
The Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine

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Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius.

"Fiction Writing = Organizing + Creating + Marketing"

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- 1) Welcome to the Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine!

Those of you who have joined in the past month (nearly 600 of you signed up in September), welcome to my e-zine!

You should be on this list only if you signed up for it on my web site. If you no longer wish to hear from me, don't be shy -- there's a link at the bottom of this e-mail that will put you out of your misery.

If you need to change your e-mail address, there's a different link at the bottom to help you do that.

If you missed a back issue, remember that all previous issues are archived on my web site at:

<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/ezine>

What's in this issue:

The successful novelist needs good organization, good craft, and good marketing. In this issue, we'll talk about each of these in turn.

* What could be more ridiculous than the idea that a person can earn a living by working only four hours per week? Or . . . is it so ridiculous? Find out my opinion in my column, "The 4-Hour Workweek."

* Stieg Larsson's blockbuster novel, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, along with its sequels, has been burning up the best-seller charts for many months now -- in spite of a boatload of backstory. What makes this series work? What secrets can authors glean from Larsson? Find out in my article, "What Makes the Dragon Fly?"

* Marketing books is about finding your niche and reaching the target audience who lives there. Facebook Fan Pages are ideal for that, because they allow your niche to come to you. This month, I interview gift book author Cheryl Ricker in my article, "Growing Your Tribe on Facebook."

Are you reading my blog? Check out the massively popular "Ask A Question For My Blog" feature on my web site. Every day, I answer one question in detail from my loyal blog readers. Are you missing out? Join the fun here:

<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/blog>

2) Organizing: The 4-Hour Workweek

A couple of weeks ago, I had a chance to sit down and talk for an afternoon with my friend Mick Silva. Until recently, Mick was an editor for WaterBrook Press, owned by Random House.

At the end of June, Random cleaned house and ordered another round of across-the-board layoffs. In the editorial department, Mick was the guy who got the axe.

That was fine with him, because Mick's an entrepreneurial kind of guy, and he's going to do Xtremely well in the current chaotic world of publishing. He and I spent a happy afternoon brainstorming ideas that will benefit both him and me.

Mick mentioned a book he really likes a lot, a book that I've been studiously ignoring ever since it came out.

The book is called THE 4-HOUR WORKWEEK, and the author is Tim Ferriss.

I've been avoiding this book because you've got to admit, that is one insanely selfish-sounding title. Good grief, if everybody worked only four hours every week, the planet would probably stop revolving, wouldn't it?

Wouldn't it?

Mick pointed out that the book really isn't focused on achieving a certain number of hours of work per week. It's about designing the kind of life you want to live, and then figuring out how to make that happen.

I'm all for that. I've been redesigning my life for the last five years, ever since I got laid off from my job with Big Corporate in October of 2005. That's when I decided I didn't want that kind of job ever again.

So I got the book and read it. I found a lot of things to like and a few things not to like.

We'll cover the "not to like" stuff in a bit. There's an awful lot to like in the book, both strategically and tactically.

Let's look at the strategic parts first:

Tim's game plan has four parts, and he uses the 4-letter acronym DEAL to spell them out.

D is Definition. If you want to achieve your goal, you need to define what it is. This is fundamental, whether you're trying win at kickboxing, get an A in Western Civ, or earn a living.

E is for Elimination. Focus is the art of saying "yes" to a few things and saying "no" to a whole lot of things. The more often you say "no," the better you are at saying "yes."

A is for Automation. If you're trying to deal with all the details yourself, you'll never be free. The solution is outsourcing to humans most of the things that require judgment and automating with computers all the things that don't require judgment.

L is for Liberation. If you have a day job, you really can't work a 4-hour workweek in the office. The other workers would complain that you're not working hard enough -- even if you're getting more actual work done than they are. So "liberation" means finding a way to work at home or anywhere that isn't under the envious

eyes of your co-workers.

Strategy is fine, and creating a strategic plan should always be your first step. But what about tactics? What actions can you take to make that glitzy strategy work?

Plenty, as it turns out. Tim has a ton of ideas for taking specific actions to reach your strategic goals. Please note that these are Tim's ideas and he deserves to get paid for telling you. I'll sketch them out here, but if you want the details, you need to buy his book.

