

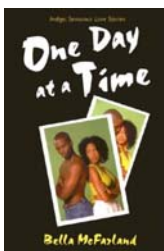
**Shades Of Reading:** Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer.

**Bella McFarland:** Although I use Bella when I write, my first name is Isabel. I came to the US from Kenya in 1991 to pursue a doctorate degree in organic/polymer chemistry and found love too. I met my husband during my first year, got married soon after, and went on to finish my degree. But instead of finding a position in industry or at some university, I decided to be a homemaker.

I soon found out that being a stay-at-home mother is not an easy task. It is mentally challenging. You could say that I needed something to give me balance. Then I discovered the joy of writing. In no time I'd finished a historical romance based in ancient Egypt and a second one based in Kenya. I finally found my balance.

**SORMAG:** Tell us about your current book?

**MCFARLAND:** *One Day at a Time* was the third book I wrote and the first to be published. The story is about a woman who is determined to find the person responsible for her sister's untimely and horrific death in an automobile accident. When the



evidence Angela McGee gathers seems to point at a baseball legend, Jerry Taylor, she infiltrates his home in Montana under the guise of his new assistant, where she hopes to find proof of his guilt. During her stay there, Angela comes to realize that things aren't always as they seem, and

that you never believe everything you hear, see, or read.

**SORMAG:** What is your favorite scene from your book?

**MCFARLAND:** I'd say the scene where Jerry takes on his mother when he finds her arguing with Angela. I'm a sucker for a man who is down for his woman.

**SORMAG:** What would you like your readers to take away from your book?

**MCFARLAND:** Secrets and love don't mix.

**SORMAG:** What type of publicity did you do for your book?

**MCFARLAND:** I'm ashamed to say none. I was one of those naïve writers who thought that the publisher did everything. It wasn't until my book was published that I joined writers' groups and started to interact with other writers on the Internet. I've learned a lot since.

**SORMAG:** How did you stay motivated to finish your book?

**MCFARLAND:** I'd been promised a contract based on the first three chapters and the synopsis of the book. Believe me, there's no better motivation than that.

**SORMAG:** What books, newsletters, or articles are helpful to you?

**MCFARLAND:** I'm an avid reader so I can't pinpoint one book in particular. But for *One Day at a Time*, I read text books on cowboys, ranching, and horse-breeding.

**SORMAG:** Our theme for this issue is resources on the net. What resources on the net have been very helpful with your writing?

**MCFARLAND:** Since I live in Utah and don't travel much, the Internet is my writing companion. I research places I write about and publishers. I've joined writers' groups and now communicate with other writers. And I've taken on-line courses.

**SORMAG:** Any last advice for the aspiring writer?

**MCFARLAND:** Write from your heart. Don't be discouraged by rejection letters. Also, please, read what is being published in your genre.

**SORMAG:** How can readers get in contact with you? (mail, email, website)

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 12**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

**MCFARLAND:**

Visit my web site, [www.bellamcfarland.com](http://www.bellamcfarland.com)

**SORMAG:** Can you give us a sneak peek at your next book?

**MCFARLAND:** Yes!!! *Vows of Passion* is a story about second chances—Four years ago, Cara discovered that Leon, the man she was having an affair with, was a married man. Broken-hearted, she disappeared from his life, but Leon had vowed to find her and explain. When he finally finds her in Kenya, fireworks can't begin to describe what happens next. The excerpt is available at my web site. It's due May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**SHADES OF READING  
MAGAZINE  
IS  
WRITER FRIENDLY**

**WE LOVE MEETING  
NEW WRITERS**

**INTRODUCE YOURSELF  
TO US  
AND WE'LL INTRODUCE  
YOU TO OUR READERS**

---

**SORMAG  
CONGRATULATES**

**BRENDA JACKSON**

**FOR BEING THE FIRST  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN ROMANCE AUTHOR  
TO MAKE THE USA BEST-SELLERS LIST**

## Who Says You Can't Do A Book Signing Over The Internet?

### This Author Had Virtual Book Signing Success!

The Internet is being used to do practically everything we have done in the past, face to face, in person, at meetings, and on the phone. Now Dr. Lois Center-Shabazz, author of, *Let's Get Financial Savvy! From Debt-Free to Investing With Ease*, can add to that, her virtual Internet author book signing.

