



Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not
Fall, 2007

MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

When I asked for contributions about our ‘frustrations with writing’, I was in the midst of trying to find an editor who would do more than proof-read my writing. *I found one amongst us!*

Thank you Sam, you got me started on a great path. And - thank you all for your wonderful, thoughtful contributions.

Beth Ramos sent us a great *random thought* to share:

A phrase that stops a budding writer:

“You don’t need to take a class. Just find an editor.” Hm-m-m!

The *Frustrations with writing Contributions* are broken down into the following topics:

What gets in the way?

Designing a Story

Deciding what to write

Editing and Publishing

Self-Publishing

I discovered that others experience similar frustrations and that has helped me feel less isolated. It’s so good to share!

My path has taken me into the next big quandary – *to publish or not to publish?* What a learning curve! By the Way (BTW) – “*Jacob’s Tails . . . (Back-to-the-Land)*” is published and printed (Details at www.firststepbooks.com).

As of September 4th, we will be on the road for eight months. Maybe we will get a chance to meet some more of our on-line Penwheel friends. Our BLOG is <http://firststep-andlifegoeson.blogspot.com/>
Lynne Benjamin

Tentative schedule for publication is:

- Fall, 2007 – October, 2007
- Winter, 2007 – January, 2008
- Spring, 2008 – April, 2008
- Summer, 2008 – July 2008

This Issue

- Writers’ Groups News
- Contributions and Contributors
- *I’ve Been Published* – Bragging Rights!
- New Members & Introductions
- Resources and Opportunities
- Review

Submissions:

***Want to contribute? Send submissions
to: Lynne – 2firststep@gmail.com
Submit the month before publication***

PS-Sometimes I may spell things differently from what you are used to. It’s not a typo; it’s just the Canadian way, eh?!

Writers' Groups News

North Ranch Writers' Group

Our book "Mystery at North Ranch" is supposedly going to be "reviewed" in the fall issue of the Escapees Magazine. If anyone is interested in ordering one, they may contact Carol Butterfield via email right now at nalla1406@hotmail.com to find out price, etc. and/or to order a copy.

Contributions

In response to the call for contributions on *Frustrations with Writing*

Posting #1216-May 6th, 2007

I know I'm not the only one who gets frustrated with writing (my activity of chose) so I would like to hear about your frustrations as well.

Right now, my frustration centres around what to do next. I actually completed the book I've been working on and would love to publish it BUT I need to know if it is good enough to warrant the work and expense to try to publish it even if I do most of the work myself. I may be wrong, but most people I have found who said they would edit the piece do a great job proof-reading BUT are reluctant to critique or give any direction. (Yes, I am venting!!)

So what are your frustrations? Writer's Block? motivation? grammar? whether to try to publish or not even try? If so, how? If not, what are you going to do with your writing?

Wanna' share??

What gets in the way?

Contributed by Gary Taylor

RV living distractions - Mine is too common so as to make this a non-entry. Somehow more than stick house living. Or is it? Maybe just my current form of denying that I SAY I want to write but really don't want to muster up the discipline and time/activity/fun/busyness sacrifices. So I made another pact (can't count 'em, but this must be about the 19th). When I finish my outside living build-out here in Aguanga, sometime before August, I will rejoin those who do what they want and must...after our summer travels through September, of course.

Contributed by Kay Kennedy

Writing in the confines of an RV, especially while traveling: If you seriously want to write for a living, you have to set aside at least a couple of days a week to devote strictly to working. Treat it as though you have a job. When I'm going to be on the road for a week or so, that's vacation, and then I plan to stop somewhere QUIET for a couple of days or more to catch up.

If it's a matter of sharing space with someone else and trying to concentrate, that's a problem without someone getting hurt feelings. One way would be to let the other person drive while you compose as you ride down the road, but that only works if you've got a laptop and a small inverter to plug in while you go. Another way is to kick you partner out for a couple of days a week. That's easy if they like golf, pool, or other activities that regularly get them out of the RV, but if they don't, suggest they get a job for a couple of days a week--or get an outdoor hobby. After you've been on the road for a few years, you'll get in the groove.

