



Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not
Fall, 2010

MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

"Writers are the main landmarks of the past."

~ Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton

I had never heard of Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton, but these words seemed to ring true with our Memoirs theme. My research showed that he was an 19th Century British writer who is accredited many now-familiar phrases such as "the great unwashed," "pursuit of the almighty dollar," "the pen is mightier than the sword," and the famous opening line "It was a dark and stormy night."

I like the lyrics from *The Way We Were* too:

Mem'ries, Light the corners of my mind

Misty water-colored memories, of the way we were.

Scattered pictures of the smiles we left behind . . .

Can it be that it was all so simple then or has time re-written every line?

If we don't share our landmarks . . . even if we re-write them . . . what a great loss to the future

Another interesting discussion on the forum has been about mental blocks. Ed Greenberg started it with *Do you love your characters?* and many chimed in for a great discussion. Won't this make a good theme for the next Newsletter? So . . . 100 word submissions for the Winter, 2010 Newsletter is

Do You Love Your Characters and Other Mental Blocks?

There are a lot of great resources to share in this Fall edition of the Newsletter. The talent and resourcefulness of our members never ceases to amaze me.

A bevy of new members joined during the Goshen Escapade and thank you Jeannie for planning, organizing, and reporting on (*what I expect was*) a great meeting. **Welcome New Members!**

My goal is to keep the Penwheels Newsletter vibrant and relevant AND I need your input. We lack input from those who get their newsletter via snail mail. Please let us know who you are and what you are writing!! Send hard-copy correspondence to Joanne and email directly to me (see address below).

Your help and input are critical.

Thanks and Enjoy!

Lynne Benjamin

PS It's not a typo it's the Canadian way

This issue:

- What's Gone on between Then and Now
- "100 Word Submissions"
- New Members
- Contributors
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- Resources
- BLOG List

"100-Word Submission" for the Winter Issue:

Do You Love Your Characters and Other Mental Blocks?

Send hard-copy submissions to:

Lynne Benjamin c/o Joanne Alexakis

140 Rainbow Drive #4093

Livingston TX 77399-1040

Soft copies to: 2firststep@gmail.com

Submission due date: December 1, 2010

Announcement from our Membership Volunteer – Joanne Alexakis

The Penwheels BOF newsletter is offered online – paperless as well as hardcopy!

- Register on the Penwheels electronic bulletin board (<http://groups.yahoo.com>)
 - *Online only* newsletter subscribers receive 6 issues (1 1/2 year's worth)
 - *Hard copy* newsletters receive only 4 issues - sent to you via snail mail.

Renewing your Penwheels BoF newsletter subscription is easy!

Hard-copies - Expiration date is noted on your mailing label – Please send an \$8.00 check made out to **Penwheels** to: Joanne Alexakis, 140 Rainbow Dr. #4093, Livingston TX 77399.

Receive online notification of expiration date- (**make sure your email address is up-to-date**)

The cost is \$8.00 for either method of delivery.

What's Gone on between Then and Now

The North Ranch Writers' Group - Contributed by Helen Taylor, SKP #295

As usual, the NR Writers' Group continues to meet all summer long, even though sometimes we only have 2-4 or so in attendance. We still write and read our efforts every Thursday morning in the clubhouse. Some of us suggested the topics for August and September include "Eye Glasses", "Hot August Nights", "A Miracle", "Chocolate", "Travelling Single", and "Mowing Lawns." That last one will be memories or fiction - no one at North Ranch has a lawn to speak of (in 436 lots). And we had a strange topic/prompt last week that I missed, but I'd written my short contribution for "Strange Pies". It is here for you to see what kind of nonsense some of us are down to.

Strange Pies.....

Have you ever made Apple Pie without any apples? An actual recipe or instructions showed up years and years ago for this "Mock Apple Pie" made with Ritz crackers in place of apples.

Believe it or not, it was quite tasty.

Another strange pie recipe I remember seeing was a Vinegar Pie, but not sure I can remember exactly what it was all about. Some of these strange concoctions must have surfaced during war years - specifically WWII when so many things seemed to be rationed, or totally unavailable. Nowadays I remember seeing recipes for "sweet pies", and bunches of recipes for "savory" pies. This would cover all the "pasties" meat pies, whole-meal pies, shepherd pot pies, maybe even tamales and enchiladas. Anything with a little dough of some kind under, over, around or through could be called a pie!

