



# Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not  
Tribute Edition: Summer, 2012

## TRIBUTE TO ALICE



*Alice Zyetz* was the first RV writer I met. We had been on the road for a few years and had joined *Escapees* the year before, but this was our first *Escapade*.

*Jacob's Tails* was but a synapse in my mind and we talked about it. Alice suggested that I might find the support I needed from the *Penwheels* BoF and I joined right there and then. I don't think Alice knew it, but she was a VERY important piece in what my life has become.

I spent years trying to convince Fred to visit Jojoba Hills so I could go to their Writers' Group and visit with Alice. Well, I was only half successful. When we were at Indio last year, we did manage to take a dry run over to Jojoba Hills. We ended up travelling through the hills and both of us were thankful we had the car. Great trip, beautiful country but not our idea of a road for the Motorhome.

We had lunch with Alice and learned that there was a better way but we never did make it back.

This *Newsletter* is devoted to Alice and includes our *Memories of and Tribute to* a very special woman.

*Lynne Benjamin*

### **This issue:**

- Tributes to Alice
- What's Gone On between Then and Now
- Contributions
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- Contributors

## **Tributes to Alice**

Alice left us on May 20, 2012. The Los Angeles Time obituary link is  
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/latimes/obituary.aspx?n=alice-zyetz&pid=157868682>

You can also sign the guest book there.

### **Contributed by Joanne Alexakis**

Thanksgiving 1994, I met Alice Zyetz at a SKP Boomers BoF get-together in Pena Blanca AZ. Alice was ready to befriend and willing to share her knowledge and expertise. She lead us in ten-minute writing exercises - each sharing our compositions - and a delightful new world was opened up to us. Her friendly attitude and helpful advice have been part of my life ever since. We worked on the Penwheels BoF membership. I emailed her often, relying on her super-sharp smarts and keen style to problem-solve - she was so perceptive. It is so sad to lose her. Adieu & adios Alice

### **Remembering Alice – Contributed by Barbara Bower, SKP #77439**

One of the amazing parts of this lifestyle is how many people become inspirations, and even mentors, without ever meeting. Alice Zyetz was one of those people for me. The writing prompts she posted at the Penwheels site, as well as some that she emailed me, have grown into stories that reveal a side of me that I did not know I had.

Alice, often with Jaimie, wrote books and blogs that showed RVers (especially women) that this lifestyle could be achieved. As an Escapee and a writer, she was a role model. Her voice will be missed by all who knew her, even those of us who never met her.

### **Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak**

Alice was an RV friend for 20 years. We first met in 1993. She started writing exercises at Pena Blanca that spread over the years. It is because of her prodding that I crossed the psychological barrier of writing for pay. She helped edit my book *Support* and then we teamed up to write *RV Traveling Tales* and 3 more ebooks. She was so much more than that, though. She was caring, compassionate, she sang at George's and my wedding and at sing-a-longs. She traveled on her own and encouraged other women to do so. I will miss her.

For a page posted about Alice with photos, see <http://www.rvlifestyleexperts.com/media-room/alice-zyetz-award-winning-rv-author/>

### **Contributed by Doris Hutchins**

I was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Alice Zyetz. She was a wonderful person and will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

She did a fantastic job volunteering her expertise at Jojoba Hills Writing Group. I saw her just six weeks ago at Jojoba. I had attended many sessions and found her a great help in the learning process of writing

She also was the website moderator for many years and helped many new and old members. We will miss her.

In sympathy, Doris Hutchins

### **Contributed by Darlene Miller**

One of the first times that I met Alice was at an Elk's work camp. She sang old songs with her husband Chuck and myself.

Alice Zyetz was a person that had a gentle way of helping me to write better prose. She was so encouraging. Alice edited my two RV books, sold books with me at a RV Writer's Cooperative at Escapades and even at Paul's Reader's Oasis in Quartzsite. I attended a writing class that she organized at Jojoba Hills and at the Boomer's writing group in Quartzsite. She always answered my emails as we discussed writing and editing. Her work with Penwheels continued for many, many years. All the writers at Penwheels will miss her greatly.

I miss her too. Alice would agree with me when I say she was a good friend.

**ALICE – Contributed by Betty Prange**

She was warm, loving and made me feel pampered in her presence. She could ignite my writing fire. In our twenty-year friendship we talked, laughed, cried, wrote, explored, 4-wheeled, sang, shared books, cooked, and ate.

She knew the words and chords to my favorite folk songs. She encouraged everyone, regardless of musical ability, to raise their voices, clap, and join in. She was like that about writing too; everyone should take pen to paper and let their creative ideas flow.

She was "really" special. Sorry, Alice, I couldn't help it. That word was an editing joke for us. Alice was a special friend. She is inexorably linked to my sense of full-timing-Boomers-Penwheels.