Here are some of the tactical issues Tim covers:

* Fear of failure. All kinds of bad things can happen in life that can wreck your plans. Most of those will never happen, but the fact that they MIGHT happen is enough to prevent plenty of people from ever trying anything bold. Tim's "Questions & Actions" at the end of Chapter 3 will force you to spell out what "might" go wrong and how you could recover if it did. Most of our fears wither in the harsh sunlight of reality.

* Thinking small. Most people never think big because there's no point in dreaming the impossible. Which is true, but "impossible" tends to be used too easily for dreams that are actually quite possible. Chapter 4 gives you some specific steps to take to "dreamline" your future.

* The 80/20 rule. Everybody has heard that 80% of your results come from 20% of your efforts. That sounds like a prescription for cutting your pay. But is it? In Chapter 5, Tim tells what happens when he realized that 5 of his customers were giving him 95% of his revenue, and that 2 of them were causing most of his misery.

* Time mismanagement. Tim belongs to the school of thought that believes that time management is a delusion. Whether you agree or not, you probably agree that most people waste vast amounts of time. Tim has 9 specific questions at the end of Chapter 5 that force you to focus on what's really critical and what's not.

* Bad news. How much news do you consume every day by reading newspapers and watching TV? How much actual good does that do you? Tim recommends "cultivating selective ignorance" on the news. If you're sure that you can't break your news habit, then you probably desperately need to break your news habit.

* Dealing with email. Email is a monster that grows and grows and will consume all your time if you let it. See Chapter 7 for Tim's thoughts on how to put the monster on a tight leash.

* Phone calls. You can't just ignore that ringing phone can you? After all, it's . . . ringing. Won't something horrible happen if you let it go to voice mail? It

might, so Tim has some ideas in Chapter 7 on how to make sure you know exactly when you need to answer the phone. When you must answer it, he also tells you how to make the caller get to the point right away. If your life is consumed with phone chitchat, this is gold for you.

* Meetings. In any corporation, meetings are the tarbaby of your time. In Chapter 7, Tim gives you some specific suggestions on how to keep them few, simple, and short.

* Interrupters. If you work in a cubicle, then you know that the hottest part of hell is reserved for people who interrupt your work to chat about anything and everything except the job they're being paid to do. If you don't want to wait for the afterlife to deal with these people appropriately, Tim tells exactly how to do it in two minutes or less. You'll find his secrets in Chapter 7.

* Micromanaging others. If you manage others, you need to learn how to give them some leash so you don't spend all your time helping them do their job. At the end of Chapter 7, Tim talks about empowering your people so they feel free to make most of the decisions themselves.

* Outsourcing. Some of your tasks can be safely outsourced to other people. Not all of them, but probably more than you think. Chapter 8 talks about how to make it work. It also makes the important point that you should consider eliminating any task before you outsource it. If a job doesn't need doing, then outsourcing it is a waste of money.

* Automation. If you have the right kind of business, then automation is the real key to that pesky 4-hour workweek. In Chapters 9 through 11, Tim talks about various ways to build an automated business that earns you a comfortable living with little ongoing work. There is a lot to learn here. Don't expect to learn it all in these three chapters. Tim provides links to many tools and sources of information. Tim believes that anybody can create this kind of business. My own view is that probably not everybody can, but every good writer probably can.

* Escaping the office. If you have a day job in an office and you want to work from home, what's the best way to do that? Chapter 12 gives a number of Tim's ideas on how to break free. Whether these will work for you is hard to say, because not all jobs make this possible. Still, you might be surprised what you can do when you get assertive . . . and a little bit crazy.

* Traveling cheap. You might imagine that traveling around the world is expensive. It can be, but Tim has some remarkable suggestions on how to spend long periods of time abroad on about the same amount of

money you're spending staying home. Or less. See Chapter 14 for the many details.

* Boredom. What would you do with all your time if you actually achieved a 4-hour workweek? Would your life be boring and meaningless? In Chapter 15, Tim suggests a zillion things you could do to make life worth living outside of your career.

I promised to mention some of the things I didn't like in the book. Here are the two biggest:

I'm not much taken with Tim's method for winning a gold medal in Chinese kickboxing (see Chapter 2). He won each bout with a technical knockout by throwing his opponent off the platform three times in a single round. Yes, he followed the rules. No, it's not a method I admire.