Penwheels Escapade Meeting at Goshen – Contributed by Jeannie (Myra Jean) Winniford - SKP #81050

I was awed by the quality of their writing

10 counting me in attendance
3 were Penwheels.
5 joined

Never having learned to say no, I accepted Alice's request to moderate the Penwheels meeting at the Escapade in Goshen. When I arrived at Goshen, I found that we were not in the schedule book. I think we may have been listed in Sedalia last summer. I did find us listed as additional meetings on the bulletin board. However, all it said was Penwheels, Tuesday 12:00 - 1:00 Lamb Building. There was nothing to explain that Penwheels was a writing group. To help advertise the meeting, I ran off some postcard-size flyers that I

intended to place on the tables and chairs in the general assembly area. While putting down some additional flyers the next day, I noticed the ones I had placed the day before were gone. After checking with the office, I found that it was not acceptable to put the flyers on the tables. I retrieved the flyers and took them to the information booth where anyone could pick up one. I also placed one on the bulletin board beside the notice for our location. The good news is that before all the flyers were taken off the tables, at least one lady picked one up and was at the meeting.

The building for the meeting was a pavilion that is normally used for a concession stand. It was very comfortable even though it was almost outside. We had ten people, counting me, that showed for the meeting. Alice had given me some suggestions for the meeting and I followed them very closely. I introduced myself and explained a bit about what Penwheels is and how it can help writers. Then each of the people there introduced themselves and gave their experiences with writing. Most of those there were doing blogs in addition to any other writing they did. We made a list of places where one could obtain space for a blog. The blogs mentioned were: mytripjournal.com, itsyourlifebeginnings.com, Word Press, and Google Blogger.

After introductions we did the writing prompt, I remember..... It was interesting to watch the writers as they collected their thoughts and jotted down their ideas. After ten minutes each attendee read their page to the group. I'm hoping we can invite those that were there to submit their selections to the newsletter. Each one was well written, interesting and moving. Most of the writings were about moving or life changing situations. It was a nice break when one of my SOLO friends read his thoughts. He added an element of humor and delighted everyone there.

Time was running out, so I spent a few minutes talking about the club and passing out membership forms. Of the ten in attendance, three were already Penwheels and five joined.

The last element of the meeting was an exercise in thinking of alternate words to use instead of the word GOT. We came up with seventeen words. I think we would have had over twice that many, but just as the group began to think, a man in the pavilion across the road began to talk on his cell phone. As many do, he began to speak very loudly. He was talking louder than I was. He was so loud the group could not think. We begin to find humor in the situation and were giggling about the incident. I think he may have still been shouting into his cell phone as we all said our good-byes.

Contributions - "100 Word Submissions"

Starting My Memoirs

What Happened? - Contributed by Margo Armstrong, SKP# 47139

I've never been a fantasy-prone individual, but there have been times when I wondered if I had strayed into the Twilight Zone. The years passed and I tried to fit in with little success. The dreams of the ordinary woman of my day seemed severely limited and boring. Originally I thought that working hard at anything would evolve into financial success. Reality, however, dashed that dream. Was it really financial success that drove me? As it turned out, understanding the inner dimensions of oneself was the goal all along.

Starting My Memoirs - Contributed by Delbert Ashby, SKP #67666

Deep within each of us, there is a private place where no one else is allowed to go, ever! There is also a fear of offending other people. In my memoirs, shall I go against nature and totally reveal myself, all of my feelings or shall I shade the truth to not offend. When that decision is made, I can tell the true story of my life. Hmmm, I have decided. I shall never start my memoirs. They will go with me.

Contributed by Dave Beckes, SKP # 81875

Daisy BB gun, coppery little balls flying out to kill small birds or take out someone's eye

The steel of the barrel is cool to the touch, smelling of oil, carried with pride. I'm Davy Crockett, oh how I love that fuzzy, musky smelling coonskin hat, its tail tickling the back of my neck.

Uneven rows of leafy green trees, some with golden fruit, waiting to be picked and devoured

I love the smell of the thick peel as it comes away from the juicy flesh inside. I can sit for hours in the middle of the tree and eat several with only the peels giving away my presence.

