

Penwheels Newsletter

Fall 2016



For Escapees Writers, Published or Not



Tips From Jaimie

By Jaimie Hall
Bruzenak
RetiretoanRV.com

☛ This article in the June 3, 2016 [Writers Weekly](#) should inspire us all! "I'm 81, Still Writing, and Still Getting Paid for It!"

☛ In my [Bookreporter](#) newsletter, I saw that this writer's memoir was just published and could be an interesting read. It's titled *Bukowski in a Sundress: Confessions from a Writing Life* by Kim Addibuzio.

☛ Forbes just released its annual list of the world's highest-paid authors. Together they earned a whopping \$269 million over the last 12 months. See the top earners at [Goodreads](#).

☛ If you think you are too old to write or publish articles or a novel, read the article in the June 11, 2016 issue of [Writer's Weekly](#) - "What Delayed My Writing Career? Guilt, Shame, Doubt, and a Father's Discouraging Words," by Janet Garber. It's never too late!

☛ This article in [Writers Weekly](#) could give you an idea for preserving and passing on your family history and maybe even make money doing it. Read Rich Bivins story.

☛ If you have or have had a pet, this article in the [June 30 Writers Weekly](#) could give you some ideas on selling articles on this topic. Well written with lots of ideas. Chicken Soup books are seeking stories about both dogs and cats too.

☛ Do you have writer's block? People with creative minds often have habits to help start the juices flowing. Beethoven was known for dipping his head in cold water before working on his compositions.



Braggin' Rights

By Joanne Alexakis

Betty Prange SKP#22195 - In 'Different Viewpoints' section (page 56), Betty shares facts about our National Park Service which celebrates its 100th anniversary on Aug 25, 2016.

Kay Peterson SKP#1 - In 'From the Bookshelf' section (page 73), Kay's new book, *The Elephant Bond*, is featured. This is a sequel to her novel, *13 Days in Africa*.

May/June issue of *Escapees Magazine*.

This Issue

Tips From Jaimie
Braggin' Rights
Beautiful Library
Fiction Tips From Ellen
Point of View
Great Fight Scenes
From the Editor
Find a Fiction Editor
Grammar Tips
About Book Fairs
The World of Publishing

Editor: Margo Armstrong
Margo @ [TheMaxwellGroup.net](#)

Web Moderator:
Margo Armstrong

Membership: Joanne Alexakis
[joalexakis @ earthlink.net](#)

Historian: Doris Hutchins
[valintedh @ gci.net](#)

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

The Penwheels Newsletter is digitally published quarterly. Free to all members via eMail and online.

Most Beautiful Library in the World

By Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

In June of this year, after walking seven sections of the Camino de Santiago in Spain, my sister and I spent a few more days in Portugal before flying home. On my list were visits to two notable bookstores in the area.

Porto

Joyce Space, who was traveling with her husband in their small RV in Europe as we made our plans, told me about [Livraria Lello](#), in Porto. Lello Bookstore is often called the most beautiful bookstore in the world. The brothers Lello opened the bookstore in 1906.

The facade is Neo-Gothic; inside more art deco. Beautiful wood columns and shelves line both sides but the focal point is the crimson staircase.



The stairs of the beautiful carved and curved staircase are covered in a crimson floor covering. View several angles [here](#).

Busts of famous authors decorate the store. Both new books and rare first editions can be found as well as a few cards, journals, postcards and other small gifts.

Even though they limit the number of people inside, it was packed with people taking photos and looking for books. The store was amazing.

Lisbon

In googling Lello Bookstore, I came across the oldest bookstore in the world, located in Lisbon, our other stop in Portugal. [Bertrand Bookstore](#) has a Guinness World Record certificate officially naming it the oldest operating bookshop, which is proudly displayed in the window.

Not the tourist attraction that Lello's is, we had a hard time finding it since there are now 50 or so stores in the Bertrand chain. Fortunately the taxi driver we found knew right where it was and took us there instead of the location I had in mind. And it was even close enough to walk back to our hotel afterwards.

The first room is the original with the other alcoves added over time. Much brighter than Lello's, it was attractive because of its design and the contrast between white walls and wooden bookcases.



My grandson who is at the Air Force Academy is studying Portuguese. I picked out a reader for older kids (not the "see Spot run" variety), hoping it would be at about the level he could handle.

