional readers who read romances on and off.

Remember, this is *romance-focused* only. And for romance, the statistics go like this (or at least they did three years ago):

Avid readers of romance: 31 percent of respondents

Frequent readers of romance: 44 percent

Occasional readers of romance: 25 percent

And here—my friends—is where it gets interesting. Looking just at me, Kris Rusch The Reader, I am a *frequent* reader, according to this survey. However, if you look at my habits and bring in all books, all genres

(including nonfiction), I am an *avid reader*. Right now, I'm reading four different *books*—two nonfiction (one history, one goofy) and two fiction (one mystery, one YA). I'm also in the middle of an *Entertainment Weekly*, a *New Yorker*, and an alumni magazine. Not counting the online reading I do or the two newspapers I read cover-to-cover daily. Or the manuscripts I read when my husband Dean Wesley Smith finishes something or for the anthology series I co-edit, *Fiction River*. I would call myself a voracious reader. I read all the time, if I possibly can.

Readers are clearly not one big mass of similarity. As you can see from my example above, I'm a different kind of reader if you break the questions down by genre or by subgenre. Or by author. By whether or not I know the author or if I don't.

That RWA survey looks at reading *habits*.

But let's look at the *types of consumers* readers are.

True Fan

A lot has been written about the true fan in the past few years, but let me quote former *Wired* editor and (as John Scalzi calls him) Web Thinker, Kevin Kelly, who, so far as I can tell, started this meme in 2008 or so:

“A True Fan is defined as someone who will purchase anything and everything you produce. They will drive 200 miles to see you sing. They will buy the super deluxe re-issued hi-res box set of your stuff even though they have the low-res version. They have a Google Alert set for your name. They bookmark the eBay page where your out-of-print editions show up. They come to your openings. They have you sign their copies. They buy the t-shirt, and the mug, and the hat. They can't wait till you issue your next work. They are true fans.” (<http://tinyurl.com/cvd2rn>)

Long-Time Fan

This person has been reading your work for years and will buy your work when they're ready to. They are, in the words of the retail market, Brand-Loyal customers. You the consumer can choose between Skippy Peanut Butter or Jif Peanut Butter, but you're a choosy father, not a choosy mother, so you choose Skippy whenever you can. It's automatic. You need peanut butter, you buy Skippy. You need a book and the latest Neil Gaiman is out, so you buy Neil's book. But you don't go to signings, you don't buy the book immediately, and you don't stand in line to get the limited edition version of whatever, although you might be happy if your spouse got it for you for Christmas.

The key point: long-time fans have bought your work for *years*, sometimes for *decades*.

Fan

These fans like a writer's work, but don't go out of their way to buy it immediately. Like the long-time fan, this fan is a brand-loyal customer. The only difference? They might not have been a fan for more than a few months, even if the writer has been published for decades. These fans would not call themselves long-time fans, but they will pick up the work when they're ready.

Sometimes Fan

The name says it all. This reader loves a certain aspect of a writer's work, but doesn't like other parts. I'm a sometimes-fan of Nora Roberts. I like her romantic suspense novels and will buy those when they appear. I occasionally like her contemporaries, and her paranormals I don't buy at all. (And I have a completely different take on her pen name J.D. Robb. See following.)

The sometimes fan knows her own taste. She might like Skippy Peanut Butter, but not *all* types of Skippy. Just creamy, not chunky. And not low-fat. Brand loyalty isn't here. It's *product* loyalty within the brand. ▶

Genre/Subgenre Fan

The romance survey found these people, and called them avid readers of romance. When these readers have finished their most recent historical romance novel, they look for another one by a favorite author. When they can't find that, they go for something similar. Both surveys that RWA commissioned in 2011 and 2012 found this breakdown for purchasers of romance, and the genre/subgenre fans are at the top of the list.

Top overall decision factors when deciding on a romance:

- ▶ The story
- ▶ The author
- ▶ It's part of a series
- ▶ Back cover copy

Note that my preferences for Nora Roberts books do not reflect my genre/subgenre fan preferences. I like paranormal romance more than I like contemporary romance. I just don't like Nora's paranormals. Your reader tastes are this nuanced. You know that. Think it through.

Reads voraciously

These people buy books constantly or go to the library all the time. They always have a book and/or reading material close by, whether it's on their e-reader, their computer, or their bookshelf. Voracious readers might not buy new. They might not be able to afford it. But they consider books as important as breathing.

Reads occasionally

These people—who often have young families and full-time jobs—might have called themselves voracious readers at another point in their lives. But right now, they're too busy to read all the time. They read when they can.

Some readers have always been like this, though. Reading is just part of their entertainment diet. They might consider entertainment (TV, movies, games, music, books) as important as breathing, just not one type of entertainment.

Likes to Read

Even more than the reads-occasionally people, the likes-to-read folks buy a book when the fancy strikes them. They're the people who claim to read one novel per year. Again, they probably slide into the Reads Occasionally category, depending on life circumstance, but they would never ever say reading books is as essential to them as breathing.

Non-Readers

Yes, they buy books. As gifts for friends. Of necessity, because they believe (rightly) that they should read to their children. But they're still not buying for themselves, and once the kids are grown, the book purchasing stops. Many of these folks never got into the reading-for-pleasure habit and aren't interested in acquiring it.

Here's the important point about readers:

Readers embody *all* of these traits.

For example, I buy some authors as gifts for people. I will never read some of these writers I buy for other people ever. I don't like the subject matter or the point of view or something. I am a true fan for one or two authors, a longtime fan of many authors, and a genre/subgenre fan. I am a voracious reader for the most part, but if you break down my likes and dislikes, I am an occasional reader of some things (certain types of nonfiction) and a nonreader of others. I'm sure you're the same way. So...when you target your marketing,

why do you treat all readers the same even though you're not the same reader for every writer?

Think it through.