Traditionally, book signings have been done in person. The author travels, pays for hotel room, airfare, food, and advertising, which means at some point you better sell an awful lot of books to cover these expenses.

Author, Lois Center-Shabazz found the Internet to be a much more efficient way to do book signings. She contacted customers through other websites as well as her own personal finance website, , set up her book signing page, and instead of offering a signature with the purchase of her book, she offered free bonuses. Then, she narrowed it down to a virtual book signing for one day only, and limited

the bookstore to Amazon.com.

It worked like a charm, and her success was exemplary. It was so successful in fact, that her customers came from as far away as China, India, and Slovenia, in addition to places all over the United States. On January 22, 2004, her virtual book signing day, her sales rank of, "Let's Get Financial Savvy!" on Amazon.com went from an obscure #700,000 to #147. The best part about her virtual book signing was the cost, which was almost nothing. The free bonuses she gave away were given right over the Internet also, with little effort on her part. All of her bonuses were e-books, investment and business reports, or graphics she has created over a long period of time. She was elated to have an opportunity to share them with her virtual book-signing customers instead of a signature and book discussion, often performed at a brick and mortar book signing.

Dr. Lois Center-Shabazz is the author of, "Let's Get Financial Savvy! From Debt-Free to Investing With Ease," and the editor-in-chief and founder of the personal finance website, . Her next book is a fiction, titled, "At Last" and is due later in 2004.

The authors web page for her virtual book signing is still open and can be viewed at:

---

# Let's Get Financial Savvy! From Debt-Free to Investing With Ease By Dr. Lois Center-Shabazz

*Editors Note: As a writer, it just doesn't seem right without some type of music in the background as I create my characters.*

*Music is a good way to inspire your creative juices.*

*I posed the question, what music inspires you, to a few writers.*

I use music to set the moods I try to put on the page.

For *RENEE AND JAY* and *RENEE AND JAY 2*:  
Branford Marsalis' ROMANCES FOR  
SAXOPHONE

For *SOMETHING REAL*: Sounds of Blackness'  
THE EVOLUTION OF GOSPEL

For *ORIGINAL LOVE*: Stevie Wonder's SONGS  
IN THE KEY OF LIFE

For *MISTAKEN IDENTITIES*: JAZZMATAZZ  
(Guru and others)

JJ Murray  
author of *RENEE AND JAY* and *SOMETHING  
REAL* (Kensington) and *RENEE AND JAY 2* and  
*JADE ED.* (James Crowe Press)

I listen to Gerald Levert's new CD, A Stroke of  
Genius, when writing romantic scenes.

Shelia M. Goss  
Author of *ROSES are Thorns*, *VIOLETS are True*  
[http://www.sheliagoss.com/  
shelia\\_goss\\_newsletter\\_dec.htm](http://www.sheliagoss.com/shelia_goss_newsletter_dec.htm)

## **SORMAG need devotions for writers**

**Send a query to:**

**[sormag@yahoo.com](mailto:sormag@yahoo.com)**

**TyWebbin Creations**  
**<http://www.tywebbin.com>**

Looking for professional web design  
at affordable prices?

Look no further.

Tywebbin Creations crafts some  
of the tightest sites on the  
web including  
Good Girl Book Club,  
G.R.I.T.S. Book Club and more.

Let Ty update your image with her  
logos, banners, business cards,  
letterheads and more.

**TyWebbin**  
**If we build it, they will come.**

*Discovering truth and wisdom In the inward parts, thou wilt make me to know wisdom. Psalm 51*

Writers write for many reasons: to tell a story, to enlighten, to entertain, to record. Often we feel we know what we want to say. But sometimes we find ourselves on an unknown path. A character becomes unruly. A scene refuses to go in the direction we planned.

These are times when our stories challenge us. A story is an arena where the author's spirit and soul struggle with each other. The more intense the struggle the greater the opportunity for growth. The larger the opportunity for growth, the more troublesome the mechanics of the story becomes. This generally happens when philosophical, cultural, and spiritual issues are involved.

