



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



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President's Voice

Here we go again.
The bell rings for round two.

By Celeste Barclay



During mid-July, Penguin Random House (PRH) announced a massive wave of layoffs and buyouts on the heels of Harper Collins doing the same at the beginning of the year. Editors, who'd not only been in the industry for decades, but many who'd spent the bulk of their tenure at PRH, have opted for the golden handshake, taking a sizable severance package before heading into the proverbial sunset.

According to the *Intelligencer* article, "[The Old Guard Is Out at Penguin Random House:](#)"

Many of the most influential editors have quietly decided to take the buyout, some for fear of being laid off later, others because they simply no longer recognize the place at which they've spent their entire careers. (McCreesh, 2023)

The old guard of experienced editors are leaving in droves, some to shuffle around to a different house and some to hang out shingles as independent professionals. A significant number are either retiring or leaving the industry as a whole. It's an unsettling time for people in the traditional publishing space. I recently described it to a friend as "a dumpster fire on the sun." Authors and their unpublished manuscripts find themselves orphaned, and many of the same manuscripts I've mentioned in previous articles continue to languish in virtual and physical piles. I empathize with these authors who suddenly find their career trajectory no longer following the course they'd originally set.

As much as things change, they remain the same. The unpredictability of publishing is its own predictability. Market volatility is nothing new. The cost of production, which affects supply, and current economic climates, which affect demand, are variables no author has ever been able to control. Even anticipating the rise and fall of genres, tropes, and themes is predictably unpredictable for authors when the acquisitions editors at the major houses were, and to a large extent continue to be, the gatekeepers.

We're in the trifecta right now. Cost of production is going up as we've witnessed by Amazon and Ingram changing their pricing guidelines for print books; the tightening of people's discretionary budgets as the cost of living continues to increase disproportionately to income raises; and the shuffling and exodus of editors who are no longer clearly conveying trends to agents, who by no fault of their own, cannot communicate trends to their clients.

Relationships many agents have spent decades cultivating have suddenly evaporated since their trusted editors are no longer with the house or imprint to whom the agent wishes to shop their client's manuscript. Agents are scrambling to predict who will stay, who will move, and who will disappear. The trickle-down effect is authors not knowing what types of stories to craft, not knowing to whom their agents should submit, nor knowing when to submit. Their own relationships with editors with whom they may have labored alongside to bring their books into the world are abruptly changing and even disintegrating.

It's neither an easy time for authors already publishing within the traditional space nor authors who wish to emerge into the traditional sphere. While I began my publishing career as an indie who was then headhunted by a small house, I strongly believe there are several genres where traditional publishing prevails. Upmarket, for instance, comes to mind. The connections editors and publicists have with influential book clubs and celebrity endorsements are often not within most indies' reach. Even genres with strong indie presence still have a place among the trad houses. There is no dearth of authors still striving for a traditional publishing contract or those who wish to remain with big houses.

What happens when the old guard leaves? It opens the door for the younger generations of editors to rise within the organizations. That should sound brightly optimistic, shouldn't it? The recent strike shows us that the glass is neither half-full nor half-empty. It's simply half. Younger professionals are better advocating for themselves, rightfully demanding a livable wage and championing the ongoing work-from-home model we adopted for three years. At the same time, with so many senior editors shutting doors behind them, the mentorship they themselves received in their early days has gone the way of all good things for the younger generations.

That leaves newer editors untethered to both their company and the agents approaching them. Many are learning on the fly how to negotiate deals while trying to make heads or tails of the stacks of manuscripts that are being assigned to them along with ones they've inherited. Consequently, the relationship between authors and editors is changing. Younger editors neither have the time nor the experience in many cases to work as closely with authors as their

veteran predecessors did. Plenty are looking for manuscripts that are 90+% done rather than going line-by-line with authors. The inevitable outcome, at least short-term, is significantly more rejections that might have previously been given the go-ahead.

That begs the question: how will this affect the literary world? I have no better answer to this than most of the questions I pose in my articles. But my suspicions are the continued growth of the indie sphere, the dilution of traditionally published books because of missed opportunities, and fewer people pursuing careers as trad house editors. Depending on where you sit, these may be positive or negative outcomes to you. One of the interesting things about publishing in general is that there's no age cap. People don't age out of writing or editing. It's one of the few professions where you find people well past the typical age of retirement continuing to work full-time.

For those who last, there's longevity in the careers. Some of the editors accepting the buyouts right now were in the industry for more than 40 years. That should offer glimmers of hope for the younger editors who can find their groove and hit their stride. There's the potential for agents and authors to cultivate new and lasting partnerships. The incoming waves of younger editors view the world through different paradigms, which are opening the doors to previously and currently marginalized authors and are leveraging modern tools for reaching readers. As with any industry exodus where the jobs haven't become obsolete, the void is eventually filled. Rather than seeing this as a vacuum that's sucking the life out of trad publishing, it's an uncharted horizon with myriad opportunities with which to fill that space.

Perhaps it's the recovering educator in me who loves posing open-ended questions. I put forth these:

1. What observations have you made about the current publishing situation?
2. How do they apply to you, both now and in the future?
3. Whether you're indie or trad, how do you capitalize on these events?

As a Southern California resident who's about to enter our annual fire season, I know what to expect. We have our necessities close at hand; we watch the way the wind blows; and we either relocate until the blaze is gone or we ride it out. As authors, we've donned our Teflon suits against this dumpster fire on the sun. We're watching the way the wind blows, and some authors are hunkering down to ride this out with their trad house while others are relocating into the indie, hybrid, or small house space. Either way, just like the resilience of fire season surviving Californians, authors are a hardy folk who are not easily scared away. When we have to, we rebuild. Our microcosm of the publishing world is no different. We aren't easily scared away, and we persevere because no matter what happens in the trad or indie spheres, people still want to sit down with a good book.

Reference

McCreesh, S. (2023, July 23). *The Old Guard Is Out at Penguin Random House*. *Intelligencer*. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/07/the-old-guard-is-out-at-penguin-random-house.html>

Celeste Barclay, a nom de plume, lives near the Southern California coast with her husband and sons. Before becoming a full-time author, she was a social studies and English teacher. She holds degrees in International Affairs (BA), Secondary Social Science (MAT), and Political Management (MPS). She channels that knowledge into creating rich historical romances that bring the heat.

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/>

In Memoria



**Janice Young Brooks aka Jill Churchill
Kathryn Seidick aka Kasey Michaels**



Janice Young Brooks/Jill Churchill (1943-2023)

“Though she be but little, she is fierce.”

—Shakespeare

By Victoria Thompson

Janice Young Brooks recently passed away, causing us to remember all she has done for Novelists, Inc., as one of the five co-founders and giving us the opportunity to honor her work as the very first president of NINC.

Janice Young Brooks (aka Jill Churchill) was small in stature, but as anyone who knew her will tell you, she had a gigantic spirit. Like most of the five founders of Novelists, Inc., she had served on the RWA Board of Directors and knew the challenges writers’ organizations face in trying to meet the needs of both published and unpublished folks. She recognized the need for a group dedicated only to published writers.

According to co-founder Jasmine Cresswell, Janice actually volunteered to be the first NINC president, accepting the challenge to create an organization that would genuinely meet the needs of published novelists. Janice’s organizational skills were amazing, and she genuinely

liked dealing with bylaws. As our first president, she led NINC during that all-important first year when no one was quite sure what was even possible. She listened to member input and led the formation of a unique group that has never been duplicated. She even managed NINC's membership database for many years, and at one point, she recruited her son, David, to serve a stint as NINC's Central Coordinator.

Like the typical NINC member, Janice was a prolific writer as well. She published 12 historical novels, including the World War II historical *Guests of the Emperor*, which was produced as an NBC movie of the week under the title *Silent Cries*. Her historical *Seventrees* won the American Association of University Women's Thorpe Menn Award. When the historical market suffered a downturn, Janice switched to writing cozy mysteries and published 22 of them. Her Jane Jeffries series won the Malice Domestic Agatha Award and the Mystery Readers International Macavity Award. She also wrote the critically acclaimed Grace and Favor series. She published her last book in 2013, and we hope she enjoyed time with her nine grandchildren, including a set of quintuplets!

We all owe Janice a debt of gratitude that she chose to use her unique skills to produce this organization which has benefited writers now for over 30 years. We will miss her, but she leaves behind a fabulous legacy.

Janice's complete obituary appears [here](#).

NINC members remember Janice Young Brooks

I have warm memories of the founding of NINC and of its early days. One day, at the beginning of our planning process, Janice, Rebecca Brandewyne, Marianne Shock, and I got together at the Colorado home of Maggie Osborne, and we spent the entire day grinding out the many nitty-gritty details that are essential to the smooth running of an organization such as NINC. When working on names for the organization, Rebecca was the one who said she didn't care if we called it Novelists, Incorporated, we just needed to pick a name and move on. And so we became NINC. In the evening, when we were all exhausted, Maggie's husband, George, suddenly appeared with a tray bearing five tall glasses of white wine and bowls of snacks. I think it was after our second glass that Janice volunteered to be the first president of NINC.

