



# Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not

## **MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:**

When I was a youngster, I had a diary. I wrote about my hopes, fears, feelings, successes and failures. *Heaven forbid anyone should find it and read it!* It was locked. To my mind, a Blog is similar to any journal you might write EXCEPT it is posted on the Web and immediately accessible for others to read and comment on.

***Do I Blog?*** Yes, our entire trip is blogged complete with pictures – it took the place of the Web Page PhotoJournal I did in previous years (<http://firststep-andlifegoeson.blogspot.com/>).

***Is it a good way to promote my book and myself?*** I don't know: but the opportunity to write and express myself has been beyond my expectations.

Kay Kennedy has a different idea – as you can read in her contribution.

There is some question about commercial use of blogs.

***Procrastination*** has been a popular topic and I have included a contribution on that topic and suggest it be the theme for the Summer, 2008 Newsletter.

***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 not about me . . . it's about you." And it's up to you!!

I think Helen Taylor put her finger on the whole purpose of the Newsletter: "Sometimes it takes a group to make one realize what all resources there are out there."

*Lynne Benjamin*

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

This issue:

- What's gone on between then and now
- Writers' Groups News
- Contributions and Contributors
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- New Members and profiles
- Resources
- 2007 Penwheels BoF Statement
- The history of Penwheels BoF

**Next Issue:**

***We all have it!***

***Writers' Procrastination!!***

***What gets in your way?***

***What do you do about it?***

**Submission due date: June 1, 2008**

## What's Gone on between Then and Now

### *Writers' Groups News* – Contributed by Betty Prange (edited)

In a tradition that began over 13 years ago, writers got together in late January to share writing exercises and writing experiences. It was at a Boomerang (gathering of the Boomers BOF) in November of 1994 that Alice Zyetz first introduced some of us to the "let it all out" writing practices of Natalie Goldberg, author of *Writing Down the Bones*. Ever since when Boomers or Penwheelers meet, it is fun to share that experience.

These sessions include members of the Penwheel BOF but anyone with an interest in writing is welcome. We have had people who have published books, articles, short stories and poems, people who have had their plays or melodramas performed, people who would like to be published, and a good number of people who write simply for the joy of writing, for themselves or perhaps family and friends. Family histories, memoirs, haiku, mysteries, humor, historical fiction, science fiction, travel, how-to, and non-fiction are all represented by the people who attend.

In late January of 2008, during the Boomerang at Quartzsite, people joined together for two such sessions. In the first one, seven people met in Darlene Miller's motorhome to talk and write. Darlene and Sam Penny shared their experiences with self-publishing. Sam shared the plot of his books and Darlene announced she was having book signings at the bookstore in Quartzsite. Ardith Rehfeld shared a few of the haiku she has written. Other people in attendance were Debra Lind, Gretchen Chalsma, Verna Baker, and Betty Prange.

After those discussions we had a couple of writing practices; "Impressions of Quartzsite" and thinking of an odour (sweet, pungent, yeasty, sour, repulsive, whatever) write memories associated with it. Barnyard smells, creosote, and grass all conjured up memories for individuals.

Several days later Debra, Verna and Betty met in Betty's motorhome and wrote again. This time there were three topics. The first was based on a quote from Nobel peace prize winner; our second assignment consisted of drawing a card from the Balderdash game and using 4 words none of us had ever heard of before, weaving them into a little fantasy; our final section brought more serious and emotional responses. We each wrote a list of memories. Then each of us picked the memory from our own list which we wanted to write about.



From left to right:  
Verna Baker, one of the original  
Penwheelers members; Ardith  
Rehfeld; Debra Lind; Darlene  
Miller; Gretchen Chalsma; and Sam  
Penny.

## Contributions

Posting #1478 – February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Blogging  
Do you Blog?  
Why?**

**Is blogging a good way to promote your book and yourself?**

**Contributions that are too long or don't fit the Newsletter 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.**

### **Blogging – Contributed by Jaimie Bruzenak**

Alice and I have joined the world of blogging. We have a blog: RV Home Yet? at <http://rvhometown.typepad.com>

My first experience with blogging was committing to write a blog on working on the RV road for Chuck Woodbury at RVTravel.com <http://www.rvtravel.com/blog/rvwork/index.shtml> I'm getting paid to write two posts/week on the topic. I'm up to 124 posts. We use Blogger, a free blogging software run by Google. Sign up for a Google email account and you can start a blog.