This all-the-same marketing breaks down even farther when you talk about *purchasing* books rather than just reading them. Some readers cannot afford new books. They also can't afford e-readers, for the most part. These readers go to the library or, occasionally, the used bookstore. But they can't purchase books brand new, for whatever reason. They are a vast and influential part of the reading public. They influence what libraries put on their shelves and what used bookstores take into their stores.

But when we writers discuss *marketing* our books and *pricing* them, we can't target these people. They will see the marketing anyway, and do their own thing, but they won't hand money over *personally* to buy the books. (I'm not trying to diminish their importance. I don't know what the statistic is—because, again, no one has done this study—but I think the underground community of readers who can't afford books is bigger than we think.)

Note: I'm not including the collectors either (except as true fans) because I'm dealing with *readers* and many collectors I know want the object and don't read it at all. (Often, though, they'll buy a reading copy.)

So, the following categories are of people with cash in hand, people who *buy books*:

True Fans

Yep, they show up here again, because as Kelly says, they'll fork out tons of cash for whatever project their favorite writer does. These people might not be rich, but they spend a disproportionate amount of what money they do have on their favorite writers.

Always Buys New

These brand-loyal readers will buy a book from their favorite author when they see that book. *Not* when the book is released, but the moment the fan discovers it exists. They'll pay for the hardcover if the hardcover is out, the mass market if they missed the initial release. But they want a new copy for their shelves or their digital library.

Sometimes Buys New

The category title says it all. They'll buy new when they see the book, but they might consider the purchase before doing so. Or they'll buy the book at a used store as readily as they will from a new bookstore. Often, the readers buy these books to read and trade back in or give to friends.

My experience with Nora Roberts' J.D. Robb pen name fits in here. I buy those books new or used, I don't care. Usually I buy used. Why? because I'm not a huge fan of them. I like them, and I know they'll provide a few hours of entertainment. I tend to read them on airplanes and then leave them behind when I'm finished. I'm not sure if my J.D. Robb purchases will end now that I can read my e-reader throughout the flight. I didn't read a J.D. Robb on this month's trip to Vegas, and I would have last year. I'm sure you have books/authors that you read the same way.

Always Buys Discounted Books

These readers never pay full price for anything, whether it's because of their own financial situation or their own financial preference. They'll find their books in the discount bin at bookstores or they'll watch Amazon for sales. They'll buy a lot of titles from used bookstore.

The key to these readers? They're usually voracious readers, but they're loyal to *price*. In other words, they'll buy Skippy or Jif, depending on which peanut butter is cheapest or on sale that week. They like peanut butter, but they don't care what type they actually get.

They are probably more adventurous readers than the readers listed above, but they will rarely pay ►

full price for anything. They will also complain the loudest if prices that were traditionally low get raised.

Always Gets Free Books

These folks are the same as the discount buyers above. For whatever reason, they don't buy books at all, choosing only to get things available for free. Again, these readers are loyal to *price*—or lack thereof, actually—rather than writer, subgenre, etc.

That sounds harsh, I know, and honestly, the 100-percent-free folks are rare. But again, when we're talking purchasing strategies as reader/consumers, we each fit in all of the categories. For example, I always buy Stephen King, Elizabeth George, Mary Balogh, and several of my other very favorite authors new. Always, always, always. I already told you about J.D. Robb, whom I occasionally buy new. There are many authors that I occasionally buy new—and a lot of them are new authors, if the books sound interesting enough and they fit into my genre/subgenre preferences. I am a discount book shopper of nonfiction in particular when I need research material. I will occasionally try something for free if—oddly—I'd already heard of the author or book. But I will rarely get to those books first.

Those are my reader preferences on price. I'm sure yours are different, according to your circumstance. When I was a very poor newly divorced woman, I had \$10 per week I could squeeze out of my budget for books (and I did this by eating less). I shopped at used stores and rarely bought new. I went to the library weekly. My circumstances were different and so were my buying habits, but not my *reading* habits.

The Whys and Wherefores

Why did I tell you all of this? Because, marketing one way to all readers—whether it's free or expensive, whether it's one type of book or another—ignores how complex readers as consumers really are.

I've used pricing strategies throughout my career in various places, from my work at *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* to my various publishing companies to my retail businesses. I've used free and discounts, and consented to all kinds of promotions on my books even in the days before the Internet.

I know the markets for my books, and honestly, I haven't worked on growing them. That's my 2014 plan. Because I'm a hybrid writer, I concentrated on getting my backlist out for my fans—from the true fans to the simple fan and the occasional reader. Once I've reached those markets (and I *started* to as of 2013), I will add the strategies for bringing in new readers.

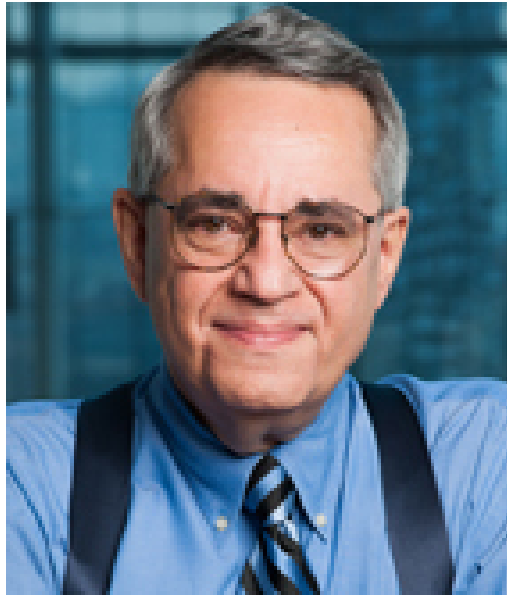
Because I'm a long-time writer, I have a large fan base, including a very big base of true fans. I've cultivated it over the years with absolutely no help from traditional publishers. (My traditional publishing editor on the Retrieval Artist series, upon learning that I had about 10,000 true fans on that series, told me point blank: *That's not even a significant number.* Of course, this was in 2007, before the 1,000 true fan meme exploded on the Internet. Maybe the editor has a different opinion now.)