—Jasmine Cresswell

When I arrived at the first-ever NINC conference as a new, young writer who only knew a couple of people, Janice was so friendly and hospitable to me. Despite her being an experienced pro and the founder of this new organization, she treated me as an equal. I still remember how much I appreciated the way Janice included me in conversations that weekend, introduced me to other writers, and ensured that I felt like part of this remarkable community from the start.

—Laura Resnick

What I remember of her was that she was always upbeat and encouraging. My presidency came during a precarious time for NINC, but I could always count on Janice to offer pragmatic advice—and provide it with a laugh and the assurance that I’d be able to do whatever needed to be done.

—Barbara Keiler

I was treasurer way back at the beginning and remember working with Janice, whose son served as bookkeeper. We were all frustrated with the need to keep paper records and find a bank the board could access. Her volunteerism kept us going as one by one, she solved our problems with grace and caustic humor. She was invaluable in keeping NINC up and running in those early years. I wish we could have cloned her. My sympathies to her family.

—Patricia Rice

Janice Young Brooks was not only a whiz at organizing things—a skill she used extensively in getting NINC off the ground—but she was also a great writer and a great friend. After publishing 12 historicals, she switched to mystery, writing two successful and award-winning series. When I made the same switch, I asked her for advice. She gave me some very valuable pointers, offered to give me a cover quote, and then wrote me the most inspiring note of encouragement after reading the first book. I still have it 25 years later.

—Victoria Thompson

Janice Young Brooks, along with the other founding members, pioneered the way for an organization that has served our professional novelist community for over three decades. Without professional leaders such as Janice, many opportunities to learn and network would have gone untapped. It’s with heartfelt condolences that I wish Janice’s friends, family, and loved ones courage, comfort, and peace and my unwavering gratitude for all of Janice’s contributions to the publishing industry.

—Celeste Barclay, NINC President





Kathryn Seidick/Kasey Michaels (1943-2023)

By Michele Dunaway

I had the good fortune to consider NINC past President Kathryn (Kathie) Seidick a friend. In fact, she played a huge role in helping me gut the partial for what became my 2023 release *What Happens in the Air*, which marked my return to traditional publishing. Kathie passed away July 25, at age 79, surrounded by family. Her husband, Michael, whom she married in 1963, passed away in 2021.

Kathie, who wrote as Kasey Michaels, was a *New York Times* bestselling author of more than 110 books. Her awards are far too many to list: four coveted starred reviews from *Publishers Weekly*; RWA RITA award recipient; Waldenbooks bestseller; and the *Romantic Times* Career Achievement award for her Regency era historical romances. She appeared on the *Today* show and was the subject of a Lifetime cable TV show “A Better Way,” in conjunction with *Good Housekeeping* magazine—a program devoted to women and how they have achieved career success in the midst of motherhood (short version: “with great difficulty”).

Kathie, however, never let her success get in the way of her love for her family, friends, and writing colleagues. To NINC, she gave back constantly, by serving as a NINC president, by participating in NINC’s loops, by serving on the Advisory Council, and by being a resource on the critique loop. She was honest about the care she had to give her late husband and about her own illnesses, yet despite any challenges, she remained generous with her time and helped others hone their craft. She made me a better writer.

Kathie was a one-of-a-kind icon. In her own words, she said, “Seriously... I don’t write to change the world. I write to entertain, and I want my books to bring a smile, maybe a tear or two, but then more smiles—and just be the sort of story that, when the reader finally closes the book over the last page, she just sits there and sort of rubs at the back cover for a moment, wishing the story wasn’t over yet. That’s my dream.”

Kathie exceeded those dreams, and we are all better for it.

Her complete obituary appears [here](#).

NINC members remember Kathryn Seidick

I served on the NINC Board of Directors with Kasey (as I always called her). She worked hard as president-elect and, the year after that, as president, bringing tremendous energy and passion to her role. Kasey and I didn't always agree, but I always knew she had NINC's best interests at heart, and I respected her willingness to roll up her sleeves and get things done. She later brought that same level of commitment to chairing the NINC conference for several years, and its reputation and attendance numbers grew under her guidance. Kasey was a devoted family woman who adored her husband, kids, grandchildren—and even her various in-laws! She was a force of nature and will be dearly missed.

—Laura Resnick

My heartfelt condolences to Kathryn Seidick's friends, family, and loved ones during this challenging time. Kathryn was an invaluable member of our NINC community, serving as our organization's president in 2009 and going on to chair our conference. Her service to our organization helped make our annual conference not only one of the most highly respected events in our industry, but by bringing it to the Tradewinds, helped grow it into a highlight of our membership. To the people in Kathryn's life, I hope you find peace and solace.

—Celeste Barclay, NINC President

Victoria Thompson is a founding member and past president of Novelists, Inc., and the author of the Gaslight Mystery series and the Counterfeit Lady series.

Michele Dunaway, who served on the NINC board as Nink editor for three years, writes happily-ever-afters in small towns with wineries and hot air balloon races.

www.ninc.com

NINC 2023

Elevate

SEPTEMBER 20 - 24, 2023 | ST. PETE BEACH, FL



NINC 2023: ELEVATE is just around the corner—a little over a month away! Are you as excited as your conference team is?

You've probably noticed the conference posts on social media. Please *do* like and comment on those posts so more people can see them.

As you share your anticipation for the conference, you might have friends expressing severe FOMO. If they're already members, remind them to jump on registration right away next year. If they are *not* yet NINC members, encourage them to [go here](#) to check out the requirements and begin the process of joining the best professional fiction author organization in the world!

The window for cancelling registrations for an 80% refund has now ended. If you haven't secured your room reservation at the TradeWinds, please call 800-360-4016 and use group code: NINC

An important reminder! Only registered, paid attendees (NINC members and industry guests) will be permitted to participate in the conference (workshops, meals, roundtables, and other events). Also, remember that our policy is one registration per person: married couples and co-writing teams must each have their own registration.

Our **speaker lineup** is below. You'll note that we have a mix of teacher speakers and industry professional speakers. In case you didn't know ... we invite workshop presenters from three categories: **Featured Guest Speakers** (these are usually invited non-members who have an established body of expertise in a publishing and/or writing-related area), **Member Speakers** (pretty self-explanatory: NINC members who have demonstrated an area of expertise or interest from which we feel our attendees would benefit), and **Industry Guest Speakers** (these are people who have a publishing-related business—this includes our fabulous sponsors as well as attending Industry Guests who have pitched a workshop topic to the programming team).

We know we can't please everyone! If you have suggested a speaker to our team, and you're frustrated that your favorite isn't among our presenters this year, remember that while we can invite a speaker, we cannot force them to say yes! For instance, I've been inviting my Uncle Stevie (aka Stephen King) to speak for several years, and he's yet to agree. But I keep hoping . . .

Sarra Cannon

- The Path Back to Joy
- Elevate Your Focus with a Game Board Strategy

Nicholas Erik

- AI for Authors: How to Use AI to Supercharge Your Marketing
- The 80/20 Plan for Building from Five to Six Figures (and Beyond)

Margie Lawson

- What's the Visual?
- Making Silence BOOM!

Leslye Penelope

- World Building for Any Genre
- Creating a Story or Series Bible

Steve Pieper

- How to Hop off the Exclusive Hamster Wheel
- The Secret Sauce to Direct Sales

Erica Ridley

- Newsletter Masterclass (2-hour masterclass)

Alessandra Torre

- Bringing Your Books (and Income!) Back from the Dead
- How to Write Unputdownable Stories

M.K. Williams

- Leverage YouTube for Your Author Business
- Triple-Threat Author, Narrator, and Producer: Self-Publishing Audiobooks

Erin Wright

- Why Wide (And How to Thrive!)
- Using Print to Diversify Your Income

Carrie Elks

- Amp Up Your Income with a Personalized Plan

Melanie Harlow

- Road Repair: How to Stay in Your Lane Without Getting Stuck in a Rut

Ines Johnson

- Direct from the Page

Alice Briggs

- Peaceful Publishing

Dana Claire

- Unleash the Power of Book Swag and Merchandising

Michael Evans

- The Creator Economy: The Next Era of Publishing

Bonnie Paulson

- Build a 3-Month Successful Ad Strategy Specifically for the Successful Indie Author

Joe Solari

- The Power of Connection

John Logsdon, Bonnie Paulson, and Joe Solari

- How to Scale Your Author Business for Long-Term Success

Draft2Digital

- Game Changer: The New Frontier for Your Author Career

Google Play

- Grow with Google Play Books

Kobo Writing Life

- Digital Publishing in the Modern Age: Insights from Kobo

Kindle Vella

- Writing Serialized Stories with Kindle Vella

KDP

- Help your books stand out with Amazon Ads

Down Island Publishing

- Strong Authors, Strong Stories

Vellum

- Kindle Delivery Costs, Demystified

Writer MBA

- Creating Your Perfect Author Ecosystem

BookFunnel

- Your Books, Your Readers, Your Money: Selling Direct for Fun and Profit!

