



Fall Issue 2014

For Escapees Writers Published or Not



Tips From Jaimie

The link to this column at CreateSpace.com came in an Amazon Kindle Direct newsletter. Fiction writers wanting ideas for developing a character might find this exercise helpful. This is from a short blog post, "The Stranger in the Room," by Richard Ridley:

To truly know your characters, you have to spend time with them outside of the book - away from the plot and surroundings they are used to. You have to pluck them from their cozy storylines and throw them into an unfamiliar situation to understand what makes them tick.

Read more and try out the exercise at:

<http://tinyurl.com/kpdhhmo>

Have fun!

~Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

News Flash!

Barnes & Noble is selling off **Nook Media** and keeping the retail stores. For those of you selling books on the Nook eBookstore, this could be chilling news. It could also mean more sales. Right now, it is anyone's guess about the outcome.

New Digital Newsletter

Welcome to the new digital Penwheels newsletter. This digital format not only conserves resources, but also provides live links to articles and other areas of interest to authors.

Let's heard the sound of virtual hands clapping for Doris Hutchins as she retires from the position of editor and moves on with her life.

The *Penwheels* newsletter, designed to bring you personal writing experiences from our members, is also poised to share news from the writing and publishing world.

If you would like to contribute an article, poem, book review, contest, or share a tip, send an e-mail to the new editor: Margo@TheMaxwellGroup.net

Except for the first page, each column is 250 words, a two-column article is 500 words. A feature article may be one or two columns.

 **Note:** To open the **Table of Contents** (Bookmarks), click the icon in the far left column of the PDF software.



The **new** location for accessing any past Penwheels newsletter from 2009 to the current issue:

<http://Penwheels.MovingOnWithMargo.com>

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Penwheels is a private group of Escapees members who enjoy writing and discussing the writing adventure.

To be a member of this group, first join the Escapees RV Club. Next, contact the *Membership Coordinator*, **Joanne Alexakis**, to submit your request for membership to the *Penwheels* group.

The *Penwheels* is a FREE digital newsletter published quarterly to all members via e-mail.



Margo Armstrong

RVillage

RVillage.com is now our new communications home. The Escapees head office is putting energy into making this website the official “go to” spot for members. We have a forum to use here too.

RVillage is a brand new social networking site that is exclusive to RVers. It allows you to interact with and meet new friends that you can keep in touch with along the way!



It's absolutely FREE to sign up; just log on to <http://RVillage.com> and create an account.

The “Groups” section includes organizations and independent groups. *Penwheels BoF* is one of those “groups.” We can stay in touch with each other on the road and have impromptu get-togethers when we are in the same location.

From the member location map, it is possible to set up your travel schedule to connect with one or more of us ... or not.

There are several videos and other user documentation on the site. It is wise to look through those first, especially the videos. They give you an overview.

Similar to some of the other social networking sites, RVillage has a “friend,” “like,” “personal message,” and an E-mail update notification that someone has posted on one of your groups. There is also an Activity Timeline like most other sites, so you never miss anything.

The website is still in “Public Beta” so there are some bugs yet to be worked out. It is easy to use though, and I find myself participating in several groups.

To join RVillage:

- In your browser, type **RVillage.com**
- Click the “**Join for Free**” button.
- Complete your profile.
- Click **Groups**.
- In the *Groups Search* field, type **Penwheels**.
- When the *Penwheels* homepage displays, on the left-hand side of the screen, click **Join**.
- To read or post on the forum, click the **Forum** button.
- To see if we are planning a **Get-Together**, click that button.

It is easy to exchange information and upload images. There is no *File Upload* function. That may be developed later; meanwhile all the archives are stored on one of my websites for easy access. If you want to add something there, just send it to me.

For the **Archives**, visit:

<http://Penwheels.MovingOnWithMargo.com>

I know very little about **Curtis Coleman**, the mover and shaker of RVillage. From *About Us* section of the website:

“Curtis Coleman is the Founder and CEO of RVillage. With over 30 years experience as an RV owner, enthusiast, and full time RVer, Curtis brings his passion, knowledge, vision, and leadership experience to this unique company role.

