



# Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not  
Winter, 2008

## MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

*Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!*

**Due to popular request, the 100-word contributions will again be part of the Penwheels Newsletter!**

It was time to solicit more ideas for the Newsletter from the group. We're really a bright bunch, aren't we? Two areas that got a lot of support were to:

- Re-establish the 100 word submissions to give writers an opportunity to see their work in print, and
- List the BLOG sites of our members.

And so we shall!

Starting in the **Spring, 2009** issue, one or two pages of the Newsletter will be devoted to 100-word submissions on the theme of the Newsletter. Don't kid yourself, reducing a piece of work to 100 words can be a real challenge, but I know we can all do it!!

We've started a **Members' Blog List** in this issue and will continue in each issue.

Writing can be quite an isolating experience and *Finding a Writing Buddy* can make all the difference in the world. The theme for this issue is *Finding a Writing Buddy*.

It seems like many of us have found it difficult to find a buddy – but are willing to buddy-up with others. *Penwheelers* became my *writing buddies* and I know that if it weren't for so many *buddies* in the group (Sam and Marianna and many others) 'Jacob's Tails' would never have left the document folder on my computer. So this is my opportunity to thank you all again.

As many of you pointed out we do draw on *Penwheels* for support and encouragement and others have been able to find Writers' Groups to help them along (See the Contributions section).

### Announcement from our Membership Volunteer – Joanne Alexakis

The Penwheels BOF newsletter is being offered on-line - paperless! You need to be registered on the Penwheels electronic bulletin board (PWBB) in order to receive this feature. The "on-line only" newsletter subscribers receive 6 issues of this newsletter (1 1/2 year's worth) as compared to only 4 issues (one year's worth) of the hard copy that is sent to you via snail mail. The cost is \$8.00 for either method of delivery.

To join the Penwheels bulletin board (PWBB) and get daily (almost) digests and access to the on-line PW newsletter, send a blank e-mail to: [penwheels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:penwheels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

Also please send an e-mail to our PWBB moderator, Alice Zyetz, ([youshoulda@aol.com](mailto:youshoulda@aol.com)) letting her know that you have subscribed, so she can inform Yahoo to accept your request. Please include your name and SKP# in this email.

As Helen Taylor said "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
- **Penwheelers at Quartzsite!**
- Contributions and Contributors
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- New Members and profiles
- BLOG List
- Resources
- Book Review
- The history of Penwheels BoF

**“100 Word Submission”**  
**for Next Issue:**

**‘Facing the Blank Page’**

**Is this a challenge for you?**  
**How do you overcome this challenge?**  
**Share the resources you have found?**

**100 words or less**

**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: March 1, 2009**

## What's Gone on between Then and Now

### *Writers' Groups News*

I attended the new Writers' Group at the Park of the Sierras in Coarsegold, Ca. This was actually the first Escapees Writers' Group I have ever attended and I was delighted to be able to join in. The challenge for this meeting was to Mind-Map descriptors of our pets and write for 10 minutes (more about Mind-mapping next Newsletter). Great Exercise! Thanks for letting me sit in with your group. – Lynne Benjamin

**Fun N Sun** – We have wonderful news: 350 copies of our book, *Fun N Sun Then N Now*, will be arriving this weekend from Lulu printing. If anyone is interested in information about undertaking a group book-writing venture and publishing it through Lulu contact me. – Marianna Nelson.

### **Penwheelers at Quartzsite!**

The Boomers gather on the east side of Quartzsite the last 2 weeks of January. Look for Jaimie Hall Bruzenak and Alice Zyetz to arrive around January 20th. Lynne Benjamin is already there! **(Look for a Class C towing a silver Saturn - Alberta licence plates around Hi Jolly or La Posa North – BLM Visitors Areas)** Lynne is doing Book Signings at the Quartzsite Public Library and Readers' Oasis Books.

Once the Boomer Rally is settled, look for a notice of a Penwheels meeting – maybe at Sweet Darlene's?

## *Contributions*

### **Who Is Your Writing Buddy(ies)?**

Those who encourage – critique - keep us going!  
How did you find (or not find) your writing buddy?  
Are you a writing buddy for anyone else?  
That's what we mean by writing buddies - those who encourage - critique - keep us going!

### **Writing Buddies – Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP #77439**

Since my husband is also a writer, I thought he would be a good writing/editing buddy. This has not proven to be the case. He is very good for my ego because he rarely finds anything that he would change and seems to enjoy the pieces that I ask him to review. As there is only so much editing I can do on my own work (either in love with my creation or overly critical of it), I look for feedback from a second set of eyes. I desire constructive criticism to help my writing grow in quality, and while praise is more than welcome, I also need to know how it can be improved. I have attended one writer's group meeting at a local library, but found that while those present were kind enough to my submissions as a first-time attendee, they seemed to only find fault with the writing of those who attend on a regular basis. As someone who is just now beginning to open myself and my efforts up to the public, I was turned off by this. A balance of appreciation and analysis of my writing is what I seek. I plan to check out a monthly writer's group that meets at one of the bookstores. Perhaps, there, I will find my writing buddy.