Suppose you are a feminist and you have created a 18 year old character who has just gotten accepted at a prestigious college "the first person in her family to go to college. And now, viola, she is pregnant. You have planned that your character will have an abortion. Then suddenly, in a horrifying moment you realize that your character doesn't want the abortion. Everyone else does; her parents, her unemployed boyfriend, her sister. What do you do now? Your character has rebelled.

How do you know when a character has rebelled? That's easy: the story becomes flat, a writing block arrives. At this time, your spirit's truth and your soul's opinion are struggling with each other. You cannot write because the scene you planned to write just doesn't ring true. Another truth has emerged, another battle, a new priority emerges.

Now your choices are: will you continue the original game plan in spite of the false note that keeps creeping in? Will you consider the new truth that your soul and spirit have placed before you? The conflicts and scenes in your story will show the battle. Now the plot says that women are oppressed into abortion by selfish boyfriends and embarrassed parents? Are you willing to say that? You now have

a choice of sticking to a plot that isn't working or writing a story in which the character has to stand up against her parents and her boyfriend. The theme is now changed: No longer does your story say that abortion is a woman's choice.

This is often the decision that shows how we relate to our lives and how our lives relate to our stories. This is where truth in the inward parts "our own truth" "comes up against what we thought we believe. The challenge is to allow our story to change us and to show that deep in our hearts we don't believe what we think we believe.

Having seen the conversation between our mind and spirit, we now understand our opinion in a deeper wiser way than if we had not begun that creative journey.

**Carole McDonnell's fiction and essays have appeared in many publishing venues, in print and online. Her short stories and essays have been published in regional and national publications including, "Oreo Blues", in W.W. Norton's LIFENOTES: Personal Writings By Contemporary Black Women. Her story, "Lingua Franca" appears in the groundbreaking, So Long Been Dreaming: Post-Colonialism in Science Fiction and Fantasy, an SF/F anthology by writers of color, edited by Nalo Hopkinson and by published by Arsenal Pulp Press. (arsenalpulp.com)**

**Her devotionals appear in Christian print magazines and also on [www.faithwriters.com](http://www.faithwriters.com). Her reviews are on [www.compulsivereader.com](http://www.compulsivereader.com), [www.thefilmforum.com](http://www.thefilmforum.com) and [www.curledup.com](http://www.curledup.com).**

**She lives in New York with her husband of twenty years and their two sons.**

**Shades Of Reading Magazine:** Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer.

**Gavin Taylor:** I was born in Newark, NJ, and raised in Orange, NJ by my mother Faye Taylor (who is a single parent), and my brother Kendall Lambright.

I was married to Tanya Taylor on August 9, 2003. We are members of the Love Of Jesus Family Church in Orange, New Jersey where we are pastured by Pastors Jason & Gale Alvarez. On top of being an author, I am also a member of the United Chaplain Worldwide Outreach International where I serve as a mentor and volunteer, at the Youth Correctional facility in Newark, New Jersey, I am the bible teacher of the Wednesday Prayer group, in Livingston, New Jersey, and a pianist and musician.

**SORMAG:** Tell us about your current book?

**TAYLOR:** *"Laying a Solid Foundation"*, is a "What do I do next" book, for new Christians, and a "checklist" for existing Christians. Often, when people first get saved, they don't know what they should do next. They are often lost and confused, and since everyone is not assigned a mentor when they get saved, they are stuck trying to figure it out on their own. This is where my book comes in. Since nothing replaces the bible, my book acts as a supplement to the bible. The book outlines some key things that "new Christians" should do, backing it up with scriptures from the bible. It will help them understand a little more clearly, so they won't get frustrated.

**SORMAG:** What would you like your readers to take away from your book?

**TAYLOR:** Having a relationship with Jesus can be as real (or more real) than any relationship that we can have in the physical. The king of the universe's greatest desire, is to have a relationship with us. That blows my mind, and I want the readers to know, that you will never experience a more intimate relationship, than with God. If they

don't get anything else, I want them to get that.

