



# Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not

Fall, 2008

## MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

*"The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamouring to become visible." ~ Vladimir Nabakov*

*Writing for Magazines* - a theme suggested way back and many of us have been able to brag about our accomplishments in getting articles published.

My research (I googled RV magazine submissions) led me to an amazing number of Magazines that solicit submissions. To complement our contributions to this topic I asked for suggestions from our volunteers and approached a few magazines about what they look for in submissions. Of course, my first contact was Janice Lasko, editor of our Escapees Magazine. Her input is both instructive and helpful.

Some magazines are highly restrictive – the writer must be a subscriber to the magazine or already established with the publication or target specific geographic areas – and others are wide open but most have *Writers Guidelines* that suggest what they are looking for.

The opportunities are out there if we are willing to search them out (and can tolerate the possible rejection).

This issue of our Newsletter is shorter than usual so we can include the Penwheels BOF Roster with the snail mail copies. Those of us who download the Newsletter on-line can request a hard copy of the Roster from Joanne (joannealex@earthlink.net). Joanne also has a special message for us about the rates for the email and our on-line offering. (below)

*Lynne Benjamin*

**Remember:** *"A Newsletter is "news" . . . news about what we have done, are doing and how; news and resources to help us get to where we want to go as writers; and the opportunity to share and celebrate (or commiserate) with others. It's all about you." And it's up to you!!*

*PS-Sometimes the way I spell things may not be the same as you, but I am Canadian, eh?!*

## Announcement from our Membership Volunteer – Joanne Alexakis

The Penwheels BOF newsletter is being offered on-line - paperless! You need to be registered on the Penwheels electronic bulletin board (PWBB) in order to receive this feature. The "on-line only" newsletter subscribers receive 6 issues of this newsletter (1 1/2 year's worth) as compared to only 4 issues (one year's worth) of the hard copy that is sent to you via snail mail. The cost is \$8.00 for either method of delivery.

To join the Penwheels bulletin board (PWBB) and get daily (almost) digests and access to the on-line PW newsletter, send a blank e-mail to: [penwheels-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:penwheels-subscribe@yahogroups.com) .

Also please send an e-mail to our PWBB moderator, Alice Zyetz, ([youshoulda@aol.com](mailto:youshoulda@aol.com)) letting her know that you have subscribed, so she can inform Yahoo to accept your request. Please include your name and SKP# in this email.

## What's Gone on between Then and Now



The "Y" means that the person is a member of Penwheels. Back Row L - R: Heather McClary #85849 (Y), Barbara Bowers #77439 (Y), Cathy Daniels #90380 (N), John & Harriet Halyktard #85830 (N), Art Knapp & Nancy Cullinan #64632 (N), Judy Lahore #75934 (Y), Joan Pomeroy (Y) First Row L - R: Barry Maughan #46237 (Y), Kay Kennedy #23282 (Y), Connie & Dave Beckes #81875 (Y), Janice Lasko, Editor Escapees Magazine, Beth Ramos #86268 Not Pictured: Lois Kropp #100198 (N)

### Penwheels at Escapade 2008 - Contributed by Judy Lahore SKP #75934

The Penwheels meeting at Escapade was, in Janice Lasko's words "the best ever." Sixteen writers sat around a circle in the art gallery at the Cam-plex in Gillette, WY on Monday afternoon, June 30.

After Beth Ramos introduced the Penwheels BOF and Janice gave a brief history of the organization, we wrote and shared a 5-minute exercise under Beth's inspired guidance, based on a passage she had selected on "details" from Natalie Goldberg's excellent book "Writing Down the Bones."

We discussed how we cope with the distraction of trying to write in the confined environs of an RV with the 24/7 presence of a significant other.

One woman goes outside her RV to write, another closes off her bedroom and writes there, another has an agreement with her spouse not to talk in the first hour after awakening in the morning. One woman even suggested that all writers have ADD! But we agreed that distractions are a part of life, and are actually necessary to writers, because they give us energy and things to write about. A big problem is that the things we have to do pull us away from the things we want to do, i.e., write.

