



Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not
Winter, 2011



The Best of the Holiday Season to All

MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

*"Take out another notebook, pick up another pen, and just write, just write, just write.
In the middle of the world, make one positive step.
In the centre of chaos, make one definitive act.
Just write. Say yes, stay alive, be awake.
Just write. Just write. Just write."*



~ Natalie Goldberg

Getting back on-the-road feels like getting home . . . Ah . . . so good!

Our first stop on the way south was at the *Park of the Sierras* at the Gateway to Yosemite National Park. If you haven't been there, it is truly an incredible place. Beautiful surroundings, as well as a wonderful very active writers group that I managed to attend a couple of times. That first meeting had 13 fellow writers . . . I don't think I have ever been in the company of so many writers all at one time and with all those inconceivable stories. I did cheat though – I did the writing exercise on *I Remember* . . . our submission prompt for this issue.

Special *kudos* to Helen Taylor on the publication of *Grandma's Other Life*, I know she's been working hard on it for a long time.

There seems to be a number of new members, but we haven't seen any new introductions, so I assume they don't know how to get onto the bulletin board.

To join the **Penwheels** bulletin board and get daily (almost) digests, send a blank e-mail to:

penwheels-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Please send an e-mail to Alice (youshoulda@aol.com) with your

Name, SKP# and when you joined Penwheels BoF

Let's share our wisdom, experience and stories.

Lynne Benjamin



This issue:

- **What's Gone on between Then and Now**
- **New Members**
- **Contributions**
- ***I've been published* – Bragging Rights!**
- **BLOG List**
- **Contributors**

What's Gone on between Then and Now

Order *Tuesday Pieces* now!
Pre-publication price only \$15

In *Tuesday Pieces*, 24 authors publish over 70 of their stories and poems to celebrate the group's 10th anniversary.



Writers Group at Fun N Sun

Writers Group at Fun N Sun – Contributed by Marianna Nelson, SKP#45711

I belong to two writers groups in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Both have two big projects coming to fruition. First, the Writers Group at Fun N Sun, which I started 10 years ago, is publishing a collection of the group's stories and poems (see green poster). Order your copy now at a special pre-publication price – only \$15 plus a mailing cost of \$3.50. Make your check out to "Writers Group" and send to: Writers Group at Fun N Sun, 1400 Zillock Rd., San Benito, TX 78586. For more info, email me at: marianna@studio221.net.

Secondly, the **Rio Grande Valley Byliners** is sponsoring a day-long workshop on Feb. 11 in Harlingen, Texas. The Workshop is called "Get That Book Published!" and will be given by Laurel Bill, an energetic presenter with lots of experience publishing and marketing her books, namely her Alaska history series called *Aunt Phil's Trunk* (see workshop poster and go to: auntphilstrunk.com). Penwheelers searching for a warm and friendly winter getaway, plus some writing stimulation, will want to register for this workshop. If you register now, the cost is only \$35; if you register after Jan. 1, the cost is \$40. See instructions on poster. If you prefer, you may register and pay your \$40 the morning of the workshop, 8:30 a.m., Harlingen Public Library. Hope to see you there! Email me for more info.

VALLEY BYLINERS
WRITERS WORKSHOP

Saturday, Feb. 11, 2012 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
 Harlingen Public Library Auditorium, 410 '56 Drive, Harlingen, TX

GET THAT BOOK PUBLISHED!

Early registration: \$35 if received before Jan. 1, 2012*



Get Ready!
 How to:
 • Choose your topic
 • Identify your audience
 • Research the market
 • Make your prose sparkle
 • Find a great copy editor

Get Set!
 Pros and cons of:
 • Mainstream publishing
 • On-demand publishing
 • Physical self-publishing
 • E-books

Get 'Er Done!
 Marketing tips to:
 • Create a stellar marketing plan
 • Organize successful book signings
 • Network through social media
 • Develop impressive press packages
 • Make the most of reviews
 • Speak to local groups and book clubs
 • And lots more!!

Featuring Laurel Bill
 Award-winning journalist and author of *Aunt Phil's Trunk*, an Alaskan history book series

Mail checks payable to Valley Byliners to: Valley Byliners, c/o Jose Alvarez, 1300 Pizarro Ave., Rancho Viejo, TX 78575
 *After Jan. 1: \$40 by mail or payable at the Workshop at 8:30 a.m.