RVing doesn't make writing easier, but I think new sights keep your mind sharp and open to new ideas. You have to be disciplined no matter where you write.

Contributed by Jaimie \ (Hall) Bruzenak

It is hard to find the time- especially when traveling - to be creative or work on new stuff. I think Kay's suggestion of setting aside a couple of days a week to work is a good one. I know I should drop off a few Yahoo lists and get off the joke lists. Hard to do!

Contributed by Beth Ramos

Frustrations/distractions/excuses

Sunrise
Hot Tea
Clean tablet
Sharp pencil
Magpies

Sunset
Iced tea
Clean table
Laptop
Mosquitoes

After ruminating on the assignment for several months, I type solid for twenty minutes, paragraphs, valuable, free-flowing like Jack Kerouac who took 3 weeks to type a novel that gestated several years, but unlike his scroll preserved in a case that travels from museum to museum all I need to save my work is a key, except I hit the wrong one and the whole piece goes away. (The tour of the original manuscript of On the Road began in January 2004 and will end in 2009.)

At 10am I walk to the ranger. "It's a baby, damp and weak, barely able to lift it's head." "Watch for the adults," he says. "It's the bird's time to fly. They'll help." At 11 it was hobbling, by 12 its wings were fluffed. Each time it seemed to be losing strength an adult brought substance. At 1 it ran a little, at 2 it hopped, 3 was its first flight, another at 4 than 5 ... Each stronger, longer ... At 6 the bird was gone. I missed the big one, on its own and singing, because I have a deadline.

Contributed by Janet Carter

I feel like you have to have a space in your life to write for any length of time - not just space on the dinette table. Trying to write every day if you're moving is frustrating. Stop somewhere and after a day or two, you'll find you are able to focus more clearly. Drive between projects.

Contributed by Alice Zyetz

And my frustration? To quiet my critic when I'm writing: "Alice, what is the matter with you? Is this the best you can do? And you're published???? Oh yeah, you're self-published! No wonder!"

And that's just the polite stuff I can place on this open board. I handle my frustration in two ways: Negative: procrastination; Positive: Following Natalie Goldberg's credo to "just write" and ignore my critical self.

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Deciding what to write

Contributed by Ed Greenberg

When I have something to say, I do fine. For instance, Blog entries. I can do a fine job documenting an event or expressing my opinion, but not in choosing a topic, when one isn't evident. If I were to have a deadline for a column, I'd be sunk.

For fiction, my problem is my inability to be cruel to my characters. If I have characters, I need conflict and tension of some sort, to interest my readers, but I'm a softie. I can't bear to give my characters trouble. Perhaps the solution is to figure out how they get out of the trouble before I start writing about how they got into the trouble.

Contributed by Kay Kennedy

As for ideas for other projects after you finish the first one, I always seem to have more ideas than I can handle, but I sometimes forget them if I don't write them down. Right now, I've just finished a book, which is at the editor's, but I already have two others started in the computer. I have no idea what direction the two new books will take, but I have a few pages already typed up and ready to roll OR be rewritten. It's the only way I can remember my ideas, even if they suck when I read them again later.

Designing a Story**Contributed by Ed Greenberg**

This brings a question for the fiction writers... In designing a story, how does one start? With an outline? With an idea? How detailed an outline before starting to actually "tell." Can somebody recommend a book on this topic?

Contributed by Bill Chatham

Read Stephen King's "On Writing" and you'll learn he just sits down and starts typing. I do that sometimes too. I dabble with screenplays as well, and find you can't create one of them without following the Hollywierd formula, as prescribed by Syd Field.

Contributed by Sharon Vander Zyl

Another excellent book is Take Your Characters to Dinner by Laurel Yourke.

