

# Penwheels Newsletter



## Summer 2016

*For Escapees Writers, Published or Not*



### Tips From Jaimie

By Jaimie Hall Bruzenak  
[RetiretoanRV.com](http://RetiretoanRV.com)

📖 [Writers Weekly newsletter](#) has a short but good article on copyright infringement. Whether it is a book or a blog, you can't just publish someone else's work.

📖 If you are into history, Arizona has an annual history convention. It was held this year in Yuma in April. Writers are invited to submit papers and give talks. Several members of the *Arizona Professional Writers* group, an affiliate of the *National Federation of Press Women*, that I belong to, presented or attended. You might find similar organizations and publications for your history passion.

[Papers for the 2017](#) conventions will be submitted in the fall.

📖 A publication that uses short and long stories and pictures about the West is [True West](#). You can find the link for submission guidelines on the webpage. For Western history buffs, this is a great magazine.



### Braggin' Rights

By Joanne Alexakis

**Betty Mulcahy** SKP#76334 - *Avoid Injury And Vehicle Damage - Wildlife Crossing*. Betty writes about being aware of "furry, feathered and scaly animals" while driving our nation's roads. Page 62.

**Joanne Alexakis** SKP#19367 - *Iowa Travel Stops* (in the SKP Stops section). Joanne tells about visiting Antique Archaeology (home of American Pickers) and Kevin Costner's Field of Dreams movie set. Page 86.

**Cheryl Keefe** SKP#68640 - *RVs in Bloom* (in the Viewfinder section). Cheryl has a photo of redbud trees blooming at a Branson, Missouri RV park. Page 91.

All from the *Escapees Magazine*, March/April 2016 issue.

### New Penwheels Members

*Since Last Update*

Bill Mead SKP#112389

Linda Needham SKP#41579

Janet Shaw SKP#111544

Jewel Star SKP#1243311

Karen Kelley SKP#124854

### This Issue

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Flash Fiction

From the Editor

The World of Publishing

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*Penwheels* is a private group of Escapees members who enjoy writing and discussing the writing adventure.

The Penwheels Newsletter is digitally published quarterly. Free to all! members via eMail and online.



## Follow the Yellow Brick – Process?!?

By Ellen Behrens

[www.ellenbooks.com](http://www.ellenbooks.com)

Are you drafting like mad? Good for you! You're already following the process:

### **Draft. Revise. Edit. Proofread. Polish.**

You should be running like a train on the tracks when you're drafting. If a train scootches even a fraction off that track – whammo! Disaster. Same for you.

But what about the rest of the process? Picture a triangle, heavy side balanced on the tip:



**DRAFT:** Get the story into words. Tell yourself you can't screw this up: it's a draft. Relax. Have fun. Explore all the avenues of plot, character, setting. Don't stop writing until you have a beginning, middle, and end.

**REVISE:** Revise any rickety plot issues. Make the characters believable. Fill any holes. Speed things up or slow things down. Check the tone and point of view. Make the story as readable, as interesting, as "real" as you can.

**EDIT:** Read closely. Fix any inconsistencies. Make your sentences sing. Correct grammar and punctuation boo-boos.

**PROOFREAD:** Spell-check. Grammar-check. Double-check. Triple check. Don't rely solely on your software's embedded tools – these are not reliable, especially with homophones. If you don't trust yourself, hire someone to do this for you.

**POLISH:** Check your formatting, chapters, and page numbers. Make the manuscript look professional.

Think because you're writing a short story you can skip a step? Think again. Shortcut the process and you risk the final quality of your writing. The good news is the process is recursive, meaning you'll probably do some revising and editing while drafting, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't go back through the entire manuscript to follow the full process.

If you're publishing your work, especially a novel, you'll go through much of the process at least one more time with your editor, plus you'll have a galley proof – more editing. Good writing takes time. Period.

New fiction writers often complain they spent hours and hours on something that ended up getting cut or was revised so completely writing it in the first place felt like a waste of time. If you decide to look on those lost pages as part of your learning process, you'll realize nothing was wasted.

No one has said it better than *W. Somerset Maugham*: "There are three rules for writing the novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are." Understanding the inverted triangle process is the next best thing to knowing *Maugham's* mythological three rules: it can get you down the yellow brick home toward home better than most other paths you could follow.

