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# President's Voice

*By Lisa Hughey*



Lots going on this time of year!

The board and committees are hard at work for our members. After interviewing several very qualified candidates, we hired a new professional bookkeeper who is ready to take the reins and help us streamline our processes. This is especially important as NINC grows.

In an effort to figure out how widespread this problem has become, NINC wants to collect information on the **increase in returns at Amazon**. Here is the link to enter your information:

<https://forms.gle/HD6WUmfE6MhG6e6A>

In this issue, please check out the slate of candidates for 2023. NINC's process is a little unusual. Each open board position has **one** person to vote for. That person was vetted by the Nominating Committee (elected last year). On this year's ballot, you will elect a Secretary, Treasurer, and a President Elect, plus next year's nominating committee. We will hold the election in August and September. Also on the ballot will be a small change to our bylaws. For that we will need everyone to vote so keep watch for an email from Laura Resnick ([admin@ninc.com](mailto:admin@ninc.com)), our Central Coordinator.

The 2022 Conference Committee has nearly finalized the workshops and events for **NINC 2022: Work Smarter**. Check out the exciting things we've got happening this year.

The past few years have been tumultuous and unsettling. About once a week, I see an article about the Great Resignation. People are straight up leaving their professions at a crazy rate. We're lucky that our job is inherently satisfying. We have flexibility in our work schedule and where we choose to focus our energy. But even so, sometimes we get in a rut or yearn for a different path than the one we're currently traveling.

I've been thinking about this in relation to my own career. I've had to take some time off to deal with family health issues and spent time on self-reflection. According to [Bronnie Ware](#), the number one regret at the end of life is, "I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."

So here's a goal for the summer: Take the leap. Write in the new genre. Cut back on your hours. Or work more hours. Write the book of your heart. Make that change. Be true to what you want and see what happens. It may turn out to be the best decision of your career...or it may not. But at least you'll know, and you won't regret that you didn't try.

Write on!

Lisa Hughey  
2022 NINC President

P.S. I am fine and healthy but others in my life have had some major health issues!!

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*USA Today best-selling author [Lisa Hughey](#) writes about strong heroines who are perfectly capable of rescuing themselves and the heroes who love both their strength and their vulnerability. She pens romances of all types—suspense, paranormal, and contemporary—but at their heart, her books celebrate the power of love. She lives in Cape Ann, Massachusetts, with her fabulously supportive husband, two out of three awesome mostly grown kids, and one somewhat grumpy cat.*

## About NINC

NINC is committed to welcoming a diverse and inclusive membership to our organization and serving all members. No author will ever be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

## About Nink

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

## **NINC Member Benefits**

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

Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](#).

## **Accessing the NINC Website**

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



We are only a little more than two months away from NINC2022: Work Smarter!

The conference committee has received many questions about the possibility of registration re-opening or about a wait list. At this time, we do not plan to open a waiting list. In the unlikely event that we receive a high number of cancellations prior to July 20 and are able to re-open registration, an announcement will be made on the Facebook group and the Groups.io email group.

If you are registered and have not yet reserved a hotel room, you can call the TradeWinds at 1-800-808-9833 and request the NINC conference rate, but we have exceeded our room block—as well as the increased room block—and can no longer guarantee that the hotel will honor our rate.

We have arranged for an overflow hotel: The Hilton Garden Inn, 6100 Gulf Blvd., St. Pete Beach, FL 33706. If you call the TradeWinds and cannot secure the conference room rate at the Rumfish, we suggest that you call The Hilton Garden Inn at 1-877-782-9444 and reference the NINC conference. The rate there will be \$169 per night, available from the night of Wednesday, Sept. 21, through Saturday, Sept. 24 (checking out Sunday, Sept. 25). **This rate is for registered conference attendees only.** We will be double-checking reservations, and if anyone is not already registered, their hotel reservation will be canceled.

A tentative general conference schedule and a list of workshop blurbs are available on the NINC website [here](#). Please note that this schedule is *not* final and is subject to editing and change.

The list of companies sending industry guest representatives to our 2022 conference includes (but is not limited to):

- Apple Books
- Atticus
- Barnes & Noble
- Book Brush

- BookBub
- Book Funnel
- Chirp Audio Books
- Down Island Publishing
- Draft2Digital
- Ingram Spark
- Kobo
- Market Better-Faster
- My Author Concierge
- Plottr
- Podium Audio
- Publish Drive
- PublishWide
- Reedsy
- Self-Publishing Formula
- Vellum
- Voices by Veronica
- Well Read Translations
- Written Word Media
- Zory

Look for more updates and announcements over the coming weeks. We hope you're all as excited as we are to meet at the beach!

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*Tawdra Kandle is the author of over 100 romances that span genres from contemporary through paranormal. Her engaging and realistic characters bring readers back again and again to devour the steamy love stories she spins. She lives in central Florida with a husband, a mischievous pup, and too many cats.*

# NINC's Clubhouse Room

Let's connect on the social audio app

By Celeste Barclay



NINC has an official [Clubhouse](#) with a room every Tuesday at 11 a.m. PST / 1 p.m. CST / 2 p.m. EST. It's called the NINC Virtual Tiki Bar. How fitting!

As a close-knit author community, our goal is to create a space where we can talk about authorship topics in real time. We alternate between craft and business topics for an hour each week. These includes topics such as current trends on retail platforms, increasing diversity in your storytelling, branding, and opportunities to get advice on improving parts of your writing. Bring your expertise and your questions, so we can share insights and gain support. We have at least one Tuesday a month dedicated to an industry expert where we can learn more about the tools at our disposal and ask questions.

Are you unfamiliar with Clubhouse? It's an audio-only platform with "clubhouses" that host rooms with various topics and purposes. There are no images or cameras involved. You can join using Apple or Android by downloading the Clubhouse phone app in your store. Setting up an account only takes a few steps, then you're ready to go.

You can apply to join our NINC Virtual Tiki Bar here: <https://bit.ly/jointikibar>

If you have any trouble or room topic suggestions, email me at [preselect@ninc.com](mailto:preselect@ninc.com) or back channel me on Clubhouse @celestebarcly.

We hope to see you there!



*Celeste Barclay, a nom de plume, lives near the Southern California coast with her husband and sons. Growing up in the Midwest, Celeste enjoyed spending as much time in and on the water as she could. Now she lives near the beach. She's an avid swimmer, a hopeful future surfer, and a former rower. Before becoming a full-time author, Celeste was a social studies and English teacher. She holds degrees in International Affairs (BA), Teaching Secondary Social Science (MAT), and Political Management (MPS). She channels that knowledge into creating rich historical romances that bring the steam.*

# Small Presses, Indie, or Big Five, Oh, My!

## Pros and cons of publishing pathways

*By Elaine Isaak*



Authors have more ways to get our books to readers than ever before, a fact worth celebrating—but which also adds a new level of decision-making. Many writing circles build animosity, championing one pathway over all others, rather than acknowledging that each has advantages and disadvantages depending on the project and the writer's priorities.