Contributed by Candice Byrne

I second "On Writing" by Stephen King. I also found "Bird by Bird" by Anne Lamott, and "Writing Into the Open" by Elizabeth Berg very helpful. Like King, they write organically rather than by outline. Lamott's advice is "start where you are, do short assignments, and write "shitty" first drafts."

Contributed by Adrienne Kristine

I imagine my reader . . . at home in a chair sipping tea under a good lamp. Is my work going to keep my reader involved enough to finish the work and eagerly await my next book? Do I want my reader to be informed? Entertained? Enthusiastic enough to recommend the book to others?
 "Twenty years from now, you'll be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do.

Throw off the bow lines.
 Sail away from the safe harbor.
 Catch the trade winds in your sails.
 Explore. Dream. Discover."

Contributed by Pat (Patrick) "pds_in_oregon"

The problem is, I really want to write stories (which set the imagination free) rather than reports (which keep it tethered to reality).

Okay, so the trouble with stories is, you have to come up with a detailed plot ... duh! ... and that's where I've been stuck. My great start to a murder mystery petered out in chapter 1 with a drunk, a fishing boat, and a body on the beach. After that, inspiration waned as fragmenting plot lines led to less and less convincing outcomes.

I read about Stephen King's book "On Writing" with interest . . . Stephen . . . seemed to say that his starting point for a novel was generally an idea which he could explore in his writing. (Not a new concept, of course, but his presentation of it resonated with me.)

At all events, starting with the (also not new) idea that personal and actual reality are two different things, I have found it easier to develop a plot. The idea doesn't provide a plot, but it does provides context (or perhaps just inspiration) within which plot decisions can be made, and that has made a difference for me.

Editing and Publishing

Contributed by Bill Chatham

I suppose every aspiring writer has had the same experience -- everybody says they "loved it", but that's where it ends. There's no help and in fact you never hear from most who've read your masterpiece and eventually you get the message, "It stinks".

Other writers frequently have a jaundiced view of anything they didn't create, so what's a person to do? I've had professional critiques of some screenplays and found them to be very helpful, and expensive.

Maybe, when I pass out a manuscript to friends or relatives, I should include a case of beer as an incentive to get back to me right away with the real, bad news.

Contributed by Marianna Nelson

The book you publish is one you have to sell (copy after copy) . . . It takes a lot of time going here and there promoting it! That's why I'm glad I'm working with two groups that are publishing books. It helps to spread out the work.

Contributed by Sue Otto

I hear what Lynne is saying about finding someone to critique. Proofreaders abound, but most people are hesitant to 'critique' fearing it will come out as criticism and be hurtful. Most advice I have seen about critiques is so general (like precede a negative comment with a positive one) that they are of little use for me.

Since tact is **NOT** my long suit, I would value a formulaic approach to critiques. For example, in fiction the steps might be as follows. Step one: quick read to identify subject matter, intended audiences, etc. Step two: slower read to identify characters, motivation, etc. Step three

Does anyone know a book or website that addresses the subject of critiquing that we could adopt as individuals or as a group so that we are better resources for each other?

Self-Publishing

Contributed by Sam Penny

I moved about 900 copies total at this point and consider that pretty successful. I am also selling a few each month through Amazon and am in a couple of museums, etc. It took a lot of work to get there, and I am not getting rich on my royalties.

If you are serious about wanting to do most everything yourself, you are taking on a big task. First, you need to ask yourself why you are doing this? Do you really want to spend the time and effort (figure at least twice the effort to write the book)? Do you know who your audience is and how to reach them? Have you written your book for them, or for yourself? Are you ready to really get serious about running a business, because that is what the publishing business is?

If you have any doubt about your tenacity on getting the book done, you should probably search for a publisher to take on all those tasks. On that path, unless you are a really good writer and/or have a great subject, you can expect a lot of rejection notices, many just saying, "NO" without any explanation, or they give you some lame excuse why they cannot help you in any way. The rule of thumb is 20 to 40 rejections to find a publisher who will look at your work. Just keep writing and making your work better and better. Someday, it may click with some publisher.