My sister and I did a lot of walking in Porto and Lisbon and we were amazed at the number of small bookstores we saw. The big chains (Bertrand seems to be the only one) have not taken over Portugal so many thrive. Had the books been in English, it would have been hard for me to pass them by!





Choose Wisely, Grasshopper!

By Ellen Behrens

www.ellenbooks.com

Wondering if, after writing mostly nonfiction, you're doing this fiction thing right? I've heard this from some Penwheels members, so let's explore the distinctions between fiction and nonfiction. Most of us remember the basics: fiction comes from the imagination; nonfiction is built around facts.

Seems simple, but as you write, those lines start to blur, don't they? Writers the world over tangle with this same issue. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- ❖ Research might be the focus of a nonfiction book or article but should only serve as background in fiction. For example, a magazine article can be all about the history of the Yuma Territorial Prison, but in a short story or novel, you should include only enough of that history to support the plot, setting, or characters.
- ❖ Just because something "really happened that way" doesn't mean it should be written "that way" in fiction. Embellish. Trim. Shape the actual event into something fitting the story. (If you insist on reporting what really happened – you should write a memoir or your autobiography instead of fiction.)
- ❖ Don't mistake "reporting" for narrative. Yes, fiction has narrative sections where things have to be explained, but there's a world of difference between telling the reader what happened (reporting) and plunging the reader into the experience the through scene (fiction). [See the *Fall 2015 Fiction Tips* column for more.]

Some articles use scenes and description – techniques of fiction – but their purpose is entirely different. Don't mistake using fiction techniques for writing fiction.

To be clear, short stories are fiction. Articles are nonfiction. Definitions and distinctions matter because editors, publishers, and reader have expectations attached to each type of writing – confuse the terms and you'll confuse those who matter the most.

Remember the brouhaha on Oprah over the James Frey memoir? He fabricated parts of his own background to make the story of his life more interesting and ended up losing credibility.

Generally it's harder to keep the fiction out of fact than the other way around – which is why I prefer fiction. My favorite comments on my books are when readers wonder "what's real and what isn't"; the questions tell me I've successfully blended fact and fiction in a way that makes the entire novel completely believable.

Fiction gives you the freedom to take a few facts, an episode or two from your life, and expand them into something with a beginning, a middle, and an end—which real life doesn't often provide.

Now take your foot off the brake and get moving!

Questions? Ideas for topics? Drop Ellen an e-mail at ellenbehr@aol.com or post it on the Penwheels forum so we can all benefit!

*Ellen Behrens' second novel in her Rollin RV Mystery series, **Yuma Baby**, is coming soon. She is a former fiction editor and the recipient of an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship. She and her husband have been full-time RVers since 2009. Learn more about her books at www.ellenbooks.com.*



Point of View

Language is always uttered from some point of view; that is, it comes from someone.

Scientific writers and legal writers (lawyers, the court) may try to hide this fact by writing in a voice so passive that it begins to sound as if it were uttered from some completely impartial god outside of the human experience.

No one argues more passionately than those folks who write within these two areas.

When writing a short story we use one of the following points of view:

Third Person Restricted: We recognize this from the pronouns "he" or "she."

In this point of view, probably the most popular, and some would argue the most natural, all the action takes place in the presence of the character from whose point of view we learn the story.

If we are taken "inside the head" of a character, it is only within this character's head. The narrator does *not* tell us what anyone else thinks or feels. This character may or may *not* be the main character of the story.

First Person:

We recognize this from the pronoun "I." Like third person restricted, all of the action takes place within this character's presence, and we learn only his/her thoughts and feelings in any kind of direct fashion.

Omniscient:

As the word implies, this is a god-like point of view. The narrator freely moves from one character's perspective to another. This point of view was far more popular in earlier centuries than it has been in the current one, reflecting both the tastes of authors and the reading public.

Using this point of view within a short story is very difficult to pull off with any success because of the space restrictions. It takes time to develop more than one character's point of view.

Second Person:

We recognize this from the pronoun "you." This point of view is rarely used except in some experimental writing. Literally "you" means the reader, and a story told from this point of view can quickly become tiresome.