Large, traditional presses continue to dominate the bookstores and review venues, but authors can have great commercial success by publishing independently (indie, or self-publishing). Small presses, on the other hand, offer some of the advantages of both, taking some of the burden of editing and promotion from authors, and getting attention from traditionally focused venues while publishing a wider range of works. As a result, choosing the right path for your new project may not be easy.

Many NINC members are now hybrid, using multiple pathways, depending on their goals. I interviewed a dozen authors who have used at least two of these paths to offer some guidance as you consider how to manage your upcoming work.

### **Traditional publishing**

“Trad” or the “Big Five” publishing houses, along with a few powerhouse genre publishers, are where many NINC members began, and remain the glowing beacon for legions of new authors as well. Trad publishers used to offer advances; top-flight editorial input; access to stores, libraries and reviews; and some level of promotional support for a variety of their authors. But with advances shrinking, editors leaving the business, and even established authors receiving little to no publisher support, the large presses may be losing their edge. Still, I’ve worked with some great editors who definitely improved the books, plus got me quality covers and high-profile reviews.

*Good news!*

When it comes to the biggest advantages to trad, [Lori Handeland](#) speaks for many when she says, “Having the editing, cover, production, some promo taken care of so I can use more of my brain cells for writing.” The publisher footing the financial burden of getting the book out is certainly key. Also, [Katie MacAlister](#) says, “I loved having an editor who had my back, and I could trust with my career. It also helped when the publisher really wanted to push my books.”

[Jennifer Ashley](#) cites a few advantages:

1. Print distribution. Large New York publishers can get your paperback or hardback into every store in the U.S. and possibly around the world.
2. Secondary rights sales. If the rights team is aggressive, they can get you many deals in translation, audio, TV/movie, and other secondary rights, which add both income and reach more readers.
3. Prestige (if this is important to you).
4. Possible advantage: Marketing. If you are lucky and the marketing team goes all out for you, they can get you publicity that it's hard for indie authors to access unless we have our own connections.

*Bad news...*

Of course, the compromise here is in the control that the author hands over, along with a big chunk of the profit per sale, which may or may not be made up for in volume. Rights-grabby and restrictive contracts can limit opportunities. Some authors have resented being at the whims of editorial or marketing decisions where their input wasn't solicited or was simply ignored.

Some NINC members found their trad experience to be helpful as they indie published backlist or new fiction.

[Lynn Cahoon](#) observed, “For me, being with a publisher was a paid internship. I didn't know what I didn't know. So I wrote, and signed bad contracts, and wrote more, and learned more. Everyone has their own path to calling themselves an author, but for me, having those lessons gave me the confidence to continue writing. And making better decisions.”

## **Small press**

Small presses (what used to be called “independent publishers”) have long been considered a bastion of less commercial or niche projects, which sometimes break out and claim national attention. A number of household names began with small presses, while other authors work with these publishers for projects that fall outside their usual fare.

*Good news!*

[Nicole Evelina](#) started out self-publishing, but now has several titles under contract with a mid-sized press.

“They give you a modest advance, personal attention, and let you have input on things like cover, but still have some clout like large publishers,” she says.

Evelina hopes to pursue larger presses with future projects and climb up the scale of advances.

*USA Today* bestselling author [Leslie Langtry](#) loves the specialty press for her cozy series. “My publisher has a huge fan base of readers, ARC reviewers, and I have a wonderful cover designer. I don’t have to edit, format, upload, design covers; they do it all for me. I did that as an indie publisher and I really didn’t enjoy it.”

### *Bad news...*

All of the small press authors caution that the author needs to do their research before signing. Authors reported lack of transparency, lack of communication in general, and publishers that disappear or suddenly change direction in terms of genre or publishing approach, leaving clouds of uncertainty.

[Ashley McConnell](#) points out, “If you get involved with someone unscrupulous, they’ll cheat you, and you have very little recourse. That’s true no matter what venue you use, but because you may have a relationship with small press people, it feels worse.”

Both sides have definitely been reflected in my own small-press experience. The publisher of my latest book offered a modest advance for a work that’s right in his wheelhouse, making him a great editor and partner. At the same time, it’s such a small operation that if he or one of his contractors falls ill, that can throw off the whole publishing schedule, making it a challenge to deliver on things like ARCs or setting up pre-orders.

## **Indie Publishing**

Many of us remember when self-publishing meant going to a printer and keeping boxes of books in your garage, looking for ways to hawk them—but those days are long gone! Now, a lot of authors go directly indie, and it’s a viable route to financial success with indie books reaping awards, film contracts, and slots on the bestseller lists just like the trad books do.

### *Good news!*

After beginning with trad publishing, then having a bad experience with small press, [Brenda Hiatt](#) appreciates having “maximum control over every aspect of my career. For me, the money’s been better, too!” Some indie authors have found enormous financial success, often by writing series in popular genres.

That idea of controlling not only the content, but also the covers, design, schedule, and marketing, excited most of the authors who have self-published some of their work. Working with retailers directly gives you access to their advertising tools, enabling authors to manage their own campaigns.

*Bad news...*

Susan, [who writes as](#) Janis Susan May (romance and horror) and Janis Patterson (mystery), summed up a few disadvantages.

“Self publishing is a lot of work—most of it picky little work—and...you have to see and act on two opposite sides of the process. You have to be Author You and Publisher You. Sometimes it can get ugly.”

Several authors made similar remarks about separating your writing and publishing hats when you enter the indie market. When you’re in control of everything, you have to manage all of those aspects, either personally or by finding (and compensating) someone who has skills that you don’t. There can be a steep learning curve to getting everything right. Then Amazon changes their algorithms, delivering new frustrations.

For the traditional author thinking of indie publishing, [Caridad Pineiro](#) suggests, “I would say that if you’re only traditionally published, you have to decide whether the time you take away from that to indie publish is a good return on investment in terms of the time involved and the satisfaction you get from doing that. By satisfaction, I’m not talking about money because I honestly believe that if your only goal in being published is to make money, and that writing is not your passion, it’ll show in your work.”

## **Future works**

In this newly fluid world of possibility, each author considers a number of factors in placing their new work. A literary project that could benefit from traditional publishing, large or small, might struggle in the more series and commercially oriented indie stream. A fast, fun series concept where volumes could be released quickly is likely to thrive in that market. Most of the authors I spoke to would consider any of these models, depending on the needs of the project at hand.

[Lenora Worth](#) says, “Could I have made more money going indie years ago? Maybe. But I worked hard to establish my publishing career traditionally, so I appreciate that opportunity. Now, I also appreciate the other options available and I plan to utilize those options to the best of my ability.”

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[Elaine Isaak/E. C. Ambrose](#) writes adventure novels inspired by research subjects like medieval surgery, ancient clockworks, and Byzantine mechanical wonders. Published works include *Drakemaster* (2022), the *Dark Apostle Series*, and the *Bone Guard* archaeological thrillers. Her next adventure will be the interactive superhero novel *Skystrike: Wings of Justice*, for *Choice of Games*.

## But—is it Legal?

Fan fiction and the professional writers who love it

*By Patricia Burroughs*



**“Fan fiction isn’t copying - it’s a celebration. One long party, from the first capital letter to the last full stop!”**

**- Jasper Fforde**

The relationship between professional fiction writers and fan fiction ranges from hostile to tolerant to embracing.

