




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

 **novelists,
inc.**

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President's Voice

By Julie Ortolon



“May you live in interesting times,” is commonly thought to be an old Chinese curse, even though there is no evidence to actually support that claim. I often wonder, though, why it’s considered a curse rather than a blessing. As fiction writers, we strive for conflict in our imaginary worlds.

Without challenge, fiction would be boring. And so would life. As members of NINC, we have all faced our own sets of challenges. We wouldn’t have gotten to a point in our careers to qualify for membership without collecting our personal set of battle scars and badges of honor.

When I first started writing, crafting a really great story was my only concern. Then getting published and staying published was added to the mix. Now the list of non-writing items that vie for my attention seems to mount every day.

Being a career novelist during these interesting times is hard. But as Tom Hanks’s character said in *A League of Their Own*, “If it wasn’t hard, everyone would do it. The hard is what makes it great.” Which is why I’m grateful for the camaraderie, wisdom, and humor we can share thanks to NINC.

P.S. Make sure you check out all the great stuff happening during our conference. We hope to see you there.

Julie

NINC Member Benefits

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

Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](#). You can also [propose an article](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#). And you can [buy a paperback copy](#) of the 2016 *Best of Nink!*

Accessing the NINC Website

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

Julie Ortolon is a USA Today bestselling author of contemporary romance. First published by Dell Publishing in 2000, she has also written for St. Martin's Press, and Signet Eclipse. Since going indie in 2009, she has hit the Amazon Top 100 several times. One of her greatest joys is helping other authors find success. When not writing, she enjoys traveling the world with family and friends.

From the Editor

By Michele Dunaway



Dear *Nink* Reader,

July marks one year since I came on board. This is my 12th issue editing the newsletter, and we have tons of great content for you.

After Twitter and the internet exploded, I reached out to Kevin Kneupper, the author/lawyer who filed the challenge to the trademark for the word “cocky.” His perspective is in here, as is one of my former college professors, Mark Sableman, who is a partner with Thompson Coburn in St. Louis. Mark is one of the country’s top intellectual property and trademark attorneys, and he’s written an overview of legal issues writers face. Following that, there’s a link to the entire government publication and the exact text of the government publication regarding trademarks.

While the article on agents won’t exactly address the foreign rights discussion we’ve had on the loop in June, it will provide some perspective on how authors who have agents use them in this traditional/hybrid/indie world. As I did 15 traditional books without an agent, and then 11 with an agent before we parted ways, I hope it helps those of you who have one and those of you who don’t, but think you might want one. Speaking of agents, one author even met her agent at the conference, so there’s some conference information in this newsletter as well, and I hope that if you haven’t signed up, you do. I went last year for the first time in ages and walked away with so much.

Rounding out the month’s articles, Denise Agnew tackles complicated writer’s block and Linda Barrett talks about retirement, Laura Resnick brings us her Scribbler, and you’ll also find the NINC slate.

In August, we’ll begin a three-part series on critique groups (spurred on by discussion on the NINC Critique loop). The issue will also show you side hustles to make more money, and how to work with a web platform that allows people to pay you to write. We’ll also peer into libraries and getting your indie books into them, and whether state library conventions are worth your while (but that last one’s October). November and December will be our conference

reports. There are a lot of good articles ahead.

Speaking of articles, we are always looking for ideas and article proposals, so please send them to newsletter@ninc.com or ninkeditor@gmail.com. There's also a form at ninc.com.

Finally, I want to take a minute to say thank you to a few people. First, to Erica Ridley who sent me an email saying something like, "Thanks for volunteering! I've appointed you."

I also wouldn't be able to do this job without all the members of the board who have my back, including Terey, who answers dozens of questions, and Mindy, who pays everyone who writes an article or completes a conference report. My production team (Laura, Cynthia, Heather and Susan) is the absolute best, and we've gotten the newsletter out on the 5th of the month minus a glitch or two at the beginning. Boyd and Sarah make the membership process simple—and don't forget members to read this.

Finally, to all who have written one article or more, or who have completed all the conference reports, you are the heart and soul of *Nink*. Thank you. You rock.

Michele

In addition to writing over 26+ romance novels for traditional New York houses, Nink editor [Michele Dunaway](#) teaches English III with a focus on American literature. She never gets tired of exposing her students to the classics and puts a literary allusion in every novel she writes.

September 26 - September 30, 2018



Join us at the Tradewinds resort in St. Petersburg, Florida
Sept 26 - Sept 30, 2018

Be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Working Schedule

This schedule is constantly growing and subject to change. It is meant as a sample of what you can expect at NINC 2018. If you haven't [signed up](#), what are you waiting for?

Wednesday, September 26

1:00 pm Registration Opens

6:00 pm First Timers' Orientation

6:30 pm Welcome Reception

Kick things off with a fun, casual gathering in the courtyard with heavy appetizers and a cash bar giving NINC members the chance to mix and mingle with speakers and industry guests.

8:00 pm Night Owls

These member-only sessions are a NINC tradition that go back to the founding of our organization. They started out as a chance for authors to have frank conversations about publishing with no publishers or agents present. Today, they also include talks about maintaining a balanced life, ways to keep writing fresh, and fun topics like tarot cards.

Thursday and Friday, September 27 & 28

The days will be packed full of presentations designed to address the needs of professional, multi-published fiction writers. Lunch provided.

Industry Suite

NINC members have the opportunity to meet with representatives from companies that can help further their careers. The growing list of companies who are coming include Amazon, Kobo, D2D, BookBub, Reedsy, Bookfunnel, Ingram, Verity Audio and more.

NINC at Night

In the evening, all attendees are invited to gather in the lobby for Night Clubs sponsored by industry guests, or attend members-only Night Owl sessions. (Night Clubs can be cash bars, or open bars with some drink tickets provided by the sponsor.)

Speakers Confirmed (this list is still growing)

Mark Dawson

A master of Facebook ads and Amazon Marketing Services.

Joanna Penn

Founder of the popular podcast, [The Creative Penn](#), Penn will share secrets on increasing sales worldwide.

David Gaughran

Author of *Let's Get Visible* and *Let's Get Digital*, Gaughran is a master at understanding retailer algorithms and how authors can use this knowledge to increase discoverability and sales.

Shawn Coyne

With 25+ years experience as an editor, Coyne has created [The Story Grid](#) to help authors push their novels to the next level.

