

PENWHEELS NEWSLETTER

FOR ESCAPEES WRITERS...PUBLISHED OR NOT

OFFICIAL PENWHEELS LOGO

December, 2013



(Joanne won the logo contest)

*A little smile, a word of cheer,
A bit of love from someone near,
A little gift from one held dear,
Best wishes for the coming year. John Greenleaf Whittier*



VOLUNTEERING FROM 1995

JOANNE ALEXAKIS SKP # 19367

I love Penwheels. I volunteered for the PW membership coordinator position in 1998. Betty Prange guided me through the ropes when she passed that job on to me. I enjoyed that position for several years. In 2002, Jaimie Hall Bruzenak and Alice Zyetz set up the Penwheels website and I helped. Then with lots of encouragement and support from Jaimie, I became the PW newsletter editor. From 2003 till 2007, I got a kick out of learning more about you all as I collected info for each issue. It was a rewarding job. I resumed the PW membership coordinator position in 2007 and am still trying to keep track of you all. I love Penwheels!

PIC BY GOTHAM WRITERS WORKSHOP



The *Escapees* magazine published a few of my articles. I was so thrilled to be in print. Articles were:

- * "Tipper Trees a Bear" about tent-camping with my husband Nick in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of Northern Minnesota. Tipper was our 30-pound dog (best dog in the world) and he really did tree a black bear.
- * "Aliens," (I don't remember the exact titles) about Nick & me working as security guards while parked on a construction site in the desert near Aguila, Arizona. We witnessed the unexplained Phoenix UFO lights in 1997 and I can accredit them to aliens - I saw them!
- * "Things That Bite and How to Not Get Bitten," about rattlesnakes, black widow spiders, and scorpions. I took an online writing course from Moira Allen on how to put together a magazine article. It was intriguing to research that article - critters are so fascinating.
- * "Heavy-Duty Trucks" wasn't as inspiring, but Nick was thinking about upgrading to a bigger tow vehicle, so I thought it was a good idea for me to be informed.
- * "I Always Wanted to Be a Cowboy" about a summer job at Custer State Park in the Black Hills of South Dakota where we got to roundup the 1,400 head bison herd. It was an unbeatable adventure and I was a great cowboy/girl. Janice Lasko, *Escapee* magazine editor at that time, even put this article in her book, *Rocking Chair Rebels*, about RVers who do more than sit on their "tushes".

I wrote "Losing Weight with Suzanne" when I took off 40 lbs. using Suzanne Sommers' diet plan. Jaimie and Alice pulled that piece out of my ink pen word by word and published it as part of *RV Traveling Tales: Women's Journeys on the Open Road*, a Benjamin Franklin award-winning book. I am so proud to be part of this book that continues to inspire and entertain women RVers (even ten years later). My writings hint at my interests. I intend to start a blog supplemented with lots of Nick's pictures soon. Nick and I joined *Escapees* in 1992 and began full-time RVing in 1994. However, for the last 10 years,



we have been part of the working world in Southern California. We retired in May 2013 and are 'on the road again.'

This summer, we traveled to Minnesota, our home state, and back again. Now we're spending the winter in the Arizona desert and SoCal. I hope I get to see some of you along the way and even join in some Penwheels writing exercises.

While on one of our trips, I rode a camel.

JOANNE AND I ... BY JAIMIE HALL BRUZENAK

Joanne SKP#19367

Jaimie SKP#19361

We also had a common interest in that Joanne and Nick were Workampers like Bill and I. We both needed to earn money. I followed Joanne and Nick's adventures from Custer State Park where Joanne wrote about the buffalo roundup to construction-site sitting in the desert. Joanne wrote up these experiences, which were included in *Support Your RV Lifestyle! An Insider's Guide to Working on the Road*.

Somewhere along the way Joanne joined Penwheels and later volunteered to be membership chairman. Besides the editor, Penwheels has a membership person to collect dues and keep track of who has paid and who has not. There is also someone who copies the newsletter when it's ready and mails it out. The membership person supplies the mailing labels based on active subscriptions. Joanne is in her second stint as membership chairman. In between she edited the Penwheels newsletter, bringing a fresh new perspective.

