



# Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not  
Winter, 2009

## **MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:**

*"It is impossible to discourage the real writers –  
they don't give a damn what you say, they're going to write."  
~ Sinclair Lewis*

By the time this newsletter is out, we will have been on the road for going on three months and what a time it has been. We revisited Zion National Park (my most favourite NP in the USA) and Death Valley and we've stayed at three more Escapees Parks.

October found Penwheelers questioning *what Penwheels has meant to them* and searching for ways to expand our membership and get new ideas. I have included some of the on-line contributions made by our members. We need your input or, at least, let us know what your writing interests are.

Beth found a survey that explores our writing goals. I have included the survey questions for those who would like to contribute their answers for the next newsletter. We really do want to hear from you. You can send hardcopy contributions to Joanne at **Joanne Alexakis, 140 Rainbow Drive #4093, Livingston TX 77399-1040** and she will make sure they get to me.

Leading up to November, the forum focussed on the NaNoWriMo. It's a perfect opportunity to write a rough draft – to get SOMETHING down on paper (or computer). *I certainly admire the resourcefulness and stick-to-it-tivity of all those who entered the contest. Congratulations!*

Please let me know what direction you would the Newsletter to take.

***Thanks and Enjoy!***

***Lynne Benjamin***

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

**BTW – if there is no SKP # it's because you didn't attach one!**

### **This issue:**

- Goals Survey
- Wanted
- NaNoWriMo
- What Penwheels Has Meant to Me
- "100 Word Submissions"
- Contributions and Contributors
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- Penwheels History
- New Members and profiles
- BLOG List
- Reviews
- Resources

### **"100-Word Submission" for Spring Issue:**

#### **Beth's Writing Survey**

(See below)

#### **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, 2010**

**Announcement from our Membership Volunteer – Joanne Alexakis**

**The Penwheels BOF newsletter is offered on-line – paperless as well as hardcopy!**

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.

**Renewing your Penwheels BoF newsletter subscription is easy!**

**Hard-copies** - Expiration date is noted on your mailing label – Please send an \$8.00 check made out to **Penwheels** to: Joanne Alexakis, 140 Rainbow Dr. #4093, Livingston TX 77399.

**On-line subscribers** - receive on-line notification of their subscription expiration (if their email addresses are up-to-date).

**The cost is \$8.00 for either method of delivery.**

**Goals Survey**

*(If you share your goals with someone else, you are more likely to peruse and achieve them)*

1. What is the one writing goal you most DESIRE?
2. What is the DUE-DATE for your goal?
3. What are OBSTACLES to achieving your goal?
4. What SKILLS do you need to overcome the obstacles?
5. How will you ACQUIRE them?
6. What ASSISTANCE do you need?
7. After answering the questions above - what is your first activity and its due-date?

**Wanted**

Is anyone else writing poetry or wishing they could/would?  
Do you want to start a sub-group where we can share/critique etc.?  
Contact Beth Ramos ([bethramos@earthlink.net](mailto:bethramos@earthlink.net))

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

**NaNoWriMo**

For those of you who don't know what NaNoWriMo is: NaNoWriMo stands for the National Novel Writing Month. Beginning November first, you write 50,000 words (only 1,667/day). You are to write, not edit.

## **Accomplishments**

### **Barbara Bowers**

NaNoWriMo word count: 21,150 (Although I did not reach the 50,000 words needed to win NaNo, the challenge got my mind, pen, and keyboard moving again. It was the motivation I needed to get back to writing every day.)

### **Eva Knapp**

I, too, started NaNoWriMo and then lost a few days. To date I have about 12500 words. I must get back at it.

The novel isn't much-I have two characters who are in search of a novel-and they interact with the writer.

I think I will finish 50,000 words by the end of the month.

### **George Bruzenak**

I "won" the NaNoWriMo with 50K+ words written. That was entitled "Pennies" and was supposed to be a murder/suspense/mystery novel. With three men, two women, money, sex, murder . . . what could go wrong? In a word, everything. It was the hardest 30 days of writing I've ever done and the resulting prose will never see the light of day. The one good thing that happened during the month was that I kept getting the glimmer of an idea for a Sci-Fi novel.