Jennifer Barnes

Barnes has a degree in cognitive science from Yale University and is working on her PhD. She will talk about the Psychology of Fandom based on scientific research.

Erin Hennicke

A talent scout with [Franklin & Siegal Associates](#), the largest literary scouting agency in New York, Hennicke scouts books and material for Universal Studios as well as Paramount TV.

William Bernhardt

Bestselling author and founder of the [Red Sneaker Writing Center](#), Bernhardt is well known for his books on story structure.

Mark Leslie Lefebvre

Formerly with Kobo, Leslie Lefebvre will cover *Five Career-Killing Mistakes an Author Should Avoid*.

Damon Suede

A popular speaker, Suede will be talking about blurbs that sell and love scenes that sizzle.

Geoff Symon

Symon has 20 years of experience as a Federal Forensic Investigator and will walk us through the process of what happens when someone dies, from the discovery of the body to the burial. Even if you don't write crime mysteries, if anyone in your story dies, this two-hour presentation will help you get it right.

Justine Bylo

Bylo will team up with NINC member David Wind to give us the ins and outs of working with Ingram.

Michelle Spiva

A popular motivational speaker, Spiva will share insights on marketing and maintaining balance in a writer's life.

Other Speakers

We have many other speakers including professional author assistants Maria Connor, Amy Atwell, and Mel Jolly. Graphic designers Kim Killion and Jenn LaBlanc will talk about author branding from your covers to your web graphic, and working with a photographer to create custom covers. We have panels of NINC members to talk about writing with dictation, exploiting subrights, creating a series bible, and ads that sell.

Saturday, September 29

Programming continues with a combination of presentations and panels, plus brainstorming and critiquing roundtables.

Are you struggling with Facebook ads and AMS (Amazon Marketing Services)? Wondering if your covers are hurting or helping your sales? Want to share and learn the hottest trends in your genre?

Bring your questions and knowledge and get ready to roll up your sleeves for a day of interactive sessions with our speakers and fellow NINC members, who happen to be some of the savviest people in publishing.

Beach Banquet Blow-out

After three days of intensive learning and sharing, NINC members, speakers, and industry guests let down their hair for a fun and delicious banquet on the beach (weather permitting). This is a not-to-be missed highlight that attendees look forward to every year.

Sunday, September 30

9:00-10:00 am Annual General Meeting

10:30-12:00 am Lou Unplugged

Join us!

Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/>

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

Hotel information: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/conference-hotel/>

Trademark Trolls Come For Authors

What you need to know after “Cockygate”

By Kevin Kneupper



If you haven't heard of “Cockygate,” you're about to get a lesson in what can happen when trademark law goes wrong. The controversy erupted in May when the romance writing community discovered that not only had an author had filed for a trademark on the word “cocky” for romance novel titles, but that several authors who used the word “cocky” received cease and desist letters asking them to change the titles and covers of their books. Some did—but they were unhappy about it, to say the least. Others who used “cocky” found their books temporarily removed from Amazon entirely. And Twitter soon blew up with people worried that they'd be next.

I noticed a post about the controversy on my Twitter feed, and being an attorney, I started looking into the issue and the law surrounding it. I didn't like the idea of someone trademarking a dictionary word—and certainly disagreed with telling people they couldn't use a common word in their book titles. After doing a bunch of research, I decided to file a legal challenge requesting that the government cancel the “cocky” trademark.

Other authors also started talking to their own lawyers, and a few weeks later, the owner of the “cocky” trademark filed a lawsuit against me, an author named Tara Crescent, and a publicist named Jennifer Watson. The lawsuit against me was quickly dismissed (and the transcript of the hearing is a pretty hilarious read, with the judge and the lawyers having a lot of fun with the romance novel covers submitted as evidence).

But as of this writing, while I've been dismissed from the lawsuit, it's still ongoing against the two other defendants—and so is my legal challenge to the trademark. While I hope we get the “cocky” trademark problem resolved quickly, it isn't the first time something like this has happened, and it won't be the last. Since then, other authors have already tried to file trademarks on common dictionary words. And while that doesn't really give them the right to stop you from using those words, it doesn't mean they won't try.

Authors as a community need to educate themselves about trademark law, and they need to be ready to fight trademark “trolls”—people who are more concerned with trying to own a

good keyword than with using trademarks how they are really meant to be used. Trademarks should be for keeping consumers from getting confused about whose book series they're buying, not for taking down your competitors. With that in mind, here's some of the basics that you need to know.

What are trademarks for? Do I need one—and can I get one?

The point of trademarks is to prevent other people from trying to confuse consumers as to the source of a product. It's like branding cattle on a ranch—you put a unique name on a product line so people know where it comes from. Books are no different. If you buy a book from the Fifty Shades of Grey or Harry Potter series, you know what you're getting. Trademarks are designed to protect you from people who try to deceive your customers into thinking they're buying from you. Think the cheap rip-off versions of every big Hollywood movie—if you get big, you don't want someone pretending to be you.

It's important to know that you can't trademark a stand-alone title. You can only get a trademark on a title you're using for a *series* of books. Even then, you have to meet certain other requirements, like showing that purchasers recognize that your series name shows who the books come from. You can even trademark your own name, but only if you get so famous that everyone identifies your name as you.

Owning a trademark doesn't mean you own the word or words. It means people can't try to confuse consumers into thinking their books are your books. If there's no confusion between the books, there's no infringement. Trademarks are supposed to be about stopping confusion. "Trademark trolls" try to use them as a weapon against all their competitors instead.

Do you need a trademark? Probably not until you're big enough that somebody would actually want to pretend their books came from you. Just by selling and marketing a series you get "common law" trademark rights, even if you don't file with the government. If (when) you make it big, you can always look into it then.

What should you do to protect yourself from trademark suits?

Some trademarks are so generic that they probably shouldn't be issued in the first place. Many of us are now watching the trademark applications as they come through the Patent and Trademark Office, to try to stop them early on. [Cockybot](#) is a Twitter account that provides daily updates, and anyone has a right to challenge a trademark through a free filing called a "Letter of Protest."

It's also always a good idea to check on the title of your books before you publish them. Search Amazon and Goodreads to see if someone has an established series with the name you plan to use. If it's a simple dictionary word-type name ("Zombies," "Vampires"), many people are probably already using it. That's okay—as long as you're fine with other people using similar names. If you want something that's all your own, try to come up with a unique name nobody else would use. "The Zombie Lawnmower Battle Royale Series" is probably yours for the taking.