Reedsy

- Finding Success with Amazon Ads in 2023

Podium

- Audiobook Marketing: Reaching More Listeners

Lulu

- Owing the Customer Journey: Utilize Direct Sales Tactics to Grow Your Book Business

PublishDrive

- Unlock the Potential of Wide Publishing with PublishDrive

Plottr

- The Future of Authorship: Leveraging AI Tools for Book Planning, Character Development, and Research

Barnes & Noble Press

- Build a Following on Nook with the Power of Barnes & Noble Press

Written Word Media

- Unlocking Growth: 5 Essential Strategies for Expanding Your Reader Audience with Written Word Media

Confirmed sponsors joining us this year are:

- Amazon: KDP and Kindle Vella
- ACX
- Barnes & Noble Press
- BookBub
- BookFunnel
- Bookvault
- Down Island Publishing
- Draft2Digital
- Fairy Plot-Mother
- Google Play
- Kobo
- Lulu
- Plottr
- Podium
- PublishDrive
- Reedsy
- SAG-AFTRA
- SPF

- Vellum
- Writer MBA
- Written World Media

The general conference schedule as well as the list of announced featured speakers and current sponsors can be found [here](#).

Coming next month: Conference FAQs and our annual Conference Packing List!!

Your NINC2023 Conference Team:

- Conference Director: Mel Jolly
- Programming Chair/Assistant Conference Director: Tawdra Kandle
- Assistant Programming Chair: Dylann Crush
- Trad Liaison: Lou Aronica
- Sponsorship Chair: Sarah Woodbury
- Assistant Sponsorship Chair: Hallee Bridgeman
- Registrar: Lisa Hughey
- Assistant Registrar: Stephanie Julian
- Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
- Assistant Hotel Liaison: Tegan Maher
- App Coordinator and Designer: Laura Hayden
- NINC After Dark Coordinator: Tamsin Ley
- NINC After Dark Assistant: Deann Powell



Tawdra Kandle is the USA Today bestselling author of over 130 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.



Hot shots

Recently in the headlines

Authors and other creative workers sue or speak out against OpenAI

Earlier this month, the first authors' lawsuit against OpenAI/ChatGPT, seeking class-action status, was filed by authors Paul Tremblay and Mona Awad. Now three more authors—Sarah Silverman, Christopher Golden, and Richard Kadrey—are suing for copyright infringement and seeking class-action status. They also filed a separate lawsuit against Meta for the same reasons. All plaintiffs are represented by the same law firm.

So far, OpenAI and Meta have not responded to the suits. Most industry experts believe that, for a variety of reasons, the chances of legal success are slim. But the creative community revolt is fully underway. Thousands of writers have signed a [letter](#) from the Authors Guild asking OpenAI, Alphabet, and Meta to stop using their work without permission or compensation. [Learn more in the *New York Times*](#) (gift link) or at [NPR](#).

While copyright lawsuits against OpenAI may not succeed, other efforts might. The FTC is now investigating potential consumer harm due to collection of data and the company's security practices. At a U.S. government hearing, the chair of the FTC said, "ChatGPT and some of these other services are being fed a huge trove of data. There are no checks on what type of data is being inserted into these companies." There have been reports of people's sensitive information showing up. [Learn more](#) (gift link).

High-profile layoffs at Penguin Random House spark media coverage

After offering voluntary separation to selected staff, PRH has now laid off dozens of people. The CEO wrote in an announcement to employees that while the book market has grown, so have inflation and costs.

Due to the respected figures who are now departing—either voluntarily or not—major media outlets such as the [Associated Press](#), [New York magazine](#), and [ABC](#) are covering the news. And of course so are the publishing trade outlets [Publishers Weekly](#) and [Publishers Lunch](#) (sub required).

SAG-AFTRA goes on strike alongside the WGA

The Screen Actors Guild, which includes film and TV actors, journalists, radio personalities, recording artists, voice actors, internet influencers, and more, is now officially on strike. Primary concerns are like those of the WGA: the problematic economics of streaming and the use of AI. A good idea of what's at stake can be found in [this actor's story](#) of having his likeness used in an online game without his consent and without compensation. During the strike, union members may continue working on audiobooks. [Learn more.](#)

Bookstat launches its own bestseller lists

Bookstat, an industry data service that tracks online book sales, has launched its own monthly bestseller lists, [available via LinkedIn](#). There are two top-20 lists per month, one for ebooks and one for digital audio. For June 2023, two self-published authors made the list: Catharina Maura and Emily Rath.

Bookstat also looked back at the last 12 months of sales and posted bestseller lists that include indie authors Lucy Score, David Goggins, Caroline Peckham, Freida McFadden, and Meghan Quinn.

Those unfamiliar with Bookstat may recall Author Earnings, a very early incarnation of the service that was launched in partnership with indie author Hugh Howey; [it became Bookstat in 2018](#). Bookstat was [purchased](#) in August 2022 by Podium.

Book sales update

So far, U.S. print book sales have declined about 3% this year versus 2022. The decline this year is mostly affecting juvenile nonfiction (-7.8%), juvenile fiction (-5.3%), and adult nonfiction (-4.8%). Adult fiction continues to grow versus 2022, up 4.1%, with romance leading the way. Other fiction categories performing well: horror and fantasy.

IMHO: Threads is fine, just fine

Twitter's decline and the emergence of alternatives highlights the ephemeral nature of social media for platform building

What I noticed most about the launch of Threads two weeks ago was that the writer and book-lover community was ready—oh, so ready!—to jump on board and immediately begin *community building*. I say that with just a hint of sarcasm, because overall the posting was indeed friendly and focused on wholesome activities like book recommendations and writerly memes.

But boy, within the first hour of setting up my account, I saw users posting obvious engagement bait to rack up as many likes, shares, and follows as possible during the early adopter window. The only problem is this early adopter window lasted maybe a few days, at best. Threads now has more than 150 million users. Compare that to Twitter alternatives Bluesky (less than a half million, invite-only) and Mastodon (several million, perhaps, decentralized). Threads has the built-in advantage of seamlessly porting people over from Instagram, with the experience and professionalism of Meta (Facebook).

Professionalism. It's funny how I value that like never before. Dependable, consistent, a bit boring. Not prone to inexplicable decisions or [penis-measuring contests](#). I admit to feeling relief at Threads' successful launch, despite its problems and drawbacks—of which there are quite a few.

- Looking for innovative features? Or even the same features as competitors? Nope, but maybe later.
- Want to delete your Threads account? You can't—not without deleting your Instagram account (which is required to join). You can, however, deactivate your Threads profile.
- Lots of data about you may be collected by Meta, and you'll find a lot of scary screenshots to this effect, but honestly, what *don't* they know about me at this point? I don't mean to make light of the privacy concerns, but that ship sailed a long time ago for this internet citizen.
- Celebrities, brands, and influencers clog the general feed. Even if you've never followed them or expressed the slightest interest, there they are anyway. I've probably spent half my time on Threads hitting the mute button repeatedly.

Despite these issues, my [Threads posts](#) have far more engagement as of today (with ~2,500 followers) than on Twitter, where I have ~212,000 followers. It's that old cliché of the frog being boiled alive. I almost didn't realize how dead I'd become on Twitter until I began posting in this new, robust social media environment and immediately enjoyed 100 likes without even trying that hard. Now I remember what it feels like to actually reach people who follow you! Twitter, of course, is not the only network that's suppressed reach. Facebook did that first and best, and the same thing will happen, in time, on Threads.

What I now wonder is how agents and publishers might need to rethink what it means to demand authors have a particular kind of online following. Is a Twitter following as meaningful as it once was? As a longtime user, I can tell you absolutely not. But building on any of these networks is building on shifting sands; you can't trust that whomever you reach today will be there tomorrow. That's why, in my writings and classes, I stress the importance of owning your audience in the form of an email newsletter list that you control and using other forms of outreach that aren't dependent on the beneficence of Big Tech companies.

Bottom line: If you're looking for a black-and-white verdict on whether you should get on Threads, I don't have one to offer. But there's definitely a target author group that's destined to do well: anyone who's already on Instagram and doesn't hate it, and anyone who is or was on Twitter and wishes for the good old days. Give it a try.

Trailblazes

Opportunities, launches, and startups

New Harlequin imprint inspired by TikTok

Aimed at the under-35 romance reader, Afterglow will build on TikTok's #spicytok content, releasing two trade paperback titles a month starting in January 2024. In the [announcement](#), senior editor Stacy Boyd said, "Afterglow is that feeling after a beautiful moment, achievement, or experience—it takes readers to the happy part of life. It's timeless, positive, and rings true for the characters in these books."