## **Contributions**

### **What does Penwheels mean to me?**

#### **Contributed by Alice Zyetz**

I joined about 15 years ago. At the time, except for one piece, I had never had anything published. Thanks to the people I met through the bb, I built a small cluster of writing friends. We wrote together, encouraged each other, and edited each other's work. We all became published authors. Thanks, Penwheels. Alice

#### **Contributed by Marianna Nelson**

1) I think it's exciting to read the emails that fly back and forth, especially after members introduce themselves, tell about their writing lives, have questions, or need advice (and so on). I feel I know these interesting people even though I have never met them.

2) The notices are posted on the Bulletin Board, but I prefer to have them come to me as emails. Using the bulletin board is a good idea for people on the road.

3) The information in the postings is invaluable and I often share it with members of the Writers Group at Fun N Sun.

4) We haven't traveled in our motor home for over a year, and we discussed whether to continue our Escapees membership. I was reluctant to do that because of Penwheels. Then I found out that Escapees has a limited membership that would still allow us to be in BOF groups. That may be the solution.

**Contributed by Barbara Bowers**

Penwheels has been a source of encouragement for me since the meeting in Gillette last year. Although I had already been published in one of Kay Kennedy's books, I am not sure I would have had the courage to submit a piece to Escapees magazine if it had not been for the supportive words I received at that BoF meeting.

**Contributed by Lynne Benjamin**

What's the expression – let me count the ways!!

If it wasn't for the support from the members (and Sam, in particular who told me 'Jacob's Tails' read like a report - and I agree with him) and suggestions (I remember Jaimie directed me to the Self-publishing Yahoo forum) the book would have never left the computer and certainly would have never published.

Retiring was a big, scary thing for me. I was so afraid I would get bored and wouldn't find something to do that would challenge me. Thank you Penwheels - did I ever tell you that editing the Newsletter is definitely a challenge but a worthwhile one?!

What a wonderful way to meet others who have like interests. And the camaraderie - it can't be matched!!

**Contributed by Joanne Alexakis SKP#19367**

I think that I would not have written anything beyond postcards home to my family and grocery lists if not for the encouragement of my fellow Penwheelers. I am grateful for their support and inspiration. Many of you have brought ideas to my plate so I can continue to scribble. I appreciate all of you for sharing your motivation and stimulation – thank you.

I also enjoy being part of Penwheels in my volunteer 'membership coordinator' position. Having contact with PW members makes my day.

***Why Are You Not Writing  
- "100 Word Submissions"***

***"Why are you not writing?"***

**Contributed by Joan N. Pomeroy SKP#75145**

October is the time of the year I start on the stress reduction plan for the Holidays. I address the Christmas cards and start to write the Christmas letter. Guess I am writing but not for publication.

Next comes the Christmas shopping, and wrapping of the gifts. This is easy if I start with the grandchildren who have their list ready by the middle of the summer.

I learned a long time ago, to reduce the stress leaves time to enjoy the sights, sounds, and smells of the Holidays.

**Contributed by Joanne Alexakis SKP#19367**

Like always, I have a million excuses. Right now, I'll settle for: I'm busy working 5 days a week.

**Contributed by Doris Hutchins**

In this beautiful, cool Alaskan summer of 2009, I wrote six short memoir stories, complete with appropriate pictures. I have been searching for good and historical memories to pass on to my grand children, and others. So far, I have written sixty four memoirs. Now, I find my remembrance is gradually starting to leave me due to advanced age. I am satisfied that most renditions are finished, because someday I may not be able to share my life stories of the good old days with future generations to look at, if they so desire.

**Contributed by B. Kaufmann**

The "shadow" side of the ego often shows up when I try to do something big or brilliant. I was going to write something about that but along the way I discovered something else about me and my writing... I do well when I am really inspired. I haven't felt really inspired in a long, long time. I had forgotten how good it feels in that space called "Inspiration." Wow, major aha!

