



# Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not

Fall, 2012

## MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

*"You can't say, I won't write today because  
That excuse will extend into several days,  
Then several months, then...  
You are not a writer anymore,  
Just someone who dreams about being a writer."*

*~ Dorothy C. Fontana\** (script-writer for the original Star Trek)

**And haven't we all felt ourselves caught there?!**

Our Summer, 2012 Newsletter was dedicated to the memory of Alice Zyetz – a writer, teacher and Penwheeler who touched so many of us. Alice often referred us onto Natalie Goldberg, especially when we were considering our *Memoirs*.

Both these wonderful teachers constantly reinforced the idea of *practice, practice, practice*. As Natalie said in her latest book, *Old Friend from Far Away: the Practice of Writing Memoirs*, "Writing is an athletic activity. . . . And just like any other sport, it takes practice."

Natalie gives us many ideas to help us with the process as did Alice with her *Write Compelling Stories-Handouts 2008*, which is in the FILE folder on the sidebar of the Yahoo Forum.

We provide prompts with each Newsletter; space to print most Contributions; along with what you, our writers, have done and resources to help with our struggle to continue. We will be dedicating these writing challenges to Alice Zyetz by calling them *'The A to Z Writing Challenges'* and Betty Prange has provided us with a tough and thoughtful challenge.

Jaimie has some wonderful ideas and resources to help us write; market; and publish our endeavours. And because of your input, we are getting closer to knowing what to do with the extra \$\$\$,

*Thanks and Enjoy!*

*Lynne Benjamin*

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

### **This issue:**

- Penwheels Bits and Pieces
- What's Gone On . . .
- *'The A to Z Writing Challenge'*
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- BLOG List
- Review & Resources

### ***'The A to Z Writing Challenge'* Life in 6 Words\***

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](mailto:2firststep@gmail.com)

Submission due date: December 1, 2012

\* Suggested by Betty Prange-check out samples at:

<http://roughwighting.net/2012/06/29/six-words-thats-all-i-need/>

### **Penwheels Bits and Pieces**

***Doris Hutchins has agreed to moderate our Penwheels Yahoo Forum.  
Thank you, Doris!!!***

To join the Penwheels electronic bulletin board (the Penwheels forum) and get daily (almost) digests, send a blank e-mail to: [penwheels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:penwheels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
Then email Doris Hutchins, moderator, at [valentinedh@gci.net](mailto:valentinedh@gci.net) (Include your name and SKP #)

### **Meet your fellow Penwheelers**

***Post your photo at the Penwheels website, so we can 'get a look' at each other.  
It would be awesome for me personally to visit our PW bulletin board and see  
our entire group smiling back at me.***

Joanne Alexakis SKP#19367

### **What Should We Do With the \$\$\$\$?**

***We need your input!!***

We have a substantial balance (\$1,011.92) in our bank account and need your input into how to spend it. As a non-profit, we cannot have a large balance and headquarters has directed us to do something with it. We came up with:

- (a) Donate to CARE
- (b) Reduce our PW newsletter subscription fees
- (c) Offer remuneration for submissions to the Newsletter
- (d) A combination of (a), (b), (c)

***What do you think?***

Let us know:

E-mail - Helen Taylor, [htaylor295@gmail.com](mailto:htaylor295@gmail.com)

Snail mail – Helen Taylor, P O Box 1003, Congress, AZ 85332-1003

or

Post to the [Penwheels Yahoo Forum](#)

***Results at the Time of Printing!!***

The total votes to date are eight (8) for donating to CARE, none for anything else!

### **What's Gone on between Then and Now**

#### **News from Writers Group – Contributed by Marianna Nelson SKP# 45711**

The Writers Group at Fun N Sun (San Benito, TX) has continued to meet most Thursdays this summer. Each week Jeannie Winniford read instalments of her picture-book story about Dandy, a stranded Whistling Duck which she rescued and raised at her fifth wheel. Dandy Duck captured the interest of the Valley Morning Star which published a front-page story about his adventures with Jeannie and her dog Scooter. As Dandy began to develop wing strength he would fly off but would always return, whistling to let Jeannie know he was coming. Now Dandy is gone for good, presumably with a family of ducks like him. What Jeannie misses most is his whistle. A former first grade teacher, Jeannie wants to submit her book to Scholastic Publishing but knows she has to have an agent. Any tips, suggestions?