I would also do a trademark search—if you type "trademark search" into Google, the first result should be from [USPTO.gov](#). If you search for your title on their website, you can make

sure nobody has filed for a trademark on it yet for books.

And if someone accuses you of trademark infringement anyway, you'll probably want to talk to a lawyer. One of the benefits of NINC membership is a [Legal Fund](#), which is available to help members review legal situations other than contract negotiations. And remember that the community of authors has a lot of power when it bands together. Don't let your fellow authors get trolled—and don't be quiet if you see it happening to someone else.

Author Kevin Kneupper is an attorney and writer of various books, screenplays, and webcomics, including They Who Fell, Restricted Fantasies, and Argonauts. You can follow him on Twitter for more on trademark issues at [@kneupperwriter](#).

Intellectual Property Basics for Authors

Copyright and related laws may surprise you

By Mark Sableman



Some writers know one thing for sure about intellectual property: copyright is the author’s friend. And that’s about all they need to know. After all, lawyers aren’t needed—there’s always the trick in which you mail your manuscript to yourself.

If you are one of those writers, your view of the legal world is simple, comforting, and totally wrong. Intellectual property laws affect writers, and not always in ways you expect.

Let’s start with the overall landscape, and a few basic distinctions. Intellectual property, traditionally, has three aspects—patents, trademarks, and copyrights. Patents generally aren’t a concern for writers, but both trademarks and copyrights are, as is a related right, the right of publicity.

Copyright law protects creative content. The constitution refers to granting special rights to “authors” for the “writings” but the law extends copyrights far beyond literal writings. All creative content, in text, artistry, sculptures, photographs, music, and movies, is covered from the time it is created. Copyright law, at heart, is an incentive plan—the law encourages creativity by giving creators exclusive rights over their creative works, for some limited time period (though that “limited” time is now quite long).

Trademark law, by contrast, was meant as a form of consumer protection. It recognizes the need for consumers to know who make particular goods and services, so that they can recognize the producers they have come to trust and make wise buying decisions. Trademarks are the symbols of a particular producer, most often in the form of words, designs, or combinations of both. Trademark law helps producers create goodwill and build strong brands. A trademark lasts as long as it fulfills its source-identification purpose.

The right of publicity is the right of a person (usually a celebrity) to control how his or her name, likeness and other personal attributes are used commercially. At heart, it protects against false endorsements, by prohibiting false claims that a celebrity endorses a particular product. It generally does not prohibit references in editorial or artistic contexts, but many battles are being

fought on the margins. For example, the right of publicity has significantly stymied creators of sports-themed video games.

These legal doctrines affect the world of novel-writing. Let's consider, for example, the part of your book that readers see first: the cover.

The cover shows your book's *title*, of which you are understandably proud. Those few words convey something about your book, tease the reader, and may contain double or triple meanings. It took effort to develop your title, and you may assume it is protected by copyright. Wrong, unfortunately. Copyright doesn't protect titles. It is sometimes said that titles are too short to deserve copyright recognition, but the real concern is the policy need to allow different authors to use the same or similar titles in different contexts. Congress and the courts have limited copyright in other ways too. For example, copyright protects only particular creative expressions, not the underlying facts or ideas expressed, or procedures, methods of operation, principles, or discoveries.

Back to your book cover. It probably contains some *artwork*. That too is creative content subject to copyright. Who owns that copyright? Usually the artist or photographer automatically owns the copyright in his or her creation. But if the artist or photographer created that work as an employee (say, of the publisher), the employer owns the copyright; that's the work-for-hire doctrine. Less commonly, a written work-for-hire contract may provide that the artist's work will be owned by the person or entity who created it. Or the artist may own the work initially, but sell it (an "assignment") or loan it (a "license") to the user. If you are self-publishing your book, you will need to navigate these issues.

Next, your book cover may contain *trademarks*. A publisher's name is a trademark (e.g., "Alfred Knopf & Co."). Sometimes the publisher uses other trademarks as well (e.g., "A Borzoi Book"). If an organization or company sponsors the book in some way, its trademark may be part of the cover (e.g., "The AARP Guide to Retirement Investing"). And if the book is part of a series, the series title (e.g., "The Hardy Boys") may have become so well-known to readers that it serves as a trademark, by telling readers that this new book is part of the series that they have come to know, love, and insanely desire. An author who wishes to obtain a trademark for a book series title has a heavy burden to show that the claimed trademark (which may be the same word used consistently in the titles of several books in a series) is understood by the public as a source identifier. Competitors who believe that a trademark registration has been obtained improperly can petition to cancel a trademark registration during its first five years.

Finally, the book cover may contain the *name, likeness, or personal attribute* of a person, which may implicate the right of publicity. In most cases, assuming that person relates to the content of the book, this use should fall within the editorial-use exception to the right of publicity. A court dismissed a crime victim's right of publicity claim, based on use of her photo on the cover of a book about the crime, because the photo clearly related to the book's content.

But concerns arise if you use a celebrity's photo, or even an image of an ordinary person, and it is not related to the content. For example, putting Marilyn Monroe's photo on your book cover is sure to boost sales, but if it is not sufficiently related to the text, it would violate her right of publicity. Even using a non-celebrity's photo could raise issues if that person was not materially discussed in the book.

We haven't yet opened the cover of your book, and already we are awash with intellectual property legal issues.

Once we open the cover and examine your text, we'll need to consider not only your own copyrightable content, but also your use of other's content (e.g., text, photos, or art). There are three legal bases for using others' content: the work was in the public domain, you got permission to use it, or your use qualifies as copyright "fair use," a legal doctrine that is subjective and often difficult to predict.

As to your own content, don't assume that copyright protects you. You may have assigned the copyright to your publisher, and if so, your rights are limited solely to whatever the contract provides. (Yes, authors need to take care with publishing contracts, and negotiate them, even when publishers falsely claim that everything is "standard" and unchangeable.)

Trademark and right of publicity issues are less likely to occur inside your book than on the cover, but if you do use trademarks, you'll need to use them in a descriptive, nominative sense, to describe things and activities in the real world, and not in a way that suggests the trademark owner's approval or association with you or your book. Similarly, you can use names of real people in your book, so long as they are related to the content. The names "Fred and Ginger" could be used in a movie title because the movie truly portrayed a couple trying to imitate their dance hero and heroine, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

One final note. Don't believe that old myth about mailing a manuscript to yourself. Think about it: you could mail an unsealed envelope to yourself, and, after receiving it postmarked, you could later place a manuscript in the envelope and seal it. We lawyers aren't as dumb as you think. After all, as you can see, we are keeping the legal system plenty complicated for authors.