In a dilemma about something you're working on? Have a topic idea? Drop Ellen an e-mail at [ellenbehr@aol.com](mailto:ellenbehr@aol.com) or – better yet! – **post it on the Penwheels forum so we can all benefit!**

*Ellen Behrens' newest Rollin RV Mystery, Yuma Baby, is due any day now. She is a former fiction editor and the recipient of an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship. She and her husband have been living the "full-timer" RV lifestyle since 2009. Learn more about her books at [www.ellenbooks.com](http://www.ellenbooks.com).*





## From Joseph Lacey

### I'm one of the 10% (who didn't get the word)

Good Saturday morning, folks

Yes, it happened more than 3 years ago. I didn't realize there was a term for it (not 10%). **Digital Detox** is the term. I'll share the term in a few minutes.

For some time, I'd been an emotional wreck. In addition to the normal stress, we all encounter in our daily lives; **I was digitally tuned in.**

One day I snapped. I turned off the radio and the TV. I didn't read newspapers, and I didn't participate in social conversations.

Of course, I couldn't totally avoid billboards and snippets of public conversations... but I succeeded avoiding more than 90% of outside communication.

Within a month, I became a *Ten Percenter*. I was woefully ignorant of the world and local events. That included politics. (A blessing).

I no longer knew the local gossip.

People started to notice a difference in my attitude. I listened more intently. I was interested in the person. (I also complained less)

I felt wonderful... (Being ignorant can be mentally beneficial)

My personal productivity soared. No distractions.

My posture improved. I'd started the 33.33-minute timer habit. I'd read people usually have a 33.33-second concentration span. After that, mental activity tends to drain off.

I set my timer to 33.33 minutes. When it 'dinged'... I stopped what I was doing and took a five to ten minutes break from the computer.

It kept me from having a sore butt (you know the feeling...you get so involved, you have the same stiff posture, including cramped fingers and a stiff neck).

Working at the computer was the culprit. I desperately needed Digital Detox.

Wikipedia describes this condition...

**"Digital detox** refers to a period of time during which a person refrains from using electronic connecting devices such as smartphones and computers. It is regarded as an opportunity to reduce stress or focus on social interaction in the physical world. Claimed benefits include increased [mindfulness](#), lowered anxiety, better appreciation of one's environment and becoming more people-oriented.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_detox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_detox)

Think about it. Have you heard or read this, "...a feeling of irritation if separated from your device"?

How about this gem, "...looking at your phone first thing when you wake up, ignoring people when you are at your digital device"?

### Want to be a 10% person?

If you relate to those habits, there is a solution.

Plan "digital detox" breaks. Go for a walk. Talk to a person instead of email or texting them.

Step back into yesteryear before digital technology captured us.

Don't totally boycott technology. Organize time to enjoy your life. Don't allow digital technology to plan your life.

## Help!

Penwheels needs a representative at the Escapade in Vermont. If you are planning on attending and would like to represent us on the ROW, please let Joanne know. Many perks!  
([joalexakis@earthlink.net](mailto:joalexakis@earthlink.net))

# Flash Fiction

## The Parade

By Sylvester Lewis (a.k.a. Louis Silvestri, #9919)

It was going to be a glorious day for the parade. The sun was shining. The slight breeze was crisp and fresh. And, he was early enough to get one of the best viewing points – the wall.

He managed to pull himself to the top and roll over into a sitting position. Clapping his hands and swinging his legs, he could hardly contain himself.

"You'd better be careful, that's a mighty big drop" his friend called out. "I'm going down front," he added, elbowing his way through the crowd.

"Don't worry about me. I'll be okay up here" he answered. They're about to start. Oh, my. Oh, my. Look! Look!" he shouted as he craned his short little no-neck to get a better view.

He could see the Drum Major in his bright red uniform with the shiny brass buttons as he pumped his baton, setting the tempo. ".....five, six, seven, eight....".

The sudden blare of the trumpets scared the wits out of a flock of foraging pigeons sending the terrified birds knocking into each other as they frantically flew away, helter-skelter, searching for safety.

The oom-pah-pahs of the tubas shook the quivering leaves from the trees. And, the clip clip clippety clop of the horses hooves seemed to echo the pulsing in his temples.