***** Workshop participants will receive handouts with 200 plus titles that offer free book marketing and author tools.

For info call (956) 399-8505 or go to <http://www.gvbyliners.org>

Writers Group Park Sierra SKP Co-op – Contributed by Lynne Benjamin SKP#86190

I had the honour and privilege of attending two Writers Groups while we were visiting POS and met a couple of Penwheelers face-to-face. Such an incredible array of writers: a couple of writers who know so much about the technical side of writing – especially poetry; Julianne is a journalist; one gal read a very emotional piece about her mother; another fellow read the start of his story about the beginnings and history of his family – fascinating.

They hold their meetings every week and it takes a very dedicated person to keep up with that level of production.



(Gus and Mary)



(Julianne)



(Jade and Becky)

This is a copy of prompts they sent out to the group – maybe we can use them sometime:

1. Invent a definition for each of the following invented words: boknock, plagit, snump, and ravillion. Use them in a story/poem.
2. Millions of feathers
3. I don't think I can do anything more with him/her.
4. If I ever return...

New Members

Judy Kallestad - SKP#108999

Julianne Crane - SKP#103813 (*See photo above*)

Contributions

<p><u>“100-Word Submission”</u> <i>I Remember . . .</i></p>

I Remember . . . The First Thanksgiving – Contributed by Alice Zyetz

In 1967 my husband (at the time) and I bought a small home in West Los Angeles. As a kid growing up in a Brooklyn tenement, the most I ever dreamed about was a small attached home SOMEDAY. And yet, here I was with a house and a front yard and a back yard, a separate dining room, an extra bedroom for the baby I was longing to have SOMEDAY, and even a small den for the television set. We had bought a dining room table and six chairs that were delivered the day before Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving Day, friends helped us move our belongings from our old one-bedroom bungalow to the new house. One person brought a turkey she had cooked that morning. Others brought the sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, vegetables, and more. We sat down that early evening to dinner for twelve and gave thanks to the friends who had made the day happen for us. Afterwards we gathered on the floor in the living room to share music—my husband and I on the guitar and my dear friend (of blessed memory) on the mandolin.

From that day on until I went on the road twenty-seven years later, Thanksgiving was always a joyous celebration in that house. The husband changed, the guest list changed, the long-awaited baby grew into a young man, but the house and I continued.

Contributed by Jeannie Winniford, SKP#81050

I remember when I could remember. If I walked to another room to get something, I always knew what it was when I got there. I could remember what I needed at the grocery store. I knew all my friend's phone numbers. Never would I sit down at my computer and then forget why I booted up my Wweb browser. Never did I have to hold my keys in my hand and visually see them before closing the car door so that I would not lock the keys in the car. Seldom did I have to stop talking because a certain word escaped my memory. Yes, I remember those days...but very little else.

Contributed by Bruce Siff SKP#20703

I remember... a harsh grating wakes me as a thief attempts to jimmy open the rear door on our pickup camper in the Racine, Wisconsin, Holiday Inn's parking lot.

“Are you awake? Do you hear that?” she asks.

I sit up, a .38 Special in hand. "I hear it. Shhh."

"Don't shoot him. Scare him off."

How do you know it's a man? I kneel on the bed and crank open the dome. "Get away!"

A hooded figure scampers, dodging among darkened vehicles.

"Let's see if the cocktail lounge is still open."

"Okay. How do you know that was a man?"

Visiting the Big Island: Hawaii – Contributed by Verna Oxford SKP#1921

(Editors note: Verna sent a hardcopy handwritten contribution to our Membership Volunteer, Joanne Alexakis who got it ready for the Newsletter – Thanks, Joanne)

A virtually forgotten memory was recently recalled. On my 2 month visit to Hawaii I had an interesting experience. I had a reservation to fly from Honolulu to the Big Island – Hawaii.

At the assembly point, noses were counted and the engine was purring on pitch. The door and steps became available and the couples crowded and rather rudely squeezed me – a single, out of the line-up and I was the last to board. Inside I could see the couples had filled the 2 seat accommodations. Only one single seat remained and there was no window – my seat.