Mark Sableman is a lawyer with Thompson Coburn LLP. He has practiced media and intellectual property law for almost 40 years and has written one book and more than 20 law review articles and book chapters on various aspects of the law of words and images. He has also taught media and internet law and is proud that some of his past students are successful authors who manage to navigate the legal rapids of communications law. His internet and copyright blogs are available at www.internetlawtwists.com and www.copyrightfocus.com.

More on Trademarks—A Reference for You

Editor's Note

By Michele Dunaway

Mark Sableman mentioned in his article the heavy burden of proof on trademarks. In Kevin Kneupper's article, he describes his challenge to the COCKY trademark.

Below is the text from *The Trademark Manual of Examining Procedure*, which explains the heavy burden that Mark mentioned in his article. You can find more at <https://tmepl.uspto.gov/RDMS/TMEP/current#/current/d1e2.html>, as you may be interested in other portions of section 1202.08.

1202.08(d)(ii)

Establishing a Series When the Mark is a Portion of the Title

An applicant may establish that the portion of the title of a creative work is used on a series by submitting more than one book cover or CD cover with the mark used in all the titles. For example, if the mark on the drawing is "THE LITTLE ENGINE" and on the book it appears as "THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT WENT TO THE FAIR," registration should be refused because the mark is a portion of a title of a single work. See *In re Nat'l Council Books, Inc.*, 121 USPQ 198, 199 (TTAB 1959) (finding "NATIONAL" to be a portion of the title "NATIONAL GARDEN BOOK"). To establish use on a series, the applicant may submit additional book covers showing use of, e.g., "THE LITTLE ENGINE GOES TO SCHOOL," and "THE LITTLE ENGINE AND THE BIG RED CABOOSE."

1202.08(d)(iii)

Evidence that the Portion of the Title is Promoted or Recognized as a Mark

When a mark is used merely as a *portion of the title* of a creative work, the applicant has a heavier burden in establishing that the portion for which registration is sought serves as a trademark for the goods. *The mere use of the same words in more than one book title is insufficient to establish the words as a mark for a series.* The applicant must show that the public perceives the portion sought to be registered as a mark for the series. *In re Scholastic Inc.*, 23 USPQ2d 1774, 1777 (TTAB 1992) (holding THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS used as a portion of the book titles in "THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS AT THE WATERWORKS" and "THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS INSIDE THE EARTH," functions as a mark for a series, because the record contained evidence of repeated use of the designation displayed prominently on book covers, as well as evidence that applicant promoted THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS as a series title, that others used the designation in book reviews to refer to a series of books, and that purchasers recognized the designation as indicating the source of a series of books).

The Author-Agent Relationship in the Current Publishing World

By Michele Dunaway



There's the adage that a bad agent is worse than no agent, and that a good agent is worth his or her weight in gold.

In a world where authors can hire their own editors, cover artists, assistants and publicists, and perhaps make far more money by self-publishing through the various digital and print-on-demand platforms, why pay an agent? Since traditional authors can reach out to publishers directly, as can high-selling indie authors choosing a traditional route, is having an agent even necessary? If a traditional author wants to become hybrid—by publishing backlist or new content—is having an agent even worth it? What do agents do for 15 percent (or 20 percent for foreign translations or editions) and where, in this current publishing world, can authors use agents?

Me + My Agent

[Sandra Marton](#) met her agent at a NINC conference three years ago. “He doesn’t rep me for anything but the books I’ve written as an indie author,” Marton said. “He sold foreign rights for several of my books, something I’d wanted to do but didn’t want/have time to do on my own.”

[Victoria Thompson](#) has partnered with the same agent for 24 years—an agent who was once her editor for two historical romances at Avon. When the editor became an agent, Thompson, who had just parted from a previous agent, reached out and asked if she’d take her on as a client. “She was happy to,” Thompson said. “She has so many authors with reverted backlists that she hired a person for her agency who is tasked with getting those backlist books indie pubbed,” Thompson said. “This person handles everything—scanning, proofing, choosing and obtaining cover art, formatting into the various formats, etc. Overall, the agency handles everything and just takes the usual 15 percent.”

[Lauren Smith](#) signed with her agent in June 2016. “She is my third agent,” Smith said. “I got my first agent when I was not yet published. I had an offer from three agents that first time (one

big agency and two small). I chose the small agent who offered first because she believed in my story and didn't want to make huge changes. After Hurricane Sandy, she quit being an agent and dropped me and all her clients. I had an offer in hand a month later from Samhain for my historical romance and rushed to find an agent and ended up with a second agent who was a very poor choice. I learned never to take an agent recommendation from a friend who wasn't actually represented by that agent. I was with her from Fall 2012 through February 2016. Then I terminated that relationship and reached out to my New York editor at Hachette for recommendations as to agents she liked that fit my style. I emailed about six on the list she gave me and three came back interested, but after talking to two, I only wanted the third. She was actually not the original agent my editor suggested, but was her younger associate, but she was positive, energetic and relentless in how she viewed the business, and I felt comfortable with her ambition because it matched my own. She has been very supportive of me being hybrid. She understands that self-publishing keeps me paying the bills and staying a full-time writer. I work to send her proposals and while she shops those, I work on my self-published works. She has done a great job of selling my audiobook rights to Tantor for nearly all my indie titles. She's also working to sell foreign rights on those titles."

[Anna Jacobs](#) has had her current agent 10 years, and got this agent when her "other lovely agent of 15 years died." Jacobs said, "I've been lucky both times to get a wonderfully supportive, honest and decent person who knows the industry well, and my agent knew about my indie ebooks, which are reprints of backlist books. She doesn't deal in SF/F and the two big publishers we're dealing with didn't want these books either—nor did they then want the historical romances which I wrote early in my career before I left the romance genre." Jacobs's career has evolved and her agent has evolved with her. "My husband and I are now trying to get rid of the indie published stuff (was 20 books, now decreasing gradually) as we're in our late 70s and don't have the energy we used to. I'm now writing for three UK publishers. My agent is guiding this transfer to the two publishers who're now interested in taking on the older books—helping us maximize the profit and benefits and not swamp the market. I'm still producing three new books a year, which is more important to me. I keep my SF/F backlist books in print only as a service to a smallish group of readers."

