

# PENWHEELS NEWSLETTER

FOR ESCAPEES WRITERS... PUBLISHED OR NOT

March 2013



## THIS IS THE OFFICIAL PENWHEELS LOGO

The logo contest started April 1996. Originally, they were trying to find a Name Tag for Penwheels members.

Joanne Alexakis SKP #19367 designed the logo with the inkwell sitting in the SKP wagon-wheels. Lin Strout and Todd Paddock assisted in finalizing. Bob Amdor suggested we add Penwheels to Joanne's logo. Stephanie Bernhagen completed the paperwork to obtain permission to use the SKP name and wagon on our logo.

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## NEWSFLASH!!!!

I have discovered a member with the lowest SKP number in our *Penwheels* Newsletter group.



Would you believe we have **SKP #32, Bernie Fuller.**  
**WELCOME!**

I sent him an email and he replied:

**Yes. Our number is #32.** We were among the really, really early members of SKPs. After we dropped anchor, we let our membership lapse for a while. When we reinstated it, they gave us our original number.

We spent a lot of time in the early days with Kay and Joe Peterson at such places as "The Slabs," attending the early Escapades, hanging out in Casa Grande while the first Co-op was under construction, & etc.. Just generally watching the organization grow over the years, and planning "stuff."

I haven't been a member of Penwheels that long, since it didn't exist when we joined the organization. I have been a freelancer for over 60 years. My first dive into the pool was as a columnist for a really little newspaper in my hometown. I have written for a lot of the national publications on hunting, fishing, shooting, dog training, camping, environmental subjects, & etc and continue to do so.

Lately I have slacked off a bit while putting together a few books on various subjects. You'll find a great many of my articles in the *Escapees* magazine, and in the early issues of the SKP Newsletter (the magazine's forerunner).

As soon as I wrap up a couple of projects I have on the "keyboard," I will be happy to conjure up something for Penwheels. I must warn you, however, it will be a while. So, as you can see, we've been around a long time, and continue to be as active (?) as we can "unless the creek overflows its banks." (grin). Hugs, Bernie

## The oldest and newest Penwheels SKP numbers:

**Bernie Fuller--SKP# 32** **Jane Foraker-Thompson--SKP#112143**

# WELCOME

James Browne, SKP#20964



I attribute my joining Penwheels to the encouragement from a longtime acquaintance, friend and correspondent,

Betty Prange. She has known of my desire to improve my writing skills by keeping a daily journal since the age of seventeen. There are a multitude of life's stories there that need to be exposed, organized, condensed and edited to produce at least a readable memoir. This would have some value in the family archives and interested personal friends, not to mention other publishing opportunities.

I, too, am a veritable procrastinator. Hence, my deferring this obsession of writing in earnest to my rapidly approaching "twilight years." That's not a good excuse in the words of some writers, but cannot be avoided with my zest for living, seeing and doing everything I can fit in.

Unfortunately, I am not the best reader on the planet for whatever the

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## WEBSITE MODERATOR: VOLUNTEER IS NEEDED

### **WEBSITE MODERATOR JOB**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

1. Upload the pdf file to the file section of our Yahoo group. (Jaimie Bruzenak will guide you through the process if you have trouble or are new to this sort of thing.
2. When someone joins the BB, check with membership (Joanne Alexakis) to make sure they are a member, then approve their membership if they are. If not, let them

reason(s). However, the answer might be hidden somewhere in the above paragraphs!

I'm a dedicated, serious full-time RVer of 25 years, an original Lifetime Member of *Escapees* RV Club, and have a passion for volunteerism. The exposure to the many activities that have been afforded me in this lifestyle has hindered my quest to write more than a daily log or journal. However, since I have adopted two philosophies, "It's never too late" and "Do it now," there is no stopping this urge of mine. In addition, my lecturing experience with students from Grade 2 through College favors imparting my life's experiences to others.

