

Penwheels Newsletter



Summer 2017

For Escapees Writers, Published or Not



Tips From Jaimie

By Jaimie Hall Bruzenak
RetiretoanRV.com

 RVWithMe.com is a new site that books RV sites in Canada and the USA. Private property and RV lots as well as small RV parks are listed. Sign up your property, RV rental, or tiny home. This site also has some interesting ways for you to earn money by using extra RV space for package delivery, or create your own rally and post it here.

 Some DIY publishers who advertise free services add on to your bill, upping the cost of self-publishing. [Take it as a word to the wise - things to watch out for - if you go this route.](#)

 Self-publishers - read this! What happens if your publisher/printer does not fulfill something in your contract. Does that void the whole thing? [This article will help you before you sign and if there is a breach of contract.](#)



Braggin' Rights

By Joanne Alexakis

*From the Escapees Magazine
May/June 2017 Issue:*

Betty Bowers SKP#42913 - Betty praises Betty's RV Park in Abbeville, Louisiana in the *Different Viewpoints* column - page 32.

Kay Peterson SKP#1 - Kay's new novel, *When Cultures Collide*, is introduced on page 81. This is the last book in her African safari survivors trilogy.

*From the Escapees Magazine,
March/April 2017 issue:*

The Bookshelf section, *Yuma Baby*, a new book by Ellen Behrens (SKP#103358) about her RVing couple, Walt and Betty Rollin, is featured - page 80.

Donna Gates-Smeall (D.G. Smeall), SKP #100803, co-authored "*Forever Friend*" with one of her BFFs, Karol A. Barkley. Its release is imminent.

Betty Prange, SKP #22195, just completed a 3-part series for *Speak E-Z*, the Co-op Park Sierra newsletter, on *Next Step: My Plan for Me*.

This Issue

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The World of Publishing

From the Editor

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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 online at RVillage.com.



Great Expectations

By Ellen Behrens

www.ellenbooks.com

Ever pick up a novel thinking you're about to read about one thing only to discover it's something else? Maybe you thought you'd chosen a thriller, but it shifts into paranormal romance... or you were in the mood for a contemporary mystery but the book turns out to be set somewhere far in the future.

You ponder whether to finish the book. Whatever you decide to do, your expectations have been shattered.

Every writer makes promises to his or her readers. *You're* making promises from the minute you set down the first word. If you haven't thought of writing as a series of promises, you could be missing a key element for keeping your readers – not just through the end of your first book, but from book to book. And we all want that, right?

So how do you find out what they're expecting from your novel? How do you deliver on the promises you've made to them?

- Once you decide what type of novel you're writing (romance, suspense, mystery, chick lit, etc.) read well-known examples to familiarize yourself with what your readers will expect from your book – the conventions of that genre.
- Read how-to books about the genre.
- Revise your manuscript if necessary to fit the genre's conventions.
- Label and promote your book so readers will have an accurate idea of what they're getting.

"But Ellen," you say, "what about your mysteries? They aren't really cozies, but they aren't hard-boiled detective novels, either."

You're right. I describe them when I can as "quasi-cozy" because they follow some of the conventions (they avoid profanity, graphic violence, overt sex) but not all of them.

Walt and Betty Rollin travel in their RV, rather than sit in one little town, so the setting and secondary characters change with every book, unlike conventional cozies.

I try to set my readers' expectations by first not using the sort of cover you see for cozy mysteries which feature drawings in bright colors with a light-hearted feel to them.

Instead, I use photos of the settings which suggest a more realistic story. I'm also careful about how I phrase cover blurbs and promotional materials describing the story.

Recently I got an Amazon review from someone expecting something different. He admitted in the review he was perhaps not the target reader for the book and noted the ranking he gave the book was with that in mind.

We can't avoid all misunderstandings with our readers, but we should do what we can to set the stage for them. Go ahead and blur the lines of your genre (as I do) or combine them (as with paranormal romances or romantic thrillers, for example), but whatever you do – keep the promises you make. Live up to your readers' expectations.

*Ellen Behrens' second novel in her Rollin RV Mystery series, [Yuma Baby](#), got a great review from *Escapees* magazine in the March-April 2017 issue. She and her husband have been full-time RVers since 2009. Learn more about her books at www.ellenbooks.com.*



57th Escapade Rally Tucson AZ



By Donna Gates-Smeall

At the 57th Escapade Rally in Pima, AZ I was honored to be the **Penwheels Row Representative** this year.

I met many new folks and many of our old-timers as well.