In 2003 or 2004, Alice Zyetz and I sent out calls for submissions for what would become our anthology, *RV Traveling Tales: Women's Journeys on the Open Road*. Her story, "Losing Weight with Suzanne," had us laughing; we had to include it! She also submitted a short piece on the Black Hills of South Dakota for one of the Exit Ramp pages. And, when we sent out a call to RVers to help us with *Retire to an RV: The Roadmap to Affordable Retirement*, we again received contributions from Joanne. Seven of her short pieces are included in the book, adding legitimacy and insider knowledge.

I always look forward to Joanne's emails. Years ago she began adding short descriptors to her "hugs." Things like "sleepy-hugs" or "Ready-for-shopping-hugs" are fun to read and I enjoy adding similar things in reply. Thanks for your years of service to Penwheels, Joanne! SKP hugs, Jaimie

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE by William Shakespeare

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,

Full of strange oaths and bearded like the
pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the
justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts

Into the lean and slippered pantaloons,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans
everything.

HAPPY CHRISTMAHANNUKWANZAA!

Encompasses Christmas, Hannukah, and Kwanzaa, all in one big Merry Holiday.

Christmas (December 25) Christmas is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. People spend the time with their family or friends around a Christmas tree and exchange gifts, a tradition from the birth of Jesus and gifts from the Three Wise Men.



Hanukkah (November 27 - December 5, 2013) (Jewish year 5773) the joyous festival of Hanukkah begins on 25 Kislev of the Jewish calendar. Festival of Lights and Feast of Dedication, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple.



Kwanzaa (African-American) from (**December 26 to January 1**) celebration Kwanzaa from the Kiswahili word meaning "first fruits." The year 2013 will see the 47th annual **Kwanzaa**. The African American holiday is celebrated to facilitate African-American goals of building a strong family, learning about African-American history and developing unity.

BRAGGING RIGHTS



In the Nov/Dec 2013 Escapees magazine.

Betty Mulcahy, *History on Wheels*, about RVing couple

who take part in War re-enactments (page 70).

Margo Armstrong, *Writing and Publishing eBooks Tips*, (page 63).

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"

— Bob Hope

TIPS FROM JAIMIE



A COLLECTION OF TIPS...welcoming tips from
other Penwheelers. Jamie Hall Bruzenak SKP#19361

Send to calamityjaimie@gmail.com

"The ultimate inspiration is the deadline".

If you will be publishing a book or ebook and creating a cover, read this article in Writer's Weekly 10/2/13. "Writers Beware: Are You Using Stolen Art Without Knowing It?" By Tiana Bodine at http://writersweekly.com/this_weeks_article/008187_10022013.html if you unknowingly use copyrighted material, it could cost you a lot of money.

Top Misused Words Part VIII Here are some more words that are frequently misused. One I always have to stop and think about that is explained here is passed vs. past. Check them out at <http://blog.ezinearticles.com/2013/09/top-misused-words-part-viii.html> if something doesn't *sit* well with you, will you be able to *set* aside your feelings? If your brother turned *into* a frog, should you turn him *in* to your parents? Does the *principal* establish the *principle* of the thing? And frankly, is every supermarket Express Line wrong! We're back again with the next 5 most commonly misused words in the English language and we're tackling EX: some tough phrases that can be incredibly confusing. Without further delay, here they are!



Fewer vs. less *fewer* – Used with count nouns (nouns that can be pluralized when needed), *fewer* is a quantifier indicating “a smaller number of.” Incorrect: Yellow Express Lane: 10 Items or *Less*
Correct: Yellow Express Lane: 10 Items or *Fewer* – Used with non-count nouns or mass nouns (a noun that indicates both plural and non-plural when appropriate), *less* indicates a “smaller amount of” or “not as much.” Incorrect: The rabid mongoose would do less harm if it were given ping pong paddles.
Correct: The rabid mongoose would do *less* harm if it were given ping pong paddles.