**New Member**

Barry Peebles - SKP#84634 - [barrypeeb68@msn.com](mailto:barrypeeb68@msn.com)

Welcome Barry!

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

**Joanne Alexakis**

**Lynne Benjamin**

**Barbara A. Bowers**

**George Bruzenak**

**Jaimie Hall Bruzenak**

**Doris Hutchins**

**B. Kaufmann**

**Eva Knapp**

**Darlene Miller**

**Betty Mulcahy**

**Marianna Nelson**

**Joan Pomeroy**

**Helen Taylor**

**Sharon Vander Zyl**

**Alice Zyetz**

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Jaimie saw this in *Writers' Journal* (May/June 07). It was in Betty Garton Ulrich's "Words...Tools of our Trade" column titled "Brevity is the Soul of Wit - and Good Writing."  
All you really need to know about government and bureaucracy:

Phythagorean --- 24 words

Lord's Prayer --- 66 words

Archimedes' Principle --- 67 words

Ten Commandments --- 286 words

Declaration of Independence --- 1,300 words

U.S. Government regulations on the sale of cabbage --- 26,911 words

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

*Let Us Know About Your Current Publications*

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

**Lynne Benjamin**, SKP # 86190, *Snowbird Connections*, RV West, September, 2009.

**Barbara Bowers:** *When Life is Against You—Be Joyful*, Advent devotional, November 30, 2009

- *The Man and the Mirror*, Nature's Pathways Magazine, December 1, 2009

It is the prequel to the article: "Michael, Thanks for the Mirror"

**George Bruzenak**, SKP # 676, *The Jade Earrings*, appears in "Echoes from the Rim" published by the Payson Area Writers Society (PAWS), and printed by Aachanon Publishing

**Jaimie Bruzenak**, SKP # 676, I completed NaBloPoMo where you post a BLOG entry every day in November

**Betty Mulcahy**, SKP # 76334, *In a Flash (page 36)*, Escapee Magazine, November/December, 2009

**Sharon Vander Zyl**, *Pat the Bat Lady (page 60)*, Escapee Magazine, November/December, 2009

**Alice Zyetz**, *Visiting the Environs of Jojoba Hills (page 56)*, Escapee Magazine, November/December, 2009

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***So You Think You Know Everything?***

- "Stewardesses" is the longest word typed with only the left hand and "lollipop" with your right. (Bet you tried this out mentally, didn't you?)
  - 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".
  - 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.
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# History of Penwheels BOF

## History of Penwheels BOF

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Historian, Doris Hutchins SKP# 29167

October, 2009

May 2009 was the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Penwheels.

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 responded to my plea for info on the first Penwheels BOF formation. She has collected just about every newsletter since the beginning of this writing group. She 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 the anniversary date as above mentioned. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was May 2004.

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.

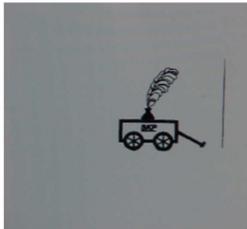
The first official newsletter was edited, copied and mailed by Myrna Courtney. Some of the early members were Dick Wood, Delores Price, Loren Leshner, Chris Christenson, Denise Christenson, Betty Prange, Joy Hale, Arlene Redstone &, Myrna Courtney.

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**

(this is the official logo for Penwheels)



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 History will be continued in the next newsletter)

## **BLOG List**

### **Lynne Benjamin**

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

### **Barbara Bowers**

- <http://blessed-b.blogspot.com/>

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

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

### **Carolyn Harris**

- <http://blog.seattlepi.nwsourc.com/lynscircle/>
- <http://travelingnewzealand.blogspot.com/>
- <http://wednesdaywoman.livejournal.com/>

### **Kay Kennedy**

- <http://boomersrememberhistory.blogspot.com>
- <http://portablewritingnewsletter.blogspot.com>
- <http://freelancewriter.booklocker.com>
- <http://travelingwithinky.blogspot.com> (the cat's travel BLOG)