**Contributed by Judy Kallestad SKP# 108999**

I belong to a writers group in St. Cloud, Minnesota that has been meeting for over a decade. I've been able to reconnect again in person. Two of us original members first met at a community education writing class sometime in the late 1990s. Members have come and gone, but we usually have four to seven writers at each meeting. We meet every other Monday morning to critique pieces submitted by e-mail prior to the meeting.

We come with hard copies of each writer's piece with our written suggestions regarding content, structure, grammar, etc. Each writer's submission is discussed in turn and our edited copies are given to the writer. The process has worked very well for our group. Many of us have gone on to publish books and articles. Recently, three of us joined a six-week memoir writing class at the local history center. Each week we have an assignment topic to write about and then we read it to the group at the next class. While no actual critiquing is done, it has generated a lot of great story ideas.

**The A to Z Writing Challenges**

*How do you feel about E-Readers?* (Prompt from Summer, 2012 PWNL)

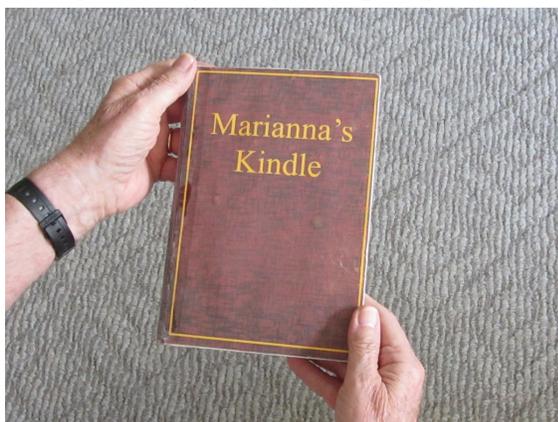
**Contribution by Terry Hager**

I love my Kindle. There was virtually no adjustment time for me. I don't miss holding the "old fashioned book" in my hands. And sometimes I still read regular books. I like that it's light and small and easily portable. I like that, if I'm close to finishing a book, I don't need to carry an extra with me. Instead, I just choose my next unread book on the reader. I like that I can enlarge the print size. I like the ease of book shopping on line at Amazon. I like that there are lots of free and inexpensive books to choose from.

I get annoyed if I don't pay attention to the battery, it runs down and I have to shut the reader off and recharge it. I miss just a bit, seeing the cover of the book whenever I pick it up.

**E-Readers: My Likes and Dislikes – Contributed by Marianna Nelson, SKP #45711**

On my birthday two years ago my husband Bruce gave me a Kindle with a case he made for it.



I thought he was sweet to do that. However, after I had read my first e-book, I didn't use my Kindle for over a year. He kept asking me, "Why aren't you using your Kindle?" The reason was that e-books lack the features I like about traditional books. First of all, an e-book doesn't have a cover to look at and no front matter – a title page, dedication and such – to peruse. It has no pages to flip through. I miss this the most because I like to go back to find out things I've forgotten or re-read what happened on page so-and-so. With a Kindle, it is difficult to navigate

from screen to screen (even with book marking) and, more importantly, to get back to where I left off. E-books have no page numbers. Instead, in the lower left-hand corner a number shows the percentage of the book I've read so far. Who cares? That number has little meaning because the page equivalent of the book is not given.

What I like most about my Kindle is its lightness and the ease of holding it in my arthritic hands (my Kindle weighs only a half a pound whereas a paperback book weighs around one and one-half pounds). Because of its size and weight, a Kindle is convenient to take on trips. If I want to read more than one book, they are all there in my little Kindle (or can be with the click of a button). The downside is if I leave my Kindle somewhere I've lost \$129 dollars, not the \$8 - \$20 I paid for a paperback book. But, paperback and hardcover books take up space on shelves or in suitcases and a Kindle takes up very little. Another perk is that E-books are cheaper than their paper versions and sometimes are free. Books I have downloaded for free gave me the incentive to use my Kindle more. Finally, I've become used to it, but I still like to read "book" books.