Into vs. In to into – Expressing movement or action with the result that someone or something makes physical contact with, becomes enclosed, or is surrounded by something else. Combined with the word “turn,” *into* also indicates changing someone or something into someone or something else. Incorrect: She imagined turning her boss *in to* a newt.

Correct: She imagined turning her boss *into* a newt. **In to** – The adverb “in” (expressing movement with the result that someone or something becomes enclosed or surrounded by something else) is followed by preposition “to” (expressing motion in the direction). Combined with the word “turn,” *in to* also indicates giving, passing, or exchanging someone or something to someone or something else. Incorrect: She

Time Frames for Musing by Sam Penny SKP# 41036



A Muse should have a good memory and adapt his thoughts to match his assumed audience. First, let me tell you how my memories differentiate my various audiences.

I was a bonny boy of three when WWII began, and in time I learned how to comb my hair like Togo and salute like Hitler. My folks never let me feel deprived. There was no TV, but we saw Movie Tone News on some Saturday nights at the movies. Living life and learning from books and experiences on the farm were our central activities. Our food came from the land around us, so my family and I lived well. I muse of when that lifestyle again becomes normal, say in about forty years, but not in cities.

When I was in my teens, I concluded I was immortal, but feared death. Everything went my way, and there was a future world out there for me to conquer. I did not understand human society and was unaware of its effects on the environment. I made decisions on the matters of positioning and choosing where to go. I picked a college major at the age of fifteen intent on helping someone go to the moon. My uncles scoffed, but twenty years later they apologized when Armstrong stepped off the ladder on that distant orb.

My musings about today's teens are that they are much like I was, but I think their opportunities are much, much less. The media shows younger teens believe technology will save their dreams and the world will continue as it is or improve remarkably. News programs tell of too many older teens becoming pessimistic and lashing out because the world is not going the way they want. I do not know what is best to tell them.

In my twenties I was on the leading edge of physics, learning, challenging, and adding experience, inventing new technology. I no longer worried about immortality, it was a given. I had a family, but the kids were more like toys. Lots of today's twenty-year-olds remind me of then. So many seem to have no care or concern about the fate of the world; they only think of themselves.

In my thirties I raised a family and gained experience, but I focused on the then present. I wanted more power and control of what I did. I executed a corporate startup, and worked my butt off with my wife's help. Hard work paid off, and things began to take care of themselves, with me in charge. My efforts paid handsomely. Luck helped, but I learned you have to answer the door when luck knocks.

Many of today's thirty-year-olds have much the same attitude of wanting control, except they seem to believe the world owes them success and good fortune. Achievement is their right, and it must be soon. The future of the world is often not a consideration. I fear many of them will suffer major disappointments in the coming decades.

In my forties I consolidated my power and control and cashed in on my success. I still owned the world around me and tried unsuccessfully to replicate my earlier successes. I lived on the fruits of my past labors and spent most of my fortune on ill-conceived investments. It was fun to be an entrepreneur, but I began to notice the world around me was less than it had been in my younger days; the environment had changed and the opportunities were fewer. I began to wonder how my off-spring might survive in this new world that was developing. I began to wonder how my wife and I would survive in the world just around the corner, but I had faith everything would continue on the good path.

As I began my fifties, Nature informed me in no uncertain terms that my immortality was no longer guaranteed. My heart began working incorrectly, and I underwent bypass surgery. A kick in the gut like that can change your whole perspective. After the surgery I looked upon any future at all as a gift. I faced the problems of paying for my health care, and went back to work with my original startup to get insurance. I began to worry about the future. What would the future hold? What would it be? Because I was lucky to be alive, the future became an issue in my mind.