How has having an agent helped?

Smith's agent has helped sell audiobooks where she gets an advance so she doesn't have to front the money and self-produce if she doesn't want to. "She's eager to sell foreign rights, even though we haven't had much success yet," Smith said. "I feel like it's good to have an agent open some doors that I can't open myself yet."

Thompson's agent has also sold audio rights, as well as foreign rights. "She's also helped me with career planning, assisted in creative development of several of my projects, gives feedback and editorial help on all my proposals," Thompson said. "She deals with the publisher and negotiates my contracts. I could do some of these things myself, but I don't like to do them, and I don't feel I'm hard-nosed enough to do it well."

Marton also relies on her agent for foreign rights. "The publisher I left—Harlequin—was a traditional publisher and handled all foreign rights," she said. "I knew lots of foreign editors,

but trying to sell to them would have been impossible because of their corporate relationships with my former publisher.”

For Jacobs, her agent has found new markets. “I’m only a partly indie author, with books that would have been out of print from an earlier publisher I’ve left,” she said. “My agent has found a new and very savvy ebook publisher, whose owners are industry experts and we’ve transferred some books to test them out—and they’re doing well. These books are about to go into mass market paperback for the first time as a new venture by this epublisher.”

What makes a good agent and a good agent relationship?

No one wants to have a horror story, but that occasionally happens. For authors, a good relationship often relies on communication and honesty.

“Good communication and similar morals (are important to me),” Jacobs said. “I’ve had that with both my agents. For me, living mainly in Australia and published by major UK publishers, I find a lot of benefits to having an agent where the action is. I spend four months a year in the UK and that helps keep up the communication with my agent, and via her when I’m in the UK, I get personal contact with major players at my publishers.”

Another area of the relationship should be reputation and ethics.

“Your agent should have an excellent reputation,” Marton said. “He/she should provide you with all the facts concerning a foreign deal. The agent should be willing and able to negotiate aspects of that deal, and the author should feel free to ask for that to happen. A good author-agent relationship should be open and honest, and should be based on mutual respect.”

Agents should also help your career instead of hindering it, and they should be a good listener.

“A good agent is someone who understands and supports your career goals and one who is determined to help you reach the next level in your career,” Smith said. “The best agent/author relationships are based on trust and having personalities that either match or work well together. An agent should be tough with publishers but understanding and supportive of the author. A good agent remembers that the author is the client and the author’s interests come before all others, including the agent’s own interests.”

“The agent listens to the author and helps her meet her goals,” Thompson said. “She points out things the author hasn’t thought about and advises on career decisions. She puts the author’s needs first. She interprets the publisher’s decisions for the author.”

So what pitfalls should agented authors be aware of?

No matter the agent, authors always should look after their own career and be sure the agent is working for the author.

“Watch out for an agent who has lost interest in you,” Thompson said. “This means not returning calls or emails, not submitting work, not giving feedback on work. You’re better off with no agent because at least you know where you stand and can do the work yourself.”

“Make sure the agent is actually working to sell your book,” Smith said. “If they aren’t sending it out, terminate them. If they don’t follow up with editors by a certain time, that could also show laziness. However, if they work hard and just fail to sell your stories, that could be

the market and may not be cause for termination. Read through a contract before you sign with an agent. New agreements are appearing that require authors to give up 15 percent of royalties on self-published titles that the agent at one time tried to sell and failed to sell. You should under no circumstances pay an agent for 'failing' to do their job. If you self-publish a book after it fails to sell, those royalties should go only to you. Have an intellectual property attorney familiar with author law read your contract before you sign anything!!"

Why or when should indie or hybrid authors consider having agents? Is there a process to follow?

The question of whether or not to use an agent becomes a personal choice.

"Depends whether sales are booming via indie approaches, I suppose," Jacobs said. "I'd prefer an agent for trad publishing. Always, always, do your research about a new potential agent. You need one that suits your needs. For me, I have to like and respect my agent. I face the world honestly and so should he/she."

Hybrid authors found having an agent beneficial for traditional projects.

"I can't speak for indie authors," Thompson said. "Hybrid authors should have one to handle traditionally published work and advise on meshing the two parts of the career."

"Indie and hybrid authors should consider agents if they're hoping to get doors opened that their own efforts or sales are failing to do," Smith said. "Mid-list hybrids and indie authors should consider agents if they need help reaching out to publishers to pursue opportunities. For indies, it might be foreign rights or subsidiary rights. For hybrids, it will be those as well as traditional publishing offers they might need help obtaining. Not all houses accept unagented submissions, so to get in the door, agents are often a 'must.' The process is fairly simple. Reach out to agents that appeal to you and inform them of your sales, your current book you'd like to shop and what goals you have for your career, and start looking for someone that feels like a 'fit' for you."

Final thoughts

Be sure that your agent is working for you, and that your agent can do what you need them to do. As Marton said, "I've heard sad stories of writers connecting with agents who do nothing for them. Although selling foreign and subsidiary rights is always a gamble—will a foreign publisher want your indie books or won't they?—signing with an agent who doesn't have the contacts or status you need, for lack of a better word, is generally a mistake."

Remember that you may not need an agent, so don't stress if you don't want one. The choice is yours to pursue, maintain and terminate a relationship, as you are in charge of your career.

Smith said, "Not all authors need agents. Not all authors who once had an agent, still need an agent. Don't let what other authors tell you that you need or don't need be your final decision. Take what other authors say and evaluate it carefully to your situation. Be brave to stand up for what you need in your agent relationship. Don't be a doormat! Be smart, look at your contracts before you sign, and don't let your emotions or excitement get you in trouble that could cost you career losses or royalty losses."

Also, if you want an agent, don't give up, even if it takes some time to find the right one or if you find agents aren't knocking down your door. "It's hard to find an agent but well worth your while to find a good one," Jacobs said. "When my first agent died, I was offering to hand over ongoing contracts and payments from him, as his estate shut down the agency totally—and I still had trouble finding an agent. That was ludicrous! I had over 50 novels published at the time with ongoing contracts. Some agents didn't even answer my query—which is good because who'd want an agent who isn't a prompt communicator? It's a crazy industry, absolutely lunatic as a business model. So who knows? In my situation (living mainly in Australia, published by major UK publishers) I can't function in traditional publishing without an agent."