To keep on task, Janice suggested "putting writing on the chore list."

We enjoyed renewing old acquaintances and meeting new writers; we even snagged a couple of passers-by to join the group. Present were: Heather McClary #85849, Barbara Bowers #77439, Cathy Daniels #90380, John & Harriet Halkyard #85830, Nancy Cullinan #64632, Art & Lois Knapp #64632, Joan Pomeroy #75145, Barry Maughan #46237, Kay Kennedy #23282, Connie & Dave Beckes #81875, Janice Lasko #14104, Beth Ramos #86268, and Judy Lahore #75934.

### Escapades in Gillette, Wyoming – contributed by Joan N. Pomeroy, SKP # 75145

Escapades in Gillette, Wyoming left Jerry and I with the feeling "How could we possible miss Escapades in Sedalia, Missouri, at the State Fair Grounds next May?" The variety of educational seminars, craft classes, the Chapter Row, Market place, and volunteer opportunities, made it truly difficult to schedule our time so we didn't miss anything. The door prizes and announcements at night were well worth going to and the entertainment was certainly enjoyed.

I will have to be honest; Ham-O-Rama was my favorite. Did you know that during Escapades \$20,000 worth of prizes are given away?

Adobe Photoshop Element 6, was so popular that they had two sessions, pre-registration, and both classes were full. I heard rumors of a waiting list. This class will forever change the way Jerry and I save our digital pictures.

The Writers Workshop was absolutely great! Harriet Halkyard and her husband John SKP# 85830, were enthusiastic and encouraging. I would enjoy going to another writers' workshop given by Harriet. Janice Lasko, SKP # 14104, the Editor of Escapees Magazine was generous in sharing what we need to know when we send in articles or pictures to Escapees Magazine, the guide lines for writing magazine articles. She also encouraged us to write and send in our articles. I found this workshop uplifting and valuable. Thanks to Harriett, John , and Janice for taking the time to give this workshop.

The 30th Birthday Bash will be a Fourth of July I shall long remember. Although I did not see the parade in downtown Gillette, the Escapees took second place. However, Ann Crow SP# 37368 walked with the Escapees float in the parade, she told me " just about the time I would become tired, there would be a group of SKP's in the center of a block cheering us on, this did not happen one but many times. Their cheerers and enthusiasts gave me the energy and encouragement to keep on walking." I personally thought "Isn't this so true of Escapees, just when we need a hug, or some encouragement we meet up with other Escapees, who cheer us up before we move on."

The Birthday party it's self was purely fun. Lynn Rodgers, SKP #2 did the narration of the History of Escapees. Now, I know why Cathy and Bud Carr are SKP # 3. Since Cathy was just too young to take the responsibility for such a group, Lynn Rogers accepted the challenge. He came all the way from Australia to attend this birthday party of over 2,000 guests. Cake and Ice Cream was served only after we all had time to blow up the balloons.

Watching the 4th of July fireworks from the RV park area was a treat, we did not get stuck in traffic, we did not have to watch them by our selves, instead Jerry and I made new friends with the SKP neighbors we had not had a chance to meet. Gillette had an outstanding fireworks display. And all for free.

### *Contributions*

Posting #1638 – July 7, 2008 - *Writing for Magazines*

Not much Penwheels input here so I went directly to the *horses' mouths* and included contributions from a couple of editors.

### Writing for Magazines - Contributed by Janice Lasko, Editor, Escapees Magazine

#### **To Accept**

Of course, I can speak only for *Escapees* magazine and the guidelines I have developed over the years. Two important issues stand tall as my personal creed. The first is, I must remain flexible, watching for new trends and being willing to backtrack if I've taken a direction that needs to be altered.

The second, and most important, philosophy I stand by is: *'When in doubt, leave it out. If something is good, share it with the neighborhood'*.

A major concern for an editor is how will readers view a particular article, and if that article is accepted and published, will it trigger an onslaught of controversy or distaste?

Controversy is good for a magazine because it tends to increase readership or over-the-counter sales. However, *Escapees* magazine has a captive audience and is not concerned with sales. I am concerned with *Sharing the RV Lifestyle* in as positive a style as possible.