Wattpad now offers a scheduling tool

Authors can now plan and schedule when new chapters go live at Wattpad. Once scheduled, authors can still make edits and change the timing of release. [Learn more.](#)

Links of Interest

AI

- **The Associated Press has struck a deal with OpenAI.** It's a two-year agreement to share access to news content dating back to 1985. In exchange, AP will get access to OpenAI's tech and product expertise. [Read Sara Fischer at Axios.](#)
- **A famous author is reportedly stuck in contract negotiations over AI.** On Twitter, author Maureen Johnson claims that a major publisher wants to train AI on the work of a "Very Famous Author." She noted, "This person will talk publicly when they can. They can't right now." [Read the entire thread.](#)

Amazon

- **Amazon changes sourcing for book sales in Europe.** Claiming it's necessary to meet sustainability goals, Amazon now requires U.S. publishers to make their books available closer to point of sale in Europe, rather than shipping from where they are printed. Of course this raises the costs for publishers, not Amazon. [Read Jim Milliot in *Publishers Weekly*.](#)
- **Amazon's Audible has a new chief content officer.** This article includes a stat that Audible controls an estimated 63 percent of the audiobook market. [Read Amrita Khalid at Hot Pod.](#)
- **No more Kindle in China.** Amazon is discontinuing its Kindle presence in China and will remove the Kindle app from Chinese stores by next summer. [Read Sovan Mandal at Good E-Reader.](#)

*Reprinted and condensed from [The Hot Sheet](#). Jane Friedman has 20 years of experience in the publishing industry, with expertise in business strategy for authors and publishers. She's the co-founder and editor of *The Hot Sheet*, a paid newsletter for authors, and has previously worked for *Writer's Digest* and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.*

Game On!

By Elaine Isaak



Many novelists are discovering the rewards of writing for games, whether game-ifying their own concepts or as staff or freelance writers for established gaming properties. In 2022, an estimated [3.2 billion people](#) worldwide played games, and the average age of a gamer is 31. Led by video games and mobile gaming, the gaming industry aims for total earnings around \$300 billion for this fiscal year, or about seven times the size of the [publishing industry](#). Who wouldn't want a piece of that pie?

Gaming has many different roles for writers. In the last year, I've seen opportunities from writing flavor text for *Magic: The Gathering* cards to story development for *Call of Duty*. While many associate gaming with science fiction and fantasy, romance and mystery are very popular —just about every commercial genre of fiction has an analog in gaming. In this article, I'll look at different ways that writers can engage with the gaming market.

Game-based text

One growth area is literary role-playing games, or LitRPG, a hybrid of novel craft with game-like elements. [According to K-lytics](#), Google searches for LitRPG have doubled in the last two years. The character progresses through levels in a game environment and may encounter messages, statistic (stat) displays, or text that replicate video or tabletop games. Sold through familiar pathways, these books appeal to readers of related genres as well as gamers. They can be indie, specialty press, or trad published titles.

Timothy Cerepaka, who writes LitRPG as [Lucas Flint](#), describes the genre as, "usually set in either (designed by the author) VR video games or worlds that operate by video-game-like

rules, starring characters who generally start off weak and must become stronger via leveling up, getting new skills and equipment, and so on.” Character journeys might involve dungeon adventures, defeating bad guys, or just learning to brew the best ale.

He started writing LitRPG after reading a number of books in the genre. Look for reader groups on Facebook and Reddit where you can learn more about what readers respond to. While it helps to be a gamer already, you can also research game design. Cerepaka advises, “When readers tell you that it feels like a real video game, or even better, that they want to play a video game based off your book—that’s how you know you got it right.”

Writing a good LitRPG requires keeping track of mathematical details like experience points and progress toward the next level, which Cerepaka initially found frustrating, and may be off-putting to some authors hoping to enter the genre. You can work with specialist editors who will help ensure consistency throughout the work. He notes that the genre is huge in audiobooks, and he recommends getting your LitRPG into audio as quickly as possible.

If you’re interested in the concept of game-based fiction but don’t want to lean into the statistics, a related genre, GameLit, presents novels inspired by gaming but is less focused on game-style mechanics. *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline is one example.

Text-based games

Also called interactive fiction, in these games the screen and the player/reader’s interaction is entirely driven by text. Illustrations may show characters or settings, but they’re not necessary to the game. If you’ve read a choose-your-own-adventure novel, this will sound familiar. However, computers allow for a wider range of choices, and the algorithms keep track so the player’s choices affect what they see later on, through direct options like the character’s name or interest in romance but also through stats that reflect player choices and successes or failures.

During the pandemic, I wrote a superhero project, *Skystrike: Wings of Justice*, for Choice of Games (CoG), an industry leader. Of note for romance writers, they have an imprint dedicated to romance games, and all of the games are encouraged to include strong romantic lines. I pitched a few ideas and sent a sample of my work. I was invited to expand one pitch into an outline then a complete game. CoG pays an advance against royalties, portioned as you submit groups of chapters, ensuring the author gets editorial feedback at early stages of the process.

A CoG author is also the programmer, creating the syntax that controls the game simultaneously with the text the reader sees. The programming language, ChoiceScript, is available for anyone, and you can release games independently as well. It’s very well supported with online resources and tutorials, but the process is finicky because a small error can result in an unplayable game.

I enjoyed the brainstorming and creative aspects of game development. Instead of committing to a single option for the protagonist’s action, I developed three to five and explored the consequences of each. For my superhero game, those choices might range from trying to convince someone to trust you, to flying them over a waterfall and threatening to drop them. It

was liberating to imagine a play-through by a Captain America type who wanted to do the honorable thing versus one inflected by a Deadpool sensibility, and offer fun choices for each of them.

One source of frustration was the intensity of feedback not only from the editors and copy editors at CoG, but also from beta players prior to the release of the game. It required a lot of fine-tuning to have the right text show up and to track down bugs—like one that funneled almost all players into a failure scenario! My game is about three times as long as one of my novels, because of all the options available.

Other interactive fiction opportunities include apps like Chapters, which works with freelancers. You can create and release independently using [Twine](#) or other [interactive fiction tools](#).

From the reader/player perspective, part of the fun is getting a different experience with every read-through. It places the reader in the driver's seat of your novel, a release of control that may not suit every novelist. I found novelist Max Gladstone's [articles](#) and interviews about writing CoG games based on his novels to be very helpful.

Text and story for games

Many graphic-based and tabletop games offer opportunities for writers, including story development—guiding storylines that play out through video or other interactions—or drafting dialogue for on-screen interactions with various NPCs (Non-Player Characters). Most video games involve several story-oriented roles, incorporating elements of novel writing like character arcs or world-building.

Novelist and screenwriter [Christine Ellis](#) works as a narrative designer at Tactile Games, creating mobile games (as opposed to video games or console-based games). At some studios, the designer strictly works on the narrative system and how the pipeline works (who will take care of each phase of story development, and what order those phases take place). Narrative design is a more technical role, while game writing is more creative, focused on story arcs and character dialogue. At other studios, including her employer, narrative design and game writing are closely linked, and Ellis enjoys the more creative aspects of game writing. She works on Lily's Garden, a free-to-play (f2p), story-driven, match-three game ("think Candy Crush with an ongoing narrative").

Studios may include story or game directors, who maintain the vision and voice of the game as a whole, with narrative designers handling smaller units (chapters, episodes or levels). Her work takes place in the Unity game development engine.

Game writing for existing works is hugely collaborative, perhaps more so than film or television, in Ellis's experience. "Nothing you write, and no decision you make, is ever entirely up to you. If you can embrace that, you'll be a very successful (and much happier) game writer/narrative designer!" She's come to enjoy the collaboration, seeing a character concept from her words become a 2D, then 3D vision.

“As a fiction writer, I was used to writing stories that exist in a kind of bubble. There’s no guarantee that anything you write will ever be published. Not true in games! The dialogue I write is released a few weeks later and then your words are just out there, in the world, being experienced by players,” Ellis says.

This reflects my own experience, where I could envision players investing in my words in very personal ways as they played.

Much of the creativity is governed by game parameters, and also the players, but this can also be freeing. Ellis says, “When faced with super strict story parameters, try not to think of them as limitations but instead as opportunities. Some of the coolest ideas and the best creativity can come out of working with, even celebrating, the limits of design.”

The industry itself can be frustrating, with misogyny and sexism often earning headlines in recent years. Thanks to that new awareness, though, Ellis feels the industry is moving in a more positive direction.

Online games aren’t the only opportunity for writers, however, and many big-name properties have opportunities for work-for-hire and freelance writing. If you were ever a Dungeons and Dragons player, license holder Wizards of the Coast enables independent writers to develop supplements for the game.

Historical novelist [Christopher M. Cevasco](#) finds this to be a fun outlet for his interest in world-building and bringing historical details to life. The supplements incorporate some flavor text that’s more similar to fiction, but the bulk of the work is developing new game mechanics and applying existing ones. He’s written independent materials for D&D, making them available through the officially sanctioned [DmsGuild](#) store, as well as working with a supplement publisher.

When asked to consider how game writing compares with novels, Cevasco summed it up well, saying, “In a novel, the author has the final say on a character’s journey, but in a game, the player does, so the creator has to provide all the tools necessary for the player to complete that character’s arc in a way that feels grounded and defined but is also open-ended enough to accommodate unanticipated variation.”

Indeed, part of the fun is developing unexpected moments for interaction, the little Easter eggs that delight gamers and keep them coming back. Even more so than when a reader interprets the author’s words, game writing is a collaboration between story-creators and the player, with a unique set of challenges and rewards.