Thanks to Anna Jacobs, Sandra Marton, Victoria Thompson and Lauren Smith for being so forthright in answering questions.

*Michele Dunaway is your Nink editor. She's tired of writing bios, really needs to update her [website](#), and can't wait to be on the beach for the NINC conference. She's working on two romance projects, and she self-published *Looks Like Hogwarts: Your Guide to Getting the Most Out of Your College Tour Experience*, from Planning to Visiting since her students always ask her those questions.*

Complicated Writer's Block

The Gnarly Monster

By Denise A. Agnew



When it comes to writer's block, you may believe you have heard everything there is to know. The list of things you can do to nip creative constipation in the bud is familiar: go to a movie, read a book, take a walk, or venture to a museum. All of those things might spark what you need to dissolve a creative snag, or you may need a fresh perspective, a little down time and/or vacation to rest your mind and spirit. Most of us find this type of writer's block a fairly simple cure. There is, though, a form of writer's block that is a much larger problem.

Over my time as a creativity coach, I've never seen one writer whose creativity block is exactly like someone else's block. Most writers will, at some point, experience a block, even if it only lasts for a week. Whether a writer is stalled for a short time, or whether the block is a gnarly giant with more tentacles than a horror movie monster, depends on many factors. If the block is simple, this is uncomplicated writer's block. If it is long-term writer's block, which I define as a month or more of not writing, it is complicated writer's block. The gnarly monster unleashed by complicated writer's block takes a little more to tackle.

Origins of The Complicated and Gnarly Monster

Complicated writer's block may grow into a hydra when more than one component of writer's block is involved and it takes some digging to distinguish the originating point of the problem. Discovering the sticking points means a writer will have to do some serious legwork and self-examination. So what is the number-one thing you're most likely to discover wrecking your creativity? Let me spell it out in big, fat letters:

F-E-A-R

Yep, that's it in a nutshell. The single, biggest factor in a complicated gnarly monster writer's block is gut-wrenching fear. Fear is full of other little minions riding on the back of that hairy beast.

Minion #1: Peer Pressure

Authors sometimes buckle under to demands from their fans, or authors, or agents, or publishers. Authors hear they should write the next shape-shifter, cowboy, secret-baby, cop, Navy SEAL, vampire, three college kids trapped in the woods stories, even if as authors we don't want to write any of these tropes. While many writers enjoy taking a fresh approach to these types of stories, there are as many writers force-feeding their creativity by writing a trope they don't like and aren't interested in writing.

Many writers, especially those early in their writing careers, fall back on tropes because they see these as a sure-fire avenue to a sale or way to gain an audience. While this may be true, and authors may get a sale from a fresh approach to a well-loved trope, writing tropes forever can hijack creativity entirely.

The writer's world/society/culture says this is the way it is: you must stay in one lane and never shall you color outside of the lines. Most people are interested in pleasing an audience, and writers are particularly invested (sometimes) in rules. Rules are fine until they stifle creativity.

Minion #2: Perfectionism

Minion #1 and Minion #2 are sometimes closely related. Perfectionism, perhaps more than most minions, can stall someone into never finishing a book. Or, in the case of the worst types of perfectionism, never finishing a page. Psychologists differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. Adaptive perfectionism might drive a writer to finish the book and never stop revising it. In maladaptive perfectionism, a writer may have learned from their parents or other individuals bad things might happen if the goal of being perfect isn't reached. Love, friendship and approval might be withheld if perfection isn't attained. Perfection, in the author crippled by perfectionism, is a way to avoid failure. Avoiding failure is never a guarantee. So, if a writer doesn't finish the book, in a sense they never have to crash and burn. In reality, never finishing a book could be considered failure. Maladaptive perfectionism becomes a self-licking ice cream cone that cripples a writer's creativity.

Minion #3: Comparison

Comparison, perfectionism, and peer pressure can be close siblings. Most writers start their careers by analyzing how other writers achieved their sales goals and recognition. Comparing yourself to other authors isn't a bad thing until a writer believes there is only one right way to accomplish the author game. If a writer can contemplate and consider their true goals and what makes them genuinely happy and creative for life, they can often stop the comparison game entirely.

Minion #4: Reader Pressure

Writing for an audience is all well and good. Until it's not. Early in a writer's career listening to what readers think or what the reviews say can help a writer to understand what

their audience wants. However, there's a limit to this technique. Full-scale involvement of readers in every aspect of the creative process, including naming characters and dictating plot points, can cause problems down the line for a writer's creativity. If the readers are calling the shots, the author isn't necessarily designing the story. It is difficult for a writer to maintain an intimate connection with their story if it isn't their creation but rather an amalgamation of someone else's ideas. I often see writers consulting their readers repeatedly for advice on what to do with a story. To keep your creativity intact, I advise using this technique sparingly.

People pleasing, in this case and in all of the minions above, is a manifestation of fear and of trying in vain to never get things wrong. If a writer recognizes these pitfalls, the chances of the writer experiencing complicated writer's block drops considerably.

Denise A. Agnew is the award-winning author of over 67 novels. Denise's novels Love From the Ashes and Blackout were optioned for film/TV by Where's Lucy? Productions. Denise is a writer/producer (Happy Catastrophe Productions/Bright Frontier Films/Where's Lucy? Productions), a paranormal investigator, Reiki Master, Certified Creativity Coach, and RT Academy Mentor. As a creativity coach, Denise assists anyone in the arts to maintain lifelong creativity. You can find her at www.deniseagnew.com and www.creativepencoaching.com.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Retirement...

By Linda Barrett



Internal conflict. Nothing beats using internal conflict for our characters to come alive on the page. As writers, we dig in and dig deep, figuring out their motivations as we put our heroes and heroines through hell and take our readers on an unforgettable journey. We turn characters inside out and provide our readers that promised roller-coaster ride. That's our job.

In real life, however, I'll take a pass on being that heroine! I'll pass on internal conflict with its stress, distraction, insecurity and non-productivity. I'll pass on walking aimlessly around the house and accumulating more angst. Which was exactly my reaction when I considered retirement from this writing career that I so yearned for decades ago.