Consequently, here is what I look for in order to share your article with our *Escapees* neighborhood:

01. Is your material unique?
02. Is it fresh and easy to read?
03. Does it teach readers anything new?
04. Is your material informative, helpful, constructive and RV-related?
05. If it is a technical article, is it well-researched?
06. If you are good at writing humor and/or dialog, your article has an excellent chance of being accepted.
07. Have you followed the guidelines?
08. Have you spelled the editor's name correctly? (Very important.)
09. Have you read at least a few back issues of the magazine to understand the style?
10. Have you proofed your work?
11. Have you read it aloud, made corrections and changes, then re-proofed it at least one more time?
12. Have you single spaced at the end of sentences?
13. Have you submitted a finished, professional-looking piece?
14. Have you completed a Limited Copyright Transfer Agreement (LCLA)?
15. Have you written about what inspires you and what you know?

**Or Not To Accept**

I was also asked to write about why a piece would be rejected. Again, this is from my personal point of view.

01. Articles for *Escapees* magazine are not accepted based on queries.
02. Although there are no deadlines for articles and no themes for individual issues, what you have written may be too time-sensitive to hold for six issues or more.
03. You have not followed the RSVP acronym of *Escapees* magazine and you wrote about:  
 R=Religion  
 S=Sexual content/innuendos  
 V=Vendor complaints  
 P=Poetry and Politics

In other words, look at what is used, as well as what is not published. There are reasons why RSVP topics are not published in *Escapees* magazine.

04. You have overcomplicated a topic.
05. You presented a problem and did not provide a solution.
06. You have relied on your spell-check only and your work does not appear professionally written.
07. You have exceeded the word count, thus causing the editor extra work.
08. Some article submissions are best when condensed to a tip or different viewpoint. If your work is condensed to another format, don't argue with the editor. Either say, "Send it back to me so I may submit it elsewhere" or "fine."
09. Consider that the editorial department is generally on deadline. The easiest way to miss the opportunity for publication is to call, e-mail or write the editorial department wanting to know the status of your article.

## Payment

*Escapees* magazine pays on publication and does not pay by the word but by how little work I have to do to your article. The less work for me, the more money for you. However, don't expect to get rich by your contributions to *Escapees* magazine. Our budget is tiny.

This may be different for other magazines, so know thy magazine before submitting material. Editors have stacks of material from which to select. Most editors look for the best of the best, and it's first-in, first-used, but only if it is the best.

The result of taking rejection personally is it will freeze your writing ability. If at first you don't succeed—and go easy on the clichés—try again or try another publication. I do look forward to hearing from each of you with an article for *Escapees* magazine.

There is a handout packet for *Escapees* magazine that contains a Quick-tip Guide, Writers' Guidelines, Photographic Guidelines and an LCLA. Contact the editorial department for your copy. Or the link to the guidelines is [www.escapees.com/magazine/ArticleSubmissions.asp](http://www.escapees.com/magazine/ArticleSubmissions.asp)

### Attention: Contributors to the Escapees Magazine:

When you write the author blurb that accompanies your article, please add a phrase that you are a member of the Penwheels BOF. This will help build an awareness of our BOF in the community. I've met many Escapees in my writing workshops at Escapades who weren't aware there is a BOF for writers. Thanks and hugs, Alice Zytz

## Five Steps to Getting Published in Magazines - - Contributed by Kerry Shellborn, assigning editor of Koocanusa Publications (which publishes several magazines in Western Canada including RVwest)

You love to write and wonder if magazines would be interested in running your stories. As an assigning editor of a Western Canadian publishing company I can answer that question with a resounding yes (especially now that most magazines have accompanying websites that require additional content). But it must be said that editors are extremely busy and very often make decisions about whether to accept a submission in a matter of seconds. Here are 5 suggestions that will greatly enhance your change in getting published.