Therefore, my wish is: to meet, listen to, correspond with, and read about fellow Penwheelers experiences and improve my writing abilities. This will all take place while I'm "somewhere down the road," for I see no end to this exciting life of freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

Submitted by: James (Jim) Browne

know the requirements and invite them to join Escapees or send in their dues.

3. Encourage participation in the PWBB by posting occasionally or replying to posts. Contact me at: joannealex@earthlink.net or reply directly to the PWBB here about volunteering. Thank you, Joanne Alexakis, PW Membership Coordinator and temporarily covering the PWBB (Penwheels Bulletin Board) Moderator

## TATTERED COVER BOOK STORE

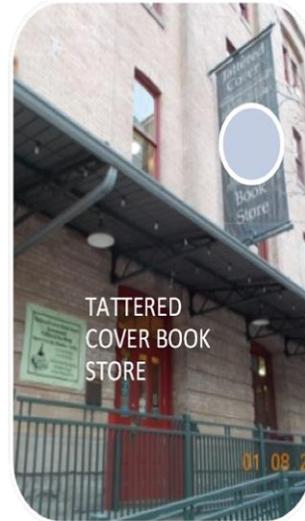
By Jaimie Hall Bruzenak SKP #19361

I was in Denver, CO. in early February to speak at an RV show. The Convention Center is three blocks from the 16th Street Mall, a pedestrian-friendly shopping area that runs for more than a mile and is serviced by free buses running just a few minutes apart. I love going to independent bookstores and had wanted to visit the Tattered Cover Bookstore.

The Tattered Cover Book Store began as a small independent store with only 950 square feet in the Cherry Creek district of Denver, Colorado. It has grown for more than 40 years to include three expansive locations in the greater Denver Metro area. I could take the mall bus to the Historic LoDo store at 1628 16th Street Mall at Wynkoop. It was

about a 5-minute ride. The store reminded me of Powell's Bookstore in Portland, OR, though a lot smaller. It is only two stories, but they do purchase used books, have a coffee shop and its well organized. Though not the original, this branch is housed in the oldest building. I made one visit to purchase a card and gift and will come back to explore the mystery section and other parts of the store. The store also has all sorts of writer's events and book signings. Check out the calendar if you get a chance to stop. Support your local indie stores so we don't lose them all! (See more at <http://www.tatteredcover.com/>)

I had noticed Writer Square as the bus passed it so took a closer look and a couple of photos on the return trip. There is a nice area to sit and journal or write. However, in doing a bit of online research, I found that Writer Square is the name of a shopping area and was named after the builder, George Writer, who built the project originally in 1981. If the weather is bad, you could always write in the adjoining Starbucks!



### **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

**Robert A. Malain** SKP#91630

I have been "published." About 6 very short stories - have been full time RVing for 7 years. I am a retired U.S.A.F. MSGT – was in Strategic Air Command, also retired (after 25 yrs.) from a large manufacturing co. - I was an analyst for the quality control manager - - My last 9 years in USAF, I was an analyst for the D.C.M.

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

**Bob Brawley**, SKP#55491

I was the winner of the Route 66 Memories Contest last year.

Janice Lasko convinced me to write more about my life and I have just finished a book about my experience living with the Old Order Amish in the early 1970's. I am writing to ask if you have any knowledge or information about the best direction in getting my book published.



## **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

My name is Cheryl Keefe SKP#68648.

My husband and I live full time in a 32 foot Class A motorhome we've named See-More as that's what this new life is all about, seeing more of this beautiful country we live in.

Our children are in their forties and the grandkids are quickly reaching that age where it's no longer cool to be with us, so we decided to sell the house and get outta Dodge while the getting was good. All those years of caring for aging parents and young children has finally come to an end and it's our turn now to run away into the sunset.

When we started to travel I named our vehicle at the time "the canned ham" because it was shaped somewhat like a canned ham and living in it was definitely a case of contents under pressure. We realized then that we wanted to live in an RV, just not one as tiny as this. [lifeinacannedham.blogspot.com](http://lifeinacannedham.blogspot.com) However, it was the R-pod experience that started my writing about our travels and thus my blog "Life in a canned ham" was begun. To protect the innocent we maintain aliases in the stories; my name is the Queen Jester, my husband is Left Brain and even the cat had a moniker of She Devil. Unfortunately her health gave out last fall and we are without feline companions, but I'm sure that will change when another manages to find us.