Starting My Memoirs - Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP #77439

Much of my writing has autobiographical elements. I hope to write a form of my memoirs in November during National Novel Writing Month. Even though it will be based on my life, the names will be changed and some of the details may be, also.

Even more than *my* life story, I would like to write down my parents' memories while I still have a chance. However, they are less than willing to share about growing up during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (Dad was born just before the stock market crash and Mom just after Pearl Harbor was bombed).

Contributed by Doris Hutchins, SKP #29167

In my preteen years, I started to draw people and planes and to write short stories. Our local newspaper had a section for young adults where this art could be submitted. Two drawings and one short story were published. I cut them out and put them in an album. This grew into collecting memoirs and photos of my family in the days gone by. It blossomed into my current collection of 124 short memoirs that I have produced over the years. It is good to start when you're young and the memories are still vividly implanted in your psyche.

Writing My Memoirs - Contributed by Marianna Nelson SKP #45711

Here are answers to some of your questions and one of mine:

Q - Have you started your Memoirs yet?

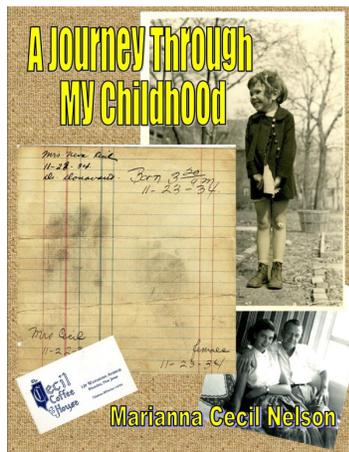
A - You bet!

Q - How is the writing going?

A - I haven't had a burst like this in a long time and it feels good. I've put other things on hold (like Nelson's Notes) to take advantage of my creative (I hope) energies.

Q - Why am I finally writing my memoir now when I've been writing bits and pieces for 18 years?

A - Your last writing prompt ("What's most important in writing my memoir") got me thinking about the urgency of finishing my memoir before I die (I'm 75). But, I needed a plan, a



guide. It took the form of a note to my readers (my Preface). I asked them to join me as I relive my childhood and discover with me that I am who I am because of three main things:

(Draft book cover by Bruce Nelson, Marianna's husband)

- Who raised me
- Where I grew up
- When I grew up

***Memoir Defined* - Contributed by Beth Ramos, SKP #86268**

My friend Annie went to Africa
when she was twenty one
lived in four cultures
met two special men,
Saw animals, drank red bush tea,
realized her story's import,
gave her memoir draft to me.
It ended with a made-up romance
'cause her life since then was plain.
"But it's your truth," I said.
So she's going to start again.

***(First) Starting My Memoirs* - Contributed by Helen Taylor, SKP #295**

My Memoirs are nearly all done, and I'm readying to try for publication.

Each "memory" is written as an Essay, now totalling at least 100 in probably 150 pages. My project now is "connecting" all the essays into a coherent pattern with a snazzy "hook" to make it a publishable book with the working title "Grandma's Other Life".

Working on this for many years now, I may just have to put it aside, work on something else entirely, then come back to it a little more fresh-minded.

***(Second) Starting My Memoirs* - Contributed by Helen Taylor, SKP #295**

For many years I've contemplated writing a book of some kind, possibly a mystery, my favorite read.

It has since become clear to me that I have neither the talent nor the inclination for writing a novel. My favorite style of writing is personal essays, covering my memories, and family history. Realizing my writings are historical, family-wise, but entertaining also, judging from friends' reactions, I am using essays for this book, hopefully for publication, but if not, for my daughters and grandsons and their future progeny.

I hope you enjoy my finished product.

(Note: I have more than 100 pages of essays all ready organized into five separate chapters, many with pictures. Now I just need to decide where and how to publish! The blurb above is included in the book as an Introduction. I have written a separate page titled Acknowledgments, further explaining my concept.)

Other Contributions

***Sauté Onions Just Before Your Husband Gets Home* - Contributed by Alice Zyetz,
SKP # 24442**

More than forty years ago when I took a leave of absence from teaching to try to conceive, I found myself in a daytime gourmet cooking class. We were all middle class women, not

working, with (apparently) a little too much time on our hands. I did learn how to make an exquisite apple cake from scratch, which I did once

However, the greatest lesson was the onion advice. Our teacher shared it with us between the asparagus soufflé and the elegant choucroute (stuffed cabbage). “If you must serve him a frozen dinner,” she said, “cook onions first. He’ll think you are fabulous.”