**1) Make a good pitch** - There is no need to submit a finished article as most editors won't have time to read the entire article anyway. It is far more effective to write an outline of the story would like to propose. Good writing is important, but it is even more important to have your story directly target the audience of the magazine you are writing for. I would also recommend reviewing past magazines and their website. Read past articles which will give you an overview of the magazines "personality" and take notice of the sections and website navigation (usually shown at the top of the page or in the browsers URL bar). This will give you clues as to what areas or topics that the magazine often covers (including this information in your pitch).

**2) Include photographs** - Being able to provide photographs can go a long way in having an article accepted. In our publications for example we never run an article unless it has a photo to go with it. This doesn't mean you have to have an expensive camera. Most point-and-shoot digital cameras can provide more than adequate pictures for magazine articles. Submitting one or two photos with your pitch will greatly increase the chances of having your article accepted.

**3) Think like an editor** - In your pitch ask how many words to write your story—and then stick to it. Because of increasingly shorter attention spans the trend in magazine writing is shorter articles with supplementary information often included in a box called a side bar. For example if you were writing about a recent trip you went on you might focus on your favourite activity and then include a side bar entitled: "Other must-see attractions" where you would simply list a few other of the fun things you did at that location. It is also a good idea to include an idea for a side right in the initial pitch.

**4) Be patient and don't give up** - Don't assume that an unreturned e-mail or phone call means that there is no interest in your submitted story idea. At times the editor may have been too busy to reply immediately to your request. I would suggest first sending in a request via e-mail and then following up with-in a day or two with a friendly phone call.

**5) Follow through** - Finally if your story is accepted then make sure to follow through by submitting your article and photos on time. Make sure to include information about each of your submitted photographs like: Who took the photo, names of any individuals in the photo and where or what is in the picture. A trusted freelance can be a valuable asset to a magazine editor and may pave the way continued submissions or even a regular column.

### **Finding the Write Idea contributed by Patricia Fry**

Most of us enter into the writing field overflowing with ideas. We have pet topics that we want to explore. But once you've written about what you know, then what?

After over thirty years spent freelancing for magazines, I'm often asked, "Where do you get your article ideas?" "Do you ever run out of them?" No, I don't. Here's my secret:

Look for ideas everywhere. For example:

**Talk to strangers.** While traveling, shopping, eating out, waiting in line or watching a game, strike up a conversation. You might be surprised at what develops. A recent chat with a parent at a local coffee, prompted me to write a piece on teaching kids good sportsmanship. After a conversation with a vendor at the farmer's market, I wrote an article for *Herb Quarterly* about how to start an herb-related club. While engaged in small talk at a social event, the discussion topic turned to job layoffs. I promptly sold an article featuring tips for supporting your unemployed spouse to *St. Anthony Messenger*.

**Go someplace new each week.** Take a new route to work. Visit places you've never been: an animal shelter, the city dump, a college campus or a manufacturing plant, for example. Challenge yourself to find a story there. I once visited a local raptor center. As a result, I sold an article to *ASPCA Animal Watch* about the rehabilitation work they're doing there. A workshop on techniques for handling the irate customer led to several published articles on related topics.

**Read an unfamiliar magazine each week.** Perhaps you're accustomed to writing for health, family and spiritual magazines. After looking through a travel magazine, you might come up with an article idea featuring family camping activities or how to stay healthy while traveling.

**Satisfy your curiosity.** Look up something on the Internet that you've been wondering about: how many shop cats are there in America? Would you believe over 300? What percentage of computer dates result in marriage? (This inquiry resulted in an article for a local technology magazine.)

There may be nothing new under the sun, but there's also no end to the ideas available to writers who are willing to go in search of them.

Patricia Fry is the president of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) [www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org). She is also a full-time freelance article-writer and the author of 28 books. Her latest book is, "The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book." [www.matilijapress.com](http://www.matilijapress.com). Read her informative blog at [www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog](http://www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog).