### **E-Reader Overview – Contributed by Margo Armstrong**

All of my acquaintances that own E-Readers acknowledge that they are addicted to them. With the entrance of the color version into the market, there should be a million more addicts out there soon. My guess is that most consumers think an E-Reader can be a substitute for the more expensive iPad. They are in for a big surprise.

Convenience seems to be the big attraction. Bus and train commuters love them. Can they not only read E-books but also catch the latest stock market reports and keep track of the gold market.

The biggest complaint about all brands of E-Readers seems to be the lack of speed in either connecting to WiFi or simply turning the pages while reading.

Currently the best seller on the market seems to be the Amazon Kindle Fire, color plus speed being the attraction. With the addition of the Harry Potter series to the Kindle E-book selection, sales should skyrocket. According to online reviews, this first version of Kindle Fire has a lot of software bugs. It is also too heavy to be held in one hand.

The other versions of the Kindle seem to more popular for just reading. The screens are easier to read in strong light, are lighter and more responsive, and can usually load any E-book previously purchased from Amazon.

The Barnes & Noble Nook seems to be the favorite for just reading E-books. It appears to feel lighter and more responsive. I think this is due to the software/hardware being more intuitive and the screen is easier to read in sunlight.

The latest version of the Nook includes the "Glow light" ability to read at night. This should improve sales even though it is more expensive. According to the online gurus, if you can wait until the Fall, the price is expected to drop. Unfortunately it is a tad too wide to fit in your pocket but can be held in one hand.

Be aware that the latest version of both products may not display E-books or other content previously purchased on their sites. Read and compare these products carefully before purchasing. Take a close look at the extra storage (SD Cards), battery life, backward compatibility, and size. Make sure that the available eBooks, local library E-books, and your own library are usable on the device.

Do not expect any E-Reader currently on the market to replace an iPad (or similar products). With the smaller screen and much slower processor, the E-Reader is designed primarily for reading content, not interactive pursuits.

**To E or Not to E-Read – That is – Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP #77439**

I have an Amazon Kindle. I will not even begin to get into whether a Nook, Kindle, Sony, or any other E-Reader is the best. I can only say why *I* have an E-Reader.

Always an avid reader, I am rarely further than arm's reach from reading material. As someone who fears running out of things to read, I used to travel with a bag full of books and magazines. The Kindle has allowed me to lighten my load without giving up my favorite hobby. At any one time, I carry more than 200 books with me in the space of one slim hardback. I do not have magazines on my Kindle, although my favorites are available, because I like to pass my magazines on to others.

The E-Reader has not replaced all my books, nor do I see that happening in the future. For one, many of my favorite series are not yet available in this form. Another reason is that I am comforted by the feel and smell of "real" books; a house is not a home without volumes with pages. The Holy Bible is a book that I choose to have in both E-Reader and traditional format. I like that I can carry it easily (and several translations) for daily reading, but prefer a leather and paper copy for carrying to church and making notes. I am able to find my place faster in the hard copy and find more meaning in a handwritten notation than in one typed onto a screen.

Everyone must choose for him-or herself, but for me, reading perfection is having both an e-reader and more traditional choices.

***I Hate To Be Critical But . . .*****Contributed by Myra Jean Winniford**

What is this thing about leaving Bas-Carts in parking spaces on the parking lot? I mean sometimes the Bas-Cart corral is right next to the Bas Cart and still whoever left it there was not courteous enough to put it safely out of harm's way. I've seen as many as four parking spaces, near the store, full of bas-carts.

Canada has a way to help with the bas-cart problem. They chain the bas-carts together in an area of the parking lot near the store. To use the bas-cart, one has to deposit a coin. When the cart is returned to the proper place, and the lock is once more engaged, the coin pops out. People may think they do not have time to get the carts out of other's way, but few are willing to leave a quarter or dollar coin in the bas-cart for the next shopper to retrieve when they finish shopping. Now, this is something else I'm critical about. Why are people so reluctant to embrace the idea of having coins instead of bills? I've heard people say they don't want to carry that much change around. While living in Canada, I found that the coins don't accumulate. It is so much easier to reach in a coin purse or pocket than open a wallet, so most people reach for the coins rather than the bigger bills. Who likes trying over and over to get an older dollar bill into a vending machine? Coins drop right in with no problem. People are reluctant to embrace change but changing to a dollar coin system is long overdue. Perhaps if we did have a dollar coin, parking spaces would not be full of empty carts.