The sight of the riders, with uniforms that matched the Major's, and their high feathered hats bobbing up and down in time with the hoofbeats, excited him even more.

"Isn't this terrific? Just so great. No one will ever forget this day," he thought.

"Here they come! Here they come," he shouted, twisting and turning to get a better view.

They were about to pass in front of him. He scrambled to stand up on the wall. "Beautiful! Beautiful!" he called out to no one in particular and wildly began waving his arms.

Suddenly, his heel caught the front edge of the wall and, like Newton's apple, he crashed to earth.

His friend, hearing the commotion behind him, turned and pushed his way through the horrified crowd. He almost fainted at the sight. His knees started to buckle. "Oh, my gosh!

Yuucccchhh!" He turned and started to run to the house as fast as he could.

She was standing on the porch wiping her hands on her apron. Just as he reached her he cried out "Mrs. Dumpty! Come quick. Humpty had an accident!".

(Footnote: Alas, all the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again.)

## The End

### Flash Fiction Challenge

Every Saturday at 9 a.m. Pacific time, [Indies Unlimited](#) hosts a *Flash Fiction Challenge*.

**The Rules:** In 250 words or less, write a story incorporating the elements in the picture presented and the written prompt. Do not include the prompt in your entry. The 250 word limit will be strictly enforced. Please keep language and subject matter to a PG-13 level. Entries that deal primarily with sex, religion, or politics will be removed. Use the comment section on the prompt's page to submit your entry.

**The Schedule:** Entries for that week's prompt are accepted until Tuesday at 5:00 PM Pacific Time. On Wednesday afternoon, we open voting to the public with an online poll for the best writing entry. Voting will be open until 5:00 PM Thursday.



## FROM THE EDITOR

### ***Tips for Formatting Your Book Correctly in Word***

This article by *Caleb Clayton* appeared in [Indies Unlimited](#) recently. Using Word to write your book is always a challenge. These tips can help.

- Why do I have an extra space between my paragraphs?
- Why are my headings not centered?
- How do I embed live links to my Kindle books in the back of each book?

Find the answers to these questions [HERE](#).

### ***5 Steps to Writing and Publishing an eBook***

#### **1. Write the content.**

- Use short sentences and short paragraphs.
- Write to the 5th-grade level.
- If you need help with punctuation or grammar, search the Internet for a professional editor, or give it to a friend to read.
- Save as Word 2003 if using Calibre.
- When the content is finished, save the file as *HTML Filtered* if using Calibre for conversion.

#### **2. Convert to the correct format ePub or Mobi.**

- Using *Calibre* for the eBook conversion: install the [free conversion software](#). Using *Calibre*, convert your *HTML file* to Mobi (for Amazon) and ePub (for B&N and everyone else).
- Using *Atlantis* for the conversion, ePub is automatically created with one click. Download [KindleGen](#) from Amazon to convert the ePub to Mobi. In *Windows Explorer*, drag the ePub onto KindleGen. A black prompt window opens and generates the Mobi file.

#### **3. Review the content.**

- Install the free software, [KindlePreviewer](#), so you can review your book as it looks on the Kindle eReader (not exact).
- Install [Sigil](#) to review your ePub content as it looks on the Nook.
- Rewrite as necessary. This is the time-consuming step that often takes months.

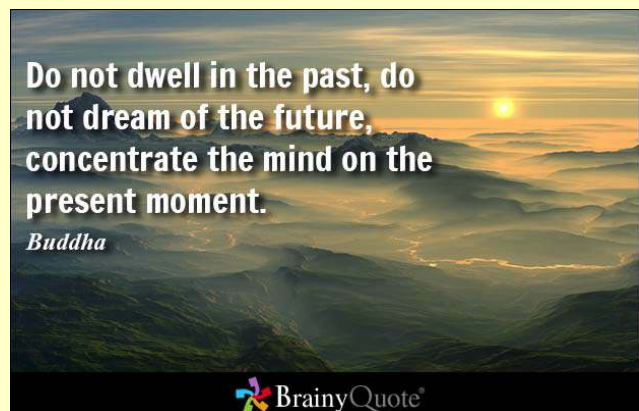
#### **4. Create the cover.**

If you need help, search the Internet for a professional artist. Do not publish without a cover if you actually want to sell your book.