Game writing resources

- *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* by Jesse Schell
- *The Art of Failure* by Jasper Juul
- Emily Short’s interactive storytelling [Emshort.blog](#)
- <https://sub-q.com/making-interactive-fiction-narrative-design-for-writers-part-1/>

- List of resources and job boards: <https://t.co/L045eykwu1>
- [GameJobs.co](https://www.gamejobs.co)
- Mitch Sabbagh on Twitter [@Watfen64](https://twitter.com/Watfen64) for job postings

Elaine Isaak writes knowledge-inspired adventure fiction, including the [Bone Guard](#) archaeological thrillers. If you're curious about interactive fiction, you can play the first [three chapters of Skystrike](#) for free.

Libraries Under Fire

Lessons from the front lines of book bans

By Margo Fisher-Bellman, MA



In 2002, I was a second-year English teacher in a struggling northern Ohio town. Poverty was rampant, and investment in education was inconsistent. That year, 15 percent of my students were parents; of the 88 counties in Ohio, our county had the highest teen pregnancy rate. My job? To get seniors to read and write at a level that would boost job opportunities—and occasionally, college acceptance. That year, our English department adopted several titles, including Mark Mathabane’s apartheid memoir *Kaffir Boy*. As a Black South African, Mathabane’s memoir reflects the brutality of apartheid—and while my students’ lives differed, many were living the brutality of poverty. When I first read the book, I knew it would speak to them.

I discovered a parent was challenging the book when my principal called me to his office and berated me for teaching it. The parent referenced a specific page, which was open and tabbed on his desk. However, it was a board-approved text. I was not going rogue; I was doing my job. I was lucky to have the support of two department chairs. Conversely, I had a very conservative principal who was furious with me. As a 23-year-old woman in a small town where I had no ties, nothing felt safe. The same day, a Toledo reporter let me know this parent contacted her about the book. The reporter’s first question for the parent: “Have you read the entire book?” When the parent replied no, the reporter declined the story and promptly reached out. When the student arrived to class, I asked her privately if she would like an alternative title to read. She replied definitively: “I’m 19. My mom isn’t taking the book from me. She just wants other parents to be aware.” My jaw hit the floor. I emailed the mother to verify—and the student was correct. I was stunned.

I found [Mathabane’s website](#) and messaged him directly via his contact page. I assumed that missive would go unanswered, but writing it gave me the catharsis I needed. Surprisingly,

Mathabane contacted me in less than 24 hours. He and his team continued to email me throughout the ordeal, providing much-needed support. As news of the challenge spread within the school, students devoured the book. Although I had to pause the unit, I was able to resume within the week; however, the book has not been taught within the district in 10 years or more, and I cannot fathom its adoption today.

As a teacher in 2002, I never envisioned our 2023 world. Then, I believed I was witnessing small-town life. Now, the state of book challenges in the U.S. is otherworldly. As a current high-school librarian, I frequently encounter stakeholders who ask how they can support our library. While my initial experience with challenges is more than 20 years old, it taught me lessons I still rely on today, which any book advocate can find helpful.

Book challenges frequently involve a factor that seems fictitious

Like my experience with the parent who had no intention of taking the book from her child, many reports of challenges seem like works of fiction—including the [May 2023 Washington Post report](#) that 11 people accounted for the majority of the nation’s book challenges in the 2021–2022 academic year. According to Hannah Natanson, the *Post* analyzed over 1,000 challenges and found that 43 percent of those challenges targeted books with LGBTQ characters, while 36 percent targeted books featuring characters of color. Furthermore, 60 percent came from repeat challengers who reported at least 10 books. Often, these challengers organize via conservative advocacy groups like Moms for Liberty. Natanson also revealed that some challenges were submitted under the same name by multiple individuals to maintain anonymity, as exemplified by Jennifer Pippin from central Florida, a founding member of Moms for Liberty. In 16 percent of the cases, challengers claimed the books were “illegal” due to obscenity laws and recent legislation, predominately originating in Texas and Florida. Yet, these issues are nationwide.

A central Ohio school librarian, who preferred to remain anonymous, also shared a tale of the vocal minority. In their rural district, the Sora ebook platform from OverDrive was banned without warning. A board member sent the district superintendent a link to an article from Blaze Media, a conservative company founded by Glenn Beck, that claimed a California school district banned Sora (and other digital reading sites) after finding “inappropriate” material. After a month of meetings, Sora was reinstated in the librarian’s district. Nonetheless, this disruption impacted the work of classes. To ensure a student could complete a project, one teacher even purchased a book for that student. While it may seem implausible that one biased article sent to an administrator can affect an entire school district’s progress, similar stories are unfolding across the country. However, it’s not just school libraries that face threats to digital reading.

A [Book Riot article](#) from July 2023 by Kelly Jensen highlights the impact of Mississippi Code 39-3-25. This law, effective July 1, 2023, restricts young readers’ access to digital books from public libraries. Noncompliant libraries could face fines of \$500 minimum. Underage accounts were frozen as of July 1, but parents/guardians can provide in-person permission for their

children. Jensen emphasizes, “This move by the state ensures that those with the least privileges —those in unstable homes, those without regular internet access, and those without active parents or guardians in their lives—have even fewer opportunities to utilize public goods and services.”

Mississippi is not the only state legislating libraries. In 2022, Missouri implemented similar measures through Senate Bill 775, making it a criminal offense to provide students with visually explicit depictions. Violators could face up to a year in jail or a fine of up to \$2,000. [Kate Grumke of St. Louis Public Radio](#) reported that a Wentzville, Missouri, school librarian encountered police visits twice following parental complaints. Police in libraries seem Bradburyian, yet it is now the stuff of headlines.

Teachers and librarians need support

Throughout my 22-year education career, parents and community members have been invaluable advocates. We often hear stories about the rise of challenges, but what does that look like in local schools? While I initially taught in a rural school district, my current position is in an urban district, Cincinnati Public Schools. In 2016, CPS implemented an equity policy and an anti-racism policy followed in 2020. These policies safeguard students and employees and impede challenges to materials. While equity policies might seem more viable in urban environments, their significance cannot be underestimated in any district.

One northeastern Ohio school librarian, who wished to remain anonymous, reported that board policies from the 1990s aided in a recent challenge to a picture book, the first challenge in the district over the last decade. The policy required a citizen request form with rationale. The librarian then took pointers from a 2022 challenge in Hudson schools, another Ohio district, targeting three titles: form an evaluation committee, create a “book resume,” examine legal precedent, and keep committee minutes for public record. While these procedures allowed Hudson schools, which also had board policies in place, to retain two of the three challenged books, all committee members, which included staff and community members, supported retaining the book in this librarian’s district. Additionally, the librarian noted a significant increase in public records requests in recent years.

Advocating for policies regarding equity, anti-racism, and/or challenges to materials can greatly impact the work of local schools. Many districts have their board policies online in a searchable format. Familiarizing yourself with the policies of local districts allows you to advocate students’ right to read. School boards typically post their meeting schedules providing an opportunity to attend and connect with local teachers and school librarians. As an author and community member, your advocacy can have an incredible impact.

Use the internet to help

Although I could not utilize social media in 2002, I could directly link to an author for support. Leverage your social media to connect to local schools, teachers, and libraries. Follow

hashtags like #censorship and #bookban, and, most importantly, follow the [American Library Association](#). The ALA, through its Office of Intellectual Freedom, has been integral in the fight against censorship. As book banning has increased, their data mining and advocacy have been unprecedented. The [ALA reports](#) that 2022 had the highest number of challenges reported in the 20-year history of gathering data. The 1,269 challenges reported nearly doubled the 729 reported in 2021. The ALA further delineates those challenges by where they occur, by whom, and why. [Donations to the ALA](#) support their important work that librarians rely on daily. Additionally, the ALA also sponsors an annual Banned Books Week and provides materials libraries can use to promote the week. This year, Banned Books Week is the first full week of October. Use your social media to promote Banned Books Week and get your followers talking about how they, too, can support students' rights to read.

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Margo Fisher-Bellman, MA, is entering her 23rd year in education. She spent 19 years as an English teacher and is starting her fourth year as a high-school librarian. She has also taught pre-service teachers at Wright State University and Mount St. Joseph. She currently works at Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati, Ohio.

K-Dramas

Binge watch your way to better stories

By Trish Milburn



A significant amount of creative inspiration can be absorbed while engaging in an activity most people just do for fun—watching TV. A summer binge of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* helped give me the inspiration to keep writing before I got published. Years later, when I was in a writing slump, stepping a bit further afield in my viewing gave me renewed inspiration. Watching stories that are set in another part of the world, written from another country’s perspective, and in another language, seems to spark the creative brain in different ways. It transports us out of our own cultural bubble, allowing us to see similar scenes played out in different ways.

For instance, romance writers can benefit from watching how K-drama writers create sexual tension with a simple look, an accidental touch, a gradual getting-to-know-you phase. There’s nothing wrong with writing hot, steamy romance novels, but there is the risk of losing the loveliness of watching a romance slowly bloom. This approach extends beyond fiction, as it’s even seen in the reality dating show *Single’s Inferno*—which I resisted watching because I hate American dating shows. But once I did give in and give it a try, I was quickly hooked. There was no hanky-panky in hot tubs or even kissing. You watched as two people got to know each other slowly while drinking coffee on the beach or cooking dinner for the entire cast in an outdoor kitchen.