If you find a [good] publisher, they should provide an editor who will proof-read and critique your work and either reject it outright or tell you what must be done to make it marketable. If they ask for money to help you make your book better, run away. Else, work with the editor to improve your book as much as possible.

Remember, the editor's perspective is to produce something that will sell in the market the publisher services. That is one of the reasons you must understand the audience and how to get to them.

If your publisher says, "Okay, let's go to print," expect to wait another year before your book reaches the shelves, and then plan on helping to market the book by going to book fairs, signings, interviews, whatever. If you make it this far, consider yourself one of the 6,000 out of 150,000 who have made it to the published ranks. Awesome.

But if you still want to do everything yourself, consider becoming a really good editor, book formatter, marketer, PR writer, and whatever else may come up, and plan to devote a lot of time going to book fairs, signings, interviews, whatever. I was on a book tour for 20 months. I met a lot of great people, and I sold a few books. It was very rewarding, but it was lots of work.

On practical issues for the self-publisher (things I learned by making the mistakes): 1) you must own your own ISBNs, 2) you must find at least one good editor who will be brutal about your work, and you must have the thick skin to take the advice given, 3) the format and layout of your book is vital, and you can ask for help on this (but watch out for those who say they will do it for you for money), 4) unless you have money to burn, consider Print On Demand, 5) unless you have a large storage shed, don't plan on a large first printing.

Editor's note: Sam went on and what he said was incredibly useful for me. For those interested in more self-publishing information, check out Messages #1231 and #1234 on the Group Forum

Contributions that are too long can be uploaded as files to the Penwheels Bulletin Board by Alice. If you want a copy of it via snail mail send a SASE to Alice at: 45120 Hwy 79 S, #426 Aguanga, CA 92536 and she will send it to you.

Contributors to this issue of the Penwheels Newsletter:

Judith Ackerman

Sylvia Baeta

Lynne Benjamin

Jaimie \ (Hall) Bruzenak

Candice Byrne

Janet Carter

Bill Chatham

Ramona Creel

Ed Greenberg

Kay Kennedy

Adrienne Kristine

Judy Lahore

Marianna Nelson

Pat (Patrick) "pds_in_oregon"

Sue Otto

Sam Penny

Beth Ramos

Judy Russell

Gary Taylor

Helen Taylor

Sharon Vander Zyl

Alice Zyetz

Next Issue:

To Publish or not to Publish – that is the Question
What have your experiences been?

Winter Contribution due date: December 15, 2007

Submit to: 2firststep@gmail.com

I've Been Published – Bragging Rights!

(Be you writer or author)

"You're a writer if you say so; you're an author if you're paid for your work."
(Heard at a BOF meeting – Beth Ramos)

Let Us Know About Your Current Publications

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

Kudos to:

- **Judith Ackerman** - two short essays in the 2007 issue of the *Red Clay Review*-"Roxie" a short story loosely based on my experiences in college at the age of sixty-four. The other story is about my relationship with my older sister, "Anne"
- **Lynne Benjamin** #SKP 86190 – *Thinking About Toilets*, July/August edition of *Escapees Magazine* "Jacob's Tails ... (Back-to-the-Land)" as been published and was released the last week in July. Visit www.firststepbooks.com for more information. There is a review further on in the Newsletter. (Thanks, Alice)
- **Kay Kennedy** *Looking Back: Boomers Remember History from the '40s to the Present* will be released sometime in August. Barbara Kaufmann, new Penwheels member, contributed two poems and Bill Chatham contributed a story and an essay. Every reader will find stories that bring back poignant memories from the years since the 1940s. For information on the release date and details about how to order the book, go to my website: <http://www.kennedyk.com>, or check the book's blog: <http://lookingbackboomersrememberhistory.blogspot.com>
- **Sue McCarron** SKP #84537 - Palo Duro Canyon article in the Road Roamers News section of the on page 81 of the July/August edition of *Escapees Magazine*
- **Betty Mulcahy** SKP #3640 – *Unlimited Possibilities*, July/August edition of *Escapees Magazine*
- **Helen Taylor** SKP #295 - (North Ranch Writers' Group) - "Mystery at North Ranch" is supposedly going to be "reviewed" in the fall issue of the *Escapees Magazine*
- **Nancy Williams** - My mystery/sci-fi novel, "A Matter of Destiny", was published April 1 (for the regular copy), by Exposure Publishing, out of Cornwall, England