Having only recently flown from San Francisco to Hawaii, I'd seen a lot of ocean out the window, so this short hop with no view except ocean water and no view with no window wasn't a big deal.

Arriving at the Hawaiian airport, we were treated to a lecture of the local area – interesting - and bussed to the southern tip and another lecture, and returned to the airport, and on our small plane.

The pilot contorted himself so he could count noses and spoke loudly – "Since you have no window seat, you now get to come up here and sit in the co-pilot's seat for our fly-over the volcanoes". Wow! I happily staggered up to the cockpit – the couples now jealous and a bit enraged. I was buckled in and we took off. Shortly we were over the volcanoes on an active day with the thick molten liquid spurting, oozing and dribbling to the downward slope to the ocean. By far my view was superior to the couples view from the 2-seaters. They were envious and I was rewarded by the spectacular view I had at the most important part of the trip.

I've always wondered if they were rude to singles again, or hoped for a reward such as I had received when squeezed from the line-up.

I remember clothes – Contributed by Marianna Nelson, SKP#45711

1930s: On winter days my mother's long raccoon coat engulfed her -- and me, too, when I snuggled next to her.

1940s: Navy blue pea jackets, like U.S. sailors' wool pea jackets, were popular around World War II. I loved mine but wasn't sure why it was called a "pea" jacket.

1940s: Stockings made of nylon were much in demand after WWII. Women kept them in place with four garters attached to elastic strips which were sewed to a garter belt. Nylons had seams, a dark line down the back of the leg. An often heard question was, "Are my seams straight?"

1950s: I remember my friend Ann struggling to pull up her rubber Playtex girdle. I didn't have to wear one – then (now there's control-top panty hose).

1960s: My shearling coat was impervious to wind and cold but what I liked most was its elegance and style. Next to my skin was a layer of lush, short brown fur; the outside was a sleek gray suede trimmed with brown fur at the hemline, the neckline, and the wrists. I called it my Jackie Kennedy coat. When we started full-timing, I had to part with it.

I Remember . . . Contributed by Doris Hutchins SKP#29167

It was Thanksgiving, 1936. At eight years of age, I was looking forward to Thanksgiving with Grandma. Turkey in those days was very special and it was only once a year that we got together and enjoyed this meal. We all sat around the old, overly long, dining room table, covered in Grandma's best linens and dishes. What a glorious day this was!

The reason I remembered this moment in time was; this year there were three family members that cooked ham instead of turkey. Nowadays, turkey can be enjoyed any day of the week. Nothing special anymore!

Contributed by Terry Hager SKP#48315

I remember . . . my adventures with Jim from Junior High days: camping in the woods outside of town; crawling into a very small cave; "borrowing the 'We Give S & H Green Stamps' sign from in front of the Hardware store to plant it on the church steps; sneaking out of the house in the wee hours; climbing the water tower; smoking under the bridge.

Maybe someday I'll have to write a book.

I remember waiting for magic to happen – Contributed by Chris Guld SKP#101167

(Editor's note: from Penwheels get-together at Gillette Escapade-thanks, Chris)

Every day for about a year when I was a little girl, I got out my magic wand to test it. I figured if I concentrated and wished it hard enough, one day the magic wand would work. I'd test it on little things. I'd go into the stall in the girl's bathroom at my elementary school and take my magic wand out of its box. It was a beautiful magic wand. It had a star on one end. I had wrapped a stick and the star with the shiniest aluminum foil I could find. I think I had to wear sunglasses to keep from being blinded by its brilliance!

I only tested while occupying a bathroom stall because I didn't want anyone to know my secret! I waved the wand at my scuffed up sneakers and held my breath waiting to see if they would turn into satin slippers. They never did.

That was many, many years ago and I have no idea whatever happened to my magic wand, but it definitely worked! My life is filled with magic every day and I know that I am making it happen. I don't need a magic wand, I just need my dreams. My RV is my magic carpet and it takes me to all the places I've dreamed about.

I Remember . . . Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP#77439

I remember picking raspberries as a young girl. Prickly bushes scratched my arms, legs, and face as I reached for the juicy black fruit. Two in my mouth, one in the bucket. So luscious, as the sticky liquid ran down my chin. Fingers stained purple for days after the fruit was harvested.