Think about what you know about your readers—if anything. And then figure out what you like to see from your favorite writers as a reader. There are some clues in those things which will impact your marketing efforts and make them different from mine.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch is an award-winning mystery, romance, science fiction, and fantasy writer. She has written many novels under various names, including Kristine Grayson for romance and Kris Nelscott for mystery. Her novels have made bestseller lists all over the world and have been published in 14 countries and 13 different languages. She is the former editor of prestigious The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. Before that, she and Dean Wesley Smith started and ran PulpHouse Publishing, a science fiction and mystery press in Eugene. This article was extracted from the author's Discoverability Series, first published on the author's blog at www.kriswrites.com and is reprinted with permission.



Celebrating the
Best of NINC



F. Robert Stein



Elaine English

Hear Ye, Hear Ye! Speakers! Get Your Conference Speakers Here!

...and now that we've got 'em, let's ask 'em some questions!

As we all know, NINClink is a great place for discussion. Subjects come up, are talked about ... and then we move on. All except the conference committee members, who read, take notes, and think: *this might be a good subject for our workshop presenters and First Word panelists.*

Some examples:

Literary Trusts/Estates. Lots of concerns there, lots of questions. Okay, we need a literary attorney comfortable with these subjects. Research, ask, and very happily secure Attorney Elaine English as one of our speakers in Florida.

But that's where the committee really begins, not stops.

Now let's ask her some questions, so she'll have the answers in Florida. There were plenty of concerns posted on NINClink: can a trust skip a generation, what if the person doesn't understand how book publishing works, what if I'm plagiarized, what if enough time has passed to get my rights back, how do they start getting my royalties—on and on. So put these worries into question form and forward them to our congenial People Person Karen Tintori Katz (mistress of the care and feeding of our industry guests), so she can get them to Attorney English.

Members joining together to publish, lifeboat, co-op, whatever as a group. Wow, lots of questions, concerns there, too (some of them beginning with, "Huh? What are those?"). NINC encouraged members to do this—join together, whether with co-ops or special joint projects, novella collections, ▶



Celebrating the Best of NINC

Tradewinds Hotel, St. Pete, FL
October 22-26, 2014

even taking on author assistants ... so it's only fair that NINC provides the “how do we do that and not run afoul of the IRS or each other” portions of the program, right?

Attorney F. Robert Stein, for instance, first heard of these writer co-ops and lifeboats and other projects in a NINC workshop in Myrtle Beach. Seeing some confusion in his eyes, I went up to him immediately after that workshop, and he asked me questions I couldn't answer—but he did express some concerns that writers could get into problems unless all the legal details were put into place. I told him, that's why I'm standing here, to invite you to talk about this next year in Florida. What are some of the possible pitfalls, I asked him. What happens if one member stops holding up his or her end? What happens if one of the members becomes the popular fiction version of Diana Ross and decides she doesn't need the Supremes anymore? Those were just off the top of my head!

Attorney Stein believed these were all questions that need to be addressed and covered in any agreement. But he has to be brought up to speed so that he can do the research now and have the answers we need for our particular set-ups/arrangements. What, exactly do you and your group do together? You've got a great agreement—let him see it. You have a cobbled-together agreement, let's see it. You think you're all such good friends you don't need a formal agreement—uh, you need to be at that workshop.

Once again, it's conference People Person, Karen Tintori Katz, collecting copies of agreements, and questions—anonously if you want, mailed to her house, or via email, to provide Attorney Stein with the sort of questions/answers he will give us in Florida.

OOP clauses, do they really own my e-rights—let's look at your contracts.

Attorney Stein also wants to see contract language concerning our ability to regain our rights. Can publishers just slap our work into POD and call that “keeping the book in print”? What are our options? Do we have options?

Literary Trusts/Estates. Author Agreements. Assistant Agreements. Deciphering publishing contracts in the digital world. You couldn't do any of this at no cost anywhere but NINC, so for God's sake, whether you think you've got it nailed on your own or not, why would you not take advantage of getting a trained pair of eyes to look at what you have and/or might need if you're just thinking about forming one of these groups, or trying to get your rights back from a “rights-grabbing” publisher who doesn't support your work?

Never assume you already know all the answers ... that way lie dragons!

This is why NINC exists, to serve its members. Whether you're going to be able to come to Florida or not, these subjects concern you as a writer, as a business partner, and in the case of literary trusts/estates, your families as well.

Because you know, sadly, writing isn't all sitting around in our P.J.s, munching bonbons while pure genius flows from our fingertips ... there's a real world out there, and for a lot of it, we often have to play by other people's rules.

Here's a sample of how to form (and send on to us!), questions for our speakers:

There's been much discussion online lately about reader-writer interaction on Amazon. Clearly a topic of interest. Yes, we could ask Amazon reps in Florida: Why don't you remove these scary reviews? But is that really the right question? Probably not. But how about this one: “As we're all in this to sell books, what can

Amazon and authors do to hasten the removal of obnoxious, attacking, misleading, and even threatening reviews?”

Remember, our panelists get the list of questions *before the conference*. This is what makes the panels so informative. We come prepared, they come prepared, and together we make progress in this business we're all in today, and tomorrow.

Submit your question(s) to:

ktinti@aol.com for questions on literary trusts/estates to be forwarded to Attorney Elaine English.

Again, ktinti@aol.com for questions on legal advice on forming book-selling websites, alliances, co-ops, anthology groups, legalities of hiring an author assistant. Email her copies of current contracts/rules employed by your groups, or mail them to Karen Tintori Katz, 4193 Southmoor Lane, West Bloomfield, MI 48323 (using Karen's address as the return address as well if you wish to remain anonymous, which is just fine).

One more time: Karen also gets the pertinent parts of contracts concerning OOP and rights, as they also go to Attorney Stein.