In November, Alice and I attended a conference in Scottsdale, AZ. One of the seminars was on blogging with Dave Barnhart of Blogging for Business <http://www.bloggingforbusiness.com> (link cannot be accessed). He did an excellent presentation on what blogging is and what an effective marketing tool blogging can be.

We had started a blog earlier in the summer. That is, I had started the blog. For me blogging is fun. Find an idea and write about it. Or take some photos of places you've stopped and blog about that. I like writing short pieces and ideas are endless. Alice seems to work better with deadlines so it hasn't quite caught on with her. So far, I do most of the posts.

To digress, a blog is short for "weblog" and is a structure that allows you to add an entry very easily. You write a short piece in a box for new posts. You can include photos and links using a simple tool bar. Click and it quickly uploads to the blogging site, where hopefully your loyal following reads your next post. Readers can subscribe to a blog so they are notified when a new post is available or even get each post through RSS feed. Some people are using blogs in place of a website, with each entry being a page. Blogs are perfect as travel journals and many RVers have started one so family and friends can keep up with travels. It is considered to be one of the new social media because it allows for an exchange between the poster and the reader. Readers can add comments to each post.

In addition to Blogger, Typepad and Wordpress are well known. Dave Barnhart recommends Typepad for business. The lowest fee is \$4.95/month or \$49.50/year. It is relatively easy to use and has a dozens of templates to choose from that look very professional. Wordpress, I'm told, is a bit more difficult. They do have a free version. With Dave's help, we switched to Typepad in December.

When you want to use a blog to get known and market a product, then the challenge is how do you get people to come to your blog? How do you get that conversation going?

I am signed up at Google Reader. You can input names (my own and Alice's) and phrases like "RV," "RV lifestyle" and it continually searches through blogs for posts that have that name

or phrase. When I check Google Reader, all my searches that have new entries are highlighted and I read quickly through them.

Now for the marketing part of Google Reader: When a topic catches my eye, I read the entire post and perhaps leave a comment. I leave my name and blog address. When someone comments and leaves a blog or website address in a comment on your blog, chances are you'll go look at it—if not the first time, maybe the next. Then you'll find a post of theirs to comment on. You start some conversations. Your name spreads on the Internet and you create a social network.

The neat thing about blogs is that they get picked up by search engines much more quickly than a change to a Web page. Dave was teaching a class once. One of the participants was blogging about the class and it appeared on the Google search engine before the class was finished. It's that fast.

Whether you want to blog your morning pages (see Julia Cameron's book *The Artist Way*), share your travels or use it to market your writing or a product, blogs are an easy and effective way to do that. The box you write your post in is small. I can write that much. In blogging short is probably better. So give it a try. Sign up for a free blogging account and get started. Several Penwheelers have blogs so check them out, leave a comment and make their day!

**Blogging on the Web - Contributed by Kay Kennedy** - It doesn't make sense not to at least try a blog for book promotion since it costs nothing but time.

The difference between a blog and a Website is that a Website stays more or less static while new messages should be posted on your blog on a regular basis to keep readers interested in coming back. You can promote your book project on either site, and can provide links to purchase the book from either a blog or a site.

Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)) offers free blogs, and all you have to do is sign up, then find the layout you like and start posting. You can add your photo, your book's photo, links to related sites, and information about yourself or your book in a section that stays up permanently. Each post you add is displayed for awhile, although newer posts will be added above it, and eventually they will be pushed off that page. They'll still be available to readers in the archives. Posts should ideally be 300-600 words, but if you are providing information that requires more words, it is okay, although you might lose some readers who don't want to take time to read a long post.