Many of today's forty- and fifty-year-olds are in good health, but from time to time they or one of their friends experience some kind of life-threatening illness or accident or lose their job. They start with the assumption that nothing can go wrong, and then when something does go wrong, they wonder what they can do. They cling to what they have, and hope that Obama Care or some other big program will carry them through. If they lose their job, they find themselves stuck in a pool of unwanted: too-experienced-to-qualify, too old to get under the wire. It is hell, both psychologically and physically. My thoughts are that it will not get any better, and for many, it will get worse.

Early in my sixties I retired and began the task of finding something to keep me busy. I watched my parents decline and realized that would be my future far too soon. I watched my children make some of the same mistakes I now realized my wife and I had made in the early years. I searched for things to keep me interested and became an Activist of sorts on several fronts. I wrote books warning of earthquakes on the New Madrid fault. I became involved in the discussions of resource depletion, population overshoot, and climate change. I wrote blogs to convince folks around me that there was something they should worry about. But it did not seem to work.

Now, in my seventies, I am tired of pushing on a rope. I realize so much better the impacts of the past actions and decisions by me and our society. I have a much better perspective on what are the consequences of various actions by our government and citizens. I think I also have a better rating system of what is important and what is not. I now find my biggest worry is living too long.

I suppose the Time Frame for Musing is when you are too old to be a useful Activist. At my age I can offer advice and guidance, and when no one listens, it is naturally easy to forget I said anything. But I should direct my musings to the generations coming along, for it will be their world to live in the future. They have some control over what that future will be, but for the most part they must learn to cope with what happens.

http://www.prudentrver.typepad.com/Phoenix_of_Memphis/. I am trying to learn to write good short stories. It is different from blogs and novels. Comments appreciated.

Kwanzaa: Light the candles on the Kinara!



Fly the Bendera, and tell stories from Africa!



MERRY CHRISTMAS

A Christmas candle is a lovely thing;
It makes no noise at all,
But softly gives itself away.

Eva Logue

THE MAGIC OF HANUKKAH never ends
and its greatest of gifts



Happy Hanukkah

are family and friends.
~ Happy New Year~

CACOETHES SCRIBENDI (*Latin: An insatiable urge to write*)

If all the trees in all the woods were men;	And for ten thousand ages, day and night,
And each and every blade of grass a pen;	The human race should write, and write, and write,
If every leaf on every shrub and tree	Till all the pens and paper were used up,
Turned to a sheet of foolscap; every sea	And the huge inkstand was an empty cup,
Were changed to ink, and all earth's living tribes	Still would the scribblers clustered round its brink
Had nothing else to do but act as scribes,	Call for more pens, more paper, and more ink.

By Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. 1809-1894



WE HAVE A MODERATOR!

Now, semi-retired, D.G. Smeall has agreed to come on board PENWHEELS BOF to help moderate our website.

After a long search for a volunteer *Moderator*, Donna Gates- Smeall SKP# 100803 has volunteered to be our Moderator. dgsmeall@me.com Donna Gates-Smeall (D.G. Smeall) is an accomplished writer with one book publication, "Com-PEN-di-um" - a poetry collection of small thoughts for her readers and over 50 poetry selections published, plus an

extensive writing career for various nonprofit organizations as a Marketing associate/programs coordinator, and various other titles. Additionally, she has published several short stories via her local writing group, Key Peninsula Writers' Guild.

Ms. Smeall is an east coast transplant who has found her paradise in Washington State, enjoys RVing with her husband, Jim, of eleven years and their seal point Siamese cat, Callie T.

Kitty. When Donna is not busy RVing, she writes in various genres, does genealogical research on her family lines, crochets, reads, and plays computer games for fun. While RV'ing, she might be found teaching a mini-class on how to get started in Genealogy research or taking history centered walks with her hubby.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening A poem written in 1922 by Robert Frost.

Source: The Random House Book of Poetry for Children (1983)

(A cherished childhood favorite-to actually feel as if you are standing in the cold, snowy New England woods.)