I also don't care for Tim's method for getting an A in his courses at Princeton (Chapter 4). It amounts to harassing the TA and making it just too painful for him or her to give out anything less than an A. Maybe it works. Having been a TA, I just plain don't like it.

On balance, there's much more to like about this book than to dislike. I've already got a long list of things I want to do to make my life work more smoothly. I suspect you'll have a similar list after reading the book.

The bottom line question that you may be asking: Is it really possible to achieve a 4-hour workweek?

Yes, it is.

Is it necessary, if all you want to do is write fiction?

No, it's not necessary.

But if you want to write fiction, you'll find that two things ARE necessary:

* Get your "real life" stuff done in less time, while still earning the money you need to pay your bills.

* Learn to market your work effectively.

THE 4-HOUR WORKWEEK will give you a huge leap forward in achieving both of those things.

Here's a link to the Amazon page for THE 4-HOUR WORKWEEK:
<http://www.advancedfictionwriting.com/blinks/ferriss/4hour.php>

(Note: This link contains my Amazon affiliate code.)

3) Creating: What Makes The Dragon Fly?

Stieg Larsson's novel THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO has been sitting on the Top 100 list on Amazon for nearly two years now. Its two sequels have followed it up the charts. For several months this year, these books held the top three positions.

The question is: Why are these books selling so well?

The first book in the series begins with a prologue, told mostly in narrative summary, in which the lead character (who isn't named) receives a pressed flower on his birthday from an unknown person who has been sending similar anonymous gifts for several decades.

Chapter 1 is mostly narrative summary about a different character, Mikael Blomqvist, a muckraking Swedish journalist who's just lost a libel suit and been punished with a 3 month jail sentence and a fine of 150,000 kronor. Most of the chapter tells the backstory of how Blomqvist got into the mess.

Chapter 2 introduces a third character, Lisbeth Salander, and again begins with a massive amount of her backstory, as seen through the eyes of her boss, Dragan Armansky, who is introduced with several hundred words of his own backstory.

If you've been writing fiction very long, you know that Stieg Larsson is violating several cardinal rules here:

- * Don't use a prologue -- readers don't read them.
- * Start with your protagonist.
- * Bring your characters on in action.
- * Put no backstory in the first fifty pages.
- * If you must put in backstory, dole it out in bits.

How is Stieg Larsson getting away with violating so many rules?

The answer is actually fairly simple.

Those pesky rules are there to make it as likely as possible that you engage the reader's interest. If you engage the reader's interest while breaking a rule or two or twenty, the reader won't care.

The real question is this: What is Stieg Larsson doing that engages his reader's interest so effectively?

After reading all three of his books and reflecting on

them for a bit, I'd say he's doing three things very well:

- * He creates unanswered questions.
- * He creates three-dimensional characters.
- * He creates a complex storyline.

Let's look at each of those in turn and see what magic Larsson is weaving to earn his success.

Larsson creates unanswered questions

In paragraph one of the prologue, we meet an unnamed character. Who is he? Why is he making such a fuss over a mere flower delivery? Why does his friend, the retired policeman, care? Who is the sender? Where did the flower originate? What is its meaning? Why has a similar gift been coming for nearly forty years? Why does our lead character weep on receiving it?

In chapter one, we meet Mikael Blomkvist, and learn immediately that he expected to lose the trial which has just ended. What is his crime? Why did he go to trial when he knew he would lose? Why does he take the verdict so calmly? Why does he not consider himself a criminal? Why is he not lashing out at his fellow journalists as they press him for quotes? Why does he insist that he won't apologize to the winner of the libel suit? Why did he, a responsible journalist, commit libel in the first place? What's the truth behind the scandal that he tried to uncover and which blew up in his face?

In chapter two, we meet a minor character, Dragan Armansky, and then his very strange employee, Lisbeth Salander. Why did Armansky, the CEO of a prestigious security company, hire a 24-year-old woman who appears to be mentally retarded? A woman with facial piercings and multiple tattoos? A woman with the build of a 14-year-old girl and the social skills of a 4-year-old? Why does he consider her his most brilliant investigator? How does she dig up so much dirt so quickly? Why won't she talk about her personal life? Why is Armansky attracted to her, and what's he going to do about it? Why has she been hired to investigate Mikael Blomkvist? Why is she so suspicious that the libel trial was a complete sham?

