



Penwheels Newsletter

Summer Issue 2020

For Escapees Writers, Published or Not

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Let's make this newsletter great!

What do you want to read in your newsletter?

Do you still want to see freelance jobs listed?

Do you want *World of Publishing* articles to continue?

Other areas of Interest? eMail please.

[Margo @ MovingOnWithMargo.com](mailto:Margo@MovingOnWithMargo.com)

Editor: *Margo Armstrong*

Margo @ MovingOnWithMargo.com

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

Jamie Bruzenak

➤ This is a potentially lucrative market—writing tutorials. I know there is a need because many products have tutorials written by nonnative speakers or very techie people and they are about impossible to understand! This appeared in the [Writer's Weekly 5-7-20 issue](#).

➤ As you've probably noticed, I enjoy spotting Little Free Libraries. The decorations vary and they pop up in interesting places. Until recently, I have never taken a book from one.

A couple of weeks ago I did take my first from a local Little Free Library. One was an Ivan Doig book and the other *One Amazing Thing* by Chitra Banerje Divakaruni (Sister of My Heart and others).

Interestingly enough, I came across this article in the [Tucson Star about Little Libraries](#). They are serving a need with public libraries closed during this virus shutdown



Braggin' Rights

Joanne Alexakis

Highlighted in the *Escapees March/April 2020* magazine: Ellen Behrens (SKP#103358) *Superstition Victim*, is featured on page 16. This is Ellen's new book about Betty & Walt Rollins as they go on another RVing adventure. If you've read her books, *Pea Body* and *Yuma Baby*, you're probably imagining the escapades that are in store already. Read my review later in the newsletter.

List of Open RV Parks

[RVillage.com](#) offers a list of RV parks that are open. Take a look to see if one works for you. Also take note that Oregon has opened its state and county parks to full-timing RVer that need a shelter-in-place option.

Contest Scam Alert

When is a literary contest not a literary contest?

When its purpose is to make money for the contest sponsor. Alternatively: when its purpose is to assemble a list of likely customers.

Take the online book competition (or book literary contest, or books competition--it doesn't seem to have an actual name) recently announced by *Legaia Books*, a publishing and marketing scam I've featured on this blog.

[For all the details of this scam . . .](#)



Pay Attention

Ellen Behrens

Some years ago, I wrote in my *ellenbooks* blog:

In a women's bathroom in Rapid City, SD, four women were sharing family pictures; one woman was describing the no-drug contract she'd made with her daughter. When did public bathrooms take the place of the kitchen table? Why were they having this discussion in the bathroom instead of in the restaurant dining room?!?

What?!? You're not paying attention to what people around you are talking about? Well, if you're not eavesdropping on people in public places, you're missing a boatload of insight into what's important to people:

"I can't ever get through to the V.A. It rang 61 times yesterday," one man complained to his breakfast companion at a family restaurant.

At another table, a woman was saying, "What they're hauling is illegal." A bit later, after a few others at the table of five commented, she said, "She knew the family. He'd lived with a grandma and was in jail already."

Now who couldn't make a story out of that?!?!

These days, even at a safe distance, we can snatch inspiration from strangers. I'm getting better at reading people's meaning through their eyes because it's all I can see over the face mask.

I'm paying more attention to small gestures—the flick of a wrist letting me know I should go first through a doorway. Fine details like this one can make all the difference in fiction. The novel coronavirus has also made me more thankful for something I never liked before: people talking loudly into their cell phones. One woman we regularly pass as we jog in a local park always seems to be talking about a male: "I've tried to tell him..." she said one day.

Tell him what? I wondered.

Nothing is more frustrating than overhearing just part of someone else's conversation—unless you're a fiction writer because the less we hear, the more possibilities are given to us.

Here's one to practice on: I heard another woman in the park tell her friend, "*It was the best...*" *Best what?* Write down everything that pops into your head.

Don't stop there. Switch the setting, the speaker, the listener, the circumstances. Instead of a happy speaker, make her/him proud, angry, or sad. Change the listener's reaction from friendly support to boredom or jealousy. Move the conversation from the park to a convent or battlefield—or someplace out of this world.

Now what happens? Move the scene around—it doesn't have to be the opening, even if it's where you started writing.

Finish out your story—or start your own from something you've overheard or noticed out in the world—and please share it with us. We'd love to see what you came up with!