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer.
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lonely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

THE WAY IT WAS



By Margo Armstrong SKP#47139

Margo has volunteered to write a column for us in every newsletter. Margo said, "I would be happy to help. My favorite subjects are 'writing & publishing eBooks,' and 'the RV lifestyle.' Since I am living and traveling full-time in an RV (18 years, the last three years solo), my expertise lies in that area. I also write and publish eBooks; the count is 17 so far. My blog, MovingOnWithMargo.com, focuses on the RV lifestyle and tools for better living."

The Way It Was When Print Was King

Back in the day so many priority issues about product liability and CYA kept any book in the tome status, rather than just simply telling it like it is. Hard cover publishers took the red pen to anything that might lead to a legal issue.

Then they gave you, the author, about 50 cents for every book sold. If the author was well known (or writing about a controversial topic) a deal could be made up front--called an *advance on publication* -- that netted a few bucks, sometimes thousands of bucks.

Publishers produce the cover (their own image, of course), fill in all the liability and copyright blanks, and distribute the book to retail outlets. The struggle begins with the distributor begging for shelf space at the local bookstore - no spiral binding, please, or hard to read titles. The struggle ends with your book on the "fire sale" table.

The writer, however, is still making the promotion circuit, book signing parties, and other time-consuming, boring affairs. Unless your book is a bestseller (about 100,000 copies), chances are your next book does not net much in the advance deal. This arcane process varies from publisher to publisher.

Before you even enter this rarefied environment, the right publisher for your book must appear. Just sending a snippet to a long list of publishers rarely works.

If you decide to go this route, purchase a copy of the *Writer's Market*. That should keep you busy for a few months. This paperbound book (also available online) lists all the publishers in most genres. This website is also full of inspirational dialogue and tips for the writer. The company also sponsors seminars to improve your writing skills.

Some writers find a literary agent to work as their portal to the publishing world. This turns out to be a futile search for many. If you get lucky, the agent takes a percentage of your royalties. However, you can take only so many rejection slips before giving up your quest.

Into this world of rejection comes the Internet (drum roll!!!) rudely throwing aside all publishing conventions previously thought holy. Along with the introduction to e-readers came the need for content...and the eBook was born. Amazon and Barnes & Noble took this new product and ran with it.

Today, not only do you not need an ISB Number (\$\$\$) to list your book in the traditional bookstore catalogs, you do not need a publisher.

Obviously, a larger reading audience for fiction exists since even \$5.99 for a good read from an unknown author beats \$9.99 at the bookstore. More people read fiction than non-fiction because entertainment rules today. If that is your goal, go for it!

The Internet is also exposing millions of readers to life-changing information available in eBook format that is simply not available from traditional publishing venues.

Authors are just beginning to discover that eBook publishing is the path to follow. To reach the largest audience, with the least investment in time and money, seems like a practical plan to me. The printed book is not dead, as touted in the news. It is just another way to reach a reading audience, rather than the only way.

Free software is available that allows the reader to convert the new eReader formats so the book can be read right on your computer. You do not even need to spend the money for the eReader device. Life changing...yes!

Enough history, you want to find out if you too can be a life-changer. Can your life experiences help others? Yes, they can. Is there much to learn about this technology? Yes, there is.

Whether you plan to write your memoirs, create a fictional world, help others understand how aging affects their life, how to plan their financial future, sell their house, or build shelves in their garage, someone out there needs your help. There is an eBook in you. Get it.

The Best Thing In The World
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

*What's the best thing in the world?
June-rose, by May-dew impearled;
Sweet south-wind, that means no rain;
Truth, not cruel to a friend;
Pleasure, not in haste to end;
Beauty, not self-decked and curled
Till its pride is over-plain;
Light, that never makes you wink;
Memory, that gives no pain;
Love, when, so, you're loved again.
What's the best thing in the world?
—Something out of it, I think,*

There is Another Sky by Emily Dickinson

*There is another sky,
Ever serene and fair,
And there is another sunshine,
Though it be darkness there;
Never mind faded forests, Austin,
Never mind silent fields -
Here is a little forest,
Whose leaf is ever green;
Here is a brighter garden,
Where not a frost has been;
In its unfading flowers
I hear the bright bee hum:
Prithee, my brother,
Into my garden come!*

WORDSMITHS

WORDSMITHS

Herewith, bear with me, run with and go with me, wherewith I do with and live with you. By Doris Hutchins

To Young Leaders

There will be an awakening one day

And a vision from out of the blue

Will fall upon you.