A serial entrepreneur by nature, Curtis' lifetime achievements are particularly vast in nature.

Most notably, Curtis is a former member of the world-renowned folk singing group, “*The New Christy Minstrels*.”

He is also an economic consultant, restaurateur, real estate investment specialist, web development advisor, and now the visionary, founder and CEO of a company that could very well change the face of RV travel as we know it.”

Wow! Well, there you have it. We are in on the ground floor of a life-changing process.



Writing Gigs

Good Old Days magazine is a nostalgia periodical that relates true first-person stories of people who lived and grew up in the time frame of about 1935-1960; no fictional stories are published. Seasonal and non-seasonal stories are included with each issue.

The tone is informal and conversational; most of their contributors are not professionals. Regular features include a cooking column with recipes, a home remedies column, a photo feature in which contributors send in reminiscent photos with brief stories/captions, a Hollywood film column featuring actors and actresses, and a Bits & Pieces column featuring shorter stories of 100 to 300 words.

They also publish an occasional biography, as well as historical stories on memorable events, fads, antiques, fashion, sports, music, literature, entertainment, etc.

Welcomes new writers. Circulation: 180K. Bimonthly. Pays on acceptance. Publishes four months after acceptance. Buys one-time, first, or all rights. No reprints. Responds within six months. Sample copy available for \$2 by mail with SASE. Subscription \$17.95, \$25.95 outside the U.S. Guidelines online here.

Current Needs: Any seasonal or non-seasonal true first-person stories from the 1935-1960 time period. Pays \$25 for full-length stories, \$10-\$15 for shorter features. Stories are 600-1000 word stories. Submit cover letter noting preferred rights; complete manuscript with name, address and phone number; SASE; scan/photocopy of any available photos. Use **Word format** when emailing stories to the editor.

Photos/Art: At least 300dpi, preferably 1500x1500 pixels.

Hints: Please be sure to include the location (city, state, region, etc.) and date of story; currently we are publishing stories that happened in the United States.

Specify your preferred rights. Unless you are emailing your story, do not send original photos with your submission; they will request any original photos needed upon acceptance. Absolutely no fiction.

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E-mail: Editor@GoodOldDaysMagazine.com.

Website: <http://www.GoodOldDaysMagazine.com>
Editor: Mary Beth Weisenburger

From an article in *Writers Weekly*, submitted by Jaimie Hall-Bruzenak



Writing Contests & Awards

Camping Trip (No Deadline)

- Write a camping related article sharing your Camping How To's, Review or Tips and Advice.
- In a few paragraphs, include useful information about your camping topic.
- Submit your article to win one of three Visa gift cards, worth up to \$100.

<http://writingcontest.camptrip.com/>

Writing Contest for Baby Boomers

Monthly writing contests.

StageofLife.com wants to hear your retirement and empty nest stories! They feature a free, writing contest for Baby Boomers...and older generations too!

This writing competition is a non-fiction, memoir, blogging, essay-style contest for any person who is in the empty nest or retirement stage of life. There is NO submission fee to enter this contest.

<http://www.stageoflife.com/StageRetirement/OtherResources/RetirementEmptyNestWritingContest.aspx>

eLit Book Award (Deadline Jan 31, 2015)

Publishers and authors worldwide creating electronic books written in English and designed for the global marketplace are eligible for entry in 65 different e-Lit categories. Titles published with a 2013 or 2014 copyright or that were released between January 1, 2013 and January 31, 2015.

http://www.elitawards.com/how_to_enter.php

Popular Fiction Award (Deadline Oct. 15, 2014)

- A chance to win the Popular Fiction Awards Grand Prize including \$2,500 and a trip to the 2015 Writer's Digest Conference
- A chance to win the \$500 Category First Prize
- Get your story promoted in Writer's Digest and on WritersDigest.com
- Win \$100 off a purchase at www.writersdigestshop.com
- Receive a copy of the 2015 Novel & Short Story Writer's Market

<http://www.writersdigest.com/popularfictionawards>

Braggin' Rights



"New Canadian/U.S. Border Tracking System," *Escapees Magazine* July/August issue, *Different Viewpoints*.