Occasionally, an author’s hostility toward fan fic of their works makes news. In 2010, concerned by some things she’d observed regarding fan fiction, Diana Gabaldon wrote on her blog, “OK, my position on fan-fic is pretty clear: I think it’s immoral, I know it’s illegal, and it makes me want to barf whenever I’ve inadvertently encountered some of it involving my characters.”

The ensuing controversy spilled over into the public press. Eventually, Gabaldon removed her opinions and posted her “Last Word” on the subject. Note that, perhaps significantly, the word “illegal” is gone.

**“You know, I’m very flattered that some of you enjoy the books so much that you feel inspired to engage with the writing in a more personal way than most readers do. Both for legal and personal reasons, though, I’m not comfortable with fan-fiction based on any of my work, and request that you do not write it, do not send it to me, and do not publish it, whether in print or on the web. Thank you very much for your consideration.”**

**-Diana Gabaldon**

Many pro writers are surprised to learn that some of us have written fan fic, still do, and would be euphoric to have it written about their own works.

The fact that fan fic exists means that writer has:

- Achieved great book sales and a very large readership.
- Attracted a subset of readers we inspired to do what we love so much—write.
- Most importantly, created worlds that ignite the imagination.

**“I’m delighted that anyone would feel invested enough in my characters or the world I created to want to write stories based around them—even if it’s because they don’t like where I took the narrative (who got killed, who got kissed, etc.). I’ve had a few people send me fics, and unfortunately I’ve had to decline reading them. I will admit to being incredibly curious, but until the trilogy is published (and maybe even after), I just don’t want other narratives in my head.”**

**~Leigh Bardugo**

And this stands even if fan fic writers rewrite canon, change who kisses whom, or decide that Ophelia or Snape or Frodo lives.

Many a romance writer in the 20th century said the first seed was planted when they threw *Gone with the Wind* against the wall and began fantasizing new endings to the book—endings where Rhett did give a damn.

Who’s to say that those stories wouldn’t have traveled the reading world smelling of

mimeograph ink if there had been any way to share them and to read how others rewrote that ending as well?

## What exactly is fan fiction?

Writing fan fiction is the act of sharing stories about a world and characters that already exist.

As a literary form, fan fiction existed millennia before the term was coined when stories were told and retold around campfires.

Even amongst the classics, you'll find examples that range from ancient Greek classics to the many variations on King Arthur to what today's fan fic world defines as "Bible fic" (Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* as two examples).

Finding new ways to write stories about worlds we love seems to be an ingrained creative urge for many, and many more people have an ingrained desire to read them.

## Is fan fiction legal?

According to the [Organization for Transformative Works](#), U.S. copyright protects a creator's general ownership of their creative work for a given period of time. It does not, however, forbid others from interacting with that work in a variety of ways, including commentary and parody.

Fan fiction is a transformative work, falling under the Fair Use Doctrine, which allows others to use copyright-protected material without the creator's permission under **one or more** of the following four considerations:

1. Purpose and character of the use
  - a. Is it commercial?
  - b. Is it for nonprofit/educational purposes?
2. Nature of the copyrighted work.
3. Amount of the portion used in relation to the entire copyrighted work.
4. Effect of the use on the potential value of the copyrighted work.

Under the Fair Use Doctrine, transformative works must meet all of the following:

1. They aren't for profit.
2. They are transformative.
3. They aren't plagiarized, a direct copy of the copyrighted work. (Some quotation is not prohibited, however.)

**"To the author of the original work, fan fiction should be considered like reviews: for readers, by readers, in reader spaces."**  
- Ellis Leigh

## How can a pro writer approach the subject of their dedicated readers writing fan fic?

Here are some options:

- Be delighted and put a notice on your website that you welcome and support fan fic written in your worlds but will not be reading any of it, thank you very much.
- Post a gracious notice on your website that you strongly discourage fan fic and hope your readers will respect that. The majority of fan fic archives honor such requests.

One consistent point made by authors who tolerate or even embrace fan fic:

They never want to see a word of it.

Ever.

Charles Stross is particularly supportive of fan fic. He wrote, “Having said this, I ~~do not mind you writing~~ encourage you to write fanfic using my characters and share it with your friends as long as you don’t do so in a manner that fucks with my ability to earn a living.”

**“They don’t do it for money. That’s not what it’s about. The writers write it and put it up online just for the satisfaction. They’re fans, but they’re not silent, couchbound consumers of media. The culture talks to them, and they talk back to the culture in its own language.”**  
- Lev Grossman

## But why do pro writers continue to write fan fiction?

Some writers were pros before they ever started writing fan fiction.

One author’s editor sent her an email with a link. It said, “I just wrote this. Finish it.”

Curious, the author clicked and found a short piece of fan fic from a universe that the two of them loved and often discussed. It begged for a “Part Two,” and the author did as directed and finished it in a fit of giggles.

It was simply fun.

She still writes fan fic occasionally and has a career that most of us would envy.

Writers who continue do so for the same reasons they started. It’s fun. They have a community of people who share their passion for particular worlds or characters. This includes readers who enthusiastically review each chapter or story posted. This includes other writers whose stories they like.

This often includes the first mentors who helped them improve their craft and even encouraged them to believe in their talent.

Pro writers often use fan fiction to push their limits and try new things.

For example, some fan fic communities often include “challenges” that range from writing drabbles (a complete story told in exactly 100 words) to writing to a common premise or theme.

A playwright wrote fan fic about a television show she loved, unsure about her prose and doubting she could capture the different character voices. She discovered she could, learning more about her abilities in the process. Her first mystery novel will be out from a major publisher next spring. She credits writing fan fic.

A screenwriter wanting to write a novel tested her prose chops writing *Gilmore Girls* fan fic and used the reviews to help her improve. Within the year, she sold her first novel as part of a three-book, six-figure deal.

A multi-published romance novelist decided to have fun by trying different styles and approaches to writing sex scenes in her novel-length fan fic.

And, of course, many write about subject matter or in genres that don't fit in their pro careers.

### **The cons of fan fic for the pro writer**

It's interesting to note that none of the writers I surveyed and interviewed had any "cons" to list, some of them stating emphatically that they'd found none.

When I confessed guiltily that I was going to "play around" writing a fan fic and that if it went well, I might pull it and pursue it as original fiction, my pro writer/fan fic writer friend pulled me up short. She said, "Fan fic is fan fic. Write it as fan fic. Enjoy it as fan fic. But accept that you are writing fan fic and don't try to justify it by making it something else. It's okay to write fan fic."

These were wise words that I took to heart and understood more deeply during the time I have spent in my fan fic community. So, here's a con.

**"Irritated fans produce fan fic like  
irritated oysters produce pearls."**

**- Anne Jamison**

Some pro writers believe some of their best work is in fan fiction. There *are* pearls—yet you might not want to point to them. For every bestselling author who comes out of fan fic with a blast of publicity, there are dozens more who don't dare mention it. So yes, you may leave pearls behind. But you can write more pearls. That's what you proved in fan fic.