Korean dramas (K-dramas) are increasing in popularity around the world, so much so that one (*Squid Game*) is the most-watched drama in Netflix’s history, in any language. They appeal to viewers in ways that authors endeavor to appeal to readers: great characters, emotional and relatable stories, original plots, excellent world building, and effective use of tropes.

Story arc

Though this is changing thanks to the Netflixification of K-dramas, one of the things that initially drew me to them was their one-season-and-done formula. Typically, these solo seasons of a drama are 16 episodes, so the writers know exactly how much space they have to tell a complete story. Thus, watching one of these dramas is a good way to see how a story is constructed and feel the flow of when certain things happen in different genres.

In the majority of romance dramas, that first kiss is going to come somewhere around episode nine or 10. Also, it's often easier for my brain to absorb these peaks and valleys of a story and internalize them while watching something rather than reading it.

Characterization

K-drama writers are masters at creating great characters and character chemistry. This is thanks both to the writing and the actors portraying those well-crafted characters. We can take inspiration by seeing the play of emotions over a character's face or the hesitance in their gestures. These stories have the ability to really make us love or hate characters, sometimes making us change our opinion from the beginning to the end of the story.

There is a wide array of heroes on offer among the leading men of K-dramas. There are dark heroes aplenty, ones such as Do Hyeon Su, an antisocial and complicated husband/father/possible serial killer in *Flower of Evil*, and Kim Do Gi, a vigilante in *Taxi Driver*.

But you can also look to K-dramas for some of the most swoon-worthy, green-flag heroes, those who respect boundaries, are protective but not overprotective, ask permission, are kind, and are comfortable talking about feelings. Prime examples are the characters of Lee Jun Ho in *Extraordinary Attorney Woo* and Ri Jeong Hyuk in *Crash Landing on You*.

If strong female characters are important for your stories, then you'll love the female leads who aren't on the screen just to advance the male plot. Dr. Kang Mo Yeon in *Descendants of the Sun* is a cardiothoracic surgeon working in a war zone. Go Ae Shin in *Mr. Sunshine* is a sniper in the Righteous Army, who fought for the freedom of Joseon (Korea's previous name) against the Japanese, and who is every bit as skilled as the male lead. *Rookie Historian Goo Hae Ryung* mixes humor with the strong female lead, who is a palace historian in a period when women were not allowed to write historical records.

Some of the best villain characters I've ever encountered are from K-dramas as well. Shin Ye Eun's portrayal of high school bully Park Yeon Jin in *The Glory* is chilling, and the evil Queen Consort Cho in *Kingdom* is often scarier than the zombies. They will make you scream and want to throw things at your television. If you remember the visceral power of that feeling, you can channel it into writing your next villain.

Emotion

K-drama writers don't pull emotional punches. You will laugh, you will cheer, and oh, will you cry. If you need to write a story or scene that will make your readers cry buckets, watch any of the following with tissues at the ready: *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*, *Goblin: The Great and Lonely God*, *Moon Lovers: Scarlet Heart Ryeo*, *Navillera*, or *Move to Heaven*.

Setting/world building

Great cinematography can inspire scene setting and world building. Beautiful Jirisan National Park in *Jirisan* made me want to hop on a plane to visit Korea. The prehistoric setting in *Arthdal Chronicles* works in tandem with the characters to pull you fully into the story. You'll get gorgeous costumes along with nefarious plots in the multitude of palace intrigue dramas set in the Goryeo, Silla, Baekje and Joseon dynasties.

Plot/plot twists

Every time I tell my best friend (also an author) about a K-drama I'm watching, she always notes the originality of the stories.

One thing you'll quickly notice is there is a significant emphasis on romance. About 90% of Korean drama scriptwriters are women, compared to 48% for American television. Some, like the Hong sisters and Kim Eun Sook, are household names.

But no matter the subgenre of romance you write, you'll be able to find something in the K-drama world to inspire you except erotica. K-dramas as a whole are more wholesome, though that's changing somewhat as they become more popular internationally. Even the movie *Love and Leashes* that deals with BDSM has a different tone than if it were a movie from the U.S. or many other Western countries.

As of May, seven of the top 10 non-English language series of all time on Netflix were Korean. *Squid Game* was also the overall winner of any language, beating *Stranger Things* season four by around 300 million watch-hours.

Those numbers tell us that these stories are connecting, particularly when you consider some English speakers balk at having to read subtitles.

As *Parasite* Director Bong Joon Ho said while accepting the Academy Award for Best Picture, "Once you overcome the one-inch tall barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films."

Effective use of tropes/originality

As much as some deride tropes, there is no denying that they appeal to readers and viewers. Whatever tropes are your favorites to write, you'll find something to get your creative neurons firing within the world of K-dramas.

Write romance? You'll find the classic tropes of star-crossed lovers (*Crash Landing on You*, a love story between a South Korean heiress and a North Korean soldier—can't get much more

star-crossed than that), enemies to lovers (*Hometown Cha-Cha-Cha*), friends to lovers (*Weightlifting Fairy Kim Bok Joo*), fake relationship/forced proximity (*1% of Something*), and rom com (*Strong Woman Do Bong Soon*).

Need inspiration for your crime/mystery or paranormal? Check out *Tunnel*, *He is Psychometric*, *Stranger*, *Beyond Evil*, *Signal*, and *Flower of Evil*.

Horror is done really well in South Korea. Even zombie dramas have an interesting variety: *Kingdom* (historical), *All of Us Are Dead* (high school set), and *Train to Busan* (heart-tugging father/daughter relationship). Other types of horror that will keep you on the edge of your seat: *Hellbound* (scary smoke creatures drag people to hell at an appointed time), *Hotel del Luna* (heroine runs a hotel for ghosts who haven't yet moved on to the afterlife), and *Duty After School* (high-school students are required to undertake military training each day after school to help fight off an alien invasion).

Fantasy, folklore, and paranormal K-dramas are among my favorites. Again, there is an impressive variety of stories: *Alchemy of Souls* (mages), *Lovers of the Red Sky* (ghosts, demons and gods), *Train* (a murder mystery in which a train serves as a portal between worlds), *Tomorrow* (grim reapers with an unexpected twist), and several dramas with a gumiho, the nine-tailed fox of folklore, as a central character (*My Roommate is a Gumiho*, *Tale of the Nine Tailed*).

Sci-fi has not been as common as other genres, but there are some really good ones. *My Love from the Star* is about an alien who lands on Earth during the Joseon Dynasty and 400 years later falls in love with a top actress. Movies *JUNG_E* and *Space Sweepers* are space opera. Romances with robots or AI as love interests include *My Holo Love* and *Are You Human Too?*

Social commentary

If your novels involve social commentary, there are excellent K-dramas that provide this while not sacrificing telling an engaging story. *Light on Me* addresses the stigma around gay relationships and the harm that stigma can cause. *Squid Game's* driving force is wealth inequality and desperation. *Hellbound* shines an unflattering light on human nature, selfishness, how easily people can be led into a religious cult, and the danger of letting religion and government become one. *Weak Hero Class 1* is an unflinching look at the scourge of school bullying.

The big boost in K-drama viewing received during the pandemic continued to increase even after life began inching back toward normal. That people continue to seek out dramas that require them to read what is being said is a good indicator that these stories speak to viewers. We can look to these dramas as inspiration to write our own stories, ones that turn people willing to read their TV screens into readers of our books.

USA Today bestselling author Trish Milburn, an avowed fan of both K-dramas and K-pop music, has used both to inspire her *Idol in Love* K-pop romance series and her *Could Have Been a K-drama* novella series.

A Deep Dive into Fantasy Fiction

By Lindsay Randall



Finding the exact origins of the fantasy genre can be as elusive as defining its boundaries in today's marketplace.

While it was once an add-on to the realms of science fiction and horror, the popularity of fantasy fiction, with all its variations, continues to grow. [Oprahdaily.com](#) touted 2022 as a "spectacular year for fantasy fiction." A January 2023 [Publishers Weekly](#) article noted that adult print unit sales of fantasy titles in 2022 jumped 17.4 percent over 2021. And WordsRated.com in a post titled [Fantasy Book Sales Statistics \[2023\]](#) stated that "fantasy books, along with science fiction, generate \$590.2 million in sales each year in the U.S."

The majority of authors interviewed for this article agree that a turn came for the genre in the wake of movie and television adaptations of such works as J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, and George R.R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones*.

"These ultra-popular series catapulted fantasy into the publishing mainstream. Since then, subgenres of fantasy have proliferated in both young adult and adult fiction," [Brenda Hiatt](#), who began her YA *Starstruck* series in 2013 after a 20-year career in historical romance, said. She characterizes the popular series as "science-fantasy" — contemporary science fiction with a fantasy feel.

[Marie Andreas](#), who published her first fantasy eight years ago and now has 27 titles available, believes that the "arrival of indies" added to the growth of sales for the genre.