We met in 1993, met up in dozens of places; she inspired me to write and pushed me when I procrastinated.

I saw her March of this year and had a great visit....writers' group, a wine tasting, meals out, meals at our rigs, a political meeting, meditation group, a Zen drawing exercise, and, lots and lots of talking. Also watched the video of Jojoba's production of Gypsy Rose Lee....in which Alice was the star. Great performance – the part could have been written for her!



These photos were taken  
April 2011



**Contributed by Myra Jean Winniford**

I met Alice at Jojoba Hills and enjoyed the Penwheels group very much. The writing we did in the few meetings I attended gave me the confidence to send a journal to my friends. I continued to send the journal until my traveling changed from seeing famous sites to going to campouts with singles. Each journal included a few pictures and my impressions of whatever site I had visited.

She is the one who always made sure there was someone to do the Penwheels meeting at the Escapade. The last two years I helped with the meeting. Two years ago, Alice asked me to host the Penwheels meeting at the Escapade. This meeting is very important as it brings in a handful of new members. Last year I helped Barbara when she hosted the meeting. This summer I'm not traveling at all. I hope someone will step forward to host the meeting. I'm very sad at Alice's passing. I was hoping to see her again.

**From the Yahoo Forum**

**Contributed by Betty Prange**

Alice was one of the first people I got to know in the RVing lifestyle, meeting at an Escapade shortly before Lin and I hit the road. We met up with her regularly after that at Boomerangs. I was in the first of the many writers sessions she instigated. She encouraged me, cajoled, even nagged, in her warm, caring form, to get busy and write. She was there for me when my husband had cancer and in those hard transitional times after he died. She just edited a story for me....one which only hours before I got the news about Alice, I heard would be in the next Escapades Mag. When she and Jaimie were getting started on RV TRAVELING TALES, she told me they expected a contribution. I am a procrastinator and couldn't think of any story to tell. Then we were together one day and I was relating an incident I had just experienced and Alice says, "that's it." I looked at her, and she said, "There's your article."

"But," I said, "That isn't enough for a story."

And she replied, "no, but it is a perfect opening." She was right, and I sat down and wrote the story about adjusting to being on the road as a solo. Later she and Jaimie later came back and said they wanted a second piece, a place in the heart piece. I procrastinated. Again, right up against the deadline, Alice left me a message asking where my contribution was (she had to have been a great teacher!) And it hit me...not the place as much as the experience, which was that first writers group session. I wrote it and sent it. I still remember taking it to a post office in Gardiner, Nevada, and sending it by priority mail.

When she wasn't traveling as much, I would stop at Jojoba to visit. I always joined her for the writers group in the park. I was there this spring and we had several great days together.

I am going to miss her terribly.

**Contributed by Lynne Benjamin**

OMG - I just can't express my feelings! Penwheels and Alice have always been inseparable and synonymous.

It's been a pooppy spring filled with death and sickness of friends - this just crowns it as the worst.

Yes, I am angry! I can accept my aging but I have a difficult time accepting my friends getting older and leaving me.

**Contributed by Ed Greenberg**

I am exceedingly sorry to hear this. My condolences to all concerned.

**Contributed by Betty Mulcahy**

I'm SO sorry to hear that Alice passed away. What a loss to friends, family, and the writing community. My condolences also go to her friends and family.

**New Members:**  
Bob Brawley SKP#55491  
**Welcome, Bob!**

## What's Gone on between Then and Now

### Writing Groups

#### **Jojoba Writer's Group - Our Last Contribution from Alice**

As I've mentioned before, we write 10-minute pieces in response to various prompts; written, visuals, 3-dimensional. Penwheels member Betty Prange asked us to send postcards to her boyfriend's father on his 90th birthday. We enjoyed doing that and, of course, wrote a variety of messages. One of our members, originally from New Orleans, wrote that she remembered him from that smoky dive in the French Quarter. Did he remember her as well?

We're dark for the summer while many Jojobians travel. Join us when we start up again in mid-October, Wednesdays from 10:30 am - 12:30 pm.

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

Many members of the Writers Group at Fun N Sun have gone north for the summer. One of them, Sharon, wrote to say her writers group from past years had folded and she had joined another group. At her first meeting, members who did not write that week put a quarter in the kitty. Then, when it came time to select what they called "the newspaper story of the week," Sharon's story "Making Orange Marmalade" was chosen and submitted to the local paper.

After hearing that, we sent a story to the *San Benito News*. That same week it was featured on page three with a bigger-than-life headline -- **Maila's Topic: My Favorite Vehicle** -- along with a photo of Maila and her husband on their Honda Gold Wing. The article began with an editor's note explaining that each week we choose a different topic to write about.

We believe local papers are glad to publish unsolicited stories. In turn, even though we are giving them our work, we are glad to publicize our group and what its members can do.