After 18 years of continuous writing and publishing, first for Harlequin and then on my own, with many of those years also working a professional full-time day job, I recently decided I'd had enough—it was time to let go of the “constant homework.” While I love the thrill of creation, decent money, and great reviews, suddenly, I was collecting social security and wondering if *now* was the right time to truly retire. Was I really one of those devoted writers who wanted to be found after death with my stiff fingers on my keyboard? I had recently seen a *60 Minutes* piece on David Cornwell, aka John Le Carré, living very privately in the English countryside, who'd said just that. He's not alone among writers with this desire.

Six years ago, my husband and I moved to an active “55 and better” retirement community in Florida. For the first time, I saw up close what retirees do with their time—play golf, softball, pickleball, and canasta, or join book clubs, garden clubs, film clubs, travel clubs, and charity clubs—you name it, this place has it. My community is the *day camp for adults* or the *cruise ship on land*. I attended book club meetings and tried pickleball. Mahjongg is my absolute fave. I tucked these extraneous activities around my writing schedule. Every morning, I was still at the computer by eight o'clock, working on two indie projects that excited me, but glancing at my watch so as not to be late for a game.

We all know that a writing career isn't for the faint of heart. Career writers are stubborn or they'd have quit before finishing their first book! I separated from Harlequin in 2010 and have

been an indie since. At that time, I had no reverted books. Everything I published from 2010 to 2014 was new writing. This included a memoir about surviving breast cancer twice and two women's fiction projects. Unfortunately, I had little financial success and considered retiring. That thought was followed by a siege of stubbornness and anger. I decided that if and when I ended my career, it would be on my terms—on a high note. No slinking out the back door. Subsequently, I wrote a romance series which did well enough for me to want to stick around.

When the Harlequin reversions came in 2016, I jumped on them. Getting those babies back up for sale took me two years. You know the drill—the formatting, new covers, promotion, marketing, learning about ads, dealing with the sales platforms, trying to optimize everything, understanding that you have to spend money in order to make money. And I did. Earlier this year, all my reversions were finally for sale...and earning delightfully well! However, I was exhausted. Wiped out. I thought it was the perfect time to retire and enjoy whatever earnings these books brought in. I'd promote them, track the numbers, and...add art classes to my activities in the day camp.

So much for the best laid plans. New readers found the books. Long-time fans had found the new romance series. As I looked at my spreadsheets—for the first time in my writing life, I was actually using spreadsheets—I understood I was running a business. Which led to...

The 2017 NINC conference. I attended Matt Buchman's estate planning seminar which answered the question: What do my kids need to know after I'm gone? *This* would be my next challenge, my *last* project before I truly retired, and it was a bear. As tough as any writing project, but I'm stubborn, and I did it. I got everything in order—a final letter, those spreadsheets of my books, physical files and computer files, and I showed my kids where everything was, including passwords. I sighed in satisfaction, knowing I had taken care of business. To their credit, my adult sons paid attention, took copies of the paperwork and when the question of retirement came up, said they just wanted me to be happy. Write or retire. Just be happy.

But me? I am too practical to just walk away and leave money on the table. And if these stories grew my readership again...? At the very least, I had to stay in touch with my readers and keep marketing what I had.

That's how I learned that even successful promotion does not satisfy the creative side. My eight o'clock habit remained and still found me at the computer, usually checking email, writing newsletters or planning ads or sales. However, I felt a bit on edge, as though something was missing. Then fate took a hand. My phone rang one day with a call from the editor of a community magazine. Would I do a monthly column about retirement life? It could be funny, poignant, whatever I wanted. The catch—there's always a catch—it was a volunteer opportunity. Translation: no pay. After two decades of sweat, how could I give my work away? On the other hand, everyone else in the day camp volunteered their time to loads of worthy causes. Writing this column would not only scratch my creative itch, but it would get my name out locally, and I could hold my head up as a volunteer. After all, I was almost retired and that's what retirees do!

After obtaining a contract where I retained all rights from Day One, I've written 21 articles for the magazine, and ended the commitment shortly afterward. Frankly, I think I've run out of

ideas. But I've learned that writing short pieces feels very good! I also think of all the closure I've gotten in the past year each time I wrote "the end."

This journey so far has been a step-by-step discovery, and it's not over yet. Here's the crux that authors understand: a novel can consume you. You dive deep and don't come up for air very often. Hours, days, and weeks fly by as you work. As beginners, we were taught to say no to any non-essential requests taking us away from the writing—but to be indie we must now add marketing and promo. It was good advice back then. At this stage of my career and my life—when time is precious and fleeting—I've been wondering if that huge commitment is the best course. So I'm taking what my family calls a "sabbatical" while I figure it out. I know more art lessons won't do. I stink at it!

When I see you at conference, I hope I have some answers.

Linda Barrett is a native New Yorker who, with her husband, also had the pleasure of living for many years in Massachusetts, Texas, and now Tampa, FL. "I've loved each place and made life-long friends everywhere. I also managed to sound like a New Yorker everywhere I went!" She joined NINC as soon as she had her second contract in hand, almost two decades ago. She can always be found online at www.linda-barrett.com.

The Mad Scribbler

May I ask you a question?

By Laura Resnick



“Ask me no questions, and I’ll tell you no fibs.”

—Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*

For the past few years, I’ve worked as a part-time, walking historic tour guide. It’s been a good balance with my writing life in multiple ways.

For one thing, it gets me out of the house, nicely dressed, and interacting with people, which can be a healthy change from spending so much time sitting at my keyboard in old sweatpants. Unlike most jobs dealing with the public, being a tour guide is usually an *enjoyable* way to interact with people. Most folks who go on a walking tour are there to have fun and learn something, not to behave badly or take out their frustrations on others.

I’d like to pretend being a walking tour guide is good exercise, especially since the work involves descending into and climbing out of sites that are 30-40 feet underground; however, to tell the truth, I’m still the same chubby couch potato I’ve always been. A friend gave me a Fitbit so I could find out exactly how *much* I walk on my tours... but I finally acknowledged last week that I was never going to learn to use it and donated the device to a charity shop. Nonetheless, all this walking (and stair climbing) I do as a tour guide is presumably a healthy contrast to the sitting I do as a writer.

Being a tour guide also provides me with instant income, since the earnings include tips. On a good day, I return home with a well-stuffed wallet. I enjoy going to work knowing that within a few hours, I’ll have actual money in hand, not just money coming later via paycheck. After all, I’ve written for publishers that paid for my work in a geological timeframe—as well as some who never paid me at all. Additionally, this job connects me with a lot of interesting people, places, and information.