***How has your summer been?*****Contributed by Terry Hager, SKP 40315**

As I write this, I'm going through what is probably the hardest five or six months of my life. I had total knee replacement surgery June 15, and the second will be done August 31. Most of my life is consumed with pre-surgery exercises, post-surgery exercises, resting and recuperating. I've found the small space of our fifth wheel a good place in which to recover. I'm glad I could be in Michigan with supportive friends and family around. I expected I'd have lots of time for visiting with them, but not so! My energy is too limited. Ruth, my wife and my caregiver, has gone above and beyond, despite the fact that I poke fun of her (as well as myself) in my monthly newsletter, "The Hager News Flash." Aside from the newsletter, I've had no energy for writing.

My third mystery in the Reverend Rob Vander Laan series languishes at about a third of the way through its first draft. I hope to get back at it late this year. On the other hand, I'm close to publishing *The Old Dude and Precious on the Road*, a coffee table book with illustrations by Nan La Salle, a wonderful graphic artist.

Having said all that, I'm doing very well in my recovery from my first surgery. It is with some dread that I look forward to the recovery from the next surgery. The pain, the limitations, as well as the occasional emotional struggles are a challenge to deal with. The thought of traveling to Alaska next summer, hiking in the mountains again and taking more overseas trips keeps me going.

***The road you might have taken and where would you be?***

**Contributed by Doris Hutchins, SKP #29167**

It was meant to be!

Thinking back to the very young age of nineteen, I might have taken the road to a degree in Nursing and a tour of duty in the Navy. My friend, Angie, and I were in Nursing School, in 1948, and had such great plans to pursue this career. We had dreams of being there for casualties and saving lives. We thought it would take us on a road to adventure to "see the world". Such childish dreams were never to be, because I met my husband. He was retiring from military service and going home to Vermont, so I left nurses training to marry and have five children. If I had gone on to be a Navy nurse, where would all my thirteen Grandchildren, six Great Grandchildren and one Great-Great grandson be?

***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

➤ **Lynne Benjamin, SKP# 86190**

❖ *Snowbirding 101, RV West* (E-Column)

[http://www.rvwest.com/index.php/snowbirding\\_101](http://www.rvwest.com/index.php/snowbirding_101)

❖ *The Calgary Stampede and Other Hidden Treasurers*, RV Lifestyle Magazine, Vol. 41, No. 4, page 26. <http://rvlifemag.dgtpub.com/?i=2251>

➤ **Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361**



❖ ***Support Your RV Lifestyle!***  
***An Insider's Guide to Working on the Road***, 3rd ed. won its category, "Non-fiction Book, Instructional" in the National Federation of Press Women's 2012 Communication Contest at the national level and has gone on to win at the national level. *Support* was also a finalist in the

Benjamin Franklin Award in the "Non-fiction Career" category. Certificates will be awarded at the national convention in September.

- ❖ Interviewed and quoted in the following articles:
  - *Women RVers Take the Driver's Seat*, for NextAvenue.org.  
<http://www.nextavenue.org/article/2012-08/women-rvers-take-driver%E2%80%99s-seat>
  - "Office on wheels: RV-based workers telecommute from anywhere" at NBC News at <http://nbcnews.to/P7JXvB>
- ❖ *Retire to an RV: the Roadmap to Affordable Retirement* is now in print. The successful ebook can now be purchased in a paperback edition.
- **Sam Penny**, SKP# 41036,
  - ❖ Energy Bulletin, [Review: "Was a Time When" by Sam Penny](#) - the latest on my new book
- Helen Taylor, SKP# 295,
  - ❖ *Finding a Family in Escapees*, *Escapees Magazine*, September/October, 2012 issue, *Different Viewpoints*, page 29.
- **Jeannie Winniford**, SKP #
  - ❖ *Duck Tales: Rescued duckling bonds with pet dog*, Valley Morning Star, (Harlingen, TX), July 18, 2012 <http://www.valleymorningstar.com/articles/duck-100833-heard-flock.html>  
I rescued a whistling duck hatchling from some dogs. The story made the lead story in the local paper.