#### **5. Put your book on sale.**

- Upload the completed eBook and cover to the major eBookStores. To start, I recommend [Amazon](#) and [Nook Press](#) (*Barnes&Noble*).
- No ISBN necessary, no Digital encryption, no review by a peer group, no critics of any kind; just upload and within hours your book is on sale to the general public.

This is an excerpt from Margo Armstrong's eBook "*Writing & Publishing eBooks, One Person's Journey*," available from Amazon., Barnes&Noble, Apple iBooks, Kobo, Scribd, and eBookstores worldwide. Also available on her website in PDF format for the PC/Mac: [TheMaxwellGroup.net](#).



# THE WORLD OF PUBLISHING



## What Works: Promo for eBooks

*J. A. Konrath*

His [2011 blog post](#) is worth reading again and again.

J.A. Konrath makes five points about promotion, then adds information all writers just getting into the self-publishing business need to know. As he lays out the truth as he sees it, find something you can use.

1. Sales Fluctuate.
2. Remember the Four.
3. The More the Merrier.
4. Exploit All Platforms.
5. Practice Makes Perfect.

Since 2004, Konrath stepped through all the promotional hoops suggested by writing blogs everywhere: Book signings, attending conventions, using social media, and placing ads in all the right places. These steps are touted by publishing gurus as the path to success.

Here are his new rules:

1. Use Your Fans.
2. Use the Social Networks.
3. Change Your Price.
4. Write More.
5. Diversify and Experiment.
6. Use Your Peers.
7. Prioritize It.

Be prepared! This must-read post may change the way you look at your publishing goals.

**Joe Konrath** has sold more than *three million books* in twenty countries. He's written twenty-four novels and over a hundred short stories in the mystery, thriller, horror, and sci-fi genres.

Known for combining incredible action, hair-raising scares, and big laughs, Konrath has received over 10,000 Amazon reviews for his work, averaging 4.2 stars out of 5. He's been a #1 Amazon bestseller on three different occasions, and has been in the Top 100 bestseller lists over twenty times. He's twice won the *Love is Murder Award* for best thriller, and has also won the *Derringer Award*, and the *Ellery Queen Readers Choice Award*, and has been nominated for many others including the *Anthony*, *Macavity*, and *Gumshoe*.

## Blogs That Provide Publishing News

From [DigitalPubbing.com](#) comes a list of blogs that provide the latest in the publishing world. Some of them cover the publishing industry, including news, book deals, and job moves. Others give updates on the indie world, such as Amazon algorithm changes or hot book genre trends. And some speculate on the future of publishing, and how digital affects the way books are made and consumed.

- The Book Designer
- The Bookseller
- Chris McMullen
- The Creative Penn
- Digital Book World
- The Digital Reader
- GoodeReader
- The Guardian (Self-publishing section)
- Jane Friedman
- Joe Wikert's Digital Content Strategies
- LibraryJournal Info Docket
- The Passive Voice
- Publisher's Lunch
- Publisher's Weekly
- Publishing Perspectives
- Publishing Trendsetter
- The Scholarly Kitchen



## New Publishing Companies

Some new self-publishing services are springing up. *Writer Beware* is staying on top of these newcomers to see if they offer professional services or scams.

**BookFuel** is apparently on the high end neighbor between \$2,500 and \$4,100 depending on the package. They also offer kickbacks to editors for referral business, **so beware**.

**Book Excellence Awards** is a brand-new awards profiteer, so keep your eye on this one. A hefty entrance fee is charged with no cash prize.

According to *Writer Beware* there are many of these profiteering awards programs that prey on writers' hunger for recognition and exposure but offer little or no benefit despite their grand promises and high fees. Don't fall for these cynical attempts to make an easy buck.

[For the rest of the story...](#)

## More on Paper vs. Digital

The [Digital Reader](#) adds more information to the discussion of whether children and adults gain more benefit from reading paper or digital devices.

When it comes to reading on paper versus reading digitally, there are a hundred and one conflicting and contradictory studies that show that one format is better than the other.

Students have higher reading comprehension with print, one study shows. No, they don't, concludes another. Turning books into games hurts reading scores, but reading digitally can (in some cases) require less mental energy.

