



Penwheels Newsletter

Fall Issue 2017

For Escapees Writers, Published or Not

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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.

[Archives available here.](#)



Jaimie's Tips

Jaimie Bruzenak

Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous. Winston Churchill loved them. Below are some examples.]

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. On the other hand, you have different fingers.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
6. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
7. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
8. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.
9. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
10. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian, any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.



Goodbye to Kay

Joanne Alexakis

R.I.P. Kay Peterson 1927 - 2017

We are heartbroken to report the passing of co-founder, **Kay Peterson**. She and her late husband, Joe Peterson, founded the club in 1978, and continued to serve Escapees members until 1990 when leadership of the club was passed to their daughter, Cathie Carr, and her husband Bud.

From writing and publishing the club's early newsletters, in the 1970s and 80s, to advising the current board of directors in her later years, Kay maintained a strong connection to the club and its members.

Her grandson, and Escapees RV Club president, Travis Carr, described Kay perfectly. "While this news is deeply saddening, we must all remember that Kay lived one of the fullest lives any ninety-year-old could ever hope for. She accomplished every goal she set for herself, and her every dream has been realized."

In addition to her work with Escapees RV Club, Kay was an accomplished writer, producing reference books and pamphlets for RVers.

She also wrote several novels loosely based on her experiences traveling around the world.

Her book, *Chasing Rainbows*, an anthology of short stories inspired by people she met while traveling, is a favorite among RVers thanks to her wry sense of humor and candid way of writing.

(continued)

Joe and Kay were inducted into the MH/RV Hall of Fame in 2001, in recognition of their support of the RVing community. They were honored again in 2010, when RV Business magazine included them in the 100 most influential people in the RV industry for their work in RV advocacy, support services and fostering a sense of community among RVers.

Their work has touched the lives of thousands of RVers. As long-time Escapees member Karen Cannon shared, "Many people's lives have changed because of what she and Joe started. We will always be grateful for them both!"

The family has asked for privacy at this time. Cards and other sentiments may be sent to the Carr family via Escapees headquarters at 100 Rainbow Drive, Livingston, TX 77351. Memorial service arrangements will be announced at a later date.



From the BOF Director

Loekie Sailer

Good morning, friends, and I hope you're having smooth roads and sunny skies where you are.

Summer has come to most of us and I can hear the excitement in the voices and letters of those members that have contacted me. The plans that were loosely laid earlier in the year are now in motion as well as the wheels of the Escapees' home as they travel paths laid out before them.

Newsletters are full of tantalizing events that are in full swing or soon to come, and the SKPs websites and Facebook pages are brimming with photos of smiling faces and shiny rigs. The plans that were loosely laid earlier in the year are now in motion as well as the wheels of the Escapees' homes as they travel paths laid out before them.

Don't forget to make full use of the Escapees magazine and website for all the events going on across the country (and out of it) that you may want to take part in.

Since I'm speaking of the Escapees website, let me point out an often overlooked portion... *the Benefits Section*. Once you've logged onto the website, if you go to <https://escapees.com/benefits>, you will find loads of information, including travel guides, discounts, safety info and many, many more things that are YOUR benefits for being a member of Escapees!

These are yours to use as much as you'd desire to make your road to freedom easier. Another link that you will enjoy is under Education and is the Webinars that you can reach at <https://escapees.com/knowledge/webinars>.

Again, you must log in first because these are special perks for Escapees members.

New Program to Recognize BOF Member

And last but not least, there is a new program starting up to recognize the hard work of that special individual among your Chapter or BOF that goes the extra mile for your group.

In order to participate, your Chapter or BOF (as a group) should vote to nominate one individual whose particular works set them apart.

Write a short essay stating the reason that this person is deserving to be recognized for their contributions and forward it to me along with a photo of that person in action, if possible.

They will be recognized for their dedication through our Escapees outlets including SKP social media and SKP website. The hardest part for your group will be choosing one person because I know there are many hard-working people out there.

Send the name of nominee & BOF, along with a short essay for publication and a photo of the individual to:

chapterdirectors@escapees.com

Scam Attempt

Once again, one of our Escapees chapters has been targeted by scammers in an attempt to lure a transfer of funds.

They pretend to be a chapter president and appear to come from the email address of the president. As you know, this isn't the first time, nor will likely not be the last, that this has been tried.

Thankfully, each time, the chapter/BoF has not fallen victim to these attempts just by making the effort to confirm by phone or in person that the request is legitimate. I know that there are new officers among some of our groups, and I'd like you to share this information with any of those that are authorized to make monetary transactions for your group.