Authors often, however, slip into the highly vernacular syntactical structure of using the pronoun in a casual manner—a kind of "you know what I mean" statement—because the language used to tell stories is more often than not colloquial.

Pure Dramatization: This really isn't a "point of view" but occasionally a writer will produce a story that is very close to a play. That is, we receive almost all dialogue and very little narration, which usually seems little more than stage direction. Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" is about as close to this as any successful short story trying to accomplish this technique.

Exercise: Take any story you have written and rewrite it from a different point of view. If you originally wrote the story in first person, try it in third person restricted. You discover that you need to do more than changing the pronoun. You should find that it is easier to be more objective about a character you are rendering in third person.

If you've written a story in third person, try it in first. This can be an especially fruitful exercise if you have had trouble making the character sympathetic or fierce.

Continued Next Page >>>

A wonderful example of the use of point of view in a novel is F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Most casual readers remember this novel as a third person novel, but it is actually told from the first person point of view.

We learn everything from Nick's perspective, *Gatsby's* neighbor.

Once again, watch what happens to the language as you change the point of view. What is it you need to add, take away? How does this change affect the emotional relationship the reader develops with the character.

The T.S. Eliot/John Gardner Killer Exercise: This exercise is quite possibly the most difficult, demanding and important exercise a writer can ever do.

The poet and critic, T. S. Eliot, coined the phrase "objective correlative" to designate what he believed was the most important element in writing. Rendering the description of an object so that the emotional state of the character from whose point of view we receive the description is revealed *without* ever telling the reader what that emotional state is or what has motivated it.

The late John Gardner, recognized in his lifetime as the leading creative writing teacher in the United States, developed the following exercise for students:

A middle-age man is waiting at a bus stop. He has just learned that his son has died violently. Describe the setting from the man's point of view without telling your reader what has happened. How will the street look to this man? What are the sounds? Odors? Colors? That this man will notice? What will his clothes feel like? Write a 250 word description.



Rayne Hall's 10 Tricks For Writing Great Fight Scenes

Rayne has published more than thirty books under different pen names with different publishers in different genres, mostly fantasy, horror and non-fiction.

1. Choose an unusual location: The quirkiest place that's plausible in your plot: a cow shed, a castle ruin, a catacomb. Involve the setting in the action: the fighters may slip on the muddy slope, leap across the fence, slam their opponent against the wall.

2. Shorten: To create a fast pace, use short paragraphs, short sentences, short words. These convey the breathlessness and speed of the action.

Instead of: Looking at his face, she could see that he was thinking, and concluding that it was his intention to strike her, she decided to move to prevent the blow from landing.

Try this: She read his intent and blocked the blow.

3. The correct skills: Make sure the fighters use only fight skills they actually have. A Victorian damsel isn't likely to throw uppercuts and round-house kicks. Establish beforehand what kind of skills the fighter has.

4. Stay in the PoV: Show only what the fighter sees in that moment: his opponent's face, his opponent's hands, his opponent's weapon. He can't afford to look elsewhere, because if he takes his attention off the fight for even a second, he's dead.

5. Implement sound: Sounds create excitement, so mention noises. Mention especially the sounds of weapons—the clanking of swords, the pinging of bullets—or the thudding of flesh on flesh and the cracks of breaking bone.

[Read the rest of the tricks here...](#)

FROM THE EDITOR

Editing Software Review

Two new editing programs hit the market that look promising: ProWritingAid.com and AutoCrit.com.

These programs charge an annual membership rate for their online assistance. Paste your content in and a report is generated.

My suggestion is that you review *ProWritingAid* first because you can start using it without any financial commitment. Then, with some critique software experience behind you, look at *AutoCrit* and compare the offerings.

The downside is everything is done online. However, you can save the report to your computer with the premium options.

PROWRITINGAID.COM

ProWritingAid's selling points: (**Note:** Keep in mind that this software comes from the United Kingdom so dual spelling of certain words, etc.) **Important:** PC version only.