My writing style is mainly humorous in nature as laughter has been my best friend through many a trying time. There are times I feel as though I live in a sit-com, so it's only natural to share the goofy things that happen to us as we blunder our way along.

I've attached a short story to provide a flavor of what my writing is like. I hope you enjoy it and it brings a smile to your face and laughter in your heart.

### FLAMINGO by Cheryl Keefe

Its name is "The Flamingo" but there's nothing to indicate that species has ever lived here. There's been no attempt to beautify the surroundings or clean up the parking lot. An aura of desperation and fatigue hangs in the air and I approach the door with loathing.

I don't want to be here, but yet I find myself here again and again against my will. I simply am not able to stay away for very long.

As I enter the door the honkytonk music washes over me. I weave my way over to a row of machines that are unclaimed.

Why do I need to do this over and over and over? Will this need ever end?

Slowly everyone's heads turn my direction and the furtive glances begin; with heads lowered, sizing me up as they protect their stations. Nobody greets me or speaks. They don't want to be here either. It is true...misery loves company.

The coins hang heavy in my pocket, but I dare not set down a purse in this kind of place, so I keep my money close to me. To play these machines you need a steady stream of quarters.....but there are no winners. We'll all return again sooner or later.

Sweat oozes down my back, plastering my shirt to my body. I wish I had thought to put my hair up; it's sticking to my face and neck in sweaty discomfort. The others lose interest in me as I start the process and they return to their own machines.

There's no relief in this cramped, steamy cinder box building. Everyone's face looks as blank as mine as I numbly go through the motions, plugging quarters into the machines like a zombie, and waiting for the payoff. I just want to get it over with and get out of here, I'm only here for a brief time and at best will have a cold drink and if lucky a quick tumble. A sign forbids the washing of any horse blankets.... I'm

hoping cat bedding is okay. It's laundry day at the Flamingo Car Wash and Laundry.  
Dollmaker127@gmail.com

## **NEW MEMBER WELCOME**

**JANE FORAKER-THOMPSON**

SKP#112143

I'm a retired Criminologist, Professor and Pastor, as well as a widow. I've written poetry, prose, academic pieces, speeches, but never published. I want to learn from and share with others.

Just got back to near civilization, in Lordsburg, NM, after spending a whole week boondocking in the BLM desert north of Quartzsite, AZ. It's not unlike the Black Rock Desert north of Reno where Burning Man is held, only there are a few shrubs here and there on the Quartzsite desert. It's very flat between the small mountains that jut up everywhere, here and there in southern NM and AZ, with a lot of broken rock all over the surface. The BLM has scoured some areas here and there of shrubs, so people can boondock in groups.

Turns out there were hundreds of Escapees (a national RV club) there, but camping in smaller groups of BOFs (BIRDS OF A FEATHER). I was camping with the DOVEs (Disaster Operations Volunteers Escapees), who did a week of Red Cross Disaster Relief training. Near us were the Boondockers, Solos, and Christian BOFs. People visited from one group to another when they weren't engaged in their own groups' activities. I met some great people last week. Many people have been "full-timers" for years (RVing full-time, with no home base). Some were just occasional or part-timers. I am now a newbie full-timer, as I've been going full-time since last June 1st, and now have no definite plan when to stop, as I'm enjoying it beyond my wildest imagination. Why stop? People are so helpful to one another. There are even classes for newbies like me called "Boot Camp," to learn all the ins and outs, dos and don'ts of RVing; all the technical things about keeping up your RV, hints on

money saving, and how best to do things. I'm going to take that soon myself. Turns out there are many full-timers who have solar panels on top of their RVs to conserve energy and bring it into their rig. Some carry extra generators to operate when they are boondocking.