Unanswered questions are good, so long as we care about the answers. Unanswered questions create mystery, and mystery pulls a reader into a story. Every novel needs mystery -- both about the past and about the future. Larsson delivers boatloads of mystery.

But we only care about those unanswered questions if we care about the characters. That leads us to the next

point . . .

Larson creates three-dimensional characters

What does that mean? It means two things:

* The character has a fully developed backstory. The author must know this backstory, even if the reader knows only fragments of it.

* The character has inner conflict. Normally this comes from having two personal values in conflict.

If a character has both of those, then he is unpredictable and yet every action he takes is a sensible action. Every action can be explained in terms of the character's past and at least one of his values.

By far the most interesting character in Larsson's series is Lisbeth Salander -- "the girl with the dragon tattoo." She's antisocial in the extreme -- apparently autistic. She is a brilliant hacker and has a photographic memory. She is fiercely loyal. She has unspeakably terrible secrets in her past which she refuses to share. In the face of adversity, she either acquiesces without a fight if she must, or she lashes out with incredible fury if she can. She lives by her own high moral code, but she's willing to break the law if it seems foolish to her.

Lisbeth has a backstory which takes all three books to unpack. Lisbeth's backstory drives the frontstory. And the frontstory, by itself, is pretty good. Which leads us to the final point . . .

Larsson creates a complex storyline

Our hero, Mikael Blomqvist, is hired by an eccentric old man to solve a decades-old mystery: Who killed Harriet Vanger in 1966 and how did they dispose of her body on an island teeming with people?

If Blomqvist can solve this mystery, the old man promises to pay 5 million kronor -- and turn Blomqvist's recent libel conviction upside down with evidence that will damn his rival, Hans-Erik Wennerstrom.

It's a convoluted mystery, filled with many twists as new evidence emerges slowly from the past.

Can Blomqvist solve the mystery? He's a persistent cuss, and the reader knows that he will, or die trying.

That's what makes THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO fly

-- unanswered questions, deep characters, and a strong storyline.

Would the series have sold so well if it had no prologue, less narrative summary, more action, and less backstory?

It's impossible to say, because you can't turn back the clock. Most analysts would probably say yes. I think it's likely.

But the series did awfully well just the way it was. A story doesn't sell because it has no weaknesses. A story sells because it has great strengths.

The lesson here for every novelist is that you can workshop a novel to death, removing every possible weakness, making sure that it has nothing to offend anyone. Or you can focus on powering up your novel's strengths.

Can you guess which approach is likely to earn you the most readers?

4) Marketing: Growing Your Tribe on Facebook

The most important thing you can know about marketing is that you don't have to market to the whole world.

You only have to reach one small niche -- your core fans. Those core fans are your "tribe."

If you grow your tribe effectively, they'll take care of marketing you to the rest of the world.

Every writer has a different tribe. Your tribe may be "twenty-something single women who love werewolf erotica." Your friend's tribe may be "middle-aged political junkie men." His friend's tribe may be "Wiccan baseball fanatics."

The three of you may have no understanding at all of each other's tribes. Yet you can still talk about marketing among yourselves by using the common language of tribes. You can help each other build your tribes.

I recently had time at a writing conference to chat with my friend, Cheryl Ricker. Cheryl's gift book, *A FRIEND IN THE STORM*, just recently came out. Cheryl has been building her tribe on Facebook, and she's agreed to do an interview here to tell us how she's doing it.

A bit about Cheryl's book and her tribe: Her book is a

non-fiction gift book of poetry. It's targeted to a very specific tribe: "Christians going through painful times." The poems in the book are written from the point of view of Jesus.

You may or may not be in that tribe. Whether you are or not, I think you'll be interested to know what Cheryl's doing to build her following, because the same methods work for growing any tribe.

If you'd like to know more about Cheryl and her book, you can find her at this link:
<http://www.CherylRicker.com>

Here's the interview:

Randy: You've got over 2700 Friends on Facebook. Tell us what you did to build that many Friends.

Cheryl:

The Snowball Effect

When I set up Facebook three years ago, I sent friend requests to people I'd known for ages. Then I attended a writer's conference, and used my business cards to "friend" many people I met.