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- Your Name and SKP #
- Title of Piece
- Magazine or Book and Date

## *I've been published – Bragging Rights!*

### ***Kudos to:***

**Lynne Benjamin** SKP#86190 – “When You Go” – July/August 2008 issue of Escapees Magazine (page 60)

- “Don’t Mess with Texas” and “Treasures in Southern New Mexico” articles in “RV Tales”– RV West E-Mag - [www.rvwest.com/journeys/index\\_benjamin.php](http://www.rvwest.com/journeys/index_benjamin.php)

- “Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park” Feature article, RV Lifestyle Magazine <http://www.rvlifemag.com/RV37-5/writingstone.html>

**George Bruzenak** SKP#19361 - "Flyfishing with Omar Khayyam" and “The Jade Earrings” - "Reflections from the Rim" to be published in September, 2008

**Betty Prange** - “Ghost Town of Bodie” - SKPStops - July/August, 2008 issue of Escapees Magazine (page 85)

- “Fulfilling Fantasies” – Working on the Road – RV Life <http://www.rvlife-digital.com/rvlife/200808/?u1=texterity> – August, 2008 issue of RV Life, (page 9)

## **New Members and Profiles**

**Barbara Bowers, SKP #77439** - My name is Barbara Bowers, SKP #77439. My husband, Everett, and I are native Iowans. We bought and moved into our first RV in 2006 and share it with two feline fur-children. We are unusual in the RVing world because although we live full-time in our fifth wheel trailer, we also both work full time.

I have been writing poetry and other creative works off and on since my early teens and have been a lover of the written word since I was a toddler. I have written articles for the Chapter 48-Iowa Wild Roses Newsletter and for a book about walking published by the West Des Moines Community School District's Wellness Department. Both Everett and I have essays in Kay Kennedy's book, *Looking Back: Boomers Remember History from the 40s to the Present*.

## **Resources**

1. **Writing Articles** (Repeat from Spring, 2008 Newsletter)
  - **Carolyn Harris** - If you're getting into the swing of article writing, **Worldwide Freelance** is a freelance list that shows what the magazines are looking for. **Freelance success** is another.
  - **Kay Kennedy - Writersweekly** is a reputable newsletter that focuses on writers increasing their income, and it pays on assignment . . . be sure to ask for writer's guidelines and study back issues/articles before you submit something.
2. **Alice Zyetz** and **Jaimie Bruzenak** have a new project exploring the RV lifestyle and the decisions people have made about various aspects about RVing and how it compares to the reality. Check out their Website at <http://www.rvlifestyleexperts.com> or, send a SASE to Pine Country Publishing, 127 Rainbow Dr., #2780, Livingston, TX 77399-1027 requesting the writer’s guidelines.

## **PENWHEELS**

An Escapees RV Club Birds-of-a-feather (BOF) group for RVers interested in writing of all kinds. Some are published and some are not. The purpose of Penwheels is to establish a support network of RVing writers for sharing information, discussion, critiques, and socializing in person, snail and electronic mail.

Penwheels is published four times a year. Subscription is \$8 (USD) per year. In order to belong to any SKP BOF group, you must be a member in good standing of the **Escapees RV Club**. You may contact the Club at 1-888-757-2582.

**Editorial submissions** are best submitted via e-mail to: 2firststep@gmail.com

Or snail mail to:

Lynne Benjamin

c/o Joanne Alexakis

140 Rainbow Drive #4093

Livingston TX 77399-1040

### **Writers-in-Residence**

\* Jojoba Hills Writers Group  
SKP Jojoba Hills RV Resort  
Aguanga, CA 92536  
Alice Zyetz

\* North Ranch Writers Group  
SKP North Ranch RV Resort  
Congress, AZ 85332-0039  
Norma Scheall 928-685-3552

### **Penwheels Volunteers**

**Editor:** Lynne Benjamin

#### **Membership:**

Joanne Alexakis

140 Rainbow Drive #4093

Livingston TX 77399-1040

joannealex@earthlink.net

**Yahoo E-Forum:** Alice Zyetz

**Travelling Library:** Jaimie Bruzenak

**Printing & Mailing:** Beth Ramos

**Historian:** Doris Hutchins

## **PENWHEELS**

Beth Ramos

900 Spring Park Street #303

Celebration, FL 34747

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