For instance, on BLM land near Quartzsite, you can stay up to 14 days for free. Many people do that, and move from site to site. So it's not only fun, it can be inexpensive. People learn to use their ingenuity and live very "green" at the same time. Life is such an adventure!

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## **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

**MARIE VON MINDEN SKP#68253**

The writing part of the project was actually easy (thanks to the editors, as English is my second language;) but I had to spend a lot of time learning how to be a photographer, graphic designer (Photoshop) and now a videographer (Final Cut). My book is actually a multimedia book and it will be published on Apple's iBook store in a month or two. I might do a hard copy but only if this catches on. All of this has been grueling.  
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I just submitted my book to Apple iBook store and have some time on my hands (still waiting for their approval though). I noticed that I missed the deadline for submission with you or are you a bit flexible on this?

Below is a link to KK's website and some videos from the book.

Hugs,

**Marie**

[http://www.kristikayadventures.com/Kristi\\_Kay\\_Adventures/My\\_Book.html](http://www.kristikayadventures.com/Kristi_Kay_Adventures/My_Book.html)

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

**DONNA GATES-SMEALL** SKP#100803

I am an Escapees member who loves to write. I have been writing since I was about 9 years old and will continue to write about life in various forms. Soon I will be full-timing. I am so excited and pumped to finally be a member of PENWHEELS' BOF via Escapees. Soon my husband will retire from his job and we will begin full time RVing around the USA to see all the wonders there are to see.

I am an accomplished writer with a background in poetry, short stories for adults and a few fun family vignettes.

I have written journalistically as well as in nonfiction genres. I do have one published volume of poetry out on the Amazon marketplace called Com-PEN-di-um and it is still available for purchase. I love writing in any form and am working currently on getting to the place where I can place some children's e-books out on the market by the end of this year. Plus I am an enthusiast about genealogy and love to write about

some of my discoveries in researching my family as well.

As the mother of three sons, two of whom are stepsons and one who is my first born from a previous marriage; I am excited to say that I have enjoyed parenting as well when my boys were all younger. I am very proud of them all for making their own way into their own lives. As the wife of a wonderful soul mate who has given his life to working to make our lives easier, I am thrilled to be at his side heading out soon for the many denizens of wonder and sharing that journey with him. I look forward to meeting all of you at some point or another during our journey. Please give me a few days to figure out how to access the chat and forums at Penwheels BOF on

Please give me a few days to figure out how to access the chat and forums at Penwheels BOF on Yahoo.com and then I am sure we will be spreading wonderful ideas on various topics to inspire and engage each other in writing endeavors.

## **LETTER FROM EDITOR**

Doris Hutchins #29167

After joining Penwheels in the Fall of 2001, I volunteered Copying and Mailing, Moderator, Historian and now trying my hand at being an Editor. A newsletter is only as good as the news supplied. This is where I need help from members to let me know what you would like to appear in your newsletter.

Let us know what type of writing you do. Send interesting articles to help others who need info on being published and for others to gain confidence. Bragging Rights are always welcome.

Do we still want prompts/themes? If so, how about for June: WHEN IS YOUR BEST WRITING TIME?

Morning, noon or night... describe area where you are seated when starting your writing, what is your mood... is it quiet or noisy..do you have a subject, climax and ending in mind.( 300 words or less).

Will need a subject for Sept. newsletter, if we are to continue.

We have a photo gallery on PWBB (Penwheels Bulletin Board) and there are only 12 photos in it.

WHY? We are a group of 51 members. Please go through your pic stack and send a face to a name.

(There will probably be errors in this newsletter, but I have tried to put each writers info together by using different fonts, so don't be upset if one name and SKP # is smaller or larger than another.)

MARGO ARMSTRONG SKP#47139

### **5 STEPS TO WRITING AND PUBLISHING A BOUND BOOK**

1. **Write the content.** Use short sentences and short paragraphs. Write to the 5th-grade level. If you need help with punctuation or grammar, search the Internet for a professional editor, or give it to a friend to read.

2. **Write a Query.** Here are two links to information and examples.