Judy Howard stopped in to say “Howdy” and regale me with tales of Sportster’s latest adventures plus we also talked books, as that is what we are about...being writers and writing stories to share with the world.

In between visits with the newest members of *Penwheelers* and the many others who rolled through the ROW to see what Escapees has to offer, I was able to take in some other activities as well.

But I must admit, I really enjoyed my time representing *Penwheels* this year. I wish I could say I had made it to the ROW Dinner which Lockie Sailor, Chapter/BOF Director for the Escapees RV Club had planned...but I simply missed it. Not through any wish on my part, but I wasn’t doing a good job keeping track of what day of the week it was.

Throughout the week, we got 21 new members for our newsletter and group. Welcome, new members! But, I was really sad to see the tables tearing down mid-week when the ROW’s function had been satisfied.

Here is Lockie Sailor’s email address as she may have some great ideas for making our ROW representation more successful:

She did a great job with the schedule layout for ROW and other pertinent information relative to the ROW’s function.

chapterdirectors@escapees.com

Tips for the 2018 Escapade ROW

- 1) We need a stand and a much larger banner that shows our name on it.
- 2) More copies of the *Penwheels Newsletter* to give away. Perhaps the Rally HQ would be willing to print them for us to collect on arrival.
- 3) More active members sitting at the ROW table to show a variety of writers, each with their own unique contributions to the writing world.
- 4) Pre-plan evening events so an announcement can be placed in the rally brochure **before** the rally begins. Once the rally starts, the only way to get the news out about planned evening events is to put it in the *Escapade Extra*, the morning newsletter placed in the Hospitality area. The BOF/Chapters bulletin board in the Hospitality area is also available.
- 5) I found my pre-planned meeting ideas didn’t fly simply because I had NO way to mark and show my location for the evening events. A large *Penwheels* sign in your rig’s window would help people find you. An email to everyone early on the day prior to a scheduled evening event could also be helpful.



Travels through Victoria and Tasmania - Australia

by Jaimie Bruzenak

I recently got back from 3½ weeks in Australia. This was my second visit to Australia, so this time I visited Tasmania and Victoria.

Victoria is the state in the SE corner; Melbourne is its largest city.

I did stop in a few bookstores. I did not see any chain bookstores and often there was more than one bookstore in a town of a few thousand people or larger. Many of the fiction books prominently displayed were by Australia authors though some U.S. authors were represented too.



My sister, Georgia, found a few fiction books by Australian authors ahead of time, plus a neighbor had loaned her a copy of *The Tin Ticket: The Heroic Journey of Australia's Convict Women* by Deborah J. Swiss.

Based on extensive research and meticulous records the English kept, it was a fascinating portrayal of convict women who were mainly arrested for crimes of poverty (stealing food to survive) and sent for 7 years to Tasmania to populate the continent. Of course, hardly any of them could afford the passage back.

Women were sent to the Cascades Female Factory in Hobart, Tasmania. (Most male convicts were initially sent to nearby Port Arthur.)

After reading their stories, I had nothing but admiration for these strong women who survived not only life in England, Ireland or Scotland, but also the dreadful voyage and then life in prison.

Making it even more real was a visit to the historic site of Cascades Female Factory and participating in a living history presentation.

Conditions were brutal, and any woman who became pregnant when sent out to work for a citizen was condemned as a sinner and punished severely. Of course it was her fault, even if raped.



Estimates are as high as 75 percent of Tasmanians having a convict in their family tree. Where it used to be shameful to be descended from convicts, it has become a source of pride. I felt so fortunate this book fell into my hands prior to my visit; I saw Tasmania through different eyes.

At the airport for the flight home, I picked up a copy of *The Lizard Eaters* by Douglas Lockwood, another nonfiction book.

A writer for the Melbourne Herald, Lockwood was invited on a journey to find one of the most primitive Stone Age peoples on the planet. They found Pintubi tribesmen who had never been in touch with our way of life. They also found more Tintubi people... perhaps the most primitive tribesmen remaining on Earth. In one case, Lockwood was the first white man to ever be seen by a small group of people.

One of the fiction books I read, which I left there, was set in Victoria and mentioned places where we traveled like Ballarat and Melbourne. While it wasn't the best murder mystery I've read, it was fun to be able to picture the setting as I read.

I loved both areas of Australia. Eucalypts are prolific and remind me of Southern and Central California. Seeing the wildlife, hiking in Tasmania and doing the Great Ocean Walk were wonderful. Having read some of its history made the experience even richer.





Book Reviews

By Joanna Alexakis

The Search for Grandma Sparkle

Darlene Miller SKP#50781

Darlene Miller, my RVing friend of twenty plus years, sent me her newest book, *The Search for Grandma Sparkle*, to peruse. Thank you, Darlene, for your entertaining read.