## Resources

### *Resources for Writing*

Contributed by **Jaimie Hall Bruzenak**, SKP# 19361

- ✓ "Get out of the Rut and Write," is Written by freelance writer Monica A. Andermann. [http://writersweekly.com/success\\_stories/007525\\_08222012.html](http://writersweekly.com/success_stories/007525_08222012.html). She starts out with: "We've all heard that old axiom before: the only way to write is to sit down at the computer and type away. Yet that discipline had me feeling all tapped . . . Clearly, it was time for me to get away from the computer." She has a number of suggestions that we RVers could take to heart.  
Her article then goes on to outline some of the things she did to bring a fresh approach to her life and writing. As I read through her ideas, it made me realize how the RV lifestyle is constantly bringing us fresh ideas and approaches. We stop in new places, at new stores and at attractions.  
If we look at these places with expectation, with curiosity and with a child's wonderment, we could very well find something interesting to write about. Whether it is a person we meet who has a wonderful story to tell and share or an observation about places- like how are grocery stores the same wherever you travel (or not). Ideas for stories or pieces can literally pop up everywhere, if that's your focus.  
That article combined with the ever-changing venues of RVing just may get your creative juices flowing!

- ✓ *To Our Children's Children: Preserving Family Histories for Generations to Come* (by Bob Greene & D. G. Fulford) is a warm, accessible, step-by-step guide to creating precious personal histories from the memories of older people.
- ✓ *Add Some Military Flavor to Your Next Article* By Dan Heaton at [http://www.writersweekly.com/this\\_weeks\\_article/007342\\_05092012.html](http://www.writersweekly.com/this_weeks_article/007342_05092012.html)
- ✓ **How to Write Travel Stories That Sell** - "*Become a Travel Writer in 6 Easy Steps*" by Leila Giray, is loaded with practical information and ideas if you'd like to write travel articles that sell.
  1. Angling Your Story
  2. Getting the Facts, Getting the Story
  3. Letting the Story Speak for Itself
  4. Turning Your Reader into a Viewer
  5. The Irresistible Story
  6. The Most Important Lesson of All - "The secret to making money as a travel writer is to sell the same story over and over again – in other words, to recycle it! Read the complete article at <http://travelbloggeracademy.com/how-to-become-a-travel-writer>

### ***Resources for Selling***

Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361

- ✓ *Overnight Travel Buses Magazine* - <http://www.overnightbuses.com> .
  - If you would like to submit an article, send an email addressed to Tom at [submissions@overnightbuses.com](mailto:submissions@overnightbuses.com) (Only available through an I-Pad Ap)
  - Guidelines online at <http://www.overnightbuses.com/submissions.html>
- ✓ *Editorial Freelancers Association* <http://the-efa.org/> - a non-profit professional organization for writers, proofreaders, editors, translators, researchers, indexers, and other self-employed workers in the modern publishing and communications industries. It has all sorts of resources plus you can be listed in order for people seeking help to find you. There is also a job list and members receive notifications when jobs are available. They have some chapters scattered throughout the U.S. that meet in person.

### ***Resources for Publishing***

Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361

- ✓ I think this article points to how the industry is changing. You don't have to go thru a traditional publisher anymore to hit it big- if that's the goal - *Four Smashwords authors make the New York Times Bestseller List* <http://www.teleread.com/smashwords/four-smashwords-authors-make-the-new-york-times-bestseller-list/>
- ✓ *To Our Children's Children: Preserving Family Histories for Generations to Come*, Bob Greene & D. G. Fulford. Resource for recording your stories for future generations: mentioned by Stephanie Bernhagen, former Penwheeler, at the Tucson Festival of Books.
- ✓ *5 Secrets Successful Online Writers Are Hiding from You*: this blog post is really terrific for helping people who want to have their writing online. [http://filipinobook.com/5-secrets-successful-online-writers-are-hiding-from-you/?goback=.gde\\_92130\\_member\\_121770210](http://filipinobook.com/5-secrets-successful-online-writers-are-hiding-from-you/?goback=.gde_92130_member_121770210)

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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](mailto:2firststep@gmail.com)

Or snail mail to:  
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**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**