*Ellen Behrens' short stories, articles, essays, and reviews have been widely published. Her third Rollin RV Mystery, **Superstition Victim**, is now available. If you'd like a free copy for review purposes, please e-mail ellen-behr@aol.com with your request. Learn more about her books at www.ellenbooks.com.*

Blowing a Story Bubble

Remember blowing bubbles with that solution in the little bottles and the plastic wand? The craft of writing is a bit like blowing bubbles (life is like a box of chocolates!) This holds true not only for your dramatic approach, but also for the characters in your story as well.

The study of real bubbles is actually a science which combines physics, geometry, and even calculus! And, as with most natural phenomena, the dynamics that drive them have a parallel in psychology as well. For example, the math that describes a Black Hole in space can equally be applied to describing a prejudice in the mind.

So, by observing bubbles we can more easily grasp some otherwise intangible concepts about the psychology of stories and of the characters in them.

[Read on . . .](#)



In Memory of
**Nicola “Nicky”
Lockwood Boston**

By Jamie Bruzenak

Nicola “Nicky” Lockwood Boston’s life journey ended on May 13, 2020. She was peacefully resting in Hospice here in Waco, Texas, well attended and cared for by many wonderful people. Her family and I miss her greatly but we take comfort in the fact that she is in a better place and at peace. Her ashes will be scattered, at a later date yet to be determined, in the ocean off Monterey, California.

Her husband, Don, chose to share that passage with us because it is so helpful to him now, and the thoughts expressed may help you too, some day.

A passage from THE SMOKE JUMPER by Nicholas Evans

If I be the first of us to die,
Let grief not blacken long your sky.
Be bold yet modest in your grieving.
There is a change but not a leaving.
For just as death is part of life,
The dead live on forever in the living.
And all the gathered riches of our journey,
the moments shared, the mysteries explored,
the steady layers of intimacy stored,
the things that made us laugh or weep or sing,
The joy of sunlit snow or the first unfurling of the spring,
The wordless language of look and touch,
The knowing,
Each giving and each taking.
These are not flowers that fade,
Nor trees that fall and crumble,
Nor are they stone,
For even stone cannot the wind and rain withstand
And mighty mountain peaks in time reduce to sand.
What we were, we are.
What we had we have.
A conjoined past imperishably present.

So when you walk the wood where once we walked together,
And scan in vain the dappled bank beside you for my shadow,
Or pause where we always did upon the hill to gaze across
the land,

And spotting something, reach by habit for my hand,
And finding none, feel sorrow start to steal upon you,
Be still.

Close your eyes.

Breathe.

Listen for my footfall in your heart.

I am not gone..... but merely walk within you.

Quotes from Famous Writers

Prose is architecture, not interior decoration.

It’s none of their business that you have to learn to write. Let them think you were born that way.

– *Ernest Hemingway*

Most writers regard the truth as their most valuable possession, and therefore are most economical in its use.

– *Mark Twain*

If you can tell stories, create characters, devise incidents, and have sincerity and passion, it doesn’t matter a damn how you write.

– *Somerset Maugham*

It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn’t give it up because by that time I was too famous.

– *Robert Benchley*

A blank piece of paper is God’s way of telling us how hard it to be God.

– *Sidney Sheldon*



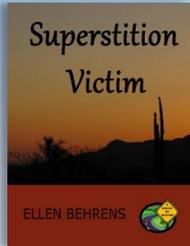


Book Reviews

Joanne Alexakis

Superstition Victim

Author: Ellen Behrens



[Click Me!](#)

Camped at a scenic state park by Apache Junction, Arizona, Betty and Walt Rollin chance upon more adventure than just hiking in the beautiful surrounding Superstition Mountains. Being in the market for a smaller travel trailer, they check out the area RV dealerships. Unfortunately, they are put off by the snotty salesman at RVs

With Perk's and develop an ominous feeling about this business vowing to not buy a rig there.

Back at camp, Walt finds himself assisting their helpless neighbor, Moxie, set up her new trailer. As if dealing with a newbie RVer isn't enough, they then discover a bloody body-a murdered bloody body-in the trailer next door.

When the choice is either to mind your own business or get involved, the Rollins find themselves once again unraveling an intriguing mystery. Who is this dead man? How did he get to their campground? Who killed him? Why does it appear that his crime-scene travel trailer is associated with that spooky RV dealership?

Will Betty and Walt, aided by the police, solve this confusing crime? Has Moxie been kidnapped or is she just taking a romantic road trip? Will they find little Poopsie, Moxie's constantly yipping dog? Will they ever purchase their new rolling home?