Among the residents of the historic neighborhood and the specific locations where I take the visitors (what we call our tour guests), I’ve met potters, artists, friars, ministers, brewers, wine makers, bakers, hoteliers, veterans, cops, renovators, and historians. My co-workers

include a musician, an entrepreneur, a wine merchant, a globe-trotting executive, an engineer, a retired firewoman, a restaurateur, a butcher, and various teachers. Many of my tour visitors are local, but plenty come from all over the country—and all over the world.

As a guide, I go into historic churches, old mansions, ceramics workshops, underground caverns, historic sites, breweries, lovely parks, private courtyards, and haunted buildings. I've learned fascinating information about my city, and I'm paid to convey this history to tour guests. While working, I also drink complementary wine and craft beer, as well as eat fun foods such as homemade bagels, handmade marshmallows, and liquor-infused ice cream.

Admittedly, guiding tours isn't always unmitigated pleasure. The weather can be far too hot, way too cold, much too humid, or it can be snowing or raining. Sometimes my feet hurt. Occasionally, rather than laughing at my jokes and asking engaged questions, visitors instead stare at me stone-faced for the entire two-hour tour, some of them repeatedly glancing at their watches or focused on their phones while I'm talking—which makes guiding the tour about as enjoyable as being on a bad blind date. Overall, though, giving tours has been fun, stimulating, and often inspiring.

Do I get story ideas from all these experiences? You bet.

Do I tell people I'm a writer? *No way.*

My personal friends are well aware of my longtime habit of *not* telling people I'm a writer. But my co-workers are sometimes surprised by it; since it's interesting, why wouldn't I want to talk about my other job? I suppose my colleagues in the writing world might think I'm passing up a ready-made marketing opportunity. After all, over the course of a year, I speak to a few thousand people in my role as a tour guide; so why *not* tell them my novels are available via booksellers?

My short answer is I like my privacy. I am comfortable with the attention of dozens of people focused on me while I talk about my city's history, but I don't particularly like talking to strangers about *myself*. It's a matter of personal preference.

In fact, visitors often do ask me questions: "Where are you from? Where do you live? How long have you been a guide? Have you ever had a paranormal experience yourself? [I get that one on the haunted tours.] What kind of work do you do when you're not guiding a tour?" And so on.

Sometimes I answer, keeping it brief and vague: "I live across the river. I do various types of freelance work." If they persist, I change the subject: "This street we're crossing used to have a different name. Want to know why?"

I don't have inherent anxiety about revealing information about myself; after all, via my writing career—including a couple of books I released that are personal narratives—a *lot* of information about me is already available. I simply prefer not to let *myself* become the topic of conversation.

Because if we start talking about *me*, the fact I'm a writer soon comes out. After all, I've been a career writer for 30 years. Writing is a huge part of my identity, my lifestyle, and my perspective. Writers are a big part of my social life, as well as my family life (my father is also a career writer). So if I start talking to strangers about myself, it's usually only a few minutes before I face a choice between (1) admitting I'm a writer, (2) outright lying about myself, or (3)

being weirdly opaque: “I’d rather not answer that question. Or tell you that. Or answer that, either.”

And once I admit I’m writer.... well, that’s it. You know what comes next.

All those *questions*. The exact *same* questions I have been answering for decades. The questions that I have by now addressed so many times, I feel myself going into an involuntary trance when I hear them yet again.

You know the questions I mean:

Have you ever had anything published?

Yes.

Really? You had a book published?

I’ve had about 30 books published.

So, you’re like a real writer?

Yes, that’s exactly what I’m like.

How much money do you make doing that?

I’m glad you asked me that. There is nothing I like better than discussing my income with casual strangers.

Have I read anything you’ve written?

How would I know what you’ve read?

Can you name some books you’ve written?

Doppelgangster, Vamparazzi, Polterheist, Abracadaver, The Mis—

Dopp.. Dopp... What?

Doppelgangster.

What?

Never mind.

What’s your name?

Laura Resnick

Lauren...?

Laura. Laura Resnick

What?

Never mind.

So how did you get into writing?

I wrote a book and submitted it until I sold it.

Were you an English major?

No.

How long does it take you to write a book?

Depends. My books have varied in length from 50,000 words to 250,000 words.

How many pages is that when it’s a book?

Depends. Do we really have to talk about page size, font size, kerning, leading, and margins?

Where do you get your ideas?

From everywhere except this conversation.

Do you have a fixed routine? A set number of pages you write every day? Specific hours when you write? A ritual before you start writing? A favorite pen?

Why do you torment me like this? Why? WHY?

Would you like to hear my idea for a book?

No. I would like to go hit myself in the head with a brick until I pass out.

Yes, *those* questions.

Look, I recognize these are (mostly) perfectly reasonable questions for someone to ask a writer. While my impression from reading statistics about publishing and self-publishing is that there are more writers than *people* in the world, there are still a lot of innocents out there who've never before met a writer. I know, because most of them eventually meet *me*. And they are naturally curious about this vocation, in a similar way that I am curious about treasure hunters, assassins, and professional psychics. I get it.

However, in the high season, which we're in right now, I guide 6-8 tours per week with dozens of visitors. That means a *lot* of chances for people to discover I'm a writer.

So when a well-meaning stranger says, "May I ask you a question?" My answer is: *No*.

Laura Resnick, author of the Esther Diamond series and the Silerian trilogy, is a guide with [American Legacy Tours](#) in [Over the Rhine](#), a Cincinnati neighborhood which is the largest intact urban historical district in the U.S.

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: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NINKcritique>

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Conference 2018: Craft Your Perfect Career

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

Registration: <https://ninc.com/conferences/registration/2018-member-registration/>

Conference Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Ninc2018/>

Yahoo e-loop: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/BeachNINC2018/info>

Newsletter

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Welcome Packet: <http://ninc.com/system/assets/uploads/>

[2017/01/2017_New_Member_Welcome_Packet-public.pdf](http://ninc.com/system/assets/uploads/2017/01/2017_New_Member_Welcome_Packet-public.pdf)

Member discounts

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

Volunteer

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

Open positions include:

- Social Media Committee
- Tweet Team
- Recruiting New Members
- 2018 Conference Promoter
- 2018 Conference Reporter
- Anything!



Founded in 1989

NINC Statement of Principle

Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve.

Founders

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

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

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2018 Committees

- *Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.*
- 2018 Conference Committee:
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