[http://www.agentquery.com/writer\\_hq.aspx](http://www.agentquery.com/writer_hq.aspx)

<http://www.charlottedillon.com/query.html>

3. **Find an Agent.** To find an agent, buy a copy of *Writer's Market*, or join the online version ([writersmarket.com](http://writersmarket.com)). This is the industry's bible. The link below also has some suggestions. Read any contract carefully before signing.

Usually 15% or more of all your royalties go to the agent assuming they find you a publisher.

<http://www.charlottedillon.com/query.html>

4. **Option 1: Send the query directly to the Publisher.** Normally it is up to your agent to find the publisher, but if a timeline is important to you, send your query directly to a publisher. The publisher takes care of the cover design; assigns an editor to help you tighten up the text; tries to get shelf space in the bookstores; and also sets up the book signing and other promotional events. Be aware that most books wind up on the fire sale table for lack of promotion by the publisher.

The balance of your royalties is absorbed by the publisher for their services, leaving about \$.50 a book for you. If you have a topic that shakes the world, an advance payment may be offered by the publisher. Advances are the only way authors make any money writing hardbound books. The cycle from publisher to market is about one year. Use *Writer's Market* to find the right publisher.

The secret to making money as an author is to write a lot of best-seller books. Each time your book hits the best-seller list a higher advance is usually in the offering. It only takes 100,000 copies sold to make that list.

5. **Option 2: Use the Vanity Press.** If it is important to see your work hardbound (vs. eBook) it might be wise to

consider a vanity press. You pay the publisher to print a limited amount of books. It would be up to you to sell your book to the bookstores, get reviews for publicity, and all the rest of the work usually done by publishers. You can hire someone to do this for you. The upside is all the royalties are yours.

### **5 STEPS TO WRITING AND PUBLISHING AN EBOOK**

1. **Write the content.** Use short sentences and short paragraphs. Write to the 5th-grade level. Save as Word 2003. When the content is finished, save the file as HTML Filtered. If you need help with punctuation or grammar, search the Internet for a professional editor, or give it to a friend to read.

2. **Convert to the correct format for eBook Stores.** Install the free conversion software **Calibre** (<http://calibre-ebook.com>). Using Calibre, convert your HTML file to Mobi (for Amazon) and ePub (for B&N and everyone else).

3. **Review the content.** Install the free software, **Kindle Previewer** (from <http://kdp.amazon.com>), so you can review your book as it looks on the Kindle eReader. Install **Sigil** (<http://code.google.com/p/sigil/>) to review your ePub content as it looks on the Nook.

4. **Create the cover.** If you need help, search the Internet for a professional artist. Do not publish without a cover if you actually want to sell your book.

5. **Put your book on sale.** Upload the completed eBook and cover to the major eBook Stores. I recommend *Amazon* ([kdp.amazon.com](http://kdp.amazon.com)) and *Barnes and Noble* ([bn.com/pubit](http://bn.com/pubit)). No ISBN necessary, no Digital encryption, no review by a peer group, no critics of any kind; just upload and your book is on sale to the general public.

*This is an excerpt from my new eBook "Writing & Publishing eBooks, One Person's Journey," available from Amazon.com and BarnesAndNoble.com. Also available on my website in PDF format for the PC/Mac, [www.TheMaxwellGroup.net](http://www.TheMaxwellGroup.net)*

## ***Talk Up Your Book***

***How to Sell Your Book Through Public Speaking***, Clark, bestselling novelist, Margaret Brownley and others.

Do your readers a favor and review this book. I wrote it for your audience. It is designed to help them locate and create speaking opportunities, give better presentations and become more effective communicators on behalf of their books at book festivals, signings and so forth. Authors will learn how to land speaking gigs at prestigious conferences related to the topic or genre of their books and even how to get paid to speak on topics related to their expertise.