Where is Grandma Sparkle? Where can she be? And that is exactly what Grandma Sparkle is wondering, too! Where is she? She has no idea where she is or why she is there—a real mystery.

Grandma Sparkle can't remember what brought her and her three-year-old great granddaughter to this rotted-out old cabin.

Why is her ankle bruised and hurting so dreadfully she can't walk on it?

And who deserted them in this rustic hut?

She uses her resourceful nature to exist in the remote shack and care for little Jessica. Her family desperately searches for them in the long-abandoned coal mine area of rural Iowa.

Darlene Miller falls back on her RVing experiences when citing Grandma Sparkle's confused recollections of days long past. Her memories of traveling to Alaska in a borrowed RV are a comfort to her and keep her on an even keel.

She ponders her family relationships while her family is continually looking for her and seeking any word of her survival.

Darlene's deep belief in God also shines through in Grandma Sparkle's faith that He will bring her through this trial safely. You will enjoy the surprise ending.

Tales of the Unexpected

Louis Silvestri SKP#9919

Take a quick break from your busy schedule and relax with an entertaining book of short, short stories by Penwheeler Lou Silvestri. It is a collection of very short, original tongue-in-cheek tales of love, fantasy, hate, mystery, humor, and science fiction.

Quoted from some of the stories:

"Rebecca was Notorious. Couldn't get along with that Psycho, Marnie..."

"He kicked off his high-heeled huaraches, slipped out of his sarong..."

"LaLa ripped the crucifix from her neck and flashed it before him..."

Each tale is under 250 words, takes approximately two minutes to read and was written based on interpretations of detached individual photographs supplied by 'Indies Unlimited' weekly program.

This soft covered paperback book published January 2017 (92 pages) is available at Amazon.

Forever Friend

Donna Gates-Smeall (SKP#100803)

Donna co-authored "Forever Friend" with one of her BFFs, Karol A. Barkley. The book is being published by Christian Faith Publishing of Meadville, PA. Its release is imminent.

This true story shares how one young woman overcame huge personal losses, built a new life and found her faith in God. It is a coming of age journey plus the story of how a nonprofit organization came into existence.

The organization, *Toy Rescue Mission of Tacoma WA*, serves upwards of seven thousand children annually by providing them with refurbished toys for their birthday, Easter and Christmas holidays. Karol A. Barkley was the founder of this organization which came into being in the early 1990's.

THE WORLD OF PUBLISHING

Book Promotions Resources

[What Type to Use When](#)

[Create a Fictional Newspaper Blog for Your Characters](#)

[Kindle Books & Tips](#)

[Thinking of Serialized Episodes?](#)

[Just Kindle Books.com](#) (Note: Very Inexpensive Promotion)

[The Kindle Book Review: List of Resources for Promotion](#)

Get Book Reviews

[Story Cartel](#)

[Choosybookworm.com](#) (Terms Page)

[ReadingDeals.com](#)

[GoodKindles.net](#) (Note: Inexpensive Promotions)

Disclaimer: The editor does not endorse or have personal experience with any of the above resources.

Tucson Festival of Books

By Margo Armstrong



The Tucson Festival of Books event began on the University of Arizona campus in 2009 with an estimated 50,000 visitors and 450 authors participating. By 2016, the estimated attendance was 130,000 making it one of the biggest book festivals in the country.

Literacy Connects, *The Reading Seed* and the *University of Arizona Bookstore* that provide outreach programs are the recipients receiving donations from the Festival.

The Festival is held every year during Spring Break on the University of Arizona campus. I participated this year and was amazed by the fantastic organizational skills exhibited by the volunteers that run this event.

The independent authors that sign and sell their books in one of the 10x10 tents are awarded their own parking garage. An email is sent to all participants with a parking permit that allows free entry on their assigned day. It is an easy walk right into the campus, very convenient.

Authors that register for the *Author's Pavilion* pay a \$35 fee that buys them a two-hour timeframe to sign and sell their books. Check their *Guidebook* online several months before the event. Book selection is restrictive, so read it carefully before putting your money down for a spot.

The only venue for independent authors is two tents to present their creative efforts. One 10x10 tent for fiction and one tent for non-fiction is provided by the Festival, allowing about 10 authors every 2 hours to rotate through 3 shifts.

Each author is given a web page on the Festival site that lists the books presented. This is great free promotion.

