



# Penwheels Newsletter

Summer Issue 2018

For Escapees Writers, Published or Not

## Inside this Issue

- Jaimie's Tips
- Braggin' Rights
- Fiction Tips From Ellen
- From the Editor
- World of Publishing
- Writer's Market

Editor: *Margo Armstrong*  
Margo @ TheMaxwellGroup.net

Membership: *Joanne Alexakis*  
joalexakis @ earthlink.net

RVillage Moderator:  
*Margo Armstrong*

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

The Penwheels Newsletter is digitally published quarterly.

[Archives Available](#)



## Jaimie's Tips

Jaimie Bruzenak

📌 This could be a way to get published, earn a few bucks and get the creative juices going!

See the Writers' Guidelines for "[The First Line.](#)"

📌 [FIDO Friendly](#) is the travel and lifestyle magazine for you and your dog. If you travel in an RV with a pet, there might be an article you could contribute.



Jaimie's Little Library Find in Bisbee, AZ.



## Braggin' Rights

Joanne Alexakis

*Escapees* May/June 2018 magazine: Our new Penwheels member, **Nancy Moore SKP#120616**, offers a short piece—*Caring and Sharing*—on page 29.

Nancy writes how the crafters at *Sumpter Oaks RV*, the Escapees park in Bushnell, Florida, sewed up a huge contribution of blankets and pillows for children in need.

## Fun Blogs for Writers

Daily Grammar  
[www.dailygrammar.com/](http://www.dailygrammar.com/)

Lousy Writer  
[www.lousywriter.com/](http://www.lousywriter.com/)

Chicago Manual of Style  
[www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html)

Grammar Girl  
[www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl](http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl)

Dr. Grammar  
[www.grammar.com/](http://www.grammar.com/)

Writing Forward  
[www.writingforward.com/](http://www.writingforward.com/)

## Find Professional Help

[Romance Writers of America: The Voice of Romance Writers](#)

[Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America](#)

[Sisters In Crime](#)

[Nonfiction Authors Association](#)

[National Association Of Memoir Writers](#)

<https://www.justkindlebooks.com/authors-corner/>



## Formula for Fiction

Ellen Behrens

Janet Burroway, in her excellent book *Writing Fiction*, says all great stories and novels can be boiled down to one basic formula. And we all love a simple formula that's easy to follow, right? Here it is:

### **Drama = Desire + Danger**

Yep, it's this simple:

1. Create your main character.
2. Make that character want something (a desire).
3. Invent hurdles to block the character from achieving that desire (danger).

Let's see how it works. We'll create Jane as our main character. Jane wakes up on Sunday morning and all she wants is a peaceful day (desire). She discovers her cat has gone missing (danger). What she desires shifts: a peaceful Sunday is no longer possible. Instead, all she wants is to find her cat (new desire).

Now for the hurdles. While looking for her cat she finds a dead body in the bushes. Or she finds her cat high in the neighbor's tree—the mysterious, great-looking man who moved in a few weeks ago she's been wanting to meet.

Now what?

Your reader is wondering the same thing: what will happen next?

See what happened there? Tension. Questions. Turning the page kinds of things. All good.

More than simple hurdles, the dead body or the mysterious man could be truly dangerous for her. Even better!

Meg Gardiner, an award-winning author of two bestselling thrillers series, advises us to "*Create sympathetic characters and put them in jeopardy.*"

There are lots of ways to add danger. Here are four:

1. Other characters, usually "the bad guy/gal," interfere.
2. Nature becomes an enemy. For example, a vicious storm threatens or the geography of the setting turns on the character (make sure you establish the lay of the land early on).
3. The main character him/herself sabotages their own effort. For example, in *Yuma Baby*, my main character Betty thinks she's going to smooth things over with someone she offended only to make things worse.
4. Up the ante. Imposing a deadline on the main character is a common way to do this. Characters have to accomplish Y before Z happens (an impending storm, a live bomb detonates, the love interest boards the airplane...).

In the end, the character either obtains the desire or doesn't. He or she appreciates achieving it or doesn't.

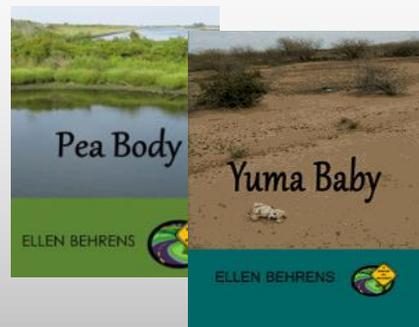
Maybe he or she has decided it wasn't important after all: maybe Jane's desire to date the mysterious neighbor is fulfilled, but she discovers he isn't who she hoped he was or realizes she doesn't need his attention after all.