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 Zyetz

New Members

New PW members are: Bee Orr, Judith Ackerman, Ramona Creel, Subscription checks from 3 new Penwheels members: Joan Pomeroy, Kathie Richardson, Ken & Shari Lakin and Barbara Kaufmann.

The PW roster has 82 members receiving the newsletter right now. Twenty-five of that number have elected to receive the newsletter 'online only' on the PWBB.

Hugs, Joanne

Alice Zyetz – PWBB Moderator

To join the **Penwheels** bulletin board and get daily (almost) digests, send a blank e-mail to:

penwheels-subscribe@yahogroups.com

Please send an e-mail to me, Alice (youshoulda@aol.com), as well, letting me know that you have subscribed, so as Moderator I can inform Yahoo to accept your request. Include your name, **SKP #**, and when you joined **Penwheels Bof**. Make sure you sign up for the daily digest once you have been accepted. If you don't start receiving your digests, please contact me.

Welcome and many hugs, **Alice Zyetz**, Moderator and **Jaimie Bruzenak**, co-Moderator

New Members – Introductions

Judith Ackerman

Hello everyone: I am a new member and am trying to find my way around the site and also to that wonderful open road which will lead me to becoming a full time RVer.

I am going to be one of the "grey haired ladies" on the road. I am 65 and have spent my life in the corporate world and later, in Real Estate. I have always felt deep inside myself that I was really a writer. I just never had the courage to pursue this calling. Now I figure I have nothing to lose, so here I come! Hopefully sometime before spring 2008 I will be on the road.

From July 2, 2007 email

I am currently in North Carolina. I moved here from New Jersey almost two years ago. I thought it would be nice to be closer to family. It is nice, but I can't seem to get my life going here, so I decided to combine two of my life-long (and neglected) dreams and try my hand at writing seriously and also find a way to travel.

I have a brother who lives in Florida and has RVed for a good 30 years (not full time) and I loved this idea, so I started investigating.

My first stroke of luck was finding "Escapees". My next biggie was finding you guys.

While I am doing research and looking for the perfect van to carry it's moniker of "Diogenes Tub" (you know about Diogenes, right?) I started taking courses at the local community college. This has been a big boon to my confidence, and I really feel I have made the right choices for the rest of my life. I plan on RVing full time until I can no longer handle the hookups, then hope to park my RV in Livingston, TX (I hope) on a pad and spend the rest of my life visiting and talking with those still going out.

I have one daughter who now lives in Austin, TX after spending most of her life for the last 25 years going and coming between the Middle East (mostly Egypt) and various academic positions in the states. She has lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, (University of Michigan) Philadelphia, PA (University of PA) and Washington, DC (Library of Congress). Her field is the Middle East and Library Science and she currently is head of the Middle East section of the Library at the University of Texas.

Currently, I am caring for two of her cats. They both are old and both have diabetes and require a bit of attention, but I am thinking they will be on the road with me.

That seems to be the high points about me. I look forward to getting to know many of the new friends I am making through this club, and hope you and I will meet someday. I have bought several books from Penwheels members and am finding them to be "real" and a big help to me while making my plans. You guys have covered so much that I'm wondering what will be left for me to write! I had already started a book, detailing my experiences from the day I made my decision through the trials and tortures of getting there. Not sure if it is needed by anyone but me!

I am working on several books, which may or may not ever go anywhere; but I am writing! At the very least, it may help keep Alzheimer's at bay!