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### **Writers' Conferences 2013**

Our Purpose is to Help You Be Successful as an Author. We encourage you as a new or experienced author to attend writer's conferences. These conferences will help to bring your writing to a new level and provide an opportunity for you to interact with professionals. You may even have the opportunity to have your work critiqued. Please visit the conference specific web references to find the most up-to-date information and plan ahead when attending.

April 2013

<http://www.bowkermanuscriptsubmissions.com/author/writers-conferences.php>

### **The Get Lit! Literary Festival**

(April 8-14; Cheney, WA)  
Eastern Washington University

### **Ohio University's Spring Literary Festival**

(April 10-12; Athens, OH)  
Ohio University/University of Wisconsin-Madison

Austin International Poetry Festival  
(April)

***Interviews, Signings, Festivals, Conferences and More.***

By Patricia Fry

You'll notice when reading this book that it has the support and several quotes from two dozen experts and professionals in the area of book promotion, Internet promotion, public speaking and communication. Contributors include, Brian Jud, Peter Bowerman, Sandra Beckwith, and C. Hope.

### **Ode to the Spell Check**

Eye halve a spelling chequer

It cam with my pea sea

It plainly marques four my revue

Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word

And weight four it two say

Weather eye am wrong oar write

It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid

It nose bee fore two long

And eye can put the error rite

Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it

I am shore your pleased two no

Its letter perfect awl the weigh

My chequer tolled me sew!

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## FINDING IDEAS

By Delbert Ashby  
SKP#67666)



Finding ideas for subjects on which to write is often a stumbling

block for getting started with a writing project. Here are several ideas and guidelines for finding the right place for you to be on this matter.

First, we need to determine a few things about you, the author. What is your purpose in writing? I am going to assume that economic gain or “fame” or both enter into your equation. If this is the case, I suggest you try the following ideas. If not, another strategy is appropriate.

Look back at your past and identify your areas of at least moderate experience and jot down a list. A second list should consist of areas of special interest or things about which you are passionate.

With this information as a basis, you will need to go do some research. Your objective in this research

is to further stimulate your thinking and to determine if others are also interested in the same subjects you are. It might be a big shock but a lot of books and other materials are written based on the excitement of the author only to find that nobody else cares. Their works are never read by many, if any, other people.

If you write solely for personal pleasure, then this research may not matter. Otherwise, research is vital to your success.

For research, there are several online resources for your use. These can help you find further ideas within a general interest category, whatever your interest area might be.

Based on your list from the previous paragraph, go to Google.com and search for the type of subject category in question. I will use “how to” writing as a basis for this discussion but the concept works for any area of interest you may have. Let’s use “Dating” as a general area of interest. Then let’s get more specialized. We could look at dating for

seniors, dating for divorced people, dating for divorced seniors and so on. How about dating for RVers?! You can take any subject and explore it in a similar fashion always digging down to more specialized interests.

As those new ideas appear, make good lists for reference as you proceed. Using this strategy should help you find, focus on, and decide viability for your hot-button subject.

When you have honed in on a prospective subject area, Google.com provides a way for you to determine how many people do searches each month for your specific area of interest. It is called “Google keyword tool” and is free to use. When you have this information, you will have market data on how many prospective readers exist. We may come back to these results later for additional kinds of information about them.

Another source of information on your proposed areas of interest can be found by going to Amazon. You can search through their books by category and by level of

interest/sales. You can even read some sample pages of their books and e-books. Lots of other data is shown there including page count and maybe even a look at the index or table of contents.

Dummies Books are also a good resource to stimulate ideas, do market research and look at content and structure used by other writers on the same topic. Search at dummies.com.

If there are a few magazines written on a given subject that is a good sign that there is a level of interest. Try Magazines.com as a resource or go peruse your magazine rack at the

pharmacy or bookstore. Speaking of bookstores, they can be a great resource either online or in a brick and mortar store.

A separate resource to be used in a similar way is Clickbank.com. They sell large amounts of digital and written materials and have for years. Like Amazon and most of the other online resources, you can search them using a number of different criteria such as popularity, sales volume, competitive products available and more. As an aside, if there is no competition, there is no interest and you should avoid that subject area like the plague.