For everything else? Patti Knoll (paknoll@q.com) is the JOT volunteer watching NINCLink and BeachNINC, gathering questions she'll then forward to me when I begin making up questions for First Word panels composed of editors, agents, publishers, authors, booksellers, and more—check the speaker list. Direct any questions you compose to her, note if you have a particular industry guest you'd like to have address that question. And, yes, make Patti's life easier by formulating your questions as in the above example and sending them directly to her (we're writers—we can do this ...).

Remember, it's not the questions we ask, but the ones we don't, that often determine our future.

See the full list of speakers at http://www.ninc.com/conference_center/ as well as other important conference information. Hotel rooms are filling fast, so register for the conference while you're there, and grab that hotel reservation before they're all gone (no kidding—registrations had already topped the 150 mark by March 5!).

And thanks. The conference is a NINC effort, not a committee effort, meant to enhance our careers and broaden our knowledge—on both sides of the microphone. So let's make it an informative and satisfying experience for all of us.

— Kasey Michaels, Chair
(and Chief Nag)
kcmi@aol.com

Business Briefs

Compiled by Sally Hawkes



Vook = e-books, app developer, distribution, and now real-time data

Vook has purchased Booklr, which will allow the company to provide real-time data and analytics for authors and publishers. The data from Booklr also includes retail performance and analysis of customer patterns. This is intended to be an all-round solution for authors in light of discussions concerning whether or not authors are receiving full earnings information. <https://vook.com/>

PW Daily

Now that You've Written "The End": How to Move the Merch.

BY RUTH HARRIS

After the book is written, edited, polished, and published, ads, promo, and marketing matter.
A lot.

There are many sites—with new ones popping up constantly—that will promote your book. Some of them paid, others are FREE.

Each site has different rules and regs—not all of them accept erotica—and it's important to read the fine print as you make your promotional plans and decide on a budget. As you will see later, some authors have found success with FREE promo, others with paid. There is, as has been pointed out many times, no such thing as one-size-fits-all.

In alphabetic order:

AwesomeGang offers FREE e-book listings in addition to a \$10 paid option for more traction. As an extra service to authors, AwesomeGang provides a list of other sites offering FREE promotion. (<http://awesomegang.com>)

Bargain Booksy (bargainbooksy.com/sell-more-books/) will list your bargain or reduced-price book on their own site and in their daily email to over 50,000 subscribers at a cost of \$50. If you are offering a free book, their companion site, free booksy, is the place to go. (freebooksy.com/freebooksy-feature-pricing/)

BookSends lists free and sale books discounted 50 percent from the usual price to over 40,000 readers. Authors can choose genres ranging from YA to thrillers to romance and just about everything in between. (www.booksends.com)

BookBub (www.bookbub.com/partners) is picky and pricey but generally considered highly effective, although, as with everything, your mileage may vary, and there can be variations between genres. As with most sites, BookBub works on an opt-in system and currently does not accept short stories and novellas or books costing more than \$2.99. Before deciding whether or not to try your luck at BookBub, you will want to do your due diligence. You will find the latest, hot-off-the-press info on BookBub promo results at this Writers' Cafe thread. (www.kboards.com/index.php/topic,l30094.0.html)

BookDaily "invites [authors] to set up a FREE author account on BookDaily to promote your book to our readers. BookDaily introduces authors to new readers by providing a sample chapter from the author's books." Recently, BookDaily emailed 43,753 sample chapters to readers. (www.bookdaily.com/authorsignup)

E-Book Bargains UK is the UK's version of BookBub and gets your book in front of readers in the UK (duh!) and other English-speaking markets that are otherwise tricky for American authors to reach. The site is run by the efficient and very-nice-to-work-with Mick. (www.ebookbargainsuk.com)

E-Readers News Today aka ENT is a long-running book promo site with an excellent track record. ENT features include listings for a regularly priced Book Of The Day, Bargain Books for books reduced to \$.99, as well as free books. What sets ENT apart is that you pay *after* your promo runs and ENT bills you for 25% of your sales. Greg and Rachele are the savvy guiding lights at ENT. (ereadernewstoday.com/bargain-kindle-books/)

Donna Fasano, bestselling romance author, believes "the combined forces of BookBub and ENT are what propelled *Reclaim My Heart* onto the *USA Today* Bestseller List. My book appearing on the list captured the attention of an editor at Montlake who bought the pub rights. The BookBub ad cost \$480, and the ENT ad cost approximately \$50. After the ads ran, *Reclaim My Heart* hit #9 on the Kindle Top 100, #4 on the NOOK List, #20 on the Kobo List, and #9 on the iBooks Romance List."

Fussy Librarian (www.thefussylibrarian.com/for-authors/) – FREE (at least for now) is a new kid on the block and sends out daily e-book recs. You can choose from 32 genres, and select content preferences such as amount of sex and violence so readers who want cozy mysteries won't receive recs for steamy romance.) Here's a WC thread introducing Fussy Librarian (www.kboards.com/index.php?topic=161412.0). You will also find an informative interview with Jeffrey Bruner who runs Fussy Librarian at Lindsay Buroker's blog. (www.lindsayburoker.com/advertising-ebooks-2/the-fussy-librarian-advertising-and-recommendations/)

Kindle Books and Tips is another paid promo site that offers readers a daily list of FREE and discounted books. 600,000-plus visit the blog daily and 125,000-plus people view the blog, Facebook page, and subscribe to their email list. (www.fkbooksandtips.com/for-authors/advertising-information/)

Kindle Nation Daily is one of the first book promotional sites and, as the title indicates, specializes in featuring your book to Kindle owners and readers. KND offers a choice of genres including erotic, which some sites don't allow, and also hosts a daily email blast called BookGorilla. (indie.kindlenationdaily.com/?page_id=642)

Pixel of Ink, another well-established and attractive book promo site, lists FREE and bargain books as well as Hot Deals browsable by category. (www.pixelofink.com)

PeopleReads, a FREE e-book listing site, launched in July of 2013. Presided over by Van, PeopleReads features e-books priced from \$.00 to \$3.99 and aims to offer top quality books to its growing list of subscribers (www.peoplereads.com/list-your-ebook). Elaine Raco Chase ran a Veterans Day weekend sale for her contemporary romance title, *Rules Of The Game*, at 99 cents, down from \$2.99. Elaine comments: "On Friday: Pixelscroll + Awesome Gang free ads equaled 20 total sales. Saturday: the People Read ad appeared at 10 a.m (Van does a lot of tweets on his own). The Read Cheaply ad appeared at 11:45 a.m., plus there were tweets from other authors. On Sunday morning ROTG totaled 55 books sold overnight (just one at NOOK). "Have NOT paid a single penny and am pretty pleased plus sales on four other books at full price."