**SORMAG:** What message do you hope to convey in your book?

**TAYLOR:** I would like my readers to learn choosing Jesus is the best decision that they could ever make. Walking with Him is a joy, honor, and privilege. Also, walking with Jesus doesn't mean "I can't do anything", it means that if you will live a life acceptable to Him, you will have more peace then trying to do it your way.

**SORMAG:** What type of publicity did you do for your book?

**TAYLOR:** I have been doing a great deal of "self promoting". I have taken my book to an organization to market it, where I have spoken about the book to representatives from many churches. I am also currently in the process of trying to set up book signings in my area.

**SORMAG:** How did you stay motivated to finish your book?

**TAYLOR:** Truthfully, God was all the motivation I needed. He kept me focused, and gave me clarity as to what I should write; so, to say I wrote the book would be a little misleading, it would be more accurate to say that I was the vessel He decided to use. And when He wants to get something done, it gets done. So, motivation was not a problem.

**SORMAG:** What was the best writing advice you received?

**TAYLOR:** The best advice I received came from the gentleman, that God used to inspire me to write the book. He said to me "pray and start writing! The world needs to read your understanding of the Word."

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 17**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16**

**SORMAG:** What books, newsletters, articles or websites are helpful to you?

**TAYLOR:** WWW.SearchGodsWord.com - This is the place where I do all my bible research.

**SORMAG:** Our theme for this issue is Resources On the Net. Do you have any net resources you can recommend?

**TAYLOR:** WWW.FreshManna.net - This website is the home of the newsletter of the same name. It has a great deal of links for study tools, movies, books, merchandise, and a host of other information.

WWW.SearchGodsWord.com

**SORMAG:** Any last advice for the aspiring writer?

**TAYLOR:** Stay focused, don't let anyone discourage you, and believe in your work. Because if you don't, know one else will.

**SORMAG:** How can readers get in contact with you? (mail, email, website)

**TAYLOR:** Readers can contact me, and purchase my book, through my website at WWW.FreshManna.Net

**SORMAG:** Can you give us a sneak peek at your next book?

**TAYLOR:** I am currently working on the "Foundation Series", which is a three book series, continuing from where the last book (*Laying A Solid Foundation*) left off. The next book will be released this year (God Willing), it's called "*The Fruits of the Spirit*". Everybody is searching for peace and joy, in this book I talk about how to obtain it.

**ARE YOU A NEW WRITER?**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INTERVIEWED IN SORMAG?**

**SEND A PRESS KIT TO:**

**L.C. HOFFMAN  
7127 MINNESOTA AVE  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63111**

**LET US  
INTRODUCE YOU  
TO OUR READERS**

## SELF PUBLISHED AUTHOR

**Shades Of Reading Magazine:** Tell us a little about you the person and the writer?

**Alisha Yvonne:** I'm Alisha Yvonne, a native of Memphis, TN. I have an undying love for the spoken and written word, but since I have a bit of a shy streak, you won't find me participating in open-mic sessions often.

**SORMAG:** Tell us about your book?

**YVONNE:** *Lovin' You Is Wrong* is the testimonial tale of a highly successful woman involved in a daring love-triangle, herself and two men who happens to be best friends. The main character, Holiday Simmons, shares with the readers why having your cake and eating it, too, isn't all that it's cracked up to be.



**SORMAG:** Why did you choose to self publish?

**YVONNE:** I researched avenues for getting published and learned that big houses only pick up about one percent of everything that comes their way. After discovering that some of my favorite authors such as Karen E. Quinones Miller, E. Lynn Harris, and Zane had first realized their dreams through self-publishing, I continued to study the industry and ultimately decided I could do it, too.

**SORMAG:** What is the most gratifying thing about self-publishing?

**YVONNE:** I love being the boss and having the final say over what happens to my story and the finished product. I hear that once the rights are sold, I'd have to give up most of my privileges.

**SORMAG:** What is the biggest problem you faced

as a self-publisher?

**YVONNE:** The biggest problem I've faced as a self-publisher is distribution. A couple of the largest book distribution companies require the author/publisher to have a minimum of published titles to acquire their services. This leaves new authors and small companies with a minor handicap. Finding other avenues of getting books out there can be a bit challenging.