### **The pearls**

One such pearl came from an 11-year-old girl, with her clumsily written but heartfelt story about a fourth-year Hermione Granger who, while all around her reviled him, realized that Professor Snape was one of the good guys. She helped and protected him, and by the end of the war, loved him. He died a hero, and she was the silent partner in his heroism, mourning his loss alone. Eleven years old, and only three Harry Potter books had been published, and yet this is

what she saw and wrote. A few years later, she became embarrassed and pulled the fiction to rewrite and repost, but never did.

But the Granger/Snape relationship had caught the imaginations of so many writers that it lives on today—sometimes platonic, sometimes romantic, sometimes smutty—but always legal. If there are any archives that accept underage sex they are hidden away.

And the archives? There are more than can be counted, often dedicated to a single universe or character.

[Fanfiction.net](#) is vast and old, considered the mother lode of fan fic. It even has a list of authors whose fan fic it will not post—out of respect for the authors' requests.

[An Archive of Our Own](#) is a project of the [Organization for Transformative Works](#) and in 2019 was [awarded the prestigious Hugo award](#). A lot more NINC members than you might suspect share that Hugo, along with more than four million other writers.

### About that Jaspar Fforde quote

This brings us back to the beginning.

There is bad writing in fan fiction.

Sometimes stories are bigger than the words that formed them.

It is a place where fledgling writers first learn that they can create magic.

It is a place filled with pearls—along with those grits of sand that didn't turn out so shiny.

It's a place largely without gatekeepers where even an 11-year-old girl's story makes a difference.

For those who read and write it and hopefully the authors whose work inspires it, fan fiction is a celebration of literature and the creative journeys that spring from our shared imaginations—a celebration that doesn't involve profit or glory, only the sheer love of character and story.

**“Fan fiction isn't copying - it's a celebration. One long party, from the first capital letter to the last full stop!”**

**- Jaspar Fforde**

Full stop.

*For further reading:*

- [Professional Author Fanfic Policies](#)
- [How to Keep Fanfiction Legal and Avoid Trouble with Lawyers](#)
- [21 Authors Who Write Fanfiction](#)
- [Writers Against Fanfictions](#)
- [3,000 Years of Homeric Fan Fiction](#)
- [11 Classics That Are Secretly Fanfiction](#)

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*Pooks (a.k.a. Patricia Burroughs) is not a lawyer. The legal information in this article comes from the intellectual property lawyers at the Organization for Transformative Works. She spent many years holding her nose in disdain over fan fiction, but after spending time in the fan fiction world has changed her opinion. She is now a member of the Organization for Transformative Works.*

# Code-Switching

## More than just slang

By LaQuette



In today's fast-paced society, it's extremely common to shorten or truncate language in order to get a message across quickly and efficiently. We can see this penchant for abbreviation in things like the 250-character tweet or text messages filled with linguistic acronyms meant to convey broad meanings with as few letters as possible. While code-switching can truncate language, it is much more involved than simply saying less to convey more.

Code-switching is when someone changes their spoken and nonverbal language and mannerisms depending on who they are speaking to or what kind of social setting they are in. While most people change their communication style depending on who they're with, not all instances of truncated or slang speech is code-switching.

What separates the act of code-switching from simply being the use of slang is that the former is a survival technique that many marginalized groups use to protect themselves in social settings where they interact with the dominant culture (white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, abled, neurotypical society). In comparison, using slang is merely a style difference.

It may seem extreme to label this action as a survival tactic, but that's exactly what code-switching is at its core. Being deemed as different by dominant culture can have significant consequences for people from marginalized communities. When the dominant culture labels you as different, often that *different* means *less than*. To be seen as less than places marginalized communities at a disadvantage, ultimately pressing these groups to the margins of society which can prevent them from accessing the things they need or want.

As an African American woman, I am well aware that when I walk into certain rooms, I'm immediately underestimated. For some people, the color of my skin and my gender mean I'm

less skilled, less intelligent, and less capable than my white male counterparts. That I possess both graduate and undergraduate degrees means nothing because people can't see my degrees when they meet me. They see a Black woman and, whether or not they know it, begin making assumptions about me and my value. Understanding this, I know that in order to access society, I have to get certain people to take me seriously. To accomplish that, I have to speak the language that they value.

People who code-switch are essentially bilingual. They have to learn to speak and mimic the standardized language and accepted societal behavioral norms oftentimes better than those who belong to the dominant culture. They do this to fit in enough to access what they need. As a result, they only speak their native language or reveal their natural mannerisms when they are in circles where they feel safe. Feeling safe means that they are in an atmosphere where they do not fear that being their authentic selves will be seen as a detriment, and where their identity isn't weaponized to take away the things they need and want.

To those who belong to the dominant culture, needing to change the way you speak, the language you speak, including your body language, probably sounds farfetched. As someone standing on the outside looking in, it's easy to dismiss this need to assimilate in order to find success. If you are a disbeliever, let me offer you some concrete examples of how code-switching is a necessary survival skill for marginalized communities.

As a Black writer who pens stories that celebrate Black characters and Black culture, there have been several instances where my skill as a writer is called into question by those in gatekeeping positions within the romance publishing industry. I've had acquiring editors turn down my work because they felt my use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE-English dialect used in Black American communities) was proof of bad writing instead of an accurate characterization of my characters. I've also had copyeditors assume my use of AAVE was an error and consistently mark those instances wrong or change them to their standardized American English equivalents. As I hope you can imagine, both scenarios are equally problematic, prohibitive, and mentally and emotionally exhausting.

The first instance actually prevented me from acquiring book deals, essentially blocking me from entering my chosen industry. The second created professional frustration that either required me to educate the copyeditor on code-switching and AAVE, or erase authentic representation of my characters and culture to make the language of the book more appealing to audiences from the dominant culture. Whichever scenario, as the person from a marginalized community, I am tasked with attempting to find a way around these gatekeeping measures.

Code-switching isn't something singularly particular to Black people. Other marginalized communities have developed some form of this skill to protect themselves while interacting with larger society as well. People from the LGBTQ+ community also employ code-switching methods to access society too. Remember, code-switching isn't just about spoken language. It's about presenting the individual in a way that prevents the dominant culture from flagging the individual as different and therefore less than or abnormal. This can include everything from

the way someone speaks, to the gestures they use, to the way they dress, to their tone of voice and use of inflections; all of these things contribute to code-switching.

Like Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, LGBTQ+ people are often forced to present themselves in ways the dominant culture finds acceptable in order to access what they need to survive and thrive. When in certain social settings, they have to suppress their authentic selves to fit in by conforming and being inconspicuous. Whether that's dressing, behaving, or speaking in gender-conforming and heteronormative ways, or modeling their relationships after what the dominant culture would consider traditional, LGBTQ+ people, like Black people, code-switch to survive in a society that tells them who they are isn't good enough or welcome.

Disabled communities also code-switch by means of masking. Masking is when a person with disabilities conceals their disability in order to present a normative appearance to the abled world. They do this to make abled society feel more comfortable. Why should people with disabilities be concerned with abled society being more comfortable in their presence? Because like all the aforementioned marginalized communities, people who have a disability, whether visible or invisible, have to be concerned with being prevented from accessing society in meaningful and positive ways for survival. Suppressing stemming behaviors such as leg bouncing or other repetitive movements when in the presence of the abled is one example of how a neurodivergent person might attempt to mask their disability.