Pixelscroll presents daily postings of e-books, as well as apps, movies and television seasons, MP3s and CDs, audio books, and all sorts of electronics. PixelScroll offers both FREE and paid e-book listings and sponsorships. (pixelscroll.com/feature-your-product-2/)

ReadCheaply is another FREE book promo service offering targeted lists of free and deeply discounted e-books. A few hoops to jump but an attractive option. (readcheaply.com/advertise/)

The Kindle Book Review is a multi-purpose site that offers author services like formatting and cover creation along with—as the name indicates—reviews. KBR also offers advertising services at prices ranging from \$25 to \$45. (www.thekindlebookreview.net/advertise-books/)

In addition to these independent sites, the major e-book vendors offer their own promotional opportunities.

At iBooks, you can set your book to \$.00 and get coupons to give to readers, reviewers, and anyone else you wish.

Kobo will also let you set your book's price to \$.00 and has a new feature that allows you to specify a sale price for a specified amount of time. You will find this option when you scroll down to the bottom of the pricing screen.

Kindle has added a new opportunity, **Countdown Deals**, which allows authors to run limited-time discount promotions while maintaining their usual royalty. Countdown also offers a dedicated website and real-time sales and royalty information. (kdp.amazon.com/help?topicId=A3288N75MH14B8&)

NOOK also allows authors to set a book's price to \$.00 but, as of now, only via Smashwords.

Hope this rundown is helpful and, if you know of other promo sites and especially if you have experience with them, please let me know and I will add them to the list!

Ruth Harris is a New York Times and Amazon bestselling author and a Romantic Times award winner. Her books have been translated into 19 languages, sold in 30 countries, and were prominent selections of leading book clubs, including the Literary Guild and the Book Of The Month Club. She can be found on the Internet at ruthharris.blogspot.com, www.pinterest.com/rcaharris, and www.twitter.com/RuthHarrisBooks. This article first appeared on Anne R. Allen's Blog at annerallen.blogspot.com.



Photo by Sabrina Ingram

Not Your Usual Writing Advice

By JoAnn Grote

Method Writing

“No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader.”

— Robert Frost, poet

A discussion on a radio show on the effect of method acting on actors piqued my curiosity. According to the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Culture*, “method acting stresses emotional truth and internal transformation (i.e. living the part).” It’s a manner by which actors get deep into the character. According to the radio presentation, research has shown that if an actor spends weeks, months, or years playing a deviant or a frightened or deeply troubled person, the effects can spill into his personal life. It can affect his sleep, his emotional life, and cause health problems.

Doris Day played a woman whose husband tried to convince her she was crazy in an attempt to kill her in the movie *Midnight Lace* (1960). She wrote in her autobiography, *Doris Day: Her Own Story* (William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976), that playing the troubled character had a “shattering” effect on her.

“When I study a script I develop a mental image of the woman I am playing,” Day wrote. “By the time we are ready to start filming ... I become that woman to the best of my ability In *Midnight Lace*, to create the fear which the character I played had to project, I re-created the fear in myself which I had once felt in my own life. I relived it. It was painful and upsetting to dredge up ugly experiences that I had paid a suffering price to forget.” For a scene in which her character was to become hysterical, she brought up the feelings she experienced during an episode of physical abuse by a former husband. “I wasn’t *acting* hysterical, I was hysterical, so that at the end of that scene I collapsed in a real faint ... My pretend life and my real life had fused. I just can’t walk away from a scene and shed my emotions.” Doris told her then-husband, “I think for the sake of my physical well-being, I should never get involved with any more films like this. The next time I might not recover so easily.”

I wondered whether authors are also vulnerable when they spend time in a character’s head. At first glance it might appear that an actor taking on another personality for long periods is not the same as a writer writing about/creating a character. Yet, good writers often try to feel what a character is feeling in order to better portray that character to the reader. It is common for stories to include the point of view of the villain, and the writer is in the head of that villain, who might be a serial killer, a rapist, a kidnapper, or a terrorist. Writers live with their stories and their characters for weeks or months. If an author is writing a series or writing in a genre where stories include angry, revengeful, hate-filled characters, the exposure can last for years.

I’m too much of a wimp to write stories that would require me to live in the mind of a creepy character, so I approached other authors for their reactions to the idea that method writing might have the power to negatively affect a writer as method acting might affect an actor.

NINC member Ruth Glick (aka Rebecca York) writes romantic suspense, often with paranormal elements. She says, “When I am writing an emotional scene involving my hero or heroine, I often find myself identifying strongly with my viewpoint character. If the hero is angry, I feel my own anger rising. If my heroine is sad, I may tear up. And if they are in the middle of a love scene, I may go look for my husband. I think romance writers are more likely than other writers to have strong reactions to their own writing because

romance tugs at our emotions. Our readers want to feel what the characters are feeling when they pick up our books, and the only way we can give them that experience is to connect very intimately with the people we create in our heads.”

Marianna Jameson, NINC member and former *Nink* editor, said, “I can’t say that aspects or traits of my troubled characters have spilled into my own life (good thing, because my baddies are megalomaniacs bent on destroying the world to settle personal scores), but being in their heads for too long can make me feel like I’m in a dark, musty closet.”