April 3, 1981—my world was changed as the structures were rearranged. Winds, maybe a tornado, flattened the barn, silos, and Dad's pickup shed. My favorite berries still stood valiantly. Then the trucks moved in. Large wheels smashed all in sight, grinding the dirt to hard clay. Nothing grows there today.

I have looked for thirty years for black raspberries as succulent as my childhood treats. Recently, I saw a table full and placed berry after nubbly berry on my tongue, holding tight to the memories of an Iowa farm girl. I wanted to grab them all and take them home, but knew they would be destroyed by the July heat before I could get them there. I would rather let them go to someone who could enjoy them than horde them and have them ruined.

I Remember . . . Contributed by Lynne Benjamin, SKP#86190

I remember . . . I remember . . . I remember . . . everything I do conjures up memories. My memory reservoir is full. I walk down the street . . . I remember the street I walked down on my first day of school; I see her picture on the wall . . . I remember how she looked and sounded that last day I saw her in the hospital; I meet someone new . . . I remember another dear friend and hope this new relationship can create fine memories like those of friends gone by.

I Remember . . . Contributed by Delbert Ashby SKP#67666

I remember when my Dad couldn't remember. In 1995, I was called home because of Dad's health issues. He lost his way home from a grocery store two blocks away. In talking with Dad, he seemed able to hold normal conversation.

A nurse trained to detect dementia came to interview Dad. Her questions went like this. What is today? What street do you live on? What did you have for breakfast? When is your birthday? How old are you? He replied "I don't know." to each of these questions.

Our normal conversational style often implies expected answers. How are you today? "Fine." Are you happy today? Yes. Did you sleep well last night? Yes. You don't like winter, do you? No.

He was able to converse fine with implied answers but failed the test when specific data was required...

Dad is no longer with us but I remember when Dad couldn't remember and I hope that never happens to me.

Contributed by Joanne Alexakis, SKP#19367

White Christmas Oh, I remember many white Christmases driving from our home in Rochester, Minnesota to celebrate the holiday with my dad's relatives in St. Ansgar, Iowa.

The roads were usually snow-packed, often icy and slippery, and always a test of one's potential survival skills. We dressed in the latest cold-weather gear to protect from the freezing, wind-chill impacted temperatures.

1994 brought significant changes to my life, when Nick and I began full-time RVing. Like all snowbirds, we headed south when the thermometer started to give up degrees. Christmas was in Arizona or New Mexico or southern California where it is never white and snowy, rarely c-c-cold, and always bright and sunny. We have to wear shorts!

I will forever cherish my White Christmases, but I now demand Christmas at the beach!

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

- **Penwheels Newsletter, Summer, 2011, *Resources and Suggestions for E-Publishing***, edited dialog from the Yahoo! Forum, February 22, 2011, , *[Tips]*, *Escapees Magazine*, November/December, 2011 issue, page 26

- **Helen Taylor**, SKP# 295, *Grandma's Other Life*, self-published, Createspace.com
 - ❖ Have nothing on the table right now as far as "actual writing" is concerned, but one of these days I plan to whip out something or other, I hope! I do have a few ideas floating around in this feeble brain lately, so we'll see what turns up.

- **Lynne Benjamin**, SKP#86190
 - ❖ *Burros in Oatman*, in *Finding Pieces of Route 66* (by Marcella Gauthier #12371), in *Escapes Magazine*, November/December, 2011 issue, page 19
 - ❖ *Snowbirding 101*, *RV West* (E-Column)
http://www.rvwest.com/journeys/rvtales/snowbirding_1011/

- **Margo Armstrong**, books available on *Barnes & Noble* and **Amazon**
 - ❖ "The RV Lifestyle - A Dream Come True"
 - ❖ "Buying Gold and Silver - A Primer for the Beginning Investor"
 - ❖ "How To Save Money While Enjoying the RV Lifestyle"
 - ❖ "About Men - Myths Revealed, Dealing With The Fear, How To Love, Live and Work With Them"

BLOG List

Lynne Benjamin

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

Barbara Bowers

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

Jaimie Bruzenak

- <http://blog.rvlifestyleexperts.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>

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

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

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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.

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