Facebook started giving me friend suggestions because it's smart about finding mutual friends. I added people; people added me; and the snowball started rolling.

Be Picky

When it came to friendships, I wanted quality over quantity, so I became friends with the "ignore" button. I created "categories" based on the states where people lived, and I did a little "house keeping" that goes like this: Once a week I scroll down the list and "ignore" friend requests that make sense to ignore, I then pay my son a dime per friend as he "accepts" all the remaining friends and places them in categories. Now I can send messages to whole groups at once. If I'm doing a book signing in Texas, I can target my audience and say, "Hey, y'all! I'm coming over on Thursday!"

Content is Key

To keep people interested in our "friendship", I focus my posts on topics that will encourage and benefit them. I share insights, quotes, verses, photos, videos, anything that reflects my encouragement brand.

I also want to be light and personal at times, so I

slip in a funny blurb about my kids. Everybody loves that. It shows I'm human and it draws more people to check me out. "Who is that crazy chick?"

Categorize Your Friends

I often send friend requests to established authors and people I highly respect. I even have a category called, "famous people." These are the friends who provide the most amazing networking and marketing possibilities. I've landed several blog interviews and blog talk radio shows because of such connections.

Be the Kind of Friend you Want to Find

When people accept my friend request, I send a "thank you" message with a personal word of encouragement. This initial connection breaks the ice and makes it easier to post on their wall ~ the place where industry professionals will see and remember me. At writers conferences, authors and speakers regularly tell me they like my posts, so I think it's working. :)

Randy: You also have a Facebook Fan Page for your book, "A Friend in the Storm." Not everybody knows what that means, so tell us what a Fan Page is, how you set that up, and why an author needs a Fan Page if they've already got tons of Friends.

Cheryl:

Fans Versus Friends

I wanted a Fan Page to highlight my book. It was important to grow my "tribe," and welcome people into my world in a low-maintenance way.

Pages

Facebook offers different types of pages and groups. I chose a product page called "A Friend in the Storm" because (1) Thomas Umstattd, my brainy techie guy told me to; (2) nobody knows Cheryl Ricker ~ yet; and (3) "A Friend in the Storm" reflects the needs of my tribe. People in pain need a friend in the storm.

Some people limit their regular Facebook account to close family and friends, and share their Fan Page with everybody else. That's a great direction to move toward. However, when I was starting out, nobody knew me, so I was happy to grow my regular Facebook Page, then use it as springboard to create my Fan Page. (More on that in a moment.) Some day, when I'm a little more famous, I'll probably slim down my regular page.

How to Create a Fan Page

Since I'm "shy a few computer chips," when it comes to techie-ness, I almost always ask somebody to, "help meeee!!" In this case, I asked techie Thomas to set up my fan page. He's "the man," so when you're ready to set up yours, pop over to his blog and read his three-point instructions. He just put mine together a few months ago.

<http://www.authortechtips.com/how-to-create-a-facebook-page/>

Randy: You have over 1000 Fans on your Fan Page. What did you do to build all those Fans?

Cheryl:

Ask and You Will Receive

Once I had my Fan Page, Facebook let me invite my friends to become fans. You can ask as many or few as you like. I asked hundreds, and many said, "yes," because I'd already developed a Facebook relationship with them. They liked my posts on hope and encouragement, and figured they'd like my Fan Page too.

Tag Your Friends

When I write on my regular wall, I sometimes link to my Fan Page by typing the @ symbol in front of the name of my Fan Page, "A Friend in the Storm." A blue link appears. When my friends click that link, it takes them from my personal page to my Fan Page so they can see what I'm up to and cross over if they haven't already. That's why it's good to pick a Fan Page name that translates well into sentences. For example: Aren't you glad we have A Friend in the Storm?

Content Reflects Brand

I mentioned that I reflect my brand on my regular Facebook page. Well, it's even more important that I do this on my Fan Page. I try to be personal and professional, but always reflect the name, "A Friend in the Storm," and show genuine compassion and care.

Create Community

Since my page is a place for like-minded people, I respond to my fans' questions and comments and I encourage others to do the same. As my fans increase, so does the number of people who respond to each other's comments. It's gratifying to see people empathize, care, and offer prayers, insights, and kindness to those they've only met through my page.