NINC member Denise (Deni) Dietz shared, “A rumor circulated for years that Stephen King didn’t want to complete his novel *Pet Sematary* because it frightened him. King (or Doubleday) may have started the rumor, and while not necessarily 100 percent true, it is partially based in fact. King has said he felt a strong melancholia while writing the book and, at times, had no desire to complete it.

“I faced a similar experience while writing *Fifty Cents for Your Soul*, a horror/mystery novel inspired by events that occurred during the filming of *The Exorcist*.” (Deni’s sister Eileen played the demon Pazuzu in *The Exorcist*.) “I was writing during the day, waiting tables at night. Usually I could shed my Deni-the-author persona and don my Deni-the-waitress facade, but creating my horror scenes made it virtually impossible to shake off my fearful depression. I was ‘possessed’ by my story of an uptight actress inhabited by a promiscuous demon/doppelganger. In fact, my co-servers wanted to know when I’d finish writing ‘that horror book’ and go back to writing my ‘funny mysteries.’ They said I was hissing and growling. Rubbish! I wasn’t hissing or growling. I was naked, putting beetles in my pockets!

“Stephen King is, admittedly, afraid of spiders. I have insects in *Fifty Cents for Your Soul*. I’m afraid of spiders too, but I felt they were a bit of a cliché. So I used ‘click beetles.’ The beetles tended to cascade in ‘moving carpets’ (or waves) whenever the demon appeared. Following a click-beetle scene, I shivered for hours. My demon didn’t scare me, but the beetles did, and I swear on a stack of Stephen Kings that I’ll never write anything like that again.”

Kay Hooper, NINC member and former NINC president, writes thrillers with psychic heroes and heroines. “Generally speaking, when I’m working on a story, I’m ‘in’ whoever’s head is speaking or even thinking at that moment: male, female, hero, heroine, walk-on character—or villain. I have creeped myself out more than once due to a villain’s actions or thoughts, but it tends to be a momentary thing, and those feelings never linger in me. I’ve always believed that once the dark and evil stuff is ‘on the page,’ then for all intents and purposes it’s out of my head and no longer has the power to trouble me.”

Most genre stories have happy endings: a romance ends with the couple declaring their love for each other, a mystery ends with the perpetrator brought to justice, and a thriller ends with a terrorist defeated. Maybe knowing the villain will be defeated, working toward that ending, keeps a writer sane. Usually the writer spends more time in the head of the protagonist than the villain, and perhaps that balances out the effects of spending time in the villain’s head.

Marianna makes a conscious attempt to deal with the issue. “I counteract [the darkness] by getting into the sunshine (literally, sometimes) and then spending some time in the heads of my good characters just to make sure the world is still the same place.” She also sees a positive aspect to the time spent with negative characters. “Doing so much research on socio- and psychopathic personalities has made me better able to deal with some of the odd and unpleasant people I’ve encountered along life’s path. Knowing how they think has made me understand how to beat them at their own game, so to speak, and turn what could be bad outcomes for me into neutral or, occasionally, positive outcomes.”

Kay Hooper doesn’t worry about lasting effects of time spent with evil characters. “I don’t have nightmares about that sort of darkness; when speaking to readers who ask me if I do, my response is always, ‘No, because I give my nightmares to you.’”

JoAnn Grote is the award-winning author of 40 books, including inspirational romances, middle-grade historical novels, and children’s nonfiction. Contact her at jaghi@rconnect.com.



WRITING is TAXING

By Diane Kelly

What's Your Status?

Just like Facebook, the IRS wants to know your relationship status. Are you single? Married? Separated? Divorced? Widowed? Is it “complicated”? Okay, so maybe the IRS doesn’t recognize “It’s complicated” as an official filing status, but nonetheless it is critical to know what filing status or statuses you qualify for in order to pay the correct, or least, amount of tax. You work hard on your writing, and you deserve to hang on to as many of those royalty dollars as possible!

Marital status is generally determined as of the last day of the year. Thus, couples who marry on December 31 will be treated as if they had been married the entire year. Couples who divorce by year end will be treated as if they had been unmarried for the entire year. An exception exists for those whose spouse dies during the tax year. In such cases, the widow or widower is considered married at year end for filing status purposes.

Single. If you are single, you will report only your income and deductions on your return. Easy-peasy. People who are divorced or who are legally separated are also considered to be single. Not all states recognize a “legally separated” status, so if you are unsure about your status be sure to seek legal advice.

Married Joint vs. Married Separate. Married couples have the option of filing either jointly or separately. Same-sex couples who were married in states or countries where their marriage was legally recognized must file married joint or married separate returns. Their marriage will continue to be recognized as valid for federal income tax purposes even if the couple relocates to a state that does not recognize same-sex marriages. Same-sex couples in a civil union or domestic partnership are treated as unmarried for federal income tax purposes and cannot file returns under a married joint or married separate filing status. A person whose spouse died during the tax year is entitled to file a married joint tax return for the year in which the spouse died.

On a joint return, the couple’s income and deductions are combined. While a joint return normally results in the least amount of tax, there are instances in which a couple might be better off filing separate returns. Where one spouse makes a very large income and the other makes a very small income, separate returns might result in lower taxes. When a taxpayer suspects that his or her spouse might be misreporting income or deductions, it is often better for the honest spouse to file a married separate return to avoid liability for the tax-cheating spouse’s taxes, penalties, and interest. Separate returns can also protect a non-obligor spouse from having his or her refund seized to satisfy a past-due child support, student loan, or tax obligation. Separate returns might be advisable if one spouse has very high unreimbursed medical expenses because medical expense deductions are subject to a floor based on adjusted gross income. When that adjusted gross income figure is reduced via separate returns, more of the medical expenses become deductible.

Living together alone does not qualify a taxpayer to file a joint return, but if the taxpayer is considered under applicable state law to be in a common law marriage, the taxpayer must file either a married joint or married separate return.