### **Finding Writing Buddies – Contributed by Marianna Nelson**

My writing buddies and soul mates are in the Writers Group at Fun N Sun. Every Tuesday afternoon year round we read our stories to each other. At first we did more critiquing than we do now. I like to think that's because we've become better writers. Yesterday I read an unfinished fiction story I'll be submitting to a local publication. I had my character where I wanted him but I was getting stuck on how to lead him to a compelling climax and a surprise ending. I got some great ideas from the group and now am all fired up to finish the story. It was a good exercise for all of us.

### **How to Find a Writing Buddy – Contributed by Bess McBride**

Many of the major online writing groups have sections for finding critique partners, AKA writing buddies, though you might think them you're worse enemy when they've torn your manuscript apart. If you write romance, Romance Writers of America, [www.rwanational.org](http://www.rwanational.org). has many, many chapters throughout the United States, plus several online chapters, and most of those do have a critique partner connection service. Membership in the organization does cost though, which is really an important point. Writing is a solitary event. Writers need to find writing groups who match their interests. Most towns have writing groups. Check your local library. They know everything about books. Check your local bookstores to see if writing groups have a regular meeting there. Google, Google, Google... Keep in mind that while paying for a critique on your manuscript is an acceptable business, it can't really meet your needs for a "writing buddy" and there are many opportunities out there to find free partnering!

## Starting a Writing Group – A History of Penwheels - Contributed by Alice Zyetz

The first group happened very naturally 15 years ago at an Escapade. At that time, in my small 21.5-foot fifth wheel all my books were strapped securely on a shelf over the back window. A new friend, DeAnna White, saw Natalie Goldberg's book, *Writing Down the Bones*.

"Do you like Natalie too?" she asked.

"Yup."

"Why don't we do one of Natalie's writing practices sometime?"

The next time we were together, DeAnna invited three other new friends, Jaimie Hall (now Bruzenak), Betty Prange, and Judy Francis. The five of us picked some topics, wrote for ten minutes, and then shared. Thus the first group started.

The group has grown over the years and it is now traditional to have a Penwheels gathering at Escapade and do a writing practice. I also started a group at Jojoba Hills when I moved there five years ago. The best friends I have made on the road come from the sweet honesty of writing together. Follow Natalie's precepts and just write, don't think, be specific, and use your five senses to describe.

How to start:

- Buy Natalie's books, including *Bones*, *Wild Mind*, and any of her other writing books. She now has a great one on memoir writing.
- Invite people to come to your rig. Tell them it's a creativity session.
- Be supportive of each other. We are not a traditional critique group although you can always ask for feedback if you're planning to publish a piece.
- Devise your own story and word prompts. Write to me at [youshoulda@aol.com](mailto:youshoulda@aol.com) for a recent copy of one of ours.
- Use Internet creativity sites for more ideas. Here are three I like, but there are plenty more:  
Creative writing prompts <http://www.creativewritingprompts.com/>  
Dragon Writing Prompts <http://dragonwritingprompts.blogspot.com/>  
Interactive Plot Generator (bottom of home page) <http://writingfix.com/>
- Here are two good books that one of my Jojoba writers found:  
*The Writer's Block* by Jason Rebdak for word and situation prompts.  
*In the Beginning* collected by Hans Bauer for real first lines of books to use as story starters. Don't tell what book it came from until after everybody is finished.

Finally, be open to the laughter and tears, the creativity and camaraderie.

**Contributed by Frank Intano, SKP#100719**

...no writing buddies here in New York. I've looked and looked to no avail...as we used to say. I can be very encouraging to another writer or writers but so far they haven't appeared. So I keep a journal and talk to myself a lot. Frank

**Writing Buddies – Contributed by Beth Ramos**

All y'all [:)] and the writers group in Celebration, FL

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 something via snail mail send a SASE to Alice at: 45120 Hwy 79 S, #426 Aguanga, CA 92536 and she will send it to you.

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

Alice Zyetz  
Beth Ramos  
Marianna Nelson  
Darlene Miller  
Bess McBride

Patty Lonsbary  
Frank Intano  
Jaimie Bruzenak  
Barbara A. Bowers  
Lynne Benjamin

***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**

**Beth Ramos** SKP# 86268, "*Honorable Mention*" and "*Second Place*" at the Florida Writers Conference's Royal Palm Award Ceremony for submissions to the Unpublished Poetry Category

**Bess McBride**

- *A Trail of Love*, is due out in print on November 21, and available at all major online book stores such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble.
- *A Train Through Time*, is due out in print on November 28, and will be available at all major online book stores such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble.
- *Caribbean Dreams of Love*, will be released in e-book format on December 12th with print to follow in March

**Darlene Miller**, SKP# 50781, "*Alaska by Land and Sea*" issue of *Alaska Women Speak*, Fall, 2008 (pages 14 and 15) 5 photos plus a book review of *More RV Chuckles and Chuckholes - More Confessions of Happy Campers*

**Patty Lonsbary**, SKP 66556, *Budget Travel*, *Blogger on Board* an article by David LaHuta, Nov 2008 <http://budgettravel.com/bt-dyn/content/article/2008/10/09/AR2008100901749.html>

**Barbara Bowers**, SKP #77439, *Pointers on Rally Planning*, *Escapees Magazine*, January/February, 2009, "Departments" section. (page 61)

**Lynne Benjamin**, *Arizona – Always Something Different* and *Zion and Home*, *RV West E-Mag* - [www.rvwest.com/journeys/index\\_benjamin.php](http://www.rvwest.com/journeys/index_benjamin.php)

## *New Members and Profiles*

Dave Beckes - SKP#81875  
Frank Intano - SKP#100719

Patricia Lonsbary - SKP#66556  
Juanita Ruth One - SKP#93393.