Paid Facebook Advertisements

Facebook, kind social network that it is, is more than happy to help us with fan-building. All we need to do is pay them for everyone who becomes a fan as a result of clicking on their advertisement. I haven't done this yet, but I hear it's a good idea.

The reality is: Ads may help bring them in, but it's the good content that's going to keep them!

Randy: Does a Fan Page on Facebook actually help you sell books? Do you have any way to track sales as a result of your Fan Page?

Cheryl:

Growing on People

Facebook raises awareness and interest in me and in my book, which translates into real life friendships, marketing opportunities (like being interviewed on someone's blog), and yes, sales!

People often tell me they have a hurting friend, and they ask where they can buy a copy of my book. Facebook gives me the easy ability to direct them (and everyone who reads their inquiry) to my website where they can buy it.

Tracking Sales

When there's a lot of activity on my Fan Page, I notice an improvement in my sales rankings on Amazon.com. For example, "A Friend in the Storm" moved all the way up to the top 11 books in Christian Poetry (three separate times in a few weeks) when I was investing more time and energy on my Facebook discussions. My husband, who watches numbers like a hawk, said, "keep doing what you're doing. It's working.)

It's easy to identify my sales ranking on Amazon because it updates every hour, showing my latest sales. I simply log on to Amazon.com, search for "A Friend in the Storm," click its cover, and scroll down to Product Details. That's where my Amazon bestsellers rank is listed. That's also where it shows when "A Friend in the Storm" reaches the top 100 of any Amazon category.

I also have an Amazon affiliate store on my website. It lets me create reports that show how many books were sold during specific time frames. I've also been able to trace these sales to times of more activity on Facebook.

Randy: Is there anything you do on a daily basis with your Facebook page and your Fan Page to promote your book?

Cheryl:

You're Always On

My Fan Page is always a silent advertisement. Whenever people see my Fan Page avatar, they see my book cover. It's like a face-out book on the shelves ~ a quiet but powerful reminder that says, "here I am. Buy me!" That's why I try to post a couple times a day.

Whet the Appetite

I post quotes, verses and poems from my book. Each message of hope is a teaser that creates interest in my unique gift tool. I use the @ symbol to highlight and direct more people to my Fan Page. For example: "When filled with Holy truth, the mind rests." ~ Charles Spurgeon. (Taken from @A Friend in the Storm.)

Connections

I post quotes, verses, poems, songs, links, videos and messages of hope from other people's books, sermons, blogs and walls. I attribute it to them, then put the @ symbol in front of their name and make a trail to their wall or fan page, so my post appears on both my wall and theirs.

Likeable Links

When I read a blog or link that I know will help my fans, I post a link on my wall, and leave a trail to the author's Fan Page, promoting their post. You can't go wrong helping others. Whenever people "like" or comment on my posted link, Facebook notes this on their wall and Newsfeeds, so more people learn about my book. (ie. Randy Ingermanson likes "A Friend in the Storm's" link.)

Buzz Questions

I ask provocative questions on my wall like, "If Jesus was holding a sign, what do you think it would say?" I received close to 30 encouraging comments on that one. My goal is to get as many comments as I can. More comments and likes cause my post to appear higher on people's Newsfeeds.

Be Funny

I use humor to soften people's hearts. I occasionally post photos or YouTube videos. (You can do topical searches to find what you're looking for.)

Generate Traffic

When I post a potentially popular comment, I inconspicuously link to my website or blog. That way, people don't even need to go to my personal page or Fan Page to get to my website; they can simply click on the link as it appears on their Home Page.

Be Exciting!

It's my job as a chronic marketer to keep posting great Facebook content that impresses people's socks off so they'll get excited, share it on their wall, and click "suggest to friends" so their pals will become fans too.

Randy: Do you also use other social networking tools, such as Twitter or LinkedIn to promote your book?

Cheryl:

Twitter

Twitter is another powerful internet marketing tool that reaches a different group of people. I have over 3000 followers who I reach with short messages or "tweets" that reflect my personal brand.

I use TweetDeck because it's integrated with Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. It lets me send my "tweets" to one, two or all three places with a click of a TweetDeck button.