## Contributions

### Poetry

#### **HAIKU by Betty Prange**

Recently I asked Penwheel members to write a postcard honoring a ninetieth birthday. I suggested this was a chance for a short literary endeavor, one of which might be haiku.

Lynne asked me to follow up with a description of haiku. I am no expert, but here are a few things I learned in researching this subject.

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Matsuo Basho is credited with introducing this highly structured, short expression which creatively links images. Traditionally, haiku contains a word linked to a season, seventeen sound units, and a juxtaposition. The seventeen sounds, in English, were originally taken to mean a line of five syllables (regardless of the number of words), a line of seven syllables, and a line of five syllables. Today, there is greater flexibility in the number of syllables per line, some sticking to the idea of a total of seventeen, some just using the other structures of haiku to create these

masterful little thoughts. Haiku is written in the present tense, is minimalist in its description, but evokes feeling and a greater awareness in the reader.

One line, usually the first or last, creates a break with the others. This may utilize a form of punctuation, but definitely a shifting in thought. Two lines might set an image and one line connects to an emotion or an association creating a new understanding. The juxtaposition may create something similar to a metaphor, yet metaphors are never used in haiku. Similes and metaphors, used frequently in literature and English poetry, are not used in haiku. In Japanese, there is a concept called, "kirieji" (cutting word) which accents the juxtaposition.

The best way to get an idea of haiku is to read a selection. There are several sites on the internet.

Here is what Wikipedia calls, "the best known Japanese haiku." This was written by Basho. This is a translation. The Japanese form includes 17 syllables; the English translation does not. It does give a feel for the sense of style.

*Old pond....  
a frog leaps in  
waters sound.*

And while I am a novice at haiku, here are several I wrote for Theron's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and put on postcards. I remembered the old 5\7\5 rule from years ago and followed it with only minor exception. Later I read that more flexibility is allowed now.

*My RV travels  
down the road, across state lines;  
postcards everywhere.*

*She said, "write haiku."  
I research, ponder and think.  
Here's Theron's haiku.*

*Hundreds of postcards  
circumnavigating the globe...  
Theron's ninetieth*

*Balloon, cake and songs  
We celebrate a birthday...  
Theron is ninety.*

*May 8, 1912  
An adventure commences  
Theron Nelson lives.*

*Hope your birthday dawns  
gloriously beautiful  
Portending a decade more.*

*Decorated Vet  
Father, citizen, and friend  
A living legacy.*

*This year is ninety  
another card comes at one hundred  
Enjoy your birthday.*

Hope other penwheels had some fun with this and will share their haiku in the newsletter.

### **Haiku verses for Betty Prange's postcard campaign – Contributed by Joanne Alexakis**

*Ninety years of youth  
May you enjoy ninety more  
A fine life is yours.*

*A man on Sweet Drive  
Enjoys a breath of fresh air  
'Ninety-Nelson' lives!*

*Greetings from SoCal  
Birthday wishes sent your way  
Celebrate ninety!*

*Mister Nelson smiles  
He celebrates with son, Chris,  
And charming Betty.*

## Poetry Resource – Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

Arizona Press Women in my area had a poetry workshop in April. Carrie Backe, the instructor, has won the Arizona Senior Poet Laureate competition for several years and other contests. Here are a few notes.

1. Her poems are a snapshot of her life. She has a notebook of ideas. Be sure to date them.
2. She gets ideas everywhere: observing nature, obituaries, news items, events, seasons, anniversaries.
3. Advice: read a lot, write a lot and pay attention to what is going around you.
4. Keep a small notebook with you always to jot down ideas and enough notes so you can work from them later. She uses a small giveaway calendar you get from a business or the Dollar store.
5. You can sign up to get notices of poetry contests. <http://www.winningwriters.com>
6. More contests at <http://www.amykitchenerfdn.org/>
7. Avoid Poetry.com. There are scams! You will have to pay a small entry fee- a few dollars- but any more than that, avoid.
8. Other ways to share your poems: give to individuals—especially if it is about them or means something to them, submit to newspapers, your college journal, local contest, a local group, find publications that accept poetry, publish your own in a chapter book or booklet.

### **Submissions: *I don't mean to complain but . . .***

#### **I Do Not Mean to Complain, But... Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP #77439**

I do not mean to complain, but griping is a contagious disease. Folks would say that I am a positive person most of the time. However, if I spend enough time around negative people, I pick up those tendencies. After spending a few days around a certain relative, it takes me almost as many days to “detox” from the criticizing and infectious grumbling in which I have been immersed. Fortunately, my husband does not let me get away with that type of behavior; I am soon myself.