I have four blogs currently up and running, two for each book that has been published in the past two years. One is for my newest book, *Looking Back: Boomers Remember History from the '40s to the Present*. That title was too long, especially for those searching the Internet, so one blog is: <http://boomersrememberhistory.blogspot.com> for those looking for books on the boomer era. The other blog for that book is: <http://lookingbackboomersrememberhistory.blogspot.com> for those who have heard of the book or read a review and are searching by the title. The book titled: *Portable Writing: the secret to living your dreams with 25 projects to fund your freedom* has one blog titled: <http://portablewritingnewsletter.blogspot.com> for those who know the title and know that I produce a regular newsletter. The other blog is <http://freelancewriter.booklocker.com> for Internet users searching for books about freelance writing.

I believe that my blogs have definitely helped sell books. It's a way that those who don't know me can find out a little about my experience and writing skills. It is still necessary to publicize my blogs so that people know about them, and know where to look, so each email that goes out includes a signature line that has my name and the title of my blogs. That way, all of my regular correspondents know about them—and hopefully, help spread the word.

**Blogging - Contributed by Carolyn Harris** I write occasionally for Escapees. Also have a couple of blogs I started a couple of months ago.

<http://travelingnewzealand.blogspot.com/>

<http://wednesdaywoman.livejournal.com/>

The Wednesday's Woman blog is for 40+ women. I'm trying to get some other ideas. I'd appreciate it if you'd check in and check the comment section and leave a suggestion. I sign it Molly Brown.

**Procrastination – Contributed by Helen Taylor, SKP 295** - Let's see – what the heck is procrastination? Maybe if I ponder on it long enough it will come to me. Then again, maybe I can find my dictionary and look up the word. That's always a good way to get started.

Right now I have to think about getting ready to go to the Activity Center for our Valentine's Day dinner. Menu includes chili, cornbread, and all the trimmings – my husband's favorite meal. I'll work on procrastination when we get back.

We're back. What a meal! Lots of friends and neighbors enjoying the Day along with us. We go to very few group meals, but when we do it's always so much fun. Don't know what our problem is getting out and around.

What was it I started writing about here anyway. Oh, yeah, I need to get the dictionary out to look up procrastination. "Pro-cras-ti-nate: belonging to the morrow; to put off doing something until a future time; esp, to postpone habitually". Pretty much just what I thought!

I'm actually very good at this subject. Actually, I'm good at "doing it." I truly put off washing dishes, vacuuming, mopping, and all that kind of stuff until it absolutely can't be put off any more. Sitting here at my computer, logging onto the internet, checking email, even reading blogs is much more enjoyable than all that other stuff.

I've now spent two days procrastinating about sending in this little piece. Now may be the time. No more dillydallying – how do you like that for a synonym. Checking out the Thesaurus, I find shilly-shally – that's even better! I'm done!

### **Contributors to this issue of the Penwheels Newsletter:**

Lynne Benjamin  
George Bruzenak  
Jaimie (Hall) Bruzenak  
Carolyn Harris  
Doris Hutchins  
Kay Kennedy

Ed Phillips  
Joan Pomeroy  
Betty Prange  
Helen Taylor  
Sharon Vander Zyl

**WORDS**- Seen in Dan Poynter's ezine- sign up at [parapublishing.com](http://parapublishing.com)

- "Stewardesses" is the longest word typed with only the left hand.
- "Lollipop" is the longest word typed with your right hand.
- No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.
- "Dreamt" is the only English word that ends in the letters "mt".
- Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing.
- The sentence: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" uses every letter of the alphabet.
- The words 'racecar,' 'kayak' and 'level' are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes).
- There are only four words in the English language which end in "dous": tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous.
- There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: "abstemious" and "facetious." (a e i o u)
- Typewriter is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.
- A "jiffy" is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second

## *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**, *Jacob's Tails . . . (Back-to-the-Land)*, in its second printing.

**Kay Kennedy**, *Multiply Profits with Advertising/Editorial Columns*, Writersweekly.com - will soon appear on their Web site.

- *Looking Back: Boomers Remember History from the '40s to the Present*, reviewed in Escapées Magazine (Jan/Feb 2008).

**Betty Prange**, *Valley of Fire State Park in Nevada*, featured in the Fall issue of RV Life

**Beth Ramos**, "A Point of View", Escapée magazine

### **Attention: Contributors to the Escapées 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 Escapées in my writing workshops at Escapades who weren't aware there is a BOF for writers.