**SORMAG:** Do you want to self publish other people?

**YVONNE:** Absolutely. My long-term goal for Ebony Literary Grace Publishing is to help aspiring writers realize their dreams of being published authors, especially our youth.

**SORMAG:** How did you choose a designer for your cover?

**YVONNE:** I spent a day perusing authors' sites and ran across a reference for Essex Graphix Designs. I visited their site and was sold by every cover design.

**SORMAG:** Did you assemble a team to work with you (i.e. editor, printer, publicists, etc?)

**YVONNE:** My graphic designer was very instrumental in helping to put together my team, the editor, publicist, and printer. I'm proud to have developed a friendship with them as well.

**SORMAG:** How did you decide about the pricing for your book?

**YVONNE:** Again, this is where the research came into play. I used page count along with the basic market rate to set a book price.

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 19**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18**

**SORMAG:** What strategies did you decide to use to promote your book?

**YVONNE:** I began as early as eight months in advance using a four-line signature announcing the arrival of my book. The members of the many online literary groups in which I belong took notice immediately. Another one of my favorite strategies is my monthly newsletter, which updates the readers on the progress of my book and future work.

**SORMAG:** What was your first book signing like?

**YVONNE:** My first signing was actually an unofficial pre-signing during the 2003 National Book Club Conference in Atlanta. Once the book club members discovered I had an upcoming release, I was asked to sign copies of my postcard, their scrapbooks, and even their book bags. It was an awesome experience.

**SORMAG:** What was the most unusual place your book was sold?

**YVONNE:** I participated in a Black Business Women Expo, which was held inside of a church gymnasium. My book wasn't in print, so I spoke to the spectators about my writing style and passed out printed copies of the first chapter. I managed to get eleven pre-orders and met many new contacts. I was ecstatic!

**SORMAG:** Our theme for this issue is resources on the net. What resources on the net have been very helpful with your writing?

**YVONNE:** I've taken online courses with Writers Village University and Authors Supporting Authors Positively University. I've also subscribed to a ton of newsletters for aspiring writers, including Writing World at [www.writing-world.com](http://www.writing-world.com), Writing Prompts For Every Day by WritersDigest.com, and

WriteThinking at [www.writethinking.net](http://www.writethinking.net). These newsletters are free and very helpful.

**SORMAG:** What advice would you give to those interested in self-publishing?

**YVONNE:** Self-publishing is for the patient and determined individual. Be sure to do homework and be mindful of fraudulent people and companies. Lastly, remember that promotion is on you, the author, your success is depending on it.

**SORMAG:** How can readers reach you (mail, email, website).

**YVONNE:** Readers may visit me at [www.alishayvonne.com](http://www.alishayvonne.com). For personal contact, email at [author@ebonyliterarygrace.com](mailto:author@ebonyliterarygrace.com) or via snail mail

Ebony Literary Grace  
c/o Alisha Yvonne  
P.O. Box 18080  
Memphis, TN 38181-0080

---

## SUPPORT

## SELF PUBLISHED AUTHORS

## PICK UP A BOOK AND SUPPORT A DREAM

**Shades Of Reading Magazine:** Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer.

**Jacqueline Deval:** Jacqueline Deval is the author of *PUBLICIZE YOUR BOOK: An Insiders Guide to Getting Your Book the Attention It Deserves* (Perigee) which Publishers Weekly calls "easily the most incisive and expert guide to book publicity ever." Now publisher of Hearst Books, she has been director of publicity for William Morrow, Villard, and Doubleday and director of marketing for William Morrow. Throughout her career she has coached hundreds of authors through their publications and put many books on the bestseller list. Among the writers and celebrity-authors she has worked with are Isaac Asimov, Margaret Atwood, Wilt Chamberlain, Bill Cosby, John Feinstein, David Halberstam, Michael Jackson, Penn & Teller, Whitney Otto, David Owen, and Diana Ross. She is also the author of a critically acclaimed novel called *RECKLESS APPETITES: A Culinary Romance* (Ecco Press) for which she appeared on The Today Show and Good Morning America. Born in England, she lives in New York City. For more information go to [www.publicizeyourbook.com](http://www.publicizeyourbook.com).