Monthly column in the *RV West eMagazine* (Snowbirding 101) (http://www.rvwest.com/index.php/snowbirding_101)

~ Lynne Benjamin

"Smoke and Fire News," in the *Knoxville Express* and "Civil War Days," in the *Pella Chronicle*, June 2014. These are articles about re-enactments taking place in Iowa and Illinois.

~ Darlene Miller

"Conquer the Road: RV Maintenance for Travelers," the paperback version, finally published and available on Amazon.

~ Margo Armstrong

Caged Love



Trapped inside a jail of my own creation,
Withering slowly like a dying bud on the vine,
Dried out and dusty - devoid of fragrance, having lost all color.
I peer out from between the bars,
Longing for my heart to be free,
Knowing that if I can just break loose, love will blossom again.
I feel the soft petals against my cheek,
A lover's caress.
I smell the rich perfume in my nostrils,
The scent of his cologne lingering on the bedsheets.
Spring has finally arrived.

~ Ramona Creel

Making It As A Writer



Hugh C. Howey "My Advice to Aspiring Authors"

"The key to making it as a writer is to write a lot, write great stories, publish them yourself, spend more time writing, study the industry, act like a pro, network, be nice, invest in yourself and your craft, and be patient.

If you can do all of these things, you'll earn some money. Maybe enough to pay a bill every month. Maybe enough to get out of debt. Maybe enough to quit your job. Thousands of writers are doing this, and we are welcoming all comers with open arms."

Hugh Howey is the author of the award-winning *Molly Fyde Saga* and the *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling *WOOL* series.

<http://www.hughhowey.com/>

Improving Your Writing Skills

Developing Characters

Trying your hand at a novel but having trouble developing the characters?

Here are a few links to articles that may help:

<https://www.autocrit.com/editing/library/helpful-hints-on-characterization/>

<http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/how-to-write-a-character-from-start-to-finish>

<http://nanowrimo.org/forums/character-cafe/threads/125155>

<http://terribleminds.com/ramble/2014/01/13/25-things-a-great-character-needs/>

<http://thewritepractice.com/how-do-you-build-a-strong-character-in-your-writing/>

<http://www.enotes.com/topics/how-write-character-analysis>





From the Editor

Subscription-based Library Services

The latest phase in the eBookstore world is charging by the month rather than charging by the book. Springing up all over the Internet, commercial services are sure you want to read more than you can afford to buy.

Scribd.com: Scribd charges \$8.99 per month to read anything and everything in their catalog. The payment plan is set up through PayPal. **A caution here**, if you cancel your subscription with Scribd, you must also cancel the payment subscription with Paypal.

Keep checking your account with PayPal until you see the automatic payment “profile” show up somewhere. When you cancel here, Scribd considers this the official cancellation and not before, no matter how many times you tell Scribd to cancel.

Scribd apparently does not notify PayPal of any cancellations. They also send you e-mails trying to talk you out of cancelling. They do admit that up front. This tactic reminds me of the old magazine subscription sales strategy.

If more than 10% of an eBook is read, Scribd pays publishers the full royalty amount.

Amazon.com: Kindle Unlimited at \$9.99 per month is offering the same type of subscription service. Currently, however, there are many publishers not participating because of the restrictions (and general hostility).

Publishers that participate must enter into a KDP exclusive contract. They are paid the full royalty on each book if more than 10% is read.

Oysterbooks.com: This is early insertion in the subscription market at \$9.95 per month and could be the stimulus for this trend.

SafariBooksOnline.com: This service is now a weak entry at \$24 a month for unlimited access, all categories.

Self-Publishing: The New Champion

The stigma is gone. Self-publishing may be the beginning, and for many it may be the end. Self-publishing leaves all the author's options open. Traditional publishing leaves almost no options open.