Like all great formulas (think  $E=MC^2$ ), Drama = Desire + Danger might seem simple, but it leads to endless combinations and possibilities. Dive in—see where it will lead you!



Ellen Behrens and her husband have been full-time RVers since 2009. Follow their travels at: [bobandellen.wordpress.com](http://bobandellen.wordpress.com).

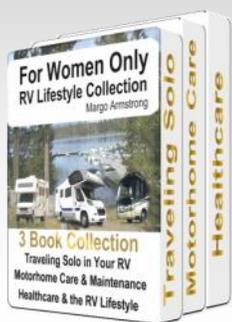
Find out about her books at [www.ellenbooks.com](http://www.ellenbooks.com) where she's been running a series of interviews with fellow RVing novelists. eMail her at [ellenbehr@aol.com](mailto:ellenbehr@aol.com) if you're interested.



## From the Editor

Margo (your Editor) just published a new eBook, *For Women Only, RV Lifestyle Collection 1*.

Since reviews are an important part of the sales process, she is asking for help from her writing colleagues and friends. A free eBook in return for an honest **Amazon review**.



3 eBooks are included in this boxset.

For Amazon details and a "Look Inside," click [here](#).

Send an eMail to:

[Margo@TheMaxwellGroup.net](mailto:Margo@TheMaxwellGroup.net)

if you would like to help.

## Self-Publishing, The Details . . Part 1

When you, as an author, act as your own publisher, that is known as self-publishing. You perform all the duties of a publisher, including editing, proofreading, formatting, and promotion. These duties can be subcontracted out to other creative professionals but not to other publishing houses.

If you have another publishing house claim the title of Publisher, for example, Smashwords, LuLu, and other similar companies, this is known as "vanity publishing."

To make it simple, if the publisher's name on the copyright page is not your company, you are not self-published.

If any company that you did not create holds the rights to publish this particular version of your book, this is not self-publishing.

This company may also distribute the book to their agents in the USA and abroad, this is still not self-publishing.

As the publisher, if you choose to take the book to print, it is up to you to invest in an ISBN. **Note:** currently eBooks do not require one.

This number (turned into a barcode) allows USA booksellers to order your book from the national catalog. The barcode printed on the back cover includes this book's product number and lists you as the publisher.

The USA monopoly that controls this ISBN/barcode business is [Bowkers Inc.](#) The cost is \$125 per individual book. However, Bowkers sells larger lots of ISBNs to companies like Amazon/CreateSpace and others, including self-publishers, for about \$10 each.

In 2017, *CreateSpace* stopped passing on that savings to the publishers that use their print service. There is still a small discount available on custom ISBNs at CreateSpace (\$99). However, if you plan on printing a book series, for instance, Bowkers sells multiple ISBNs at an aggressive discount. Read the fine print as now "barcode" is an extra charge.

**Note:** Other countries distribute this number free to publishers.



## Switch From Vanity Printing to Self-Publishing

If you chose to use a "vanity publisher" for the original version of your book, but now you want to self-publish, a release is necessary from that publisher.

This often means buying back your publishing rights. Check your contract for the length of this "rights provision." Often it is three to five years, but if it sells well, a hassle may involve legal assistance.

The option to obtaining the release is changing the cover, title, and some content. In most cases, this is enough to generate your freedom.

I am making this general assumption because a new ISBN is required when a cover, title, or significant content change. Legally, this is another book. Since the biggest share of the self-published royalty goes to you, the change is worthwhile. Do your research on this.

## How to Become Your Own Publisher

To officially become your own publisher, create a name to use in the public record of your city, county or township. At your town/city hall, register the name (called a "doing business as," or also known as, a.k.a.). IMHO, using the title of the book as the a.k.a. is not the best approach as it may feel awkward later if you choose to change genres and write more books.

You can also use your own name without any register requirements. This may cause confusion later as you establish your brand. But it does get the publishing project going without any commitment.

---

---

## Self-Publishing, The Details . . Part 2

After setting up the publishing company, make sure this name is on the copyright page of the eBook and print versions.

Use Amazon, Nook Press, Apple iBooks, and Kobo to market your books on their sales sites. They all have simple upload software.

### Be Prepared

- ◆ Create a text file with an excellent summary of the book. This is so important you may want to contract this out to a professional.
- ◆ Create a text file with about 5 tags.
- ◆ Create a text file with 7 keywords. It is wise to research this area before selecting the keywords.
- ◆ Create a text file containing 2 eBook categories. Only about 35% of the actual categories are listed in the upload form. These categories can be changed, but wait a few days after uploading the file. Visit [AuthorCentral.amazon.com](http://AuthorCentral.amazon.com), click “contact us” at the bottom of the page.
- ◆ Decide the price of the book. \$2.99–\$9.99 results in the highest royalty paid (70%). \$1.99 only generates 35% royalty per book.