Networking your Blog

I use Networked Blogs for Facebook, which automatically posts to my Facebook pages and Twitter. When people see a compelling blog title and click the link, it takes them to my website, <http://www.cherylrickey.com>, where they can read it. That's also where they're introduced to "A Friend in the Storm," and given a chance to read a portion and buy it. If they're not ready to buy, they might want to comment on my blog, "share" it, "follow" it or sign up for my Comfort and Joy newsletter, another great promotional tool.

Thanks to social networking, the world's a smaller place. Authors can build platforms from their living rooms. We can help others, and make a difference! Facebook and Fan Pages are a fun, free way to build

your tribe and increase your sales! And anyone can do it!

Randy: Thanks for taking the time to explain what you're doing on Facebook, Cheryl!

Once again, if you'd like to visit Cheryl's web site, here's a page that has links to her Facebook page and everything else she's doing:

<http://www.CherylRicker.com>

5) What's New At AdvancedFictionWriting.com

My new book, *WRITING FICTION FOR DUMMIES*, has been selling well since it began shipping last November and is one of the most popular fiction writing books on Amazon. You can find out all about *WRITING FICTION FOR DUMMIES* here:

<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/info/wffd>

If you've already bought the book and like it, I'd be delighted if you wrote an Amazon review. Thanks to those of you who already have! I appreciate you!

I've also been gratified at the response to my latest software product, "Snowflake Pro," which makes it fast, easy, and fun to work through the steps of my well-known Snowflake method for designing a novel. You can find out more about Snowflake Pro at:

<http://www.SnowflakeProSoftware.com>

Currently, my co-author John Olson and I are preparing our back list of novels for publication as e-books.

John and I are also creating some powerful online tools to make it easy for us to market our work effectively and easily. In due time, we'll make those tools available to other authors. More info on that when the opportune moment arrives.

I teach at roughly 4 to 6 writing conferences per year, depending on my schedule. My schedule for this year is now all filled in but I'm already in discussion with organizers for next year.

On October 16, I'll be teaching an all-day series of lectures for the Northwest Houston Romance Writers.

Details here:

<http://www.nwhrwa.com/conference.htm>

On October 23, I'll be teaching an all-day series of lectures for the Heart of Denver Romance Writers.

Details here:

<http://www.hodrw.com/news-events/october-all-day-mini-conference/>

If you'd like me to teach at your conference, email me to find out how outrageously expensive I am.

If you'd just like to hear me teach, I have a number of recordings and e-books that are outrageously cheap.

Details here:

<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/info>

6) Randy Recommends . . .

I don't take paid ads for this e-zine. I do, however, recommend people I like.

I'm a huge fan of Margie Lawson's courses, both the ones she teaches in person and the ones she sells on her web site at

<http://www.MargieLawson.com>

Margie is a psychologist who applies what she knows about human psychology to writing fiction. I believe her material is brilliant. Check her out on her web site!

I've also become a fan of Thomas Umstatted's terrific uncommon-sense thoughts on internet marketing. You can read Thomas's blog at:

<http://www.AuthorTechTips.com>

Thomas is especially skilled at helping authors create an inexpensive but powerful web site using WordPress blogs. I am a huge fan of this approach, since it gives the most bang for the buck in an author site. Find out more about this at:

<http://www.UmstattedMedia.com>

7) Steal This E-zine!

This E-zine is free, and I personally guarantee it's worth at least 1111 times the price. I invite you to "steal" it, but only if you do it nicely . . .

Distasteful legal babble: This E-zine is copyright

Randall Ingermanson, 2010.

Extremely tasteful postscript: I encourage you to email this E-zine to any writer friends of yours who might benefit from it. I only ask that you email the whole thing, not bits and pieces. Otherwise, you'll be getting desperate calls at midnight from your friends asking where they can get their own free subscription.

At the moment, there is one place to subscribe:
<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com>

8) Reprint Rights

Permission is granted to use any of the articles in this e-zine in your own e-zine or web site, as long as you include the following 2-paragraph blurb with it:

Award-winning novelist Randy Ingermanson, "the Snowflake Guy," publishes the Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine, with more than 22,000 readers, every month. If you want to learn the craft and marketing of fiction, AND make your writing more valuable to editors, AND have FUN doing it, visit
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