#### **Contributed by Judy Kallestad**

**I don't mean to complain but ...** finding our favorite foods while on the road is no picnic. Take coffee for example. I love to linger over a cup of flavored coffee in the morning—the instant, sugar-free, decaffeinated kind. But since leaving our home state of Minnesota last summer, I've searched in vain for my favorite brand in grocery aisles from Denver to Dallas.

Then there's bread. My husband prefers a specific whole grain bread that's advertised on his favorite radio station back home. Despite trying a variety of wannabes from Livingston to Los Angeles, he's yet to find anything comparable. And sure, margarine can be found anywhere in the country but not the cholesterol free, easily spreadable kind.

Restaurant food—same story. In the southern and western states, the fare is mostly spicy Cajun or fiery Mexican. As Midwest Scandinavians my husband and I were raised on a basic bland diet. Spicy to us means adding a few grains of salt and pepper to our food.

Fortunately, we've returned to Minnesota for the summer. And once again we're enjoying our sugar-free, decaffeinated, cholesterol free, spreadable, non-spicy Midwestern favorites until we hit the road again in the fall.

**I Don't Mean to Complain, but..... Contributed by Helen Taylor, SKP# 295**

Don't we all, at sometime or the other, just need to vent? I know I do, and hopefully I can know the "time and place" so I don't seem to be picking on any particular person or group.

Lately it just seems like I'm "venting" right to my computer what I can't bring myself to say to someone's face. I can type whatever I want, getting it all out of my system, but just make sure to never, never, hit the "send" key!

You just never know what the heck is going to get you down, and it's just not proper, polite, or smart, to chastise anyone or everyone, just because you got up on the wrong side of the bed. Am I right?

*Let Us Know About Your Current Publications*

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

**I've Been Published – Bragging Rights!**

- **Betty Prange, SKP# 22195** (and Chris)
  - ❖ *Cover, Escapees Magazine, May/June, 2012 issue, "Sometimes it all comes together for perfect stargazing*
- **Betty Mulcahy, SKP# 76334**
  - ❖ *Guest House Escapees Magazine, May/June, 2012 issue, page 29*
  - ❖ *Adopting an Older Pet, Escapees Magazine, May/June, 2012 issue, page 34*
- **Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361**
  - ❖ *Support Your RV Lifestyle! An Insider's Guide to Working on the Road, 3rd edition, won 1st place in non-fiction books in the "at large" contest for the National Federation of Press Women. This contest is for states in NFPW that don't have their own contest. My book and other state winners go onto the national contest. Support is also a finalist in the Career Non-fiction Book category for a Benjamin Franklin Award for 2012. Winners will be announced in June.*
  - ❖ *The Shadow of the Balloon, ViewFinder, Escapees Magazine, May/June, 2012 issue, page 48*
- **Lynne Benjamin, SKP# 86190**
  - ❖ *Snowbirding 101, RV West (E-Column)*  
[http://www.rvwest.com/journeys/rvtales/snowbirding\\_1011/](http://www.rvwest.com/journeys/rvtales/snowbirding_1011/)

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

Joanne Alexakis  
Margo Armstrong  
Lynne Benjamin  
Barbara Bower  
Ed Greenberg

Terry Hager  
Jaimie Hall Bruzenak  
Darlene Miller  
Betty Mulcahy  
Marianna Nelson

Betty Prange  
Helen Taylor

**What Would You Like To Do?**

We have a fairly substantial balance (\$1,011.92) in our bank account and need your input into how to spend 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: [penwheels@yahoo.com](mailto:penwheels@yahoo.com)

(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/penwheels/messages?o=1>)

***PW volunteer website moderator***

***From: Jo Alexakis***

***Penwheelers,***

***We are looking for a volunteer to moderate this Penwheels website.***

***Alice Zyetz took care of this website since day one of its origin and now sadly we have to replace her.***

***The duties include approving new members and uploading files - it doesn't entail a lot of work. Jaimie Hall Bruzenak is the back-up person for this site.***

***Please post your response on the website.***

***[penwheels@yahoo.com](mailto:penwheels@yahoo.com)***

***Thanks and SKP Hugs, Joanne Alexakis***

## 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:  
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

\* North Ranch Writers Group  
SKP North Ranch RV Resort  
Congress, AZ 85332-0039  
Helen Taylor [htaylor295@gmail.com](mailto:htaylor295@gmail.com)

### **Penwheels Volunteers**

**Editor:** Lynne Benjamin

### **Membership:**

Joanne Alexakis  
140 Rainbow Drive #4093  
Livingston TX 77399-1040  
[joannealex@earthlink.net](mailto:joannealex@earthlink.net)

### **Yahoo E-Forum:**

**Travelling Library:** Jaimie Bruzenak

**Printing & Mailing:** Helen Taylor

**Historian:** Doris Hutchins

## PENWHEELS

Beth Ramos  
900 Spring Park Street #303  
Celebration, FL 34747

**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**