To give you an idea of the variety of non-fiction genres I offered, my inventory consisted of "[Writing & Publishing Books for Fun & Profit](#)," "[Buying & Selling Gold](#)," and four of my RV lifestyle books (my [Traveling Solo](#) book sold the best and paid for my entrance fee), at \$10 each.

My shift was the 12:15 to 2:15 PM shift, which, from my previous experience at book festivals, should have been the heaviest traffic period.

I sold a few RV lifestyle books, but no other books in my stock. It is possible that I was the only "how-to" non-fiction author in the festival.

As has been my experience with other book festivals, promotion is the primary reason for participating in these events. The biography genre being an exception, non-fiction books are not big sellers. In conversations with other authors in the non-fiction tent, five books sold was the highest total. Some authors did not sell any books in that two-hour timeframe.

Behind the Scenes

Most of the participants were new to the Tucson festival and book festivals in general. Tax forms were delivered by a volunteer toward the end of your shift. The tax percentage was not well publicized in the advance information, so authors were shocked at the 8.1% amount collected.

Cash or check for the exact amount was sealed in an envelope and handed in to the volunteer as you rushed from the tent to allow the next shift to set up.

My only disappointment was the small tent for independent authors. We were just a small blur to the passing visitors. The traffic that stopped was heavier in the front three spots of the 10 x 10 square (directly in the blazing sun in the PM), but most hurried by to attend a speaking event or find a lecture room inside the University.

This event that started out primarily for local authors, artists, and volunteer organizations has grown into a commercial affair. The fee for an exhibitor booth (10x10 tent) selling books or book-related items tops out around \$850 plus another \$150 for electricity, if needed.

It is for charity after all, not for booksellers. Organizations promoting literacy or education pay the same rate. Sponsors are exempt.

All book festivals give me an opportunity to talk to other authors, find out what they are doing for promotion, what publishers they are using, and what resources they use.

The Tucson event did not offer the best experience for networking due to the short time allotted. It did, however, give me the opportunity outside of the tent to network with most of the publishers exhibiting their wares. Dozens of small publishing empires have been created with the advance of technology and the new, inexperienced and eager authors willing to pay to see their names in print.

The Genres

For members that are just starting to write as an avocation or profession, understanding genres helps when promotion time rolls around. As you probably know by now, writing the book is the easy part, promotion is the time-consuming task we seek to make as simple as possible.

Knowing the target audience is essential, and this is where genres fall into the process.

Fiction is the classification for any story or similar work derived from imagination—in other words, not based strictly on history or fact.

"Literary fiction" is a definition applied to fictional works. It was originally used to describe works of literary merit. Literary fiction, in general, focuses on "introspective, in-depth character studies" of "interesting, complex and developed" characters. This contrasts with genre fiction where plot is the central concern. The pacing of literary fiction may be slower than popular fiction.

The following are some of the main genres as they are used in contemporary publishing:

Crime

Crime fiction is the literary genre that fictionalizes crimes, their detection, criminals, and their motives. Crime fiction has multiple sub-genres, including detective fiction (such as the whodunit), courtroom drama, hard-boiled fiction, mystery fiction, and legal thrillers. Suspense and mystery are key elements to the genre.

Fantasy

Fantasy is a genre of fiction that uses magic or other supernatural elements as a main plot element, theme, or setting. Many works within the genre take place in imaginary worlds where magic and magical creatures are common.

Fantasy is generally distinguished from the genres of science fiction and horror by the expectation that it steers clear of scientific and macabre themes. In popular culture, the fantasy genre is predominantly set in medieval times.

Romance

The romance novel primarily focuses on the relationship and romantic love between two people, and must have an "emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending." There are many sub-genres of the romance novel including fantasy, historical, science fiction, same-sex romantic fiction, and paranormal fiction.

According to Romance Writers of America's data, the most important sub-genres are: Contemporary series romance, Contemporary romance, Historical romance, Paranormal romance, Romantic suspense, Inspirational romance, Romantic suspense (series).

Science Fiction

Science fiction is a genre of speculative fiction dealing with imaginative concepts such as futuristic science and technology, space travel, time travel, faster than light travel, parallel universes and extraterrestrial life.

Western

Western fiction is defined primarily by being set in the American West in the second half of the 19th century and by featuring heroes who are rugged, individualistic cowboys.

Inspirational

Inspirational fiction is fictional works with faith-based themes. It may be targeted at a specific demographic, such as Christians. Modern inspirational fiction has grown to encompass non-traditional sub-genres, such as inspirational thrillers.