Regarding emails, please remember to use "bcc" when sending out mass emails in order to protect the recipients against other scamming practices.



Fiction Tips from Ellen

ELLEN BEHRENS

Short Story Or Anecdote?

As fiction editor for a respected literary magazine, I rarely read through an entire short story before I decided whether we would consider it for publication. That shocks a lot of fiction writers.

How could I possibly judge the story's merit without reading the whole thing?

I didn't want to quit reading before finishing, mind you, but too often lousy grammar, slapdash punctuation, and crummy spelling did a story in. We received hundreds of manuscripts to fill just a few publishing slots, so I had the luxury of being very selective.

Sometimes I recognized early on I wasn't reading a story at all but an anecdote, and I reached for the rejection slip.

Why? An anecdote is a simple tale, usually told for entertainment. It's one-dimensional and easily forgettable. It usually turns on a simple "surprise" ending.

While those stories are fun and have their place, I needed stories of depth that would stand the test of time. We submitted stories to the *Pushcart Prize* and other short story awards. We published excellent, well-fashioned stories that resonated with readers long after they finished reading the last word.

In her book *Story Genius*, Lisa Cron defines short stories this way:

"In a nutshell: A story is how the things that happen affect someone in pursuit of a difficult goal, and how they change internally as a result."

Award-winning novelist Clint McCown puts it this way:

"The best storytelling deals with experiences, not events. Events are external, whereas experiences are about what develops in the people to whom the events have happened."

A piece of writing with the sort of depth Cron and McCown describe is what separates an anecdote from a short story. If what you're writing makes a great tale told to friends over a campfire, it's probably an anecdote. A short story worthy of publication requires more than a punch line or surprise ending.

If you write for fun, if your goal is to hand your stories around to friends and family, the line between story and anecdote doesn't matter.

But if you hope to publish, the distinction is worth learning so your editors and readers stay with your story all the way to The End.

The best way to learn the difference—and to get your stories published—is to read the magazines/e-zines where you hope see them published. Every story they've already published is an example of what they're looking for. If your story is similar to those you've read between their covers, your chances are good!

*Ellen Behrens' second novel in her Rollin RV Mystery series, **Yuma Baby**, is now available. Writing her free eBook, **RVing Alphabet**, gave her a chance to share some insights into full-time RVing. It can be found for most e-readers at Smashbooks.com. She is a former fiction editor and the recipient of an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship. She and her husband have been full-time RVers since 2009. Learn about her books at www.ellenbooks.com.*

Does your book need a sequel?

Not every published novel leads to a series. How can you tell if your story needs to continue?

- The overarching plot does not play out to a satisfying conclusion.
- Your characters are other stories that need to be told.
- Your readers tell you so.

The distinction between the overarching plot and the book's main story is an important one. Characters can go on to learn more about a larger storyline, but the main events of a book should come to a satisfying conclusion by the time the reader reaches the last page.

Is your series finished?

This step isn't as easy to pin down. If you try to end the series too quickly, readers will be left with burning questions that could turn into frustration when they find out that you don't plan to continue the series.

[Find out more . . .](#)



Book Review

Joanne Alexakis

WHEN CULTURES COLLIDE

Kay Peterson's newest book, *When Cultures Collide*, finishes her trilogy that started with an African safari in 13 Days in Africa. Right from the beginning, I enjoyed touring Africa.

Getting to view those extraordinary animals in the wild through Kay's eyes was especially fascinating. Initially we met a group of tourists from England and America and their safari guide who all ended up at a Maasai tribal village.

Close relationships resulted with the tourists and Maasai villagers and culminated with many eventual extended-family connections. Their feelings were expressed and explored in Kay's second book in her trilogy, *The Elephant Bond*.

In *When Cultures Collide*, our youngest characters have grown up and now need to decide where their lives are headed.

Ero is a doctor and wants to administer his knowledge and medicine in Africa to the native tribes. Namoka, born and raised in the Maasai village, wants to return to them with the nurse's education she has earned in Britain. She especially wants to assist with girls who have problems with the tribal practice of female circumcision and the resulting genital mutilation. This is a tough subject to face, to read about, and I applaud Kay for bringing it to print..

Ero is on his way to becoming a world-class cosmetic plastic surgeon. He has a beautiful wife, a charming young son, a spacious home, and a hidden love for Namoka. To compound problems, before moving forward, Ero & Namoka must confront the issue of interracial marriage which is unacceptable in Africa.

Their extended safari family becomes involved and offers assistance and resistance. Kay takes us from the USA to Europe to Africa to solve this dilemma. I love globe trotting and I thank Kay for introducing us to these individuals and taking us on this adventure.