On a married separate return, each spouse reports only his or her share of income and deductions. Be aware that special rules apply in community property states, and that each spouse should report the income and deductions that are treated as his or hers under the particular state’s community property laws. Different rules might apply to different types of income. For instance, in the state of Texas, wages are generally considered to belong to each spouse equally. Thus, if one spouse earns \$100,000 in wages and the other earns \$50,000 in wages, each must report one-half of the couple’s combined wages, or \$75,000, on his or

her separate tax return. Similarly, each spouse would be entitled to claim one-half of itemized deductions such as charitable contributions, mortgage interest, and real estate taxes. Exceptions to the community property laws apply in instances where a couple shares neither income nor financial information. In such cases, each spouse would report only his or her income and deductions. Splitting income and deductions can be tricky, so it would be worth your while to consult a tax advisor in your state for details if you are thinking about filing a separate return.

Couples who file separately must either both claim the standard deduction or both itemize their deductions. This rule prevents couples from strategizing to shift all of the deductions to the spouse with the highest income. Moreover, married separate status may reduce or eliminate the taxpayer's right to certain tax benefits, including certain credits such as the earned income credit, the dependent care credit, and education credits. Other benefits for higher education expenses will also be lost. In addition, for those filing a married separate return, the IRA contribution is subject to a much lower income phase-out range.

Head of Household. Head of household status applies to a taxpayer who is unmarried or "considered unmarried" at the end of the tax year and who paid more than half of the cost of keeping up a home for the taxpayer and a qualifying person who lived with the taxpayer for more than half of the tax year. This status will result in less tax than filing single.

A taxpayer is "considered unmarried" (even if still legally married) if the taxpayer does not file a joint return with the spouse and if the taxpayer's spouse did not live in the taxpayer's home for the last six months of the tax year. Additionally, the taxpayer's child, stepchild, or foster child must have lived with the taxpayer for at least half of the year. Finally, the taxpayer must claim the child, stepchild, or foster child as a dependent. This last provision is considered met even if the taxpayer cannot actually claim the child as a dependent due to the special rules for children of divorced or separated parents.

Qualifying Widow(er). A taxpayer whose spouse is deceased can claim a qualifying widow(er) status for two tax years following the year in which the spouse died. To qualify for this special status, the taxpayer must have a child or stepchild who lived with the taxpayer for the entire year. Foster children are not qualifying children for this particular tax status. In addition, the taxpayer must have paid more than half the cost of keeping up the home.

For more details regarding filing status, see IRS Publication 17 available at www.irs.gov.

Diane Kelly is a retired CPA/tax attorney and the author of the humorous Death and Taxes romantic mystery series, the forthcoming Paw Enforcement series, and a self-published fantasy romance.

Business Briefs

Downsizing NOOK

While Barnes & Noble acknowledges they need to continue to have a place in the digital reader market, they may still be looking at separating the NOOK Division. Only 500 employees remain after 190 layoffs, and more layoffs are anticipated with the possible closing of the West Coast office. The company hopes to release a color tablet this year and is negotiating with tech companies that might include its three million titles on their platforms. The bundling of print and e-books is possibly the next major move.

PW Daily



Simon & Schuster Reviews Other Publishers' Titles

Off the Shelf will be a website with a daily email subscription option and will include reviews or essays that focus on books that are at least one year old. This is to help readers discover books they may have missed, including fiction and nonfiction in both adult and juvenile markets. The titles will come from all publishers, not just S&S. Videos and media from publishers will also be included.

PW Daily

The Mad Scribbler

By Laura Resnick



Influences

“The craft of writing delights me. It is impossible to attain perfection; there is always something more to be learned.”

— Barbara Mertz

One of the interview questions people often ask writers is, “Who were your influences?”

I’m amazed by the long list that some writers can rattle off in response to this. Particularly when it’s a string of names that hints at how deep, broad, and interesting their own resultant writing must be: “My influences were Philip K. Dick, Virginia Woolf, H.P. Lovecraft, Sun Tzu, Rabindranath Tagore, Maya Angelou, Vladimir Nabokov, Mo Yan, and Moliere.”

I’m not sure I could even remember that many names off the top of my head. I am also, I must admit, sometimes a little skeptical about these lists. (Did Proust really influence your writing, or are you just being pretentious?)

I do have influences, but not that many (at least consciously). One key influence, certainly, was my father, Mike Resnick, a career writer for the past 50 years. He taught me that a writer *writes*. He doesn’t sit around and talk about it, he doesn’t wait for inspiration, and he doesn’t whine about his art. He puts his (or her) butt in the chair and writes.

This can sound pedantic to the point of silliness when you say it aloud to an interviewer or audience. And yet it is, of course, what separates the career writer from the never-fulfilled aspirant. Learning from an early age that being a writer is about putting your butt in that chair and *writing* something day after day after day, year after year after year, was a *huge* influence on me. (It was also why I resisted becoming a writer. I had absolutely no romantic illusions about what this life entailed.)

My father also taught me things like: Chase your hero up a tree on the first page of the book, start throwing rocks at him on page two, and don’t let him find a way down until the end of the story. (Which probably sounds more impressive if phrased as, “Establish the dramatic conflict in the opening scene and then escalate it ...”)

When I was a teenager, I typed and retyped my dad’s manuscripts for \$0.50 per page on an electric typewriter. This was how I learned to type, and it’s also where I first started learning how to revise and self-edit—by seeing what the old man changed in the successive drafts of his novels.

Specifically as a working fantasy writer, my greatest influence was probably *The Face In the Frost* by John Bellairs. A short novel, it’s the story of two eccentric old wizards in a pseudo-medieval kingdom who hit the road in search of a dastardly former colleague who’s up to no good. It’s a magical, charming, sometimes scary story of friendship, loyalty, duty, sacrifice, survival, betrayal, greed, facing your demons, dealing with consequences, and choosing your path in life. When I read it as a teenager, completely riveted, those elements combined to produce my formulative ideas about what satisfying fantasy fiction is; and those core concepts still resonate with me all these years later.