While there are various ways people code-switch and/or mask their differences to fit into accepted societal norms, what's most important for writers engaging with this topic is that they recognize the significance of why people code-switch. It's also important that writers understand that people being their authentic selves shouldn't be an assumed lack of intelligence, means, ability, or moral decency. To assume so perpetuates harmful stereotypes that further marginalizes underrepresented groups.

Assigning negative connotations to authentic representations of underrepresented communities plays a significant role in what I refer to as the "struggle story." The struggle story is when the protagonist's identity is the source of their conflict. "I can't be happy or have good things happen to me because I am Black, gay, disabled, neurodivergent, etc." is a recurring theme in fiction when depicting diverse characters (characters who are from typically underrepresented/marginalized communities).

Writers usually present these sorts of stories as sympathetic and compelling. However, what they actually do is display marginalized characters as lacking and in need of being saved from their circumstances (circumstances caused by their identity) by someone from the dominant culture. Struggle stories continually perpetuate the idea that to be anything other than white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, abled, and neurotypical is to be less than or abnormal and unworthy of having their full humanity recognized and respected.

As writers, recognizing our characters' full humanity regardless of identity helps us to construct three-dimensional characters who leap off the page. Focusing on who our characters are instead of what they are will help us craft nuanced representation of a multitude of

identities. Identity, culture, and community are important. However, they are not the sum total of who a person is. To become hyper-focused on how a character identifies is to lose the individuality that every person possesses.

Regardless of our backgrounds, we are all individuals contributing to the mosaic of culture and community. If we depict that in our work, we help readers understand that people are people no matter their race, sexuality, gender identity, ability, or financial means. We help them see how all those identifiers influence the overall makeup of the individual, but by no means defines who they are.

Understanding why people code-switch or mask makes for much more interesting storytelling because it allows the nuances of a character's personality to shine through. As the author, you're creating a richer writing experience for yourself because you're crafting different people every time you sit down and begin work on character development. It also provides character depth that engages the reader and forces them to think about who people are, challenging preconceived notions about different identities. Most importantly, understanding why people code-switch acknowledges the lived experiences of underrepresented communities and removes the stigma that to be authentic is to be abnormal, less than, and unwelcomed in the larger society.

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*2021 Vivian Award finalist and DEIA activist in the romance industry, [LaQuette](#) writes sexy, stylish, and sensational romance. She crafts dramatic, emotionally epic tales that are deeply pigmented by reality's paintbrush. This Brooklyn native writes unapologetically bold, character-driven stories. Her novels feature diverse ensemble casts who are confident in their right to appear on the page.*

# To Pseudonym or Not to Pseudonym

## A question of usefulness

By Lewis Carroll and Voltaire  
(aka Nikoo Kafi and Jim McGoldrick)



George Orwell was a big liar. So was George Elliot. And Dean Koontz. And all three of those nefarious Brontë sisters. And Mark Twain. And Agatha Christie. And George Sand. And Nora Roberts, of course. And that most insidious of liars, Dr. Seuss.

So was Jane Austen, though to a lesser extent. When Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* came out in 1811, the phrase "By a Lady" was printed in place of her name on the title page. Anonymity was important at the beginning of her career, even though her authorship later became an open secret. But why not divulge her real name? Was it protection for herself or her family, was it the importance of propriety, or was it business?

All of the authors mentioned above are examples of writers who have used pseudonyms. Some of those pen names are actually the names we know them by. Okay, using a pen name is not exactly lying. There are lots of reasons for using them and "hiding" one's identity.

George Orwell wanted to save his legal name for when he did his "serious" writing. Sand and the Brontës and Elliot and Austen were publishing at a time when it was difficult for women to get into print, never mind being taken seriously as writers. Or they wanted to protect their families or themselves, for a variety of reasons. Roberts and Koontz and Christie wanted to tell stories in other genres. Theodor Geisel was banned from submitting stories to the school newspaper for some infraction, so Seuss was born.

We're liars too. When we published our first historical romance, the publisher insisted that we use a feminine pseudonym for business purposes. They even went so far as to invent a bio for us in the book that said something to the effect that "May McGoldrick lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with her cat, where she is working on her next novel." No picture. Our real names didn't even appear on the copyright page.

That was okay with us. We were delighted about being published. Plus, those first books were romance, at that time the “infamous shady lady” of literature. Nikoo was working as an engineering manager with men reporting to her. Jim was teaching at a Catholic college. Oddly enough, our fiction turned out to be no problem there. The college administration embraced the novel, and we found out that the chaplain was even reading passages out loud at lunch in the school bookstore to groups of students.

About the cat business in the bio, however, our dog was seriously displeased. He sulked for months.

A few years later, another publisher wanted us to use the pen name Jan Coffey when we branched out into contemporary romantic suspense and thrillers. Jan is an acronym for *Jim and Nikoo*, and Coffey is an anglicized version of her Persian family name, *Kafi*. Fast forward to a couple of years ago. A publisher asked us to write a series of Westerns, and we needed a male pseudonym. So, Nik James was born.

For us, each choice was publisher-driven, with serious consideration about competition, book sales, crossover readership, and chain store retailer purchases.

So, the question for today is, are these factors for using different pen names relevant for writers in an increasingly post brick-and-mortar bookstore era? Or is it more important to have a single name so as not to cause confusion? After all, the goal is to bring the most eyes to our stories.

## **Issues to consider about pseudonyms**

### *Protecting identity*

Using a pseudonym is still a valuable tool for protecting someone’s identity. Susan May Patterson, who openly employs four different pen names for a variety of genres, says that the pseudonyms she uses for writing erotica are “known only to me and God.” Jennifer Ashley’s traditional publishers had a “collective cow” when she decided to write erotic romance, so she came up with a new pseudonym. Mary Bly was an untenured college professor at a Catholic university and saw the need to separate her fiction writing from her academic work. She chose the name Eloisa James.

### *Finding a good name*

Our first publisher wanted a female pseudonym because they were afraid women would not buy a romance that a man had a hand in writing. When we suggested Nikoo McGoldrick, they said it wasn’t feminine sounding enough. If Reedsy were around then, we could have used their Pseudonym Generator to come up with something other than Jim’s grandmother’s name. Also, you might want to choose a pen name if your legal name is too common or difficult to spell or happens to be...um, William Shakespeare or Virginia Woolf or Gabriel García Márquez.

### *Copyrighting and the pseudonym*

If you decide to copyright your work on your own, the US Copyright Office is very accommodating for authors with pen names. If you write under a pseudonym but want to be identified by your legal name in the Copyright Office's records, give your legal name under Individual Author and click on Pseudonymous and provide your pen name, as well. If you don't want to have your real identity revealed, then click on Pseudonymous only and leave the individual Author blank. If you fill in your name, it will become part of the public record. Either way you want to do it, they'll be happy to take your money.

### *Collaboration*

If you've collaborated with a partner on a novel and have decided to use a pseudonym, decide in advance (and in writing) who owns the name. After all, one or both of you may want to write a sequel.