A new world will begin

Where all peoples of the earth

Will live in freedom.

A freedom to walk unafraid

To speak freely without fear

To love and to be loved.

To bear the fruit of the earth

To aspire to greatness and to lead

The poor and unfortunate

To a new life

Rich with opportunity.

To learn

To work hard

And to have just rewards

For one's labor.

To teach

And in the teaching

Bring new inspiration

To those who will

Follow in your footsteps

In the sands of time

Unafraid

And with dignity.

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Sonny Holt ©

SCORING FOUR

By Verna Oxford SKP# 1921

Challenges written by Verna in old newsletters.

1.THE SPOON

The slim handle is etched so it appears to be braided. The handle loops to encompass a colorful enameled fleur-de-lis. Although mute, its inviting golden warmth still reflects the great affection present when tendered as a gift. (Vern. It is a beloved souvenir of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904 held in St. Louis, Missouri. The deeply cupped bowl is scalloped all the way around. The inside of the bowl is delicately veined like a leaf in exquisite detail. I wrote that this spoon was given to her mother by an ex-suitor).

2.THERE WERE RATS IN THE SOUFFLE

There were rats in the soufflé again. Ever since their laying hens had been exposed to viewing that TV commercial for Farmland Eggs, their egg production had tripled. They had to eat more soufflés now. They had shared their excess cackle berries with friends and neighbors until these sources were sated. The strategic placing of egg-laden dishes in known rat-runs in the barn was successful. Every rat told others. Swarms in the runs became enormous and had made a dent in the glut of the eggs.

3.WHY DO I WRITE?

I breathe and blink my eyes involuntarily, unconsciously. I eat to satisfy hunger. I sleep to provide needed rest. I read to gain new information or to rehash old. I converse with others, orally or

I write recording and remembering the wondrous pleasures, apprehensions, affection, learning, yearning, and fulfillments, an active life has provided. Writing events have had their part in molding me. Writing adds the vitally needed zest to my life. With it my cup runneth over.

4.TWO BEES

My first glimpse of the two bees occurred midmorning. From bloom to bloom they flitted, seemingly insatiable. A neighbor called out. For a few minutes we chatted. When I resumed weeding, here came two bees again. Both with stripes a darker caramel color than the usual bees. Again they zoomed, hovered, and darted gathering nectar. Bachelor Buttons, usually the favorite, now abandoned, swayed in a gentle breeze, as the seekers searched the Day Lilies for nectar. Sudden silence reigned when the visitors sailed over the fence heading for the hive nearby. Honey, how I love it!

SUGGESTIONS IN WRITING by Verna Oxford

1. *Describe! Describe! Describe! Makes the reading come alive in the reader's brain. If a phrase such as my car was visible out the window. (car is a noun and easy to describe) Ex. My sleek new car, my brilliantly, newly painted car, my beloved car. Any description makes a mental vision to the reader and is interesting.*
2. *Expand vocabulary: see your Book shop for a book filled with words and their various forms such as cloudy, dark, and dreary and at least 7-10 more words describing the lack of sunshine and brightness... then used as opposed to rain, dripping, dreary helps point a picture to the reader.*

CHALLENGE FOR DECEMBER

My Most Memorable

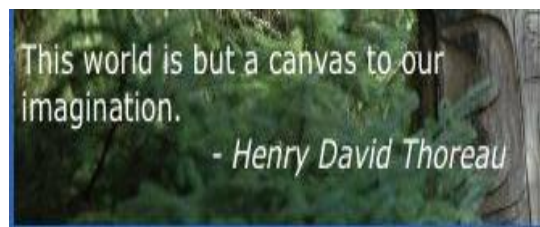
Christmas, Hannakuh, Kwanzaa

CHRISTMAS PAST (*I remember:*)