Condo-On-Wheels RV Luxury Home Under \$30,000

Author: Margo Armstrong



[Click Me](#)

Deciding on a suitable place to live in these changing times is a challenge. *Condo-On-Wheels* exposes a secret, known by only a few: a luxury home under \$30,000. These fifth wheels have solid cherry wood and oak cabinets, soft-closing doors, expensive carpeting, lots of storage and completely furnished.

If you are looking for luxury living with the advantage of mobility, find out all the details.

Margo Armstrong explains what to look for, how to find it, and why it is a perfect home.

An important part of this book is the invaluable *Homeowner's Guide* that helps you understand how it all works. Margo makes you at home with your home.

For instance, you learn how the electrical system works, both plugged in to shore power or boondocking (dry camping) using solar power.

You find caring for your RV roof, air conditioning, slide outs and awnings easy-to-master tasks. From filtering your water to storing your rig for the winter, Margo covers it all.

You may find this book reveals the perfect luxury home that you can take with you when that next job moves you into new territory. All this for under \$30,000, what a deal.

RV Groups Scrambling to Aid Displaced Full-timers

When national, state and local governments issued stay-at-home orders shutting down many private and public campgrounds, an estimated 1 to 2 million full-time RVers were potentially left homeless. Across Facebook full-timer groups, the sense of fear and panic was palpable.

Note: Oregon's state and county parks are open.

Displaying the entrepreneurial spirit for which the RV industry is known, businesses and services are adapting swiftly to help these displaced RVers. Here are some of the groups that are helping:

- ◆ FMCA
- ◆ Escapees/Xcapers
- ◆ KOA (Kampgrounds of America)
- ◆ Yogi Bear's Jellystoe Park Resorts
- ◆ RVillage.com
- ◆ Campendum
- ◆ RV Life

[All the details . . .](#)

From the Editor

Creating Titles that Sell

Struggling with a title for your book?

You're not alone because most authors have sleepless nights over exactly that. Second only to your book's cover, good titles can make a difference in not only your sales conversions but also in your book's discoverability on Amazon.

That's why the process on how to write book titles should be a combination between **marketability** and **sales copy**. In truth, there are many things that an author should consider before they finalize their epic book title or else face having a book that just won't sell.

[Read on . . .](#)

Finding Your Story's Core

Every story has a core – that concept at the center that pulls all of the story elements into a cohesive whole, establishes meaning and message, and provides the story with an overall identity.

There are four basic types of cores, though each has endless variations.

- ◆ Situation stories
- ◆ Mind stories
- ◆ Activity stories
- ◆ Psychology stories

Which of these four kinds of cores best describes what you want your story to be about and how you want it to feel?

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

New Podcast for the RV Lifestyle

RV Lifestyle Experts—The Podcast is up on many podcast platforms this week, hosted by your editor, Margo Armstrong.

[Spotify.com](https://www.spotify.com)

[Breaker.audio](https://www.breaker.audio)

[RadioPublic.com](https://www.radiopublic.com)

[Overcast.com](https://www.overcast.com) & AppleiTunes

[Stitcher.com](https://www.stitcher.com)

RSS Feed: [https://anchor.fm/](https://anchor.fm/s/20ccd128/podcast/rss)

[s/20ccd128/podcast/rss](https://anchor.fm/s/20ccd128/podcast/rss)

World of Publishing

Apple Brings Good News to Authors

Apple Books (used to be iBooks) new revamp allows PC users to publish directly to Apple. In the past, you either used some type of converter or an aggregator like Draft2Digital. Now you can self-publish directly to their portal.

Your book. Your price. If you are the rights holder of your book, you determine the customer price. You'll earn 70% royalties on all of your ebook titles, regardless of price point, with no hidden fees or exclusivity requirements. Payments are made within 45 days following the end of each month.

Apple Books pays 70% royalties for any price—even 99¢ books or \$19.99 box sets, which is a marked improvement over the 35% which Amazon pays for any price outside Amazon's preferred \$2.99-\$9.99 range, of course.

Apple Books pays out within 45 days of the end of the respective month, which is a little quicker than most other retailers.

There are no delivery fees with Apple Books, a particular bone of contention on KDP with children's authors, graphic novelists, or anyone wanting to use pictures in their eBooks, especially with Amazon charging data transfer prices last seen when AOL was the new hotness.

Best-selling author [David Gaughran's blog post](#) describes his personal take on this new service. It is worth a read to get the basic changes and enhancements taking place at Apple.

Smashwords Vs. Draft2Digital

It's been a while since we've had a post outlining the similarities and differences between Smashwords and Draft2Digital (D2D), and since both have made changes over the years, now seems like a good time.

[More . . .](#)