Press Release "Inevitable Moments"

Louis Silvestri, a member of our group, has released his latest book.

It's Summer, Relax...

Don't let this hot weather ruin your day. Sit back and let these original short short stories cool you down.

Inevitable Moments, written by Lou Silvestri, contains a collection of quick to read stories about love, mystery, fantasy, humor, and more.

"I like writing these short vignette type of stories. Keeps my mind active," he commented.

"You remember Grandma Moses painting all those wonderful painting at her age? Well, I'm about as old she was, but still think I'm 35. I sort of feel like a Grandpa kind of author." Mr. Silvestri is 88-years-old.

This is his second book, published in June, 2017.

A few lines from his tongue-in-cheek vignettes:

"She reached around and dunked her cigar into a glass of champagne."

"We got word of the assassination plot from Munich a short while ago."

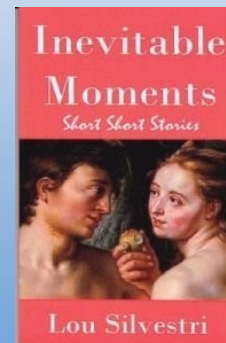
"He kissed him once again, then checked to make sure he had two bullets left."

"Oops! What was that? Was that her foot rubbing across mine?"

"...We'll always have Paris,' he had reminded her."

Perfect reading to put your nervous mind at ease while sitting in your doctor's waiting room, or relaxing in a comfortable chair enjoying a refreshing drink. Makes summer feel grand.

5 X 8 Paperback. 110 pages. \$6.95. Published June 2017. Available by title/author from [Amazon](#) or [eBay](#).





What's in a Name

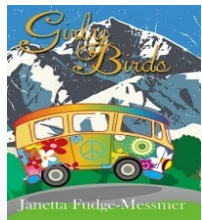
Janetta Fudge Messmer

My maiden name is Fudge. That's right, and it's okay if you laughed. Lots of people do when they hear the odd name. Can you blame me for using it on my books when I became a published author?

Yes, in January 2016 my debut novel, *Early Birds*, came out. We tell everyone that our precious pooch, Maggie, inspired it. She told us to quit our jobs, sell everything, buy an RV and hit the road. We took her advice and have traveled in rig for four years seeing the U.S.A.

Some of you may be asking, "How do you write on the road?" Since Maggie gave me such a great idea for a book (*Early Birds*), I sat down and wrote it, adding a few crazy friends to join them on their adventure. My Christian Comedy was born.

The characters in my first book refused to hush up, so I wrote *Southbound Birds* (October 2016). More antics occurred as the *Early Birds* hit the highways to help humanity once again. You'll wonder if they'll ever get themselves and their RVs moving again.



They did and they wintered in the Sunshine State. But once again my characters beckoned and *Girlly Birds* (a novella) released July 1, 2017. The females in the *Early Birds* series leave their hubby's behind and make a trip to Estes Park, Colorado to help Mary's niece, Jennifer.

Jenny's up to her eyeballs revamping her shop. She's also trying to figure out what's going on with her boyfriend, Peter. He's skipped town. Will their love survive his unexpected trip? Or will all of them learn communication comes in more forms than just talking?

As you can see, traveling gives me time to write. It also gives me plenty to write about. One item I never forget to take when we leave the RV is a notebook to jot things down. Trust me, I've heard conversations that are too priceless to put to memory. These will make it into future books.

How about you? Do you write things down when you're out and about? Have you taken any of them and expanded them into a book? Tell me about your writing projects, I'd love to hear about them. And, if you're interested, take a jaunt over to Amazon:

<https://goo.gl/61CElk>



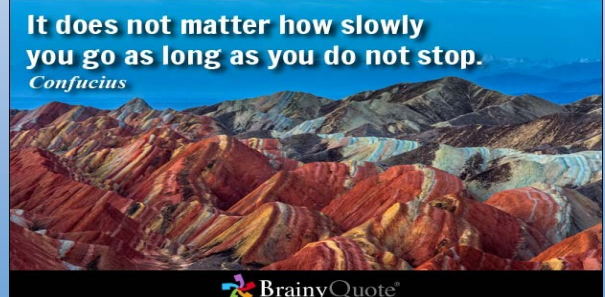
From the Editor

Margo Armstrong

Write Your First eBook

The 12 Step Plan

- 1st. Compile a list of reasons for writing this eBook. Untold story to tell? Bring traffic to your site? Promote your business?
- 2nd. Make sure there is enough motivation to write this book, a niche for it to fill in society.
- 3rd. Set and describe your end goals, for example, free gift or to sell on Amazon.
- 4th. Write down several possible titles and one sentence to start the story, one sentence to end it.
- 5th. Use text files to help organize your thoughts.
- 6th. Decide on your eBook's working title.
- 7th. Write out a paragraph containing a sentence or two stating exactly what plot problem you are addressing and how to solve it.
- 8th. Research your target audience. Current genres are YA, Romance, Thriller, Horror, Christian, Historical, and a few subdivisions.
- 9th. Decide on the format of your chapters. There should be continuity from chapter to chapter. Add a graphic? Use titles or numbers?
- 10th. Explore how to keep your writing engaging. Take a few online writing classes. Read back issues of the *Penwheels Newsletter*.
- 11th. Should you add audio or video? Is it wise to hire an editor or proofreader? Use a professional book cover designer?
- 12th. Decide how to distribute your book. Self-publish? Use a distributor/aggregator, or a vanity press? Find a traditional publisher?



Story Structure: Not Your Enemy

Structuring before writing or anywhere in the beginning of the process hobbles the Muse and creativity stops and progress bogs down. This can make it appear as if story structure is your enemy.

But, if you apply structure at the right point in the process, story structure can be your greatest ally.

To turn structure from foe to friend, follow these four steps:

First Step

Create your story world: What are all the elements you would like in your story? Don't force creativity—just make a list of all things you want in your story—the people, events, messages, and moods you'd like to explore.

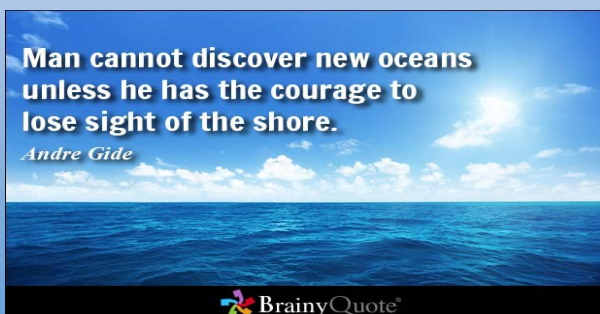
If you have specific ideas for a battle, a line of dialog, a clever plot twist—anything that you want in your story—jot it down. Then, develop those ideas into the world in which your characters live and in which your plot will take place.

Once you feel you have the basic outline of your story in focus, *write a synopsis of your story*. A synopsis talks about what's in your story—not so much the order of events. It is intended as a conversational description of what your story is about, as if someone asked you, "I hear you are writing a novel (or screenplay). What's it about?"

If you answered that question, you wouldn't answer by telling them the order in which things occur. You would tell them about all the major concepts, interesting moments, and principal characters. You would describe your story world so they get an idea of what the finished story will be like. That, is your synopsis.

Second Step

[Read more...](#)



Writing Tip: Chop away deadwood

It's easier to write fewer words right? It seems not. For some reason lots of people have a tendency to use deadwood phrases. These are the wordy ways of saying simple things. For example, we might write "has the ability to", instead of just saying "can". It's really easy to use one of these phrases by accident and they make your writing much less readable. Look through your writing for a simpler way of saying the same thing.

Some other examples are:

- ♦ At this point in time => now
- ♦ Due to the fact that => because
- ♦ In order to => to
- ♦ In the event that => if
- ♦ Prior to the start of => before

What is Narrative?

Narrative is not an artificial construct imposed on fiction nor on the real world, but is simply a name we give to our attempt to understand ourselves and to chart the best way to respond to personal and interpersonal problems and issues.

Where does narrative structure come from? Consider that we all possess certain fundamental human qualities such as a sense of *Reason*, *Passion*, and *Skepticism* to name a few. When faced with problems or inequities in our own lives, we bring all of these qualities to bear in order to seek a solution to the problem and/or see balance to an inequity.

When we come together in groups around a issue of common interest or a common purpose, we quickly self-organize into specialties so that one of us becomes the *Voice of Reason* for the group, while another becomes the *Passionate heart* of the group and yet another emerges at the *Resident Skeptic*, for example.

This occurs because the group purpose is best served when one person spends all his or her time delving deeply into the issue from the viewpoint of *Reason* while another focuses solely on examining the issue with *Skepticism*. Then, we come together to report our findings.

[Read the rest of this enlightening article . . .](#)

How to Keep the Inner Flame Burning

7 Tips from Outstanding Writers

Being a writer does not mean sitting and waiting for the inspiration. It's a life of hard work and perseverance, and each writer must find a way to keep their own inner flame burning.