- ❖ Checks for hidden and passive verbs
- ❖ Identifies overuse of adverbs and glue words
- ❖ Locates repetitive sentence structure
- ❖ Checks for commonly overused words
- ❖ Locates repeated words and phrases
- ❖ Finds vague, abstract and complex words
- ❖ Checks for clichés and redundancies
- ❖ Identifies spelling mistakes
- ❖ Find commonly confused words such as let's and lets
- ❖ Points out grammar & diction mistakes
- ❖ Highlights incorrect punctuation
- ❖ Finds inconsistency of capitalization and hyphenation
- ❖ Searches the Internet for plagiarism

ProWritingAid provides a 14-day free trial version with a limit of 3000 words at any one time. The interactive editing feature is disabled and you can't download or print your reports.

The Premium annual purchase at \$40 and \$45 add the interactive editing tool and more reports. Deep discounts are offered for multiple-year commitments.

With the \$40 annual version, you can buy a plagiarism bundle of 10 reports for \$5.

The PremiumPlus version offers 50 plagiarism-checking reports, a boon for freelance writers. It also allows printing and/or emailing the report.

There is a sophisticated "settings" panel that allows you to enter your own patterns, select the reports for the analysis, and several other options that I have never seen in an editing software before.

I tested the *Word 2007+* add-in that works well. The icon appears on the *Word* toolbar. Click the "Analyze" icon to start the process. As the analysis takes place online, *Word* is just the interface to connect to the editing software. Very slick!

You can select your writing style after you enter the code for your free trial (sent to you via email). This may change the reports available to you, or the way the word usage is handled. A recent addition to the report list, "Checking the Inside and Outside of Dialogue," makes this program attractive to fiction and screen play writers.

The support center also offers several areas that writer's find useful: *Writing and Inspirational Quotes*, *Writing Prompts*, and several dictionaries.

See the Winter Issue for the Autocrit review.

This is an excerpt from Margo Armstrong's new paperback edition, *Writing & Publishing Books for Fun & Profit.*
Buy it directly from [Createspace](http://Createspace.com) or [Amazon](http://Amazon.com).



Find a Fiction Editor



Editorial Freelancers Association (EFA) members are editors, writers, indexers, proofreaders, researchers, desktop publishers, translators, and

others who offer a broad range of skills and specialties to the general public.

The *online EFA member directory* offers clients **free** and instant access to the diverse assortment of highly skilled publishing professionals who make up EFA membership.

The free EFA job listing service offers clients another way to find the right freelancer for the job.

EFA members receive a customizable listing in the directory and access to the wide variety of project opportunities submitted by clients, along with many other membership benefits.

EFA also provides resources for both freelancers and clients, including a chart of common rates.

As a publisher or author, you want qualified professionals to work on your manuscript or project.

Where else to find them than through the largest and oldest national professional organization of editorial freelancers?

Grammar Tips



Mignon Fogarty offers to be "Your friendly guide to the world of grammar, punctuation, usage, and fun developments in the English language."

She provides **short quick and dirty tips** for your writing needs.

Mignon believes that learning is fun, and the vast rules of grammar are wonderful fodder for lifelong study. She strives to be a friendly guide in the writing world.

About Book Fairs

Book fairs come in all sizes and venues. A book fair could be outside under canopies, or on a college campus under one roof. It could also be a combination of both venues for the outdoor and indoor experience. It depends on the size of the community the book fair serves and the season.

If you have been thinking about participating in local book fairs to promote your creative efforts, but unsure about what to expect, here are a few insights.

- ❖ A fee is charged for a table and two chairs. The size of the tables vary along with the fee. Usually a "share table" option is available where you split the cost of the table with another author (or two).
- ❖ The larger the Fair, the higher the table fee.
- ❖ If a "goody bag" is provided to the visitor, you may be asked to contribute products or cash to be included as a vendor.
- ❖ Often a book raffle is conducted to raise funds for a local charity. Be prepared to donate one or two books to the cause.
- ❖ Book sales are unpredictable. Your location determines the amount of traffic, hence the amount of book sales.
- ❖ As a general rule, Book Fairs are promotional events, not book-selling bonanzas. Best practice is to bring a moderate inventory of books until you are experienced at this venue.
- ❖ Bring plenty of giveaways, book marks, and an attention-grabbing display.
- ❖ A banner that is long enough can be used as a table cloth and has a color copy of your book cover at the bottom that hangs down to the floor is the best adaptable advertisement.
- ❖ If space is available, there are a number of portable display units that can be used for this purpose, either on the table or floor.
- ❖ For USA Book Fair events, click [here](#).