When you go to clickbank.com, you will want to find a tab on their home page labeled marketplace. Select that and you can start searching by category and then within the selected category, search by various other criteria. Most are self-explanatory but you need to know that “gravity” means how well it is selling.

Try this approach to stimulate your ideas and to do so knowing that there is a bona fide interest by others in your subject matter.  
(Copyright 2013 Delbert M. Ashby.)

**BRAGGING RIGHTS** Found in *Escapees* magazine Jan/Feb/13

**Lynne Benjamin**, “Cotton Fields near RoVers Roost,” page 83

**Betty Mulcahy**, “New Life for an Old RV,” page 58

**Pete Gray**, “How to Conduct a Business Meeting,” page 30

Photo of fishing boats at Cape Breton Island, page 76

**Jaimie Bruzenak** was asked by Good Sam Media and Events to give presentations on the RV lifestyle at five RV shows put on by Good Sam. She gives a Power Point presentation and can sell books. Even better, she will be paid.



**Helen Taylor  
SKP#295 Helen  
does Printing and  
Mailing for  
Penwheels  
Newsletter.**

I've been an Escapee  
now for over 30

years, with our number "that we are very proud of." Escapees is a truly neat organization, and we truly love meeting lots of new people, even though we are now no longer "on the road," but happily settled here at North Ranch. Happy to see you if you show up at NR and look us up.  
htaylor295@gmail.com

From Helen Taylor:

Today in my mailbox was a short letter from earlier Penwheels member Verna Oxford #1921, that I'm sharing verbatim here.

"Donations to Care are a great suggestion. Do keep a small amount - I suspect postage may go up again. I'm now 90 years old, and I can tell it. I'm not ill, just old."

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**PENWHEELS HISTORIAN  
Doris Hutchins, SKP #29167**

**Verna Oxford** SKP#1921 was one of four early members who had over twenty years in Escapees, and is a prolific writer. She contributed many short stories to the early newsletters. I found her address and got in touch with her and she responded with three of her earliest offerings.

**THE MUSIC LOVERS**

By Verna Oxford SKP# 1921

We walked through the lush grassy park area to where it sloped gently all the way

down to the river. Each was hugging a blanket, towel or pillow to sit on. Not far down the slope we spread our seating accommodations. Already we were in competition with others vying for a choice location for the concert. At the bottom of this broad, natural, amphitheater, a floating stage was anchored in the river snug up to the bank. In only a few minutes most of the hillside was obliterated and became a visible sea of heads. The natural slope provided a chose view of the stage. Some of the tuxedoed orchestra members were already in place, practicing runs and trills, producing a total hodgepodge of sounds punctuated now and then by the lower sounds of the bassoons on the high pitch of the piccolos. The daylight was now fading fast and some of the stage illumination came on. We visited and shifted on our pillows, looking forward to the leading number," Dance of the Flowers." All of the audience at this FREE concert gave full attention to the melodious sounds reaching their ears as the superb orchestra progressed through the program. The last piece ended on a crescendo and a vigorous timpani roll. Amid applause and a surge of those in a rush to get to one of the buses first, we arose and folded our blankets. As usual, we were reluctant to leave this pleasant hill and the sounds so pleasing to our ears. We knew the floating stage would soon be towed under the Memorial Bridge and to its sheltered winter berth. However, we could look forward to the next season with its free operas, operettas and concerts, for then the floating stage would be towed back to the area, which had served as the water entrance to the city for several centuries. You, too, know of the site. *This Watergate to the city, now occupied by a gigantic apartment building in our Nation's Capital.*

**PENWHEELS BOF  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2012**  
Submitted by **JOANNE ALEXAKIS,**  
**MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR SKP#19367,**

January 1, 2013

Balance January 1, 2012	\$1,011.92
Income Jan 1 - Dec 31	192.00
Expenses Jan 1 - Dec 31 (photocopying newsletters, postage)	(161.96)

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Balance December 31, 2012	\$1,041.96
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Number of members on Jan. 1, 2012 - 52

Number of members on Dec 31 2012 - 51

Check Presented to CARE Jan 24, 2013

A \$500.00 donation was sent to Escapees CARE Center. Linda Stewart, Administrative Assistant, confirmed receipt of our donation and thanked us.