### **Barbara Kaufmann**

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

### **Patty Lonsbary**

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

### **Bess McBride**

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

### **Darlene Miller**

- <http://rvchuckles.blogspot.com>

### **Marianna and Bruce Nelson**

- <http://www.otr.studio221.net>

### **Betty Prange**

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

### **Elaine Seavey**

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

## **Resources**

### **Who Needs an Editor? By Patricia Fry**

Do you need an editor? The fact is that more and more publishers require that their authors hire professional editors before submitting their manuscripts. Editing is also important when you go the self-publishing route. You want your book to outshine your competition.

How can you tell if you need an editor? Get an editorial evaluation. Some editors will evaluate your manuscript for free. Others may charge \$50 or \$100 to evaluate your first 25 or 40 pages.

Before turning your manuscript over to an editor, do a thorough self-editing. Here are some of the most common editing problems I encounter with my clients:

- Too many spaces between sentences. It is now one space after all punctuation.
- Dangling em dashes. The em dash now connects the two words—it no longer dangles between them.
- Improper use of the apostrophe.
- Improper use of quotation marks and single quotes.
- Errors that the spell check missed.
- Muddy writing.
- Redundancies.
- Incorrect use of common words. (Whose instead of who's, it's instead of its, for example.)
- Poorly organized story or nonfiction book.
- Inconsistencies in the material/story and/or spelling, capitalization, etc.

- Using the passive instead of the active writing.
- Inconsistent voice and tense.

The more errors you find while self-editing, the more you need an editor. If you don't find many or any errors, this could mean that you are simply not wired to see them. Hire an editor—or get an editorial evaluation.

### **Contributed by Darlene Miller**

There may be articles that you wrote included in the extensive library at the RV/MH Hall of Fame in Elkhart, Indiana. All the issues of Escapees magazine are included.

If you have published an RV related book and wish to have it included, call Al Hesselbart at 574-293-2344 or 800-378-8694.

The address is  
RV/MH Heritage Foundation. Inc.  
21565 Executive Blvd.  
Elkhart, Indiana 46514

### **An invitation from Patricia Fry and SPAWN**

As you may know, I've been involved with SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) since the beginning (over 13 years). I've just accepted the position of Executive Director. We have a brand new board, a newly designed website ([www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org)) and we are eager to bring our members and the general writing/publishing public more and greater publishing opportunities and resources during the coming months and years.

I invite you (*and your members*) to tour our website and sign up for our FREE monthly SPAWNNews newsletter. As a gift for subscribing, you can download our booklet, "Promote Yourself! 25 Ways to Promote Your Work Whether You're an Artist, Author or Small Publisher."

Patricia Fry, Executive Director, SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network)  
[www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org)

## **Book Review**

**Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak**

### ***The Writer's Book of Hope: Getting from Frustration to Publication* by Ralph Keyes**

The Writer's Book of Hope is the follow-up book to Keyes' *Courage to Write*. He talks about how necessary hope is to writers, unpublished as well as award-winning and best-selling authors. He talks about how to deal with discouragers of all kinds, including yourself!

He then goes on to mention author after author who was rejected. Rejection is a rite of passage and can help you perfect your craft. Did you know the popular British mystery writer, John Creasey, collected 743 rejection slips before he sold his first book? He kept on writing and, over the next 40 years, published 562 full-length books under 28 different pseudonyms.

Keyes writes about how to move beyond frustration, to seek out encouragers and how to keep hope alive. And, publishing may not be necessary to find satisfaction in your writing. Keyes, for example, wrote a memoir that was not for publication but helped him put his life into perspective.

If you dream of publishing articles or a book, this book will be your encourager and help you to find more like-minded souls like our Penwheels group. I recommend it.

## 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  
Alice Zyetz

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

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**Yahoo E-Forum:** Alice Zyetz

**Travelling Library:** Jaimie Bruzenak

**Printing & Mailing:** Beth Ramos

**Historian:** Doris Hutchins

## PENWHEELS

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**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**