Thanks and hugs, Alice Zyetz

## *New Members and Profiles*

### **Alice Zyetz – PWBB Moderator**

To join the **Penwheels** bulletin board and get daily (almost) digests, send a blank e-mail to: [penwheels-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:penwheels-subscribe@yahoo.com)

Please send an e-mail to me, Alice ([youshoulda@aol.com](mailto: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

### **Ed Phillips SKP#13142**

While I am not a "writer", I am in the process of writing my "memoirs", just so that my kids and grandkids can envision what life was like during the great depression and World War Two. Having been orphaned at eight years of age, put out to work for at least part of my room and board (this was before child labor laws), working a man's job to finish high school, having little or no home or family life. Then Pearl Harbor - joining the Navy and serving for three years, getting out, getting married, raising six children with only one income. Finally retirement.

June and I started "FULL TIMING", joined the ESCAPEES, saw the USA, Canada, and part of Mexico. We were original lot owners at North Ranch where I joined the Writers' Group. With a lot of help, sometimes praise, even a little criticism, I enjoyed every meeting. The retirement village in Glendale, AZ where I now live has a great writing group and I have attended several outside writing workshops.

I had a short article about our war time wedding published in the May/June 2007 "Town Square" magazine.

My other hobbies are glass etching and gardening.

### **Joan Pomeroy**

My husband, Jerry and I have been RVers since 1977, when we bought our first travel trailer, a 22 foot Nomad. We had decided early in life that we wanted to see the United States. In 1998 we sold the Nomad and bought an Alpha Ideal fifth wheel, and a 1999 Ford diesel. In 2002 we, joined Escapees, put some of the belongings in storage, gave away other things and retired from Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Then we began to travel full time.

I am author of Pomeroy Travelogues, it was our way of keep track of our traveling years, and soon the travelogue was being sent to our family and friends.

We have been in 49 states and 6 providences. Hawaii was never part of our plans.

My hobbies are history, photography reading, writing and amateur radio. I find many interesting places to visit by reading the information I obtain at the State Welcome Centers, Visitors Centers, and from what people in the RV parks tell me.

### **Betty Prange, Nomad, from somewhere on the road**

Hi, I've been a member of Penwheels for years, but finally, this luddite, decided to sign up for the yahoo Penwheels group. Hope to stay in better touch with everyone and get inspired.

(Editor's note: Alice tells us that Betty "has written many articles for RV magazines over the years. She was also in our very first writer's group in 1994 in Pena Blanca, AZ, and then described it beautifully in RV Traveling Tales along with her other wonderful piece on going solo after a rich life on the road with her husband, Lin).

### ***Resources***

#### **1. Tips on blogging from Tom Trush's workshop I attended in Phoenix on October 26, 2007 - Jaimie (Hall) Bruzenak**

1. Google's Blogger is free and easy to set up.
2. Technorati.com is the search engine for blogs. Claim your blog there to get it picked up by search engines. You list key words at Technorati that people are likely to search for.

Tom Trush, Write Way Solutions

[www.writewaysolutions.com](http://www.writewaysolutions.com) [www.tomtrush.com](http://www.tomtrush.com)

## 2. Writing Articles

### – Carolyn Harris

If you're getting into the swing of article writing, you might join one of the freelance lists that show what the magazines are looking for. **Worldwide Freelance** is one. **Freelance success** is another. They usually have a few markets listed for free. If you join for a small fee, you can get into a larger list.

### - Kay Kennedy

**Writersweekly** is a reputable newsletter that focuses on writers increasing their income, and it pays on assignment, so I've already received the check for the article. This is a good outlet for Penwheels members, but be sure to ask for writer's guidelines and study back issues/articles before you submit something.

## 3. ScriptFrenzy (April, 2008) – George Bruzenak

Get out your pens, warm up your computer, find a couple of ACCO #2 Brass brads\* for your final manuscript, makes lots of coffee, buy lots of chocolate! Whatever it takes, join the rest of the crazies at <http://www.scriptfrenzy.org/> for a month of creativity.