There was an article in [Scientific American](#) this past week that discussed new research which is beginning to show that (in terms of reading comprehension) **mixed media is winning** out over either print or digital books.

## Understanding Contracts and Arbitration Clauses

Recently, the *New York Times* published a fascinating three part series of articles on arbitration clauses, and how such clauses "buried in tens of millions of contracts have deprived Americans of one of their most fundamental constitutional rights: their day in court." (You can also listen to an interview with the articles' author on NPR.)

The articles deal mainly with consumer and employment contracts, in which, according to the *Times*, arbitration clauses have created "an alternate system of justice" where "rules tend to favor businesses, and judges and juries have been replaced by arbitrators who commonly consider the companies their clients."

But arbitration clauses are increasingly common in publishing contracts, too--as well as in the *Terms of Use* of some major self-publishing platforms. And most authors don't understand their implications.

[Read the rest of the story...](#)

## Google Closes Its eBook Publisher Portal

Nate Hoffelder, in his post on [The Digital Reader](#), discussed the closing of *Google Books*. Is it permanent or temporary?

"It was around this time last year that I broke the news that Google had a industrial-scale piracy problem. I showed how ebook pirates were basically setting up their own eBookStores in Google play, pirating ebook after ebook with impunity. All Google did to fix the problem was to remove eBooks in response to DMCA notices and issue a bland statement about "taking the issue seriously".

Google proceeded to ignore the negative press coverage, but they did finally respond when the Dutch publishers trade group NUV demanded that Google fix it.

Google responded by closing the publisher portal to new signups on 25 May 2015."

## ***You Can't Destroy the Village to Save it***

The august body of the Electronic Frontier Foundation has been fighting DRM (Digital Rights Management) it seems forever. Their efforts to keep the Internet open and available to all has worked so far. But it is a slippery slope, as more corporate and government strategies are uncovered.

"The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the non-profit body that maintains the Web's core standards, made a terrible mistake in 2013: they decided to add DRM—the digital locks that train your computer to say "I can't let you do that, Dave"; rather than "Yes, boss"—to the Web's standards.

At the time, we fought the proposal on a principled basis: DRM has no place in the open Internet because of the many ways it shuts down legal, legitimate activities.

We lost.

So we came back with a new proposal: the W3C could have its cake and eat it too. It could adopt a rule that requires members who help make DRM standards to promise not to sue people who report bugs in tools that conform to those standards, nor could they sue people just for making a standards-based tool that connected to theirs. They could make DRM, but only if they made sure that they took steps to stop that DRM from being used to attack the open Web.

[Read the rest of the story...](#)

The moral of the story is "do not check the box for DRM" when you upload your content to Amazon or any other portal. If you need a practical reason: the older eReaders cannot access your book.

The fight for Internet freedom cannot be won without your cooperation. Every day a battle is waged on a corporation, such as Verizon, that embedded software to keep customers from blocking ad sites on non-Verizon websites.

Keep fighting the good fight. Keep the Internet open!

## ***DMCA is Out of Control***

The Digital Reader Caution: A DMCA Troll may take down your website.

Nearly all creators know that they need to keep their copyright so that they can control their creations, but even though it's 2016 some still forget to apply that same principle to their online presence.

If you don't own your online presence you're just one bogus DMCA notice away from being shut down. It doesn't matter if your content is on WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Flickr, Youtube, etc, if it is someone else's platform then you're still at risk. (And even though I use a self-hosted WP site, I too am at risk because I don't control the server - but I do control my backups.)

To be fair, Google (Blogger) and Automattic (WordPress) are less inclined than they used to be to simply wipe your site from existence, and Automattic has even struck back at trolls who abuse the DMCA, but those are the two bright spots in a dark cloud. Both Tumblr and Youtube, to name a couple examples, will take down an entire account in response to the most ridiculous DMCA notices.

[Read the rest of the story...](#)

[Wikipedia](#) definition of *Troll*:

In Internet slang, a troll is a person who sows discord on the Internet by starting arguments or upsetting people, by posting inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community (such as a newsgroup, forum, chat room, or blog) with the deliberate intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion, often for their own amusement.

This sense of the word "troll" and its associated verb trolling are associated with Internet discourse, but have been used more widely.

Media attention in recent years has equated trolling with online harassment.