By Bruce Siff, SKP#20703

"I'll go to the Catholic church down the shoreline a couple of blocks," I answered Frankie when he asks where I will be just before Christmas officially arrives. "I went last year, terribly crowded, go early." There isn't an empty seat when I arrive at eleven. "Severe weather kept many away," the jovial chap lingering next to me explains. "If it hadn't been this bad, you can imagine what it'd be like. I guess we'll have to stand outside, then. Cup your hands around your ears to hear the service", he suggests. Between heads, I peer inside again. There must be at least two hundred jamming the walls, three hundred lucky ones seated, another hundred are standing with me. Hard to believe they can put up with it. He points inside. I wipe away a bead of perspiration hanging on my forehead. We shake hands when the service ends at 1:00 a.m., Christmas Day, 1999."

This one I'll always remember," I remark standing in one hundred and one degrees Fahrenheit on The Esplanade, Cairns, North Queensland, Australia.



WRITING IS EASY. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CROSS OUT THE WRONG WORDS MARK TWAIN

CHRISTMAS IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL

PARK By Jane Foraker-Thompson SKP# 112143

One winter in the 1990s the family went to Yellowstone National Park for Christmas. My four kids were in college and high school and my husband and I were living in the mountains near Boise, ID.

The six of us drove to West Yellowstone, MT. in our Ford pickup truck with camper and rented three snowmobiles; each one seating two people, and entered Yellowstone National Park from the west side. We had reservations at one of the lodges near the center of the Park. As we drove in, we passed an area near a river heated by the underground hot springs. The ground was covered with snow, but steam was rising from the river. Some elk were grazing near the hot water where the snow had melted, and white swans were floating in the river. It was magical. We stopped for a few minutes to watch. My two daughters began to sing Silent Night softly to the wild animals. The elk looked up and gazed at us in wonder. We talked to them quietly for a few minutes, and they kept watching us. Then we got back onto our snow mobiles and went on to find our lodge.

We spent several days there, celebrating Christmas and touring on the allowed roads to see the wonders of Yellowstone covered in snow. We had been there before during summers, but it was our first time to see it in the winter covered with snow. We ate at a nearby restaurant and visited with other folks at some of the social times arranged by the Rangers and other staff. It was a magical time. Nowadays, the visitation during the winter is more limited in order to better preserve the wildness of Yellowstone, which I approve of. But selfishly, I'm glad we were able to visit there as a family to see and enjoy the winter wonderland of Yellowstone together. My kids had travelled back to Idaho to spend Christmas together with my husband and I, and it was a very special time for all of us. That was one of my favorite Christmas experiences.

My Most Memorable Christmas

By Donna Gates Smeall SKP#100803

My most memorable Christmas is actually a tie. I had two different Christmases that brought the same level of memory to me. The first Christmas I will mention is that of my visit to Washington State which actually changed my life in a huge way.

December 2000 was the year my son, David and I flew to Washington to spend a week with James, the man who is now my husband and his son, Tom. James paid for David and me to visit following my Labor Day visit to his home to see if we would enjoy life in WA.

My son was nearly nine years old at the time and very excited about making a visit to another state across the USA from home. Home was Alabama at the time. So we flew out to spend a week and got to meet Jim's family and I fell in love with them all.

Less than a year later, we were living in Washington following the 2600 mile drive to Washington from Alabama. No, I didn't do much of the driving, Jim did. He loves driving and I love reading: so while he drove I was on the adventures with Harry Potter from book two all the way to book five.

It seemed as if the books lent some magic to the journey wherever we stopped. I found things to excite me and make me happier than I had ever been. By the time we rolled up the driveway into our new home, my son and I were ready for the adventure to begin.

The state of Washington had been an out-of-reach dream for me since I was a little girl and coming here has been the most magnificent of journeys for me. I had wanted to live here all my life and couldn't imagine anywhere else as home on Earth. The state's beauty didn't

disappoint me nor did my experiences of living here over the past thirteen years.