Sylvia Baeta

My name is Sylvia Baeta and I am a writer. My home base is in Fremont, California. My husband and I have considered full-time RVing, but, alas, have many reasons to come back to our home in Fremont: kids, grand kids, brothers and sisters, friends, but mostly grand kids.* Also, sometimes it's hard to give up *things* that seem to own us -- is this codependency? ;)

I joined Pen Wheels because I have too many wonderful distractions* in my life, and I need lots of encouragement to set time aside to write. After attending a few Escapade meetings, I believe that the people who write for Pen Wheels, as well as members of the BOF, give nudges and pointers that I need in order to keep on writing. Just reading your messages keeps me in touch. That's a very good thing.

In the past, I have written articles for free newsletters that were published, some of which required interviewing. As a former typesetter for a local print shop, I have edited and helped with the layout of an 8-page newsletter.

Journal writing is a regular thing for me ... Recording pictures and experiences with words that help family and friends join me and my husband in our travels. Looking forward to staying in touch and hearing from all of you.

Ramona Creel

I am a new member of your BOF, and wanted to introduce myself. My husband and I are setting the stage to embark on the full-timing lifestyle (hopefully by the end of the year - depends on how quickly we can get the house on the market and sold) - and one of my goals in Airstreaming it is to expand my travel writing and photography. I plan to set up a travel blog about full-timing and road travel in North America - but we also travel internationally and I plan to include that in my writing, as well (I've already started recording some of my tales while traveling through India).

Glad to be a part of your group!

Resources and Opportunities - (We have great resources right in our group)

Free Articles 4 Readers

Contributed by Alice Zyeta

Carolyn Howard-Johnson has a number of free articles you can choose from. "Subscribers who have websites or newsletters of their own may be interested in the Free Articles 4 Readers and Writers on my site, www.howtodoitfrugally.com. I try to add new articles to it each week. If you don't see what you need for your blog, or newsletter, just ask.

HoJoNews@aol.com."

Playwriting Classes near Coho SKP Park
By Judy Russell and Judy Lahore

Playwriting is alive and well on the Olympic Peninsula. Every town and hamlet seems to have its own troupe of actors and practicing local playwrights. Theatres and theatre schools offer workshops where you can start a play, refine a play, hear your play read aloud, and generally hone your craft.

Less than two miles from the Evergreen COHO SKP Park in Chimacum, Washington, The Paradise Theatre School offers 9-week playwriting classes three times a year, Fall, Winter, and Spring. The summer intensive class we attended only lasted for three weeks, but it was great!

The school's director, Pattie Miles Van Beuzekom, spoke of three rewards of playwriting: personal and creative expression, personal discipline and involvement in an arts community. A highly productive writer, director and actor, Pattie has a gentle and supportive manner that makes risk-taking okay. The classes are hands-on, interactive and exciting.

If you are in Chimacum around Halloween, The Paradise Theatre will produce Alan Rickman's *My Name is Rachel Corrie*. Their Christmas offering will be Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. For more information on The Paradise Theatre School and their schedule of performances and classes, visit Pattie's web site, home.earthlink.net/~theparadise or contact her at (360) 643-3493 or theparadise@earthlink.net.

Writing Practice by Alice Zyetz

"The best way to write is by writing." Natalie Goldberg (*Writing Down the Bones, Wild Mind*) calls it writing practice. Pick a topic (or writing prompt), set a timer for ten minutes and just write. Keep your hand MOVING. Even if you can't think of anything, write "I can't think of anything" and keep writing. Pretty soon something will pop into your mind.

Be specific. Don't write *car*; write *Cadillac* or *Jeep*. Being specific paints a clear picture for your reader. Don't write *tree*; write *eucalyptus* or *weeping willow*. Ignore the critic on your shoulder who says nobody will ever want to read what you write. Just write. Use your five senses to create powerful descriptions: the smell of your grandma's kitchen, the taste and texture of the hot chocolate chip cookies just out of the oven.