**SORMAG:** Tell us about your book?

**DEVAL:** *PUBLICIZE YOUR BOOK* is an insiders guide that explains how to work with your publisher or on your own to generate publicity, be an asset to your publicist, and get your book noticed. It covers:

- Writing a marketing plan and defining your target readership
- Developing a press kit
- Working with your publicist for best results
- Hiring an independent publicist
- Networking effectively
- Creating pitches for talk shows
- Getting newspaper and magazine coverage
- Marketing on the Internet and in other outlets
- Preparing for interviews and touring
- Setting up bookstore appearances and signings
- And more.

**SORMAG:** What would you like your readers to take away from your book?

**DEVAL:** A sense of empowerment, that he or she can get involved in the marketing of a book and make a real difference in terms of that book's exposure and sales.

**SORMAG:** How can this book help a recently published author?

**DEVAL:** *PUBLICIZE YOUR BOOK* explains very clearly how a publishing house works and how publishing decisions are made about a book. It shows how an author can be proactive to affect how the book is published, and what to do if the publisher is doing nothing to promote the book. This book answers all the questions that keep an anxious author awake at night!

**SORMAG:** How can readers get in touch with you? (email, snail mail, web address)

**DEVAL:** [jdeval@yahoo.com](mailto:jdeval@yahoo.com)

**Read the review on page 21**

**The writer's library are books we recommends writers have in their library to improve their writing and writing career.**

**If you have a book or would like to recommend a book, contact us at [sormag@yahoo.com](mailto:sormag@yahoo.com)**

**Publicize Your Book****Jacqueline Deval****Perigee Books/Berkley Publishing Group****ISBN: 0-399-52863-6****Rating: 4+ Stars-EXCEPTIONAL****Reviewer: Nathasha Brooks-Harris**

If you're a soon-to-be author who has just received "the call" that your book will be published, or if you've just finished writing a book, please don't think that your work is over. Yes, breathe a sigh of relief and take a short break, because in reality, your work has just begun. The "easy" work of writing and shopping your novel is over. However, the hard work is ahead of you. Namely, that is the art of publicizing your book and keeping it in the public's eye. If you haven't a clue how to do that, don't fret. There is a wonderful new book on the market called Publicize your Book by Jacqueline Deval, which will tell you, step-by-step, how to do that.

This book goes into great detail about such topics as how to garner the best media coverage, how to reach readers effectively, how to sell more copies of your book, how to keep your book in print, how to give a great interview, particulars about setting up and making bookstore appearances and speaking engagements, internet marketing, how to choose a publicist and what he should be accomplishing for you, and so much more.

Deval very graciously addresses what authors should do after they've written the book. In addition, she gives an in-depth look at how to create a press kit and a marketing plan—the two most essential tools needed to get publicity for your book and promoting it. She also devotes an entire chapter to how to get on The Oprah Winfrey Show.

After reading this book, any author who desires information about how to market and promote their book will have it for a mere \$15.95 and the time

they've invested in reading it. There is a wealth of good information in this book that's written in layman's language. Deval doesn't stop there: she also gives a comprehensive Resource Guide --A Directory of Service For Authors and Publicists-- with current information and samples of everything an author will need to get the word out and (keep it out there in all media) about their book.

Deval definitely knows her stuff because she gives the big picture of the situation, then she gets into the "little taken for granted" things that most people wouldn't include in their how-to books. An example of this is when she discusses getting to and from an interview, speaking, or signing venue and the author has to depend on taxis to get there. She makes a very valid point that black authors should allow extra time when using a taxi as a mode of transportation in major cities because sometimes, taxis won't stop and pick them up. She advises such authors to have a back-up plan—just in case. Some readers might find that statement politically incorrect, but that will be their loss, because Deval keeps it real. Anyone of color will be able to relate to what she is saying. This reviewer certainly can. She looks at every angle of a situation and presents it in an honest and forthright manner.

This book is simply excellent and belongs in any author's or wannabe author's reference library because it is in essence, a complete marketing plan. It's a must-have and there's no compromising that fact.

**SUPPORT SORMAG**

**BUY A SUBSCRIPTION  
FOR A FRIEND**

**SORMAG MAKES A  
GREAT GIFT**