### *Cost and time*

Suppose you publish a series of books using a pseudonym and then decide to write in a different genre. Should you use a different pen name?

One thing to consider is the cost and time involved in developing your online presence. Jennifer Ashley, whose various pseudonyms were (like us) driven by publisher involvement, has said that her preference would have been to put "all my books under one name." Developing an online presence for several pen names is a major pain.

We think of it this way. Do we really want to have two (or three or four) different websites and Twitter and Instagram accounts that constantly need to be fed? We won't even get into the nightmare of additional TikTok accounts. Seriously, how much dancing can a working writer manage to do? And one last thing. Distinct autograph signatures for each pseudonym! Enough said.

### *Pseudonyms for nonfiction*

A pen name for a how-to or other nonfiction book doesn't really work. The success of these books depends, for the most part, on the recognized expertise of the individual writing the book.

### *Discoverability*

Something we've known from the beginning of our career was that readers buy books by authors they know or have heard about from someone they trust. What we've learned is that having two pen names doesn't facilitate crossover.

When J.T. Ellison decided to write in a different genre, she didn't foresee a large crossover in readership and felt that using her name would screw up the algorithm for Also Bought suggestions on the online retailer page. So, she used a new pen name. M.L. Buchman disputes

that position and believes you should go with one author name. He cites Kindlepreneur creator Dave Chesson's research (shared at the last NINC conference) that "the shopper's eye [on those product page suggestions] will mostly skip to see only the genre they're interested in."

Barbara Keiler (writing as Judith Arnold) and Brenda Hiatt each chose to write under a single name. Like us, both established their readership while writing for traditional publishers. They assert the belief that their name recognition and the consistency of their approach to storytelling across genres draws and satisfies readers, despite the different types of stories they tell.

### *Branding*

For the 21st century novelist, branding is essential.

Elaine Isaak, writing in multiple genres, wanted "more separation when the books came out," and is working on better branding. On the other hand, M.L. Buchman uses one name and "brands the crap out of it." His branding efforts focus on a specific hierarchy: author, genre, then series. Buchman's bottom line, "One name, one website, court the superfans who pay me the most money and buy everything I write."

So, where does that leave us? Using your own name or a single pen name or several, the choice is individual. But for us? NO more multiple pseudonyms. If we had a do-over, we'd follow Buchman's route.

And by the way, Eric Arthur Blair—you of the *Animal Farm*—we know who you are.

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*May McGoldrick, Nik James, and Jan Coffey are pseudonyms for USA Today bestselling authors [Nikoo Kafi](#) and [Jim McGoldrick](#). Together, they have crafted over 50 fast-paced, conflict-filled historical, contemporary, and Western novels, as well as two works of nonfiction.*

## Smart Marketing for Savvy Authors

*By Tawdra Kandle*



*This quarter of Smart Marketing is all about social media.*

*Post. Tweet. Pin.*

*Is it essential?*

*How do we grow our following?*

*How do we think outside the SM box?*

I can't imagine being an author in a world without social media.

Back in the halcyon days of my early career, Facebook was how I learned just about everything. I met my first writing friends there through groups specifically designed to link up authors for info sharing and education. I found readers in blogger groups. Facebook was my favorite hangout, and I played there often. I wasn't alone.

There is a school of thought that posits a theory that indie publishing was born and thrived because it emerged at the same time as two other phenomena: the e-reader (Kindle and Nook) and social media. The first opened the door for writers to produce books easily and cheaply (ebooks have low overhead) and the second allowed all authors, indie or trad, to interact with existing and potential readers in an entirely new, oddly intimate way.

In the ensuing years, however, social media has evolved into something else altogether, and much of the author community has developed a sort of love/hate relationship with posting, tweeting, pinning and the like. Do we have to *have* some sort of presence on social media? Is it a non-negotiable part of being an author?

"I *wish* the answer was no, authors don't have to be on social media," says *USA Today* bestselling author Cynthia D'Alba. "But that would be categorically false. Authors *must* have a

presence of some sort on social media. Even some of the largest authors (Harlan Coben, Neil Gaiman, Nora Roberts) all have social media presence, and I figure they don't need help selling books, but they are there, which suggests to me that even popular authors see the value."

Award-winning paranormal author Michelle Zink agrees. "Yes—you don't have to do everything, but you do have to do something if money/readers are the goal."

"I do believe social media is non-negotiable for authors. Authors need to interact with readers. Social media is the easiest place to reach larger numbers of readers," chimes in Amazon Top-100 author Jean Joachim.

*USA Today* bestselling sci-fi romance author Cara Bristol concurs. "Yes, I think it's non-negotiable if you want to sell books. Can you think of a single business that doesn't have a social media presence? What you get out of it depends on where your readers are and what you put into it."

Others feel that social media isn't necessarily required for every author. "I think it's possible not to be on, or need, social media, especially if you're trad-pubbed and your books are available in stores," muses *New York Times* bestselling author Jenna Bennett. "If you're an indie, social media becomes more important. I think it's a good idea to be on social media of some sort, specifically where most of your readers are, but there are people who make it work without."

"I don't think anything is non-negotiable," notes *Wall Street Journal* bestseller Pamela Kelley. "Social media is a plus—not a must. But I do think it makes a big difference in building loyal readers—engaging in reader groups—and in generating sales, both from reader groups and Facebook ads."

"Social media has two purposes—one is to run ads. I don't do that," remarks Patricia Rice, bestselling author of historical and contemporary romance. "The other is to interact with readers. I don't think it sells books so much as builds brand loyalty. Those readers pre-order every book no matter what insane direction I take next. You can't buy that kind of reader base anywhere."

Although Facebook was among the earliest players on the social media stage, it's far from the only game in town. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, TikTok—not to mention reader-centric platforms like Goodreads—all have offered authors a place to promote and interact. Not surprisingly, though, Facebook remains the overwhelming favorite place to reach readers among the authors with whom I spoke.

"Facebook is also my most effective spot because my main audience demographic is forty-year-old-and-up women," says award-winning BDSM contemporary and paranormal romance author Joey Hill.

Award-winning author Aubrey Wynne agrees. "Facebook is my most productive platform. My readers tend to be female who are forty-five and over so they aren't on the other platforms as much, if ever."

So, social media—particularly Facebook—might not be required but is highly recommended if you want to make connections with readers—and perhaps if you want to sell books, although the majority of responding authors note that finding a direct correlation between social media and sales is nebulous at best. Several of those who did see a connection mentioned TikTok as the social media platform most likely to lead to a jump in sales.

“Yes, some form of social media is required,” says Veronica Scott, bestselling science fiction and paranormal romance author and “SciFi Encounters” columnist for the *USA Today Happily Ever After* blog. “Have to go where the readers are but pick the platform(s) you’re comfortable with. Tiktok is my most active and the one that sells books for me.”

The newest entry on the social media scene, TikTok has proven to be an asset to a growing group of authors who come up with new ways to highlight their books and branding on the short-video platform. These fans say that BookTok—the reading and book-celebrating subset of TikTok—can boost book sales when a popular BookToker films a video about their favorite. (Paperbacks seem to be the most commonly preferred format of BookTokers, by the way.) More on that later this quarter.