Many of our members joined after participating in my writing workshop in the last few years at Escapades so this is nothing new. If you haven't done it for a while, start again today. All the stores are discounting school supplies. Buy yourself several spiral bound notebooks and get back in the habit of writing practice. Find one or more congenial people to write with. Read your pieces aloud to each other. Try not to comment on the writing. Just accept each other's work. If you have misplaced your list of writing prompts or never got one, send me an email at youshoulda@aol.com and I'll send you a copy. Two Creative Writing Sites are <http://www.creativewritingprompts.com/> and <http://dragonwritingprompts.blogspot.com/>.

Here are twenty prompts to get you started. Enjoy!

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Castle | 8. Presidential | 15. Grandmother |
| 2. Butcher | 9. Hope | 16. Scrumptious |
| 3. Money | 10. Disgusting | 17. Rhythm |
| 4. Popcorn | 11. Purple | 18. Crown |
| 5. Wishes | 12. Teacher | 19. Memorize |
| 6. Green | 13. Casserole | 20. Bouquet |
| 7. Home | 14. Flame | |

In this issue of Dan Poynter's ParaPublishing newsletter, he promotes his new book. His book on Nonfiction Self Publishing Manual is considered the bible of self-publishing - Jaimie Bruzenak

Shameless New Product Announcement

Write your book by-the-numbers: just fill in the blanks. You have heard of paint-by-the-numbers. It means filling in the blanks according to a pre-determined plan. PAINT-by-the-numbers is a step-by-step outline that makes you look like a master. This system in a binder shows you how to WRITE-by-the-numbers. Writing books is hard work-unless you have a plan. Without a roadmap, it is easy to get lost. Without noticeable progress, it is easy to become discouraged and lose momentum. Dan Poynter will supply you with a 33-page book-writing template in a 3-ring binder. You just fill in the blanks. Each page of the frontmatter, chapter headings and backmatter tells you what to put on that page-your book is structured and ready for your material. See <http://parapublishing.com/sites/para/information/writing.cfm#mbp> Writing-by-the-numbers will accelerate your book project by helping you visualize the entire project and by guiding you through the writing process.

Reviews

Jacob's Tails . . . Review by Alice Zyetz (<http://www.rvhometown.com/>)

Congratulations to Lynne Benjamin, RV author, for her delightful book about her return to the land with husband Fred during the sixties as told by their dog, Jacob. He captures the adventurous spirit of his humans, who he says "tried, survived and are here to tell their tails."

Jacob's Tails recounts Lynne and Fred's experiences in a relatively underdeveloped area where they could build a home, raise their own food, generate their own power, and struggle to be self-sufficient. Lynne has selected an unusual narrator to tell her tale (oops, I mean tail). Rather than saying how she felt when she couldn't find the right property immediately, she lets Jacob describe her as "something like I look when I'm disappointed and walk off with my tail between my legs."

The book begins with Lynne and Fred's early attempts to find the right property and the adventure of title search where the data is embedded in the original handwritten land grants with descriptions like "starting at the spruce tree on the northeast corner wall, walk 100 steps east to the border . . ." Jacob (er, um, Lynne) goes on to detail the dome house Fred designed and built and the unexpected disasters they encountered when they first arrived. RVers will note that their experiences are not unlike experiences on the road when our travel karma is not working.

The story continues with the choices they made, the day-to-day tasks they had creating their lifestyle, including raising goats, sheep, and pigs and planting fields of strawberries, turnips and plentiful kitchen vegetables. Photos add another dimension to the tails. I highly recommend Lynne and Jacob's book for an engaging and honest read that will carry you on their journey back to the land. Visit the website

<http://www.firststepbooks.com>

To order the book as an e-book or hard copy. Contact Lynne at 2firststep @ [gmail.com](mailto:2firststep@gmail.com) for more information.

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Alice Zyetz, Author, Taking the Mystery out of Retiring to an RV

Co-author, The Woman's Guide to Solo Rving, Taking the Mystery out of RV Writing

Co-editor, RV Traveling Tales: Women's Journeys on the Open Road

Author, You Shoulda Listened to Your Mother: 36 Timeless Success Tips for Working Women

## **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.

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