Horror

Horror fiction aims to frighten or disgust its readers. Although many horror novels feature supernatural phenomena or monsters, it is not required. Early horror took much inspiration from Romanticism and Gothic fiction. Modern horror, such as cosmic horror and splatter-punk, tends to be less melodramatic and more explicit. Horror is often mixed with other genres.

Children's Literature or Juvenile Literature

Children or Juvenile genre includes stories, books, magazines, and poems that are enjoyed by children. Modern children's literature is classified in two different ways: genre or the intended age of the reader.

Young Adult Fiction (YA)

Young adult fiction or young adult literature (YA) is fiction published for readers in their youth. The age range for young adult fiction is subjective with some sources claiming it ranges from ages 12-18, while authors and readers of "young teen novels" often define it as written for those aged 15 to the early 20's.

For more details describing these genres, read this [Wikipedia](#) section.

Australian Book Store
in the Grampians

Courtesy of
Jaimie Bruzenak



FROM THE EDITOR

Genre - Act by Act

Many writers have a misconception that genre is something you “write in” – like a box. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Genre is the overall personality of a story, created through structural and storytelling elements and approaches.

The character of your story is not simply set at the beginning and then continued through the conclusion. Rather, the elements of genre are sprinkled into the story, establishing an initial mood, and then developing it over the course of the entire journey.

Genre in Act One

Your story’s genre is its overall personality. As with the people that you meet, first impressions are very important. In act one, you introduce your story to your reader/audience. The selection of elements you choose to initially employ will set the mood for all that follows.

They can also be misleading, and you can use this to your advantage.

You may be working with a standard genre, or trying something new. But it often helps involve your reader/audience if you start with the familiar.

In this way, those experiencing your story are eased out of the real world and into the one you have constructed.

So, in the first act, you many want to establish a few touch points the reader/audience can hang its hat on.

As we get to know people a little better, our initial impression of the “type” of person they are begins to slowly alter, making them a little more of an individual and a little less of a stereotype.

To this end, as the first act progresses, you may want to hint at a few attributes or elements of your story’s personality that begin to drift from the norm.

By the end of the first act, you should have dropped enough elements to give your story a general personality type and also to indicate that a deeper personality waits to be revealed.

As a side note, this deeper personality may in fact be the true personality of your story, hidden behind the first impressions.

Genre in Act Two

[Read more . . .](#)

State Your Story in One Sentence

You’ve got your character arc and story arc with plot points all figured out. But do you know what the theme of your latest novel is? Wait. What?

What is theme anyway?

Some writers relate the theme of their story as its moral, but that’s a little too simplistic. While authors might try to teach readers something, the vast majority of us just want to make a statement about the human condition.

As a writer, you do not necessarily have to believe in the theme of your story. At your core, you may be a hopeless optimist, but your story wants people to know that hope is an illusion.

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



Character Development Tricks!

Although it is possible to write without the use of characters, it is not easy. Characters represent our drives, our essential human qualities.

So a story without characters would be a story that did not describe or explore anything that might be considered a motivation.

For most writers, such a story would not provide the opportunity to completely fulfill their own motivations for writing.

For example, we might consider the following poem:

Rain, rain, go away.

Come again another day.

Are there characters in this short verse? Is the rain a character?

Find out by clicking [HERE](#).

First Steps to Write Your First Novel

From the new "Amazon Author Insights" website come these helpful hints from best-selling authors:

- Understand what you're writing and why
- Why do you want to write a novel anyway?
- Write a character that people want to spend time with, use one main character.

Focus on these questions.

- What does your character want and why?
- What/who stops them?
- How do they overcome the obstacles along the way?
- How are they changed as a result of the journey?

[Read more . . .](#)

New Print Option from Amazon

Late last year, Amazon began offering authors the option of publishing both their eBooks and paperbacks through Amazon.

Previously, authors wanting to publish paperbacks had to use CreateSpace, an Amazon-owned company that requires a separate login and tax information.

Amazon may be planning on phasing out CreateSpace in the future, so keep your eye on this process and **let the editor know** if you read or hear rumors about CreateSpace closing shop.

In terms of the author's royalty, it is somewhat the same as CreateSpace. However, when I did the math, my royalty total on direct sales from CreateSpace was several dollars more than the flat 60 percent of list price, minus publishing, that Amazon offers.

With the exception of a few direct and international sales a month, the bulk of sales was through Amazon anyway, so any dollar loss would be small.

Also different rules, Amazon restricts international sales to their outlets only. This could be a sales loss for you.

One important point: Amazon does not provide proof copies or discounted author copies. If you do your own promoting at book fairs, trade fairs, and other venues, this could get expensive.

[For details, read this . . .](#)