With these text files available, open a browser, type [kdp.amazon.com](http://kdp.amazon.com).

## World of Publishing

### Protect Yourself Against Publishers Going Out of Business

Check out the publisher before you put your money on the line. This article provides some resources to visit. One part I found very interesting is the sounding board for employees, [GlassDoor.com](http://GlassDoor.com).

#### Red Flags From Employees

The first place to check is [GlassDoor.com](http://GlassDoor.com), which is a site that allows employees to post anonymous reviews about their employers, and workplace in general. If there are no reviews about a company at all, that’s a good thing!

[Read more . . .](#)

### Beware: Two Publishing Houses to Watch

#### Blue Deco Publishing Christian Faith Publishing

Problems cited include late or missing royalties and royalty statements, broken marketing promises, and difficulty reaching or getting responses from the owners.

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

### Cocky Trademark Shenanigans

[Trademarks may become the new shenanigan](#), as *Victoria Strauss* calls it, that keeps us from writing more books.

Faleena Hopkins is trying to trademark a common word that is used as part of her book title.

## Contract Terms You Need to Know

Section 1: **Term of copyright.** They want your book for the full term of copyright. Copyright in the U.S. is for 70 years after the death of the author. In essence, you’re giving them your book forever, unless they decide to terminate the contract for some reason. I didn’t see *any* provision that allowed for YOU to ever terminate the contract. This means if you’re unhappy with them, too bad. They have your book forever.

Section 9: **Competing works.** If you sign, you’re agreeing that while you’re with this publisher you won’t publish any works on the same subject with any other publisher.

Section 10: **First option.** You’re giving them first option to publish any of your future writing. This goes along with Section 9: If you write a book on a similar topic, they get the first option to publish it. If they don’t want to publish it, according to Section 9 you’re still not allowed to publish it anywhere else.

[Read on . . .](#)

## What Story Do You Want as Your Legacy?

Writers are in an interesting position to leave a tangible legacy—words others will remember us by for years to come. Even though tomorrow isn’t guaranteed, you still have time to create an amazing legacy.

Here are questions to help guide how you can shape your life today to create the legacy you want most.

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

---

---

## Problems with Amazon?

Read about the mom and pop publisher that sued Amazon, and WON!

“My ex-editor is selling my book on Amazon AS HER OWN and Amazon won’t remove it! What can I do?!”

“I revised my book but people can still buy the previous version on Amazon! Why?!”

“Why won’t Amazon let my relatives post (fake!) reviews about my new book?”

“Amazon Won’t Remove My Book! Are They Violating My Copyright?”

Is Amazon REALLY Giving Authors Accurate Sales Numbers?? Read This!

[Read on . . .](#)

## How Not To Age Out Of Paying Markets As A Writer

Being beyond age 60 is not cause for a shrinking base of readers, nor paying writing markets.

And remember, you never need tell an editor your age. If your writing is good, they don’t care.

Here are some tips so that you won’t age out of paying writers markets:

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

*You must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot destroy you. ~Ray Bradbury*

## Writer’s Marketplace

From Writerweekly.com: [Job Opportunities](#)

- ◆ Freelance Marketing Writer – Pays 45K-60K/year
- ◆ Fit Small Business
- ◆ Freelance Western U.S. News Editor
- ◆ Newsweek Freelance Science Writer
- ◆ Newsweek Freelance Content Writer
- ◆ The Found Gen
- ◆ Freelance Copy Editor – Pays \$18-\$22/hour
- ◆ Emailbroadcast.com
- ◆ Freelance Content Writer – Pays \$15-\$20/hour – Niche Academy
- ◆ Freelance Expert Mommy Contributor/Content Writer
- ◆ Freelance Sex & Dating Writer-Elite Daily
- ◆ Freelance Document Editor/ Technical Writer UnitedHealth Group
- ◆ Freelance Copywriter| Purple, Rock, Scissors
- ◆ Freelance Content Writer— Review.org, LLC
- ◆ Freelance Technology Writer Prose Media
- ◆ Freelance Proposal Writer Grand Rounds

[More . . .](#)

## The Ghostwriter Gig

Think about this: Ghostwriting blog posts for corporate executives,

Here is the process you can follow to get those gigs:

### ◆ Know why they need you

Before you can convince a company to hire you as corporate ghostwriter, you have to remind them why a corporate blog is important.

Fortunately, there’s no shortage of reasons to have an active executive blog.

- ◆ The Brand Benefit
- ◆ The Individual Benefit
- ◆ Identify Your Key Industries
- ◆ Show Your Capabilities
- ◆ Write a Generic Query
- ◆ Find Your Marks
- ◆ Contact and Follow Up

[More . . .](#)

## Monetize Your Blog

The most reliable way to get and monetize blog traffic.

[Read on . . .](#)