If Facebook is the gold standard in social media for writer/reader interchanges, as these authors firmly believe, what’s the best way to use it? Within Facebook exist several options for reaching out to readers. Most authors maintain both personal profiles and professional pages. Not all respond to friend requests from fans, preferring to keep their profiles more personal and private. The author page is where the bulk of work is done to reach out to potential readers. Since Facebook has limited the reach on pages, we’re always looking for a work-around to make sure those important posts—book releases, sales, or in-person events—are visible to the people who “like” our pages.

Besides pages and profiles, of course, there are groups. A few years ago, Facebook encouraged pages to add associated groups, promising the interaction there would be organic and uninterrupted. At that point, most authors who didn’t already maintain an active reader group created one.

“If an author is diligent about going in once a day (to their Facebook group), you’ll see an advantage,” reveals award-winning author of erotic romance Monica Burns. “These are your hard-core readers. Posts in groups are starting to have the same view problem that pages had way back when, and I expect the decline to continue. However, I have fans who are on daily and comment on almost every post I make, whether it’s from my automated scheduler or one I do organically. The more comments, the higher the push up to the top and expanded views. So, I offset Facebook limiting views by tagging my regulars and they see the notification and they’re in there right away, commenting. It works.”

When authors accept social media posting as a necessary part of their promotion and publicity tool box, it must become part of their daily schedule. Everyone agrees that consistency is hugely important; you can’t go weeks without interaction and then expect your followers to

respond to what you share. But what to do when you're under deadline, buried in edits, or juggling a challenging personal life?

Hiring out social media management has become an increasingly popular option. Sometimes assistants or PR company reps post as the author for whom they work so that readers don't know the difference. Some authors prefer to have their social media managers post as themselves and simply keep conversation and interaction flowing in their groups.

"I do my own posting because it's the most authentic," notes international bestseller T.M. Cromer, an author with a vibrant and active reader group. "Interacting with my readers promotes reader loyalty."

Monica Burns adds, "Social media is about connections. It's building relationships. Readers want to know the authors they like and if one goes into hiding, then it does have an impact, *unless* you're putting out a book a month or two months. Marketing on these platforms are about actually chatting or liking a comment. I don't reply to every comment, but I heart every one of them so they know I saw their comment."

"I do it myself," agrees Joey Hill. "I may be midlist forever because of this, but I've found nothing builds a loyal fanbase (the readers who will talk about you to other readers) like prioritizing the time to personalize my social media presence."

We may love it or hate, farm it out or write every post ourselves, but we know that social media is a permanent fixture on our author landscape. Next month, we'll do a deep dive into how we can effectively grow our audiences on our chosen platforms.

*Big thanks to all of the authors who offered me input and insight into their social media journey. Any mistakes in quotations are mine alone.*

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*Tawdra Kandle is the author of over 100 romances that span genres from contemporary through paranormal. Her engaging and realistic characters bring readers back again and again to devour the steamy love stories she spins. She lives in central Florida with a husband, a mischievous pup, and too many cats.*

# The Mad Scribbler

## Nuts & Bolts

By Laura Resnick



*"It can really vary from movie to movie what the producer's role is and there are all kinds of producers. There are line producers who do a lot of the nuts and bolts work on the set."*

—Nina Jacobson, producer of *The Hunger Games* and *Crazy Rich Asians*

A couple of months ago, I became NINC's new central coordinator.

Since then... I have become *drunk on POWER!*

Okay, I tell a lie. Mostly, I've been mired in figuring out how to use unfamiliar apps, learning to read spreadsheets, and wrestling regularly with NINC's !\$&#@^%? website. (So far, the !\$&#@^%? website is winning.)

Heigh ho, the glamorous life.

I joined NINC in 1989, when it was being created (before it even had a name!), and I've been very engaged with the organization ever since. I co-chaired NINC's first Outreach Committee (persuading multi-published novelists to join our new organization), I was assistant editor of *Nink* for a year, served on the Nominating Committee a couple of times, did site selection for the 1995 conference, chaired NINC's first Manhattan conference (and worked on two other NINC conferences), served as president-elect and president 2007-2008, and have been the *Nink* production manager for the past five years.

So, yes, I know where the bodies are buried. (Maybe that's why I was offered this job?)

The central coordinator's role is varied, challenging to learn, and not always easy to define.

I like to think of myself as equivalent to Moriarty, the shrewd and ruthless mastermind who sat spider-like at the center of a vast and complex web of criminal enterprise in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Less thrillingly, the central coordinator might be described as NINC's daily operations manager or as someone similar to the line-producer on a movie set: the nuts-and-bolts person.

The person in this job is basically responsible for keeping the wheels on the vehicle (i.e. NINC), the engine running, and the whole thing moving forward day after day, year after year, over the hills and through the dales, regardless of rain, sleet, mud, and heat.

The central coordinator is supposed to have a bird's-eye view of what's happening in NINC on a weekly basis: what plans and projects are underway; which services are functioning well and which ones need work; which contractors, volunteers, board members, or committees are in charge of what tasks or decisions; and what NINC's (rather massive) Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) says about almost any relevant topic, as well as what our bylaws say.

The central coordinator, who ideally serves for a number of years, also carries some of the organization's institutional memory, is able to tell a new board of directors why previous boards made certain decisions, knows why various things in NINC function the way they do, and also knows whether or not "X" has ever happened before in NINC (and, if so, how it was handled). This is in addition to maintaining a historic archive of internal files and records.

The central coordinator also manages many mundane daily functions in NINC. Most first contacts with NINC from outside the organization go into my in-box ([admin@ninc.com](mailto:admin@ninc.com)), and I either deal with it, or I forward it to whoever within NINC should handle it. I also receive many emails every week from NINC members who need help with the !\$&#@^%? website (ex. can't access a particular page, have forgotten their password, are listed as "lapsed" even though they've got a receipt showing they've paid their dues, are locked out of membership services, can't find something in the *Nink* archives, etc.). I schedule Zoom meetings, I ask the board to approve things that committees want approved, I manage the NINC Facebook page and some of the e-lists, I make sure we renew the services NINC needs and change or cancel the ones we don't want, and so on.

The job also includes annual tasks, such as preparing the NINC affidavits for the Authors Coalition of America. (ACA is a U.S.-based organization that receives non-title specific reprographic royalty payments and distributes those funds among member organizations, including NINC. For more information, visit their [website](#).) So it's my job to remind you to fill out the online ACA form on our !\$&#@^%? website when you renew your membership each year. Which reminds me of another of the central coordinator's annual tasks: organizing membership renewals every year and updating NINC's membership information after renewals are over. I also organize the nuts and bolts of NINC elections (the slate of 2023 candidates is in this issue of *Nink*).

I don't engage in functions like setting policy, choosing or steering advocacy efforts, or determining projects and goals for NINC. That all falls within the territory of the board officers.

My role is to advise the board on whether or not the things they're interested in doing are in keeping with NINC's bylaws, our official policies (the PPM is regularly revised and updated, but the changes have to be voted on by the board), and NINC's established customs and culture.