I tried it and she was right. Works with writing too.

Answer to question - Contributed by Betty Prange, SKP #22195

Q - Close your eyes . . . take a deep breathe . . . what do you smell?

A - *Wild anise and creosote* - My hands, jeans and the striped t-shirt on my eight- year old body, smell of a day building forts under the huge train trestle that spans the marshy area in my neighborhood.

The creosote on the huge beams of the lowest rung of the trestle, where it meets the steep hillside, smells tarry in the summer sun. We use the beams for ceiling support and the end for a wall of the fort. We add stalks of wild anise to complete the fort.

Today if I walk a railroad track and smell creosote, my senses detect the acrid, licorice-like odor of wild anise as well. It does not need to be present. The two merge in my mind.

Answer to question - (because it was interesting to me) - Contributed by Marianna Nelson, SKP #45711

Q - Close your eyes . . . take a deep breathe . . . what do you smell?

A – (1) Cod liver oil and (2) freshly baked rolls.

(1) My mother spooned smelly cod liver oil into me every night during the winter to make sure I got enough vitamin D (milk wasn’t fortified with D then).

(2) My father was an expert chef; three of his specialties were buttery perfections called Parker House rolls, butter flake rolls, and cloverleaf rolls.

Contributed by Jaimie (Hall) Bruzenak, SKP #19361

This morning I smell the ocean, hear the pounding of waves on the rocks along the shore and the strident cries of sea gulls. The pouring rain from tropical storm Earl has abated and gray clouds are scudding out to sea. Large waves dash over ledges offshore, all but the two largest now hidden by high tide. The sea is gray, broken by the darker ledges and a few spots of color bobbing in the waves - lobster buoys that mark the Maine coast. The sun will come out - today or tomorrow. The sky and sea will be transformed again.

Why and How We Write - Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP #77439

I write to express my thoughts and feelings. I write to inform. Writing is my creative outlet. It says who I am, who I have been, and who I want to be. I write because the written word has been my constant companion.

Scrawled words on a page, neat terminology transferred from keyboard to screen, blog, and journal; these are all ways I write. Late at night or during mid-day light; inside, outside, home and work, I write. Black ink is favored over blue, but purple, green, or red will do in a pinch.

Never pencil—I want something bold!

New Members

Patrice Guillaume, SKP #99595
 Verna Hughes, SKP #97505
 Betsy McNair, SKP #94972
 Rose Muenker, SKP #104069

Glenn Shields, SKP #92616
 Karen Vigmostad, SKP #106503
 Myra Jean (Jeannie) Winniford, SKP
 #81050

Welcome!

New Member's Profile

Rose Muenker - SKP #104069

Because I've been struck with wanderlust since my childhood, travel writing has been my primary focus as a freelance writer these past 20+ years. No wonder my photographer-husband, David, and I became fulltime RVers! We chronicle our journey on a blog, *On the Road with David and Rose* (<http://davidandrose.com>), and in a regular column in the suburban Denver magazine, *Out of Denver*. I've written two travel guidebooks, an award-winning column for the *Denver Post*, and scores of articles about business, lifestyle and travel topics.

I also coach writers one-on-one and in group programs. Fortunately, today's technology makes it possible to coach via phone from just about anywhere. This autumn's group program (Sept 21 to Nov 2) is "Put Your Writing Project on the Fast Track to Completion." All the details are described at <http://getgreatresults.com/writenow.html>.

I've Been Published – Bragging Rights!