Another major influence is my favorite writer, Elizabeth Peters aka Barbara Michaels aka Barbara Mertz (her real name). Sadly, she died eight months ago, at home and in her sleep—which is exactly how she had

said she wanted to go. At the time of her death, Barbara, who was in her 80s, was writing her next (unfinished) manuscript, *The Painted Queen*. She had a long and prolific writing career that included awards, honors, critical praise, commercial success, and many devoted readers—the kind of career many writers hope to look back on when setting down their pens for the last time.

As Elizabeth Peters, she was best known for her bestselling Amelia Peabody novels, a long-running mystery series set in the early 20th Century about a family of eccentric British Egyptologists whose paths are regularly crossed by ancient mummies and fresh corpses. She also wrote several mysteries featuring a librarian-turned-author named Jacqueline Kirby, and she penned a number of stand-alone mysteries and romantic suspense novels, including gems like *Devil May Care*, *The Love Talker*, and *Summer of the Dragon*. My favorite Peters fiction, though, is her Vicky Bliss series. These half dozen novels feature an American art historian and her tumultuous romance with an unrepentant English art thief as they tackle mysteries in Europe and Egypt.

Egypt and its history are prominent in so much of Barbara's fiction because she was an Egyptologist. In 1952, she got her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago's celebrated Oriental Institute (where, decades later, she set one of her novels, *Search the Shadows*). Although she never worked as an archaeologist ("in the post-World-War II backlash against working women, females weren't encouraged to enter that or any other job market," she later wrote), she maintained close ties with the profession the rest of her life, and she wrote several respected nonfiction works under her real name.

Under the pen name Barbara Michaels, she primarily focused on romantic and supernatural suspense. *Ammie, Come Home* may be her most famous Michaels novel. My two favorite Michaels books are *The Dark On the Other Side*, about a biographer researching a powerful man who's hiding supernatural secrets, and *Wait For What Will Come*, in which a young woman is menaced by an ancient curse after she inherits a crumbling manor in Cornwall.

A love of history, archaeology, and art, an interest in folklore, legend, and the occult, and a shrewd wit and sharp sense of humor run through all of Barbara's work. These are all things I enjoy very much, particularly when combined with her smooth writing style and engaging voice. I can't point to any one of Barbara's books (of which there are about 70) and say, "This is one of the best books I've ever read"; but I can easily name at least two dozen of her novels which I've read three or four times each. And that frequency of reading—the long-term and repeated pleasure I've had from her many books—is why she is my favorite author.

That is also who I have long wanted to be as an author. Obviously, I'd be delighted if someone thinks something I've written is the best book they've ever read. But my goal is to be the reader's favorite author through a large body of work that contains a number of beloved "keepers" and re-read novels, rather than to produce one particular book of note.

Barbara influenced me in other ways, too, since I had the pleasure of knowing her. I first wrote her a fan letter when I was 19 years old. This was back in the days when that meant typing or handwriting a letter and sending it to the author in care of her publisher. To my delight, she wrote me back—a friendly, handwritten note. My memory of that incident still influences me, no matter how busy I am, to respond to readers who bother to write to me.

She also put me in touch with someone who printed a newsletter about her work. This was years before you could look up a writer's body of work on the Internet, so the newsletter made Barbara's titles easier to track and find.

Well, the newsletter ran a contest that year. Subscribers were invited to write a one-paragraph proposal for a Michaels/Peters type of novel and submit it for judging. Barbara would choose the winner, who would be given an original cover painting from one of her novels. I won the contest, and so the original cover painting for *The Sea King's Daughter* by Barbara Michaels hangs on the wall of my living room.

However, since I was leading a peripatetic existence back then, traveling a lot and moving often, Barbara held onto the painting for me for a few years, until my life finally settled down. We struck up a correspondence during those years—and she often encouraged me to write, suggesting I start with the story idea I'd penned for the contest.

After becoming a romance writer, which absorbed all my energy for a few years, I eventually tried for several years (and with several different versions) to sell the story idea Barbara had liked, but I never found a home for it. So I subsequently used the core premise for a short story, "The Hound Lover," which I ▶

contributed to a dark fantasy anthology. Someday, though, I still hope to write a novel using that long-ago contest idea.

We remained in touch for years, and I visited with Barbara at several conventions. I never knew her well enough to call her a “close” friend, but she was certainly a cherished one. And her body of work, her commitment to her craft, and her generosity to other writers—including me—all influenced me, inspiring me to try to follow the example she set as a career novelist.

Shortly before she died, she wrote this brief update for her website: “At 85, Elizabeth Peters (aka Barbara Michaels) is enjoying her cats, her garden, lots of chocolate, and not nearly enough gin.” Which is how I shall always remember Barbara—*enjoying her life* (and her gin). And that’s another example I mean to follow.

According to Barbara Mertz’s website, MPMbooks.com, there will be some answers posted to questions the estate has been receiving about the status of *The Painted Queen*, the novel Barbara was working on when she passed away.

Laura Resnick writes the Esther Diamond urban fantasy series, which novels she humbly hopes evince some of Barbara’s influence on her writing.

Business Briefs

Apple Blames the Judge

Apple’s appeal as the last company in the price-fixing lawsuit claims that the judge was the problem. Judge Denise Cote relied too heavily on circumstantial evidence when she declared Apple was the head of the e-book price conspiracy, according to Apple attorneys, who called the evidence ambiguous. Apple’s hope is the Second Circuit Court will totally disagree with Judge Cote’s verdict. Apple claims it was simply trying to enter the e-book market and in this pursuit had discussions with publishers in light of Amazon’s \$9.99 pricing. The judge’s decision stated that Apple did more than have talks with the publishers. Observers aren’t giving Apple very good odds on their appeal.

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