- The vast majority of books traditionally published never earn out their advance. They go out of print and into the black void. This can never happen to a self-published work except by the author's choice.
- The obvious advantage to self-publishing is what the author earns. eBook self-publishing pays 70% royalties for the rest of your life. The traditional publisher's going rate for eBook royalties is 25%.
- In the print world, self-publishers can earn up to 90% of the retail price at some eBookStores that sell Print-On-Demand. High-volume POD online retail outlets pay from 40% to 60% royalties. Global retail outlets may only pay about 20% of the retail price.
- Traditional publishers may pay a flat fee up front; some pay an advance against royalties. Some new ideas springing from traditional publishers are paying higher royalties, but no advance. There is also a subscription model bouncing around out there where the author receives a share of the revenue.
- Self-publishing pays monthly. Traditional publishing pays twice a year and after quite a bit of initial delay. They also withhold a reserve for print returns.
- If you want to give away your creative efforts to build readership, self-publishing allows this. Traditional publishers cannot do this for fear of competing with their other authors. It is also why they do not promote you (lightly if at all) beyond that six-month window. You are now their competition.

Some downsides to self-publishing, of course, include hiring or finding an good editor to polish your work. You may also need to hire an artist for the book cover.

There are plenty of self-publishing companies popping up to help you create that great american novel. Take the time to review their *Terms & Conditions*. Above all, retain the publishing rights, and get the best royalty contract.



Feel free to E-mail me with any questions you may have.

Margo@TheMaxwellGroup.net

We are Professional Writers!



I recently received a request to run a reprint of an article I originally did for RoadTripAmerica.com titled "Six Great Day Trips From Phoenix" in a community publication in the Phoenix area. I googled the publication and found that they have both advertisers plus subscribers. My E-mail response was to ask what their rate of pay is for a reprint.

I received this response: *"Thank you for your quick response. The positioning that we are offering to you is an unpaid article position, the benefit to you would be exposure to our over 6,000 readers. We regularly feature recipes, health tips, etc from writers that are interested in creating a larger audience for themselves. Please let me know if this is something that you would be interested in."*

I have written things for no payment before but felt I should get something since this is a for-profit magazine. I decided to take a stand for at least a token payment. My reply:

"I am a professional writer and spent considerable time, travel and effort to write this article. You are a for-profit magazine that gets fees from advertisers and subscribers. I would love to have my article in your publication but would need at least a token payment of \$25 plus a mention of my website."

Surprisingly he wrote back fairly quickly to say he agreed and asked for a bio and where to send the check!

Could I have asked for more? When someone agrees to your terms so quickly, you have to wonder. However, I am proud of myself for insisting on payment. When I first started out, getting credits and exposure was important.

Continued ➡

My first articles were in Escapees magazine almost 20 years ago when authors received no pay. It was a psychological hurdle to submit to a paying market but by then I had credits in Escapees and others.

Fellow Penwheelers, the late Alice Zyetz and Betty Prange, encouraged and helped me submit that first article. Now, unless I am writing for myself, I expect to be paid. I also pay a small amount for articles in my ezine since it helps me sell books. I figure as a publisher I too should treat writers as professionals.

The moral of this story? If you don't ask, you certainly won't get paid. But the first step is to see yourself as a professional worthy of pay. Sometimes, that's the biggest step of all!

~Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

Escapees News Bulletin



Texas DMV Update by Jim Koca, Advocacy Director, Escapees

"I want to update everyone on the issue of the registration/MVIS law that will be enacted on March 1, 2015, for the SKPs who register their vehicles in Texas. I have continued to monitor the situation and am pleased to pass on that a solution will be in place to allow RVers and others who are out of the state to be able to re-register their vehicles without having to drive back to the state for the MVIS sticker.

During a Senate Transportation Committee meeting chaired by Senator Nichols, Whitney Brewster, the Director of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, publicly stated in the Transportation meeting that residents who are out of state at the time of re-registration will be allowed to complete the process without the need to return to the state for the vehicle inspection.

On-line re-registration will be available for people who choose to use this option; however, at this time we do not know what type of documents will be needed to show proof that one is out of state.

When the vehicle has returned to the state, then the owner will have 72 hours to get the required inspection. All Texas county registration offices will have the ability to override the inspection requirement during the re-registration request. I have talked to the Polk County registration office, and they confirmed that this process will be available."