NINC has always had a central coordinator, since its founding 33 years ago, but my immediate predecessor, Terey Ramin, changed and enhanced the role a great deal—and I am stepping into some very big shoes as I take over from her.

For more than 20 years before Terey's tenure, it was the central coordinator's job to send and receive mail, and to deposit checks. (I know there were some other tasks, too, but memory fades.) Back when NINC was young, most business and communication was printed on paper and mailed, and most dues and fees were paid by check. In those days, all NINC mail went to a post office box in Kansas, where this organization was (and still is) incorporated. Collecting checks from that P.O. Box and depositing them in NINC's bank account was one of the central coordinator's most crucial tasks, since dues and fees comprised the bulk of NINC's operating funds. This also meant that for many years, NINC only employed someone as central coordinator if they lived in Kansas. (Neither Terey nor I live there.)

Obviously, all that changed a lot by 2015, the year that NINC hired Terey to be the new central coordinator. (And it has changed so much by 2022 that ever since I opened a P.O. Box near me three months ago and made it NINC's official address... I have not received one single piece of mail there.) But by the time we no longer needed someone to check the NINC P.O. Box frequently and deal with the mail they found there, a whole lot of other things had also changed.

Today, for example, NINC is at least *ten times* the size it was in its first year, and our organization is growing fast these days. Our conference is much bigger and more complex than it was 30 (or 10) years ago. *Nink* was eight pages in the early years, with most of its contents focused on internal organizational news and letters to the editor; now it's a well-staffed publication with multiple feature articles and columns, and each issue is typically 11,000-25,000 words long, depending on the month. NINC has a website, multiple social media accounts, multiple e-lists, and a conference app. The benefits we offer to members include a legal fund and members-only discounts for various professional services, and we have multiple committees engaged in various projects. And, obviously, as NINC grows, we want to keep expanding the benefits that career novelists get from belonging to NINC.

All of this requires more infrastructure than NINC needed decades ago. After Terey Ramin was hired, she substantially increased the central coordinator's administrative and logistical tasks and responsibilities, which was a crucial development in NINC's evolution.

Correspondingly, one of the reasons I am well-suited to step into this job, now that Terey is retiring, is that 15 years ago as NINC president, I was actually doing many of the bureaucratic and administrative tasks, both small and large, that I now do as central coordinator. Although many aspects of this job are new to me, it also includes a number of responsibilities I've dealt with before. The daily operations management of this organization took up a lot of my time

when I was president, even though NINC was much smaller then; and that necessarily limited how much time I had available to pursue projects, plans, and goals for NINC. This would be even more true today, due to how much NINC has grown since then.

Having a central coordinator who handles the nuts-and-bolts of keeping NINC going creates room for the president—and the whole board—to work more effectively on the bigger picture of NINC's direction, future, goals, and projects. As central coordinator, I keep this vehicle moving forward while NINC's leaders continue crafting it into a ride that you find better and better with each passing year.

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*Laura Resnick is the author of 11 fantasy novels and, in the distant past, was also the author of 14 contemporary romance novels published under a pen name.*

# 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 (these groups are for NINC members only):**

- Email list for all Novelists, Inc. Members: <https://groups.io/g/NINCLINK>
- NINC Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/>
- Follow NINC on Twitter: [https://twitter.com/Novelists\\_Inc](https://twitter.com/Novelists_Inc)
- NINC on [Clubhouse](#): Novelists Inc Virtual Tiki Bar
- Critique/brainstorming group: <https://groups.io/g/NINKcritique>
- Traditionally published authors: <https://groups.io/g/NINCTradPubbedAuthors>
- SF/F & speculative fiction writers: <https://groups.io/g/NINCswordsandrayguns>
- Authors of thriller/crime/suspense: <https://groups.io/g/NINC suspense-thriller-crime>
- Discuss creating book covers: <https://groups.io/g/NINCcovercreators/>

## **Conference:**

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

## **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/>

## **Website (You must be logged in to access these services.)**

- Legal Fund: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/legal-fund/>
- Sample Letters: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/sample-letters/>
- Articles & Links: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/>

## **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
- 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.

NINC is committed to welcoming a diverse and inclusive membership to our organization and serving all members. No author will ever be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

### **Founders**

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

### **2022 Board of Directors**

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

- President: Lisa Hughey
- President-Elect: Celeste Barclay
- Secretary: Hallee Bridgeman
- Treasurer: Timothy Cerepaka
- Newsletter Editor: Harper St. George
- Advisory Council Representative: Steven Womack

### **Advisory Council**

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

- Kay Hooper
- Tawdra Kandle
- Barbara Keiler
- Julie Leto
- Pat McLaughlin
- Kasey Michaels
- Julie Ortolon
- Diana Peterfreund
- Pat Rice
- Erica Ridley
- Marianne Shock
- Wayne Stinnett
- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
- Steven Womack

## 2022 Committees

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

- Central Coordinator: Laura Resnick
  - Assistant Coordinator: Mica Stone
- 2022 Conference Committee
  - Conference Director: Mel Jolly
  - Assistant Conf. Director & Programming Chair: Tawdra Kandle
  - Assistant Prog. Chair: Hallee Bridgeman
  - NINC After Dark Coordinator: Tamsin Ley
  - Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
  - Assistant Hotel Liaison: Tegan Maher
  - Conference Registrar: Pam McCutcheon
  - Assistant Registrar: Stephanie Julian
  - Sponsorship Chair: Sarah Woodbury
  - Assistant Sponsorship Chair: Dylann Crush
  - Traditional Publishing Liaison: Victoria Thompson
  - App Coordinator & Graphic Design: Laura Hayden
- Authors Coalition Representatives: Rebecca Zanetti & Hallee Bridgeman
- Bookkeeper: Christy Wilson
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee
  - Chair: Celeste Barclay
  - Misti Boehm
  - Pooks Burroughs
  - Malorie Cooper
  - Lynn Emery
  - Pamela Kelley
  - Ellis Leigh
  - Hildie McQueen

- Alison Perry
- Harper St. George
- Samantha Silver
- Social Media Committee
  - Chair: Violet Howe
  - Sylvia McDaniel
- Membership Committee
  - Boyd Craven
  - Sarah Woodbury
- *Nink* Newsletter
  - Editor: Harper St. George
  - Acquisitions Editor: Trish Milburn
  - Copy Editor: Cynthia Moyer
  - Production Manager: Laura Resnick
- Nominating Committee
  - Chair: Wayne Stinnett
  - Tanya Anne Crosby
  - Katherine Garbera
  - Pamela M. Kelley
  - Kathryn Le Veque
  - Kristine Smith
- Discounts Program: Emilie Richards

### Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Laura Resnick  
 P.O. Box 331, Covington KY 41012  
[admin@ninc.com](mailto:admin@ninc.com)

*Address changes may be made on the website.*

### *Nink* Newsletter

*July 2022 edition – Vol. 33, No. 7*

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

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

Publication: 12 issues annually. Available in PDF, mobi and epub formats. Public issues redact NINC members-only information.

To change subscription preferences, please contact [admin@ninc.com](mailto:admin@ninc.com).

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