James had asked me to move to WA and marry him and I was the happiest girl that day and I am still the happiest, luckiest girl in the world.

The tiebreaker Christmas was another lifelong dream of mine: to see EPCOT, at Disney World in Florida. I knew, that on some level, I might never get to see Europe, but at least I could see some concept of life in Europe by visiting the Magic Kingdom's EPCOT center.

So when I turned fifty, nearly five years ago, on December 22nd, I was walking the streets of Epcot with my mother and father who made that dream come to pass for me. I was on a one week vacation with my parents in Lake City, Florida. The wonder of trying foods from different countries and seeing video in 3-D IMAX format in their theater at Disney culminated in a lovely 50th birthday.

These two Christmases were, by far, the most memorable for the impact they had on my visions of myself fulfilling dreams that are part of my eternal bucket list.

My Most Memorable Christmas

By Barbara A. Bowers SKP #77439

"My mother died thirty-nine years ago today," said Grandpa.

Thus began Christmas Eve dinner in 2002. Mom and I looked at one another nervously as neither one of us wanted to make eye contact with my husband. We all knew that his uncle Kirby had only hours to live. This meal was difficult enough without my grandfather making such statements.

Mom said, "Yes, I remember. Tom and I also got engaged that day. It was difficult to lose Grandma on such a happy day. Let's please change the subject." We continued the meal, then gathered in my folks' living room to open

gifts, trying to not focus on the loss we felt impending.

Christmas afternoon, Everett got the call that his mom's oldest brother had passed away. Uncle Kirby had been the first of Everett's family that I had met, so I also felt the loss deeply. We went home to prepare for the funeral in northwestern Iowa.

Two days later, and one day before the funeral, Mom called. Grandpa had been rushed to Des Moines for emergency surgery for an aortic hospital after I showered. I called my sister with the news and turned on the water. As I stepped into the tub, the phone rang again. There was no need to rush; the only grandpa I had ever known had not survived the operation, dying thirty-nine years and three days after his beloved mother.

With tears and soapy water flowing down my face, I got ready to say, "Good-bye," then joined Mom and my uncle at the hospital.

Rewriting and Editing Your Creative Writing Project <http://etips.dummies.com/optin.asp>

Rewriting and editing helps to tighten up your work. But it can be difficult – what to chop and when to stop may not be clear, and you may change your mind more than once during the process.

Ask yourself whether you need to take out:

- Unnecessary information and explanation.
- Passages of dialogue that go on too long.
- Clunky descriptions that give too much detail.
- Clumsy images that don't really work.
- Too many adjectives and adverbs.

You may need to add or expand:

- Something you know but have forgotten to tell the reader; perhaps the age of the main character.
- More specific descriptive information that shows instead of tells; instead of describing a man as 'old', describe his white hair, slow gait and mottled hands.
- Dialogue of what the characters actually say, rather than summaries.

The next day, Everett and I went to Kirby's visitation. It was not the best time to meet most of his 21 cousins. Kirby's daughter inspired me to write Grandpa's eulogy on the drive home that afternoon.

New Year's Eve day was Grandpa's funeral. That night and the next several days, I spent staying with and caring for my grandma. Although far from my happiest holiday season, it was my most memorable.

CHALLENGE FOR MARCH: When and how did you learn to write?

Or

PENWHEELS TWENTY YEARS CELEBRATION
What Penwheels means to me!

Material to add interest or create suspense.

A better opening or closing line.

You may need to move:

- Dramatic sections to make a stronger opening.
- Early information to where the reader really needs to know it.
- Essential information nearer the beginning of the book.
- Descriptive passages to add tension and suspense to incidents.
- Words, phrases and sentences to make a better rhythm.

In your final edit:

- Check for grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes.
- Ensure you have no continuity errors.
- Pay particular attention to the first and last lines of any section or scene.
- Smooth out any awkward words and phrases.



PENWHEELS 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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