"Indies are more likely to be going into smaller niche sub-genres that readers enjoy, but publishers don't want because the margin of sales is too low. So the field is now extremely broad," Andreas said.

Defining fantasy fiction

Though dragons, faeries, wizards, and vampires are most often associated with fantasy fiction, today's offerings are wide and varied.

[Dylan Doose](#), an Ontario-based author of the ongoing dark fantasy series *Sword and Sorcery*, believes there is “something for everyone” in the genre.

“Fantasy encompasses epic, dark, grimdark, sword and sorcery, dystopian, urban, magical realism, and paranormal romance, to name but a few,” Doose said. “Well-told tales cross boundaries of age, language, and perceived gender preference.”

While fantasy's deepest roots span the ages and are burrowed in the mythology, religion, and folklore of our world's cultures, it has only been in the recent past that marginalized writers creating works out of their own cultures have been given commercial space. No longer is Western European-based fantasy fiction the norm. Characters of color and of varied gender and sexual identities are being highlighted. What is more, these titles are selling.

Internationally bestselling Jamaican author Marlon James brings ancient Africa to life in his *Dark Star* trilogy, telling three different parts of the same story as he draws from African history and mythology. *The Invisible Life of Addie Larue* by V.E. Schwab covers centuries and features pansexual main characters.

[E.C. Ambrose](#), author of *Drakemaster* and the *Dark Apostle* series, has paid attention to trends through the years.

“To me, it feels like there have always been some threads running through the genre tapestry: epics and quest novels (inspired by medieval stories like the Arthurian legend—which recurs in fantasy periodically); portal fantasies, where a modern person ends up in the fantasy realm; secret histories, where the fantasy elements exist in our own world, but not openly; contemporary works (not always urban) like Charles DeLint; “low” fantasy or sword and sorcery, with swashbuckling adventures that show kinship with the narratives of *Dungeons and Dragons* or similar episodic stories,” she said.

Becoming a writer of fantasy fiction

Doose knew early in life that he wanted to write fantasy. “That dream only burned stronger as I got older,” he said.

His advice for writing in this genre is to not take yourself too seriously. “The great thing about fantasy is that you get a chance to truly create your own world. To do this, take elements from our world that are recognizable and let your imagination twist them and make them unexpected.”

He warns not to make that world more complicated than necessary. “Don't rename a fork with an unpronounceable alternative name without good reason. Keep the world and the people in it relatable,” he said.

Ambrose also cites world-building as key. “Craft a striking and vivid setting from which your characters arise and infuse it into every aspect of your storytelling,” she said. “I think readers now have less patience with the long passages of description that often marked those epic fantasy works, but they still crave the experience of entering into a strange realm and shutting the door behind them. They do also want to see themselves reflected in that remarkable new world in terms of varied characters and social constructs.”

Urban fantasy writer [L.A. McBride](#) says the one thing she loves most about urban fantasy is, “It is a big umbrella with room for diverse stories. From dark, gritty tales to fun stories packed with quirky characters and snark, there’s room for a range of voice and styles.”

Her best advice for authors who want to write in this genre is to read widely, connect with other writers in the genre, understand reader expectations, and take risks.

“It’s also important to write a story you’re excited about,” she stated. “If you love the characters and are all-in on the adventure, it’s much more likely that readers will come along for the ride.”

[Kel Kade](#), who has been writing epic fantasy for about eight years, suggests that authors “write what’s in your heart and imagination, not what you think is popular. Fantasy is about creating a piece of yourself without rules or constraints, and it most benefits when people write with passion.”

Hiatt believes an author must enjoy world-building to succeed in the genre. “Readers really seem to respond to detailed, well-thought-out worlds that are different from our own,” she said. “Otherwise, there’s a lot of freedom in this genre, so you can let your imagination go wild!”

Claiming your own place in fantasy fiction

[J.T. Ellison](#), who writes urban fantasy as [Joss Walker](#), long held a dream of writing in this genre, which is the one she most loves to read.

“When a solid idea burst into my brain—a librarian recruited into the CIA after she touches a grimoire and returns a long-cursed magic to power—I felt the frisson of excitement to my bones. Jayne Thorne, CIA librarian, was borne,” Ellison said.

Creating a new pseudonym in a genre other than the one where she has made an indelible mark hasn’t been easy. “I know some folks look at me like I’m nuts—why would I spend creative time on something that’s not directly attributed to the ‘brand’ I’ve spent years building? The thing is, magic is fun, fantasy is inspiring, and I find my craft elevated by challenging myself to write in two different genres,” she said.

Kade agrees and shared the following outlook: “It’s hard to predict what kind of success someone will have in this genre, but it’s not unreasonable to hope to be able to support yourself as a full-time writer.”

[Lindsay Randall](#) creates historical and contemporary romances, though dreams of one day crafting a fantasy novel.

Smart Marketing for Savvy Authors

By Tawdra Kandle



*This year of Smart Marketing
is all about reinventing our businesses.*

*For the third quarter, we'll cover:
The trials of being more than one person;
This journey is my own;
What comes next!?!*

When I published my first book in 2011, indie publishing was still in its relative infancy. Most, if not all, of the support and community groups on social media had not formed, and it took me a little time to find a group of like-minded authors with whom I could share and from whom I could learn.

While they were an enormously supportive group (and some still remain very close friends!), at the beginning of my journey the first thing I learned from the group was how little I knew and how ill-prepared I was for this new venture. I had no background in marketing or sales. I hadn't held a day job since I'd worked for my dad at his law office when I was in high school. Truth to tell, I hadn't even graduated from college. Most of the authors were considerably younger than me; I'd spent the past 20 years raising children, homeschooling, writing curriculum for my homeschool, and running a household. I had written for several church newsletters and served as editor for such publications once or twice, but none of that made me feel qualified or prepared.

It wasn't surprising, then, that as some of my fellow new authors began sharing the success they were seeing in publishing that I felt very much less-than. My first book made less than \$2,000 in its first year of publication while others in the group were buying houses in cash earned from their debut novel. This was the beginning of me feeling consistently less-than.

Please don't misunderstand me: I am not slamming author groups or communities. On the contrary, I love them and appreciate more than I can say everything they've brought to my life. The problem was never with the groups or with the people in them; it was with my own mindset and how I looked at myself and others.

I've already noted in past columns that some of my wrong turns over the past decade came from swerving out of my lane too often or switching strategies too quickly. I've also mentioned here and there that most of the time, those missteps were born out of a serious case of comparisonitis, a serious and often career-fatal ailment that affects many of us in this publishing world.

I'd love to say that I recognized the signs and figured out a way to cure myself. But the truth (which I always strive to share here) is that even within the last months, I've been falling victim to looking at what other authors are saying about their businesses and/or practices and feeling decidedly less-than—again.

It's even harder to climb out of that hole now. Ten years ago, I was such a newbie that I took comfort in realizing how much I had to learn. But now, I feel as though I should be a seasoned veteran, filled with publishing wisdom and success ... and yet, almost every day, I look around and recognize that in many ways, I'm further away from that success flag than ever before.

This week, I was listening to an author group on Clubhouse as I rode my Peloton (shout out to #5 Input!). They were talking about setting goals and checking in on where they were at this point in the year in terms of realizing those goals. As different people spoke up and weighed in, I could feel my spirits flagging and my anxiety rising. My inner voice got really chatty.

This author has been published half the time I have, and she's clearing six figures a year. I can't remember the last time I made over a thousand dollars in a month on my books, and I have over 130 out there! Six figures? I'd be thrilled to be grossing five again.

Just in time, though, our own NINC president Celeste Barclay spoke up. She pointed out that while sharing our progress on reaching goals was awesome and inspiring, all of us should practice caution in digesting what we heard. She noted that we are all coming at this author career business from different places. Some of us have day jobs that might get in the way of writing daily but also help pay the bills, alleviating pressure on our books to earn enough. Others have spouses or partners who share the load in supporting the household budget, or perhaps they worked for enough years to have a comfortable nest egg to help finance their author business.

In other words, we're individuals with unique situations, strengths, and weaknesses. One author's goal might not be realistic for me. And that's just fine.

I began to think of all the advice I'd received over the years from author friends who had heard me bemoan my own status when I was deep in a bout of comparisonitis. While you've probably heard some of these important points before, they bear repeating.

- Consider the source. How well do you know the person who's taking about their success? Can you trust them? And from that question comes a second, related thought:
- Not everyone tells the whole truth. At one point in my career, I worked closely with several authors who were not shy about touting their royalties from book vendors. But many were not netting those dollars; they were spending in advertising almost as much as they made. Also, the sad fact is that sometimes, people aren't honest when they share numbers.
- You don't know the backstory. As Celeste wisely pointed out, we don't always know every author's situation. Our personal stories vary widely.
- Sometimes, success is accidental. One of my favorite author friends reminded me of this. Since we'd started out around the same time, I had been interrogating her about what she'd done to make a huge leap in what she was earning. While she was kind and candid about her hard work—and yes, she had worked *very* hard—she also shrugged and said, “I was in the right place at the right time with the right story. I fell into a promotion opportunity, and it opened a bunch of doors that gave me incredible visibility. It was sort of an accident!”
- Success is subjective. Okay, I'll be honest: when my friends say to me, “Just publishing *one* book is a huge accomplishment!” I tend to roll my eyes and think, *Sure, sure. It is. Right.* And really, they're right. So many people want to write a book and never do, or if they do write it, they might not know how to publish it. For me, that part's easy, so I don't assign it the proper value. I know some whose aim is to hit a list and others who want to be millionaire authors. All of those goals are valid, but the path to reach them could be different.