Below is a collection of 7 approaches from 7 authors, each of whom found their own methods that allowed them to keep producing amazing work.

1. 'If I waited for perfection, I would never write a word.' — Margaret Atwood
2. "Write until you come to a place where you still have your juice and know what will happen next."
— Ernest Hemingway
3. 'If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that.'
— Stephen King
4. 'No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader.'
— Robert Frost
5. 'Easy reading is damn hard writing.'
— Nathaniel Hawthorne
6. 'Protect the time and space in which you write. Keep everybody away from it, even the people who are most important to you.' — Zadie Smith
7. 'Don't take anyone's writing advice too seriously.'
— Lev Grossman

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

The Creativity “Two-Step”

Tricking the Muse

The concept behind this method of finding inspiration is quite simple, really: It is easier to come up with many ideas than it is to come up with one idea.

Now that may sound counter-intuitive, but consider this... When you are working on a particular story and you run into a specific structural problem, you are looking for a creative inspiration in a very narrow area. But creativity isn't something you can control like a power tool or channel onto a task. Rather, it is random, and applies itself to whatever it wants.

[Read on . . .](#)

World of Publishing

Types of Publishing Entities

These four terms describe different publishing entities. What exactly do they mean?

1. Vanity Press: They take your money to publish your book.
2. Predatory Publisher: They take your money to publish your book.
3. Indie Press: Pays you a royalty; keeps some for themselves.
4. Traditional Publisher: Pays you a royalty; keeps some for themselves.

With what we know today about self-publishing, I question why anyone would want to split their royalties with a publisher.

By the way, when you're acting as both publisher and author, don't argue too loudly with yourself during negotiations. It makes people wonder about you.

For the full explanation, [read on . . .](#)

Self-Publishing Questions and Answers

1. Do I need an ISBN for my paperback?
2. Can't I just get a free one from CreateSpace?
3. I changed the cover on my paperback. Do I need a new ISBN?
4. Do I need to register my copyright in the U.S.?
5. I've made a few small changes or corrections to my book interior and/or my cover. How do I change it on Kindle Direct Publishing and/or CreateSpace?
6. Can I quote poems/music/other books in my book?

If these questions haunt you, [read on . . .](#)



Contests

Easy Way to Start Writing

[Reedsy.com](#) offers services for Indie writers. They also offer a weekly short story contest that nets \$50 and a chance to be featured on their blog.

Curated writing inspiration, sent to your inbox.

Every Friday, receive a selection of our favorite prompts. If you feel inspired, enter their weekly Short Story Contest for the chance to win \$50 and have your story featured on their blog!

You can subscribe to their "prompts" email list [HERE](#).

[Science-in-Society Award](#)

There are 5 categories: Books, Opinion, Science Reporting, Science Reporting for a Local or Regional Market, Longform Science Reporting (series or lengthy articles or broadcasts).

Deadline: February 1st, 2018 **Entry fee:** Free
Prize: \$2,500. Genre: Non-fiction, Science Writing,

[Zebulon Writing Contest](#)

Hosted by *Pikes Peak Writers*, the **Zebulon** gives fiction writers, at all levels, the chance to get their work in front of professional agents and editors. The contest simulates the real process of acquiring an agent, serving as an excellent learning experience.

Do you have what it takes to get published? The Zebulon helps you find out.

Contest **opens** September 1st, 2017; **closes November 1st, 2017**, 12:00 p.m., MST. Only the first 200 entries will be accepted. **Entry fee:** \$20.

For eligibility, click [HERE](#).

[Publishizer](#)

As the end of 2017 approaches, *Publishizer* is hosting a book proposal contest in the genres of limitless possibilities and boundless creative freedom: Science Fiction, Fantasy, and everything in between. All entries must be book proposals written in english and 1,000 words long.

Deadline: November 30th, 2017 • **Entry fee:** FREE
Genre: Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction

Warning: Read all the details of each contest carefully. I have no personal experience with any of these contests. If you have questions, search the Internet first.

Republishing Your Old Books

There comes a time in almost every writer's life when you need or decide to republish an earlier book.

It may be because the first edition was packaged according to a traditional publisher's ideas (which may or may not have aligned with yours), or it may be because you want to update the book, correct some early-writer faux pas, or just do a general spring cleaning.

Whatever the motivation, it's your book and you can do with it what you like (with caveats). Here's a quick overview of some things you might consider as you proceed.

Getting Your Rights Back

If your book was originally published by a traditional publisher, you must get your rights back from them before you publish independently. Remember that contract you signed many years ago? Somewhere within that legalese, there's something about giving that company the right to publish your book. There may be a time limit there, or there may not be.