### **Elaine Seavey**

I am a fairly new member of Penwheels. I did attend the Gypsy Journal rally last winter, 2007, in Casa Grande, AZ, and the spring, 2007 SKP Rally in Stockton, where I displayed my books at the Author's Co-op booth, and met some interesting fellow writers!

I have recently completed a five book series entitled the "**Maverick Series**": *Canadian Summers, Meanderings In The West, Southwest Adventures, Exploring The Southeast, and The Strait Years*. The books were published by Infinity Publishing Company in Conshohocken, Pa

### **Bess McBride - Hi y'all!**

I know some of you already from various writing venues. Kay Kennedy told me about the group. It's good to be here! Thanks for the welcome. For those of you who don't know me, I write romance novels (no, not that kind...) :-).

In the midst of a never-ending mid-life crisis, I left my job as a mental health therapist, started writing romance novels, sold my house, bought a fifth wheel and a truck, told my significant other that he needed neither money nor security (okay, I actually told him I was selling the house out from under him such that he agreed to come with me), and hit the road. I don't make a living from my writing, but I am retired military which helps take the edge of desperation...barely! :-)

For the last two summers, I've been working as a park ranger with the National Park system, and wintering on the Gulf Coast of Alabama while I write full time. So far, it's been a great life, albeit a little worrisome when it's time to buy gas or groceries... :-) I look forward to being in the group.

### **Dave Beckes, SKP#81875**

I am a new member and have paid my dues to Joanne Alexakis. My name is Dave Beckes; the picture is of my wife Connie and I. We have been retired for four years and in that time we have traveled extensively from Mexico to the Arctic Circle. Poco the Wonder dog and Harry the Pesky Cat round out our crew, full timing until last year when we bought a house in the Arizona desert twelve miles west of Surprise. I have written a story for Kay Kennedy's book "Looking Back, a History by those who have lived it." I also do a blog called "the Adventures of Dave and Connie," detailing our travels, trials and tribulations while rolling down life's highways. We met some members while at the Escapade in Gillette and look forward to learning from and getting to know more Penwheels.

### **Patricia Lonsbary, SKP#66556**

Currently, I am chronicling my 10,000 Mile Grand Tour of the US and Canada in our Prevost bus conversion "Dolly's Pride." Early entries 2006 -2007 address the plans and emotions of preparing to travel fulltime in our RV.

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

### **BLOG List**

#### **Lynne Benjamin**

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

#### **Jaimie Bruzenak & Alice Zyetz**

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

#### **Carolyn Harris.**

- <http://travelingnewzealand.blogspot.com/>
- <http://wednesdayswoman.livejournal.com/>

#### **Kay Kennedy**

- <http://boomersrememberhistory.blogspot.com>
- <http://portablewritingnewsletter.blogspot.com>
- <http://freelancewriter.booklocker.com>

#### **Patty Lonsbary**

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

#### **Bess McBride**

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

#### **Marianna and Bruce Nelson**

- <http://www.otr.studio221.net> - blog-type entries and lots of photos

#### **Elaine Seavey**

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

### **Book Review - Review of *Floor Sample: A Creative Memoir* by Julia Cameron – Contributed by Jaimie Bruzenak**

I loved *The Artist's Way*, following the 12-week program faithfully and writing three morning pages for a year straight. I also enjoyed Julia Cameron's writing immensely in *The Right to Write*, *Sound of Paper* and *Walking in This World*. I just finished her memoir, *Floor Sample*. I did not enjoy it in the same way, though I was amazed at her productivity and variety of writing considering her life.

From her first drink, Julia was an alcoholic. Right away she had blackouts. She thought that drinking was a part of writing, the career she wanted. She was married to director Martin Scorsese. That didn't last. She tells her struggles with overcoming addiction and mental problems with brutal honesty, raising her daughter, and moving back and forth across the country between Taos, Los Angeles and New York.

I wondered, as I read, how she could be so prolific and so multi-talented considering the problems she faced. She has written and published poetry, short stories, fiction and nonfiction. She also has three musicals, including the songs and music, to her credit even though she thought she had zero musical talent. What was most helpful to me personally was how she learned to listen to her inner guidance.

Alice Zyetz and I attended a seminar led by Julia Cameron on *The Artist's Way* in Sedona, Arizona. We howled with laughter as she described her various personas and were re-inspired to write.

I found this book-a hardback-on sale for \$6.99-and bought it because I loved her other books. It was worth reading, though, in retrospect, I wouldn't have paid full price.

See if you can find it in paperback or borrow a copy from the library.

## **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

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