February 2013, Linda Stewart from CARE called me and asked if PENWHEELS had made a prior donation, so she could keep our record complete.

I checked our bank statements and found a donation on April 25, 2001. This was documented in the spring 2001 issue of the PENWHEELS newsletter (page 2). This is our second donation to CARE.

Check Presented to CARE April 25, 2001

Carol Mumma and Ann Rose', representing the PENWHEELS BOF, gave a check for \$200 to new CARE Director Debra Williams in the CARE Center garden on April 25, 2001. Adelia Bracken, CARE

Board member, and staff members Sue Coward and Sharon Hall also attended the ceremony. Williams expressed her thanks for the BOF's support of CARE and she will use the donation for visual aids and audio tapes for sight-impaired participants.

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## Contributors to Newsletter

Joanne Alexakis, Jaimie Bruzenak,, Doris Hutchins, Lynne Benjamin, Verna Oxford, Helen Taylor, Betty Mulcahy, Pete Gray, Delbert Ashby, Margo

Armstrong, Donna Gates Smeall, Marie von Minden, Jane Foraker-Thompson, Cheryl Keeffe, Bob Brawley, Robert Malain, James Browne, Bernie Fuller

## **FORMER PENWHEELS NEWSLETTER EDITOR FOR FIVE YEARS!**

**L**ynne Benjamin SKP#86190

When I first wrote *Jacob's Tails* my biggest challenge was to find a way to publish it. Over and over again, I got the message that publishers were not willing to take on new authors. They wanted either "*already published authors*" or authors represented by an agent. An agent?? I didn't even know that there was such a thing as a *Literary Agent*. So I set out searching for an agent. At that time, there were nine agents in all of Canada and they were not taking new clients. Again the old adage, *they won't represent you unless you have been published and publishers will not consider you unless you have an agent.*

Not only were there no publishers available, distributors and book stores were VERY reluctant to consider a book that was self-published. The barriers to publishing grew daily.

From what I see and hear, self-publishing has become not only an acceptable means of publishing, but very popular in both hard copy and E-Book formats. Not only did E. L. James self-publish her '*50 Shades of Grey*', she published it as an E-Book even before it was picked up by a publisher. '*50 Shades of Grey*' soon topped the *New York Times Best Seller List* and was named a best seller in the U.K. She subsequently was named "*PW's Publishing Person of the Year.*"

The first *break-through* came to me via Jaimie who recommended the Yahoo *Self-Publishing* Group. Oh, my – that led me to more and more information and eventually the concept of self-publishing entered my realm of possibility. And then I did it! First I self-published then developed the e-book.

To me, the most difficult thing has been marketing *Jacob's Tails*. I don't think it matters whether your book is published by a commercial publishing house, yourself, or an e-publisher, the responsibility for market (or selling) the book lies almost entirely on your shoulders.

It has been a remarkable experience! I am no longer selling the hard copy (I only have two copies left) but carry a copy with me in my travels and refer people to the eBook through Smash words or through Barnes & Noble.

In the meantime, I continue to write articles for a number of RV magazines including a travelling [Snow birding 101 column](#) for RV West E-Magazine and I am doing the travelling and writing that I love.

### **SOME IDEAS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

BY JAIMIE HALL BRUZENAK SKP#19361

Helpful apps or websites,  
 A technical aspect of writing and publishing.  
 The story of how you became a writer. How you got published.  
 A book on writing or creativity- your report.  
 Journaling –aids, how it has helped you in your  
 life as a writer. People or authors who have inspired you.

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**Birds of a Feather (BOF)**

*A group of 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 RV writers for sharing information, discussion, critiques, and socializing in person, snail and email.*

*Penwheels is published 4 times a year. Subscription is \$8.00(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. (1-888-757-2582)*

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