The folks who run the National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) have chosen the month of April as ScriptFrenzy month. Test your creativity by taking the plunge and join a world-wide community of script writers. You can work alone, or in teams of two. Here are the rules (really, this is all of them):

The 5 Basic Rules of Script Frenzy

- 1) To be crowned an official Script Frenzy winner, you must write a script (or multiple scripts) of at least 100 total pages and verify this tally on ScriptFrenzy.org.
- 2) You may write individually or in teams of two. Writer teams will have a 100-page total goal for their co-written script or scripts.
- 3) Script writing may begin no earlier than 12:00:01 AM on April 1 and must cease no later than 11:59:59 PM on April 30, local time.
- 4) You may write screenplays, stage plays, TV shows, short films, comic book scripts, adaptations of novels, or any other type of script your heart desires.
- 5) You must, at some point, have ridiculous amounts of fun.

Simple, right? Check out <http://www.scriptfrenzy.org/> for more information, forums and ideas. If you've never written a script before, this is a way to begin. There's lots of help for beginners and grizzled veterans alike.

ScriptFrenzy is run by the Office of Letters and Lights, and all donations are tax-deductible. There are no fees for joining the fun. Come on over and join us...it's a hoot!

\*If your masterpiece is not printed on 3-hole paper bound with two ACCO #2 Brass brads, top and bottom, Hollywood agents won't even look at it. Don't ask me why.

## 4. Another Writing Opportunity – Sharon Vander Zyl

I was wondering if anyone might be interested in working to publish an anthology of fiction--poetry and short stories--by Penwheelers.

It could be sold at RV shows and Escapee events as well as on the internet and perhaps through Escapees magazine ads. What do you think? I have a couple of things I could contribute and I'd be willing to work on the project with someone else who might be interested. All of the fiction published should involve an RV or an RV experience in the content.

***Financial statement for 2007 - PENWHEELS BoF***

Submitted by Joanne Alexakis, SKP #19367- January 17, 2008  
 Penwheels BoF membership coordinator

Balance January 1, 2007	\$456.50
Income Jan 1 - Dec 31	\$544.00
Expenses Jan 1 - Dec 31 (photocopying newsletters, folding, postage, office supplies, bank checks)	(\$569.54)
Balance December 31, 2007	\$430.96

Number of members on Jan. 1, 2007 = 80

Number of members on Dec 31, 2007 = 84

**History of Penwheels BOF by Historian, Doris Hutchins#29167**

This is an informal introduction to the history of Penwheels, and was published in our newsletter before, so mainly this information is for new members.

Penwheels BOF needs to have a written history to carry on throughout the years to come. I can only go by what I have accumulated so far. If you have corrections or other info please send it to me.

Fortunately, Jaimie Bruzenak . . . patiently Xeroxed off all the newsletters she had and sent them to me. Thanks Jaimie.

I have what I presume is the first newsletter in front of me. It is dated May 1994. So if I don't receive information otherwise we will go with *that* anniversary date . . .

Reading on in the newsletter I see where ten people gathered at Chico Escapade April 1994 to discuss if Penwheels should continue, and the consensus was to do so. The newsletter stated that previously Illa Alfredson had done everything for a long time and it kept the group going. She even attempted to start a newsletter. The first official newsletter was edited, copied and mailed by Myrna Courtney. Some of the early members were Dick Wood, Delores Price, Loren Leshner, Chris Christenson, Denise Christenson, Betty Prange, Joy Hale, Arlene Redstone &, Myrna Courtney.

**20 YEARS PLUS WITH ESCAPEES R.V. CLUB!!**

How many of you can make claim to these many years with the Escapees RV Club? We have found four of our members who have received their 20 yr pins. If there are others, please let me know and we will honor you too.

Honorable Mention to:

Myrna Courtney#1930, Lillian White#203

Verna Oxford#1921 and Helen Taylor#295

Joanne Alexakis says "At one time the Penwheelers had a contest to create and select a 'logo' for the Penwheels Bof. Tom Doyle and I were the only ones to respond to the challenge. My entry was the plumed pen in the SKP wagon. Tom came up with an upright-standing pen with a spinning wheel at its base (if I remember correctly.) Well, anyway, there was a vote and my design won (I'll bet, not by a lot!)" Hugs, Joanne

## **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

**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**