THE WORLD OF PUBLISHING

Going for the Gold

There are hundreds of literary contests and awards, online and off. Most are real; some are even prestigious. But many or either fake or pointless. Few are important enough to provide a meaningful addition to your writing resume.

Fake contests and awards come in many different guises, but they all have a common goal—to take your money.

Your first self-published book brings out the hunger for recognition and tempts one to throw away money to achieve it.

Victoria Strauss @ Writer Beware: the Blog looks at all the author awards seeking out the profiteer and warning the public.

Some are outright scams. A few examples, drawn from *Writer Beware's* files:

- ❖ A fee-charging literary agency advertises a contest where the prize is agency representation. Representation is indeed offered (to everyone who enters), but the catch is that it comes with a hefty editing fee attached.
- ❖ Another agency uses a false name to run its contest. Entrants are told that even though they didn't win, their work is "exceptional", and referred to the agency, which charges an up-front fee.
- ❖ An editing service uses a contest as a way to acquire a pool of potential customers. The contest is genuine in that there are winners who get prizes, but everyone else is told that their work needs help, and offered the chance to buy editing at a "discount" from the service.

Recently the blog took a look at the *BookLife Prize in Fiction*. If you are thinking of entering this competition, read this critique first.

Victoria writes, "A big entry fee like this, as many of you know, is one of the signs of an **awards profiteer**—an organization that runs writing awards and contests not to honor writers but to make a buck (I've **written** a lot about **such organizations** on this blog).

So I contacted *BookLife* to ask why the fee was so high. I quickly heard back from *BookLife* President Carl Pritzkat, who confirmed what I suspected: Part of the fee goes to cover honorariums for the PW reviewers who'll be providing the critiques.

But he also told me that 'in terms of the entry fee we were modeling it after prizes like *Forward Magazine's* INDIES (\$99 with an early-bird rate of \$79), *IndieReader's* Discovery Awards (\$150 for the first category of entry) and *IBPA's* Benjamin Franklin Awards (\$95 per category for members; \$225 for non-members).'

The grand prize is a nice chunk of change, and given how much writers have to struggle to obtain worthwhile feedback, author blurbs and reviewer critiques are certainly tempting. But I'd suggest that writers who are considering this contest do some serious thinking about whether it's worth handing over nearly \$100 for a few sentences of feedback and the slim possibility of winning \$5,000."

The bottom line is *do your research before plunking down your cash.*



Save Your Book

Here is some sage advice from Angela at WritersWeekly.com:

"Over the last 2 weeks, we've received reports from authors that another well-known P.O.D. publisher recently kicked the bucket.

In their email notice (which used the word *regret*, but offered no apologies, nor an explanation), they told authors to pay them (\$250 to \$300 per author) if they wanted copies of their production files and an ISBN. That's right. After those authors paid upwards of \$1,000, \$2,000 or even more to get published, the publisher is trying to drain their wallets further...as they're kicking those authors out the door!"

Never, ever, ever sign with a publisher who claims ownership of each author's production files. If you pay a firm hundreds to thousands of dollars to format, edit, and/or design your files, shouldn't you then own those files?

[Read the rest of the story...](#)

Balloon Festival

Escapee HOP to Albuquerque

September 30 - October 9 2016



Freelance Jobs

Writers Digest

www.writersdigest.com

Editor: Tyler Moss, Editorial Director
wdsubmissions@fwcommunity.com

"Always accepting pitches from writers on the writing craft."

\$0.50/word. Articles fun 300-4,000 words

THEMA Literary Society

Editor: Virginia Howard, Executive Editor; Gail Howard, Poetry Editor.

Email address: thema@cox.net

Queries. Pays – Stories: \$25 Flash fiction (under 1000 words): \$10 Poetry: \$10 Photograph: \$10 Artwork: \$10 Cover art/photography: \$25

Acres U.S.A.

P.O. Box 301209
Austin TX 78703

Website: www.acresusa.com

Editor: Tara Maxwell, Managing Editor

Email address: editor-at-acresusa.com

Pays \$0.10/word for 1000-3500 words

Current Needs:

"Soil health articles, organic farming/ gardening techniques, farm profiles, specialty livestock and crop information articles." Submit query by email.

[Read the details here.](#)