Let Us Know About Your Current Publications

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

- **Betty Prange**, SKP #22195, *Cover Photo*, *Escapees magazine*, September/October, 2010 issue,
- **Barbara Kaufmann**, SKP #95737 *Words and Violence* (originator of the project and held international phone meetings for contributors, did writing prompts for them, co-wrote, re-wrote or edited every case study. There are several of my pieces in the curriculum), <http://www.voiceseducation.org/content/words-and-violence>, *Voices [Education Project]*, September, 2010, www.voiceseducation.org
- **Carolyn Harris**, SKP #51608, *Line Dance - Do it for fun and for your health*, *Escapees magazine*, September/October, 2010 issue, page 44
- **Terry Hager**, SKP #48315, *Death on the Night Watch* self-published with Createspace at Amazon.com (available sometime this fall).
- **Lynne Benjamin**, SKP #86190, [skpstops] *The Good, the Bad and the Bizarre of Slab City*, *Escapees magazine*, September/October, 2010 issue, page 84

Resources

Resource for publishing - Contributed by Jaimie Bruzenak, SKP #19361

➤ An article about using a social networking-type site to promote your writing
<http://blog.writersdigest.com/norules/2010/07/27/HowOneAuthorIsUsingScribdToFindReaders.aspx>

➤ **Resource Google Wonder Wheel - Contributed by Jaimie Bruzenak, SKP #19361**

Google Wonder Wheel is a new great feature from Google which allows you to see relevant search results to your query in a unique semantically relevant and graphically designed way. You get your results back with related topics shown as spikes of a wheel. You can click on those topics for more search results. See <http://www.googlewonderwheel.com/google-wonder-wheel-step-by-step> for directions on how to do one. I did find the Wonder Wheel option on the left under Other, not at the top as the directions show.

➤ **Beliefs That Affect Our Writing (MAD blog) - Contributed by Beth Ramos, SKP #86268**

- 
1. Talking about writing is not writing.
 2. When my life is difficult or depressing, I think: it's all material.
 3. Don't get stuck in an idea when another one is trying to happen.
 4. Writing well isn't easy; otherwise, everyone would do it.
 5. I will always be learning to write.
 6. Sometimes the workshop group wants you to write your stories their way.
 7. Get rid of a sentence that gives you a hard time. You didn't need it anyway.
 8. I have often proved my inner critic wrong.
 9. My ex will think everything I write is about him.
 10. Creation is painful. Revision is a blast.
 11. The only time I feel like doing housework is when I have a writing deadline.
 12. Reading work out loud is a good way to detect errors, tangles, and crap.
 13. My standards are higher than my abilities allow me to reach.
 14. My best writing happens when I'm not thinking about it.
 15. I am cautious about sharing my work in draft. It's fragile then, and so am I.
 16. There is always a nugget of truth in every criticism.
 17. Time slows down painfully when you wait for someone to read your work.
 18. All the good sentences might already be taken.
 19. I am kinder to other writers than I am to myself.
 20. The hardest thing about writing is believing you can make it whole.
 21. Laughing out loud while writing is good, even if it's not during the funny parts.
 22. Typos magically appear a nanosecond after you send off the piece.
 23. I'm a better writer than I used to be.
 24. Writer-friends. Necessary.

What beliefs do you hold about writing? Do they help you? Or hinder you?

➤ **Story from NPR - Contributed by Beth Ramos, SKP #86268**

In this story from NPR, writers of all genres speak of why they write

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128849596&sc=fb&cc=fp>

BLOG List

Lynne Benjamin

- <http://firststep-andlifegoeson.blogspot.com/>
- <http://lynnefred-winter.blogspot.com/>

Barbara Bowers

- <http://blessed-b.blogspot.com/>

Jaimie Bruzenak

- <http://blog.rvlifestyleexperts.com/>

Carolyn Harris

- <http://blog.seattlepi.nwsourc.com/lynscircle/>
- <http://travelingnewzealand.blogspot.com/>
- <http://wednesdaywoman.livejournal.com/>

Kay Kennedy

- <http://boomersrememberhistory.blogspot.com>
- <http://portablewritingnewsletter.blogspot.com>
- <http://freelancewriter.booklocker.com>
- <http://travelingwithinky.blogspot.com> (the cat's travel BLOG)

Barbara Kaufmann

- <http://www.onewordsmith.blogspot.com/>

Patty Lonsbary

- <http://www.glotours.blogspot.com>

Bess McBride

- <http://www.rvromance.com>

Darlene Miller

- <http://rvchuckles.blogspot.com>

Rose Muenker

- <http://davidandrose.com>

Marianna and Bruce Nelson

- <http://www.otr.studio221.net>

Betty Prange

- <http://www.PrangeDePlume.blogspot.com>

Beth Ramos

- <http://www.rootsandroutes.us>
- <http://www.peaceandgood.us>

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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

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PENWHEELS

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