My goal at the moment is to reach the point where I can call myself a recovering comparer. I'm trying to be intentional about appreciating my entire journey for what it is—and I don't even compare my path to that of my alter ego, Author X. (Is it possible to be jealous of an author who really is yourself?? I think so!)

I have a mantra to help keep me in the right mindset:

Each step is my own.

Each victory is valuable.

Celebrate every win.

Appreciate what I've overcome.

Tawdra Kandle is the USA Today bestselling author of over 130 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

Forbidden Fruit

By Laura Resnick



“Don’t join the book burners. Don’t think you’re going to conceal faults by concealing evidence that they ever existed. Don’t be afraid to go in your library and read every book.”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

In April, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that a high school district in Florida removed the following books from its library circulation: eight novels by Nora Roberts, 20 novels by Jodi Picoult, *Forever...* by Judy Blume, and *The Fixer* by Bernard Malamud.

Forever... is on [Time’s list of Best YA Books Of All Time](#), and its author is a recipient of the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. *The Fixer* won a Pulitzer Prize.

What is simultaneously most disturbing and most ridiculous about the novels of Roberts and Picoult (both winners of many writing awards) being removed from circulation is that this decision, which affected an entire school library system and all of the students it serves, was based on the objections of one sole person, a Moms For Liberty “activist” (for whom “liberty” apparently means “I will decide what books other people have access to”). Her objection to Roberts’s novels was that they’re “adult romance novels” and therefore don’t belong in a high school library.

As journalists Greg Sargent and Paul Waldman wrote in their *Post* article, “One can debate whether ‘adult romance novels’ belong in high school libraries, but this process is absurd. One sole objection, with no elaboration, was lodged against a bunch of books written by a single author, leading to their removal.”

Also in April, Pen America [reported](#), “The 2022-23 school year has been marked to date by an escalation of book bans and censorship in classrooms and school libraries across the United

States... This school year also saw the effects of new state laws that censor ideas and materials in public schools, an extension of the book banning movement... Again, and again, the movement to ban books is driven by a vocal minority demanding censorship. At the same time, a 2022 poll found that over 70% of parents oppose book banning. Yet the bans continue.”

In particular, restricting anyone’s access to *ideas* is inconsistent with a free society and the very opposite of educating students.

Obviously, which books do or don’t belong in a public school library is a subject on which members of any community will never be in unanimous agreement. But it is shocking, appalling, and dangerous to create laws, guidelines, and customs that allow any *one* person’s opinion to determine what books can or can’t be shelved in a school system—or, indeed, in any public library system.

At the very least, there should always be clearly defined and regularly reviewed standards for what sort of material might be deemed unsuitable for a school library, and there should be a rational, careful, consistent, and well-informed process for evaluating any request to remove a book from a school system.

As it happens, the Ohio county where I was a teenager tended to be enthusiastic about banning. I had never even heard of rock star Billy Joel until his song “Only the Good Die Young” was banned on local radio stations. That prompted me and most of the kids I knew to go buy the album. In her article “Libraries Under Fire” elsewhere in this issue of *Nink*, librarian Margo Fisher-Bellman talks about when the school district where she was teaching explored banning Mark Mathabane’s apartheid memoir *Kaffir Boy*, “As news of the challenge spread within the school, students devoured the book.” Of course they did! Just as kids in my county bought Billy Joel’s *The Stranger* to get our hands on the song it contained that the sheriff didn’t want us to hear.

Most kids don’t shun forbidden content, they become curious about it. As Nora Roberts, a mother and grandmother, said in an interview about her books being removed from school library shelves, “If you don’t want your teenager reading this book, that’s your right as a mom—and good luck with that.”

More to the point, she added, “But you don’t have the right to say nobody’s kid can read this book.”

Fortunately, in contrast to school systems eliminating books on the basis of one or two people’s personal opinions and without any sort of reasoned process, there are schools focused on teaching kids (and their parents) not to fear books.

My friend Chelsie Hoskins teaches at Walnut Hills, a local public high school. Her World Literature class is a college preparatory course for high school juniors and seniors. One of the class assignments each year is to read a banned book.

“We teachers of World Literature were motivated by the initial challenging of *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a very popular option on our summer reading list,” Chelsie told me.

(*Maus* recounts the experiences of the author's father, a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust. In 1992, it became the first graphic novel ever to win a Pulitzer Prize. After *Maus* was banned by a Tennessee school district last year, the author joked darkly that schools want to teach "a kinder, gentler, fuzzier Holocaust.")

Chelsie described objectives of the banned book reading assignment: "To interest students in controversial literature; to help them understand important elements of rhetoric, propaganda, and media literacy; and to practice persuasive communications via speech and visual elements."

Here's how it works. The students choose a banned book based on the American Library Association's (ALA) top 100 banned books. The students then share their book choice with their parents and begin to read their book. Parents are included in the assignment to ensure they understand its objectives.

While reading, there is a research component in which the students research the various challenges their book has faced and why. (A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. A banning is the removal of those materials.)

"We further discuss rhetorical devices and propagandic structures in order to maintain a focus on how the book's challenge is constructed and positioned. After reading, the student has another conversation with their parent(s) regarding the book's plot elements, why it has been challenged, and if they agree or disagree with the challenge. Overall, the student illustrates their understanding of the situations regarding the challenging of their book using the following pieces: an annotated bibliography, a speech, and an infographic or a poster." Chelsie added, "It's important to me, as a teacher, that I build out skills such as recognizing and using rhetorical principles while letting students come to their own conclusions during this assignment."

I asked Chelsie for some recent examples of books the students chose. They included William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (according to ALA, it's the eighth most-frequently challenged book in the U.S.) and George Orwell's *1984*. Those are both books that were assigned reading in my own public school education. Some students chose *Looking for Alaska* by John Green because they had read his work before (ex. *The Fault In Our Stars*) or because the book had been recommended to them. Winner of the Michael L. Printz Award (awarded by ALA for the best YA novel each year), *Looking for Alaska* is tied for fifth place on ALA's list of the most-banned books of 2022. Several more students chose *13 Reasons Why* because they had seen the show (adapted from the YA novel) on Netflix, and some chose to read Stephen King's *Carrie* because the drama department had put on the musical earlier in the year.

Finally, I asked about how students and parents react to the assignment.

"My students enjoy being given an option and they love a controversy," Chelsie said. "Overall, students are invested in allowing families to make choices regarding texts read as

opposed to wide-ranging text bans. They further find these values-based arguments lacking in persuasive qualities because they agree that one cannot define a community's values on such a personal scale. Of course, they think that books are not appropriate for all age ranges, but they seem to trust schools and parents to help make those decisions. Many more say that seeing the world through various perspectives help readers to become empathetic because they see different experiences from their own. A few clever students also mentioned that they have the means to find the books online, should they need to."

Indeed, the non-profit [Digital Public Library of America](#) has recently launched The Banned Book Club, which uses book banning data from [PEN America](#) combined with GPS tracking to provide free access to ebook and audiobook copies of the specific titles removed from public libraries in a user's area.

As one internet meme puts it: in all of history, the good guys were never the ones who banned books.

*As Laura Resnick was finishing this column, multiple media outlets reported that an activist who's responsible for dozens of books being removed from school library shelves in Clay County, Florida, has recently filed a challenge against a book titled *Arthur's Birthday*, which is part of a series of popular books for children about an aardvark and his friends.*

NINC Member Discounts

Two exciting discounts

By Abigail Drake

This month we're spotlighting two exciting discounts for NINC members.

The first is from [BookFunnel](#). They've generously offered a coupon for new subscribers that will take **\$50 off** their Mid-List or Bestseller yearly plans.

The second discount comes from [Pam McCutcheon Author Services](#). She is offering a **15% discount** on her already low prices for scanning, formatting, and uploading books.

Check out the [Member Freebies and Discounts](#) page on the NINC website for these and other offers.



Abigail Drake, who writes contemporary romance and women's fiction, is the award-winning author of 19 novels. She majored in Japanese and economics in college and spent years living abroad, collecting stories wherever she visited. She and her husband, who she met in Istanbul, have three adult sons.

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 NINC members: <https://groups.io/g/ninlink>
- NINC Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/>
- Follow NINC on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Novelists_Inc
- NINC on [Clubhouse](#): Novelists, Inc. Virtual Tiki Bar
- Critique/brainstorming group: <https://groups.io/g/NINKcritique>
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- Propose an article: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/propose-an-article/>
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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.

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

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

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Novelists, Inc. c/o Laura Resnick
 P.O. Box 331, Covington KY 41012
admin@ninc.com

Address changes may be made on the website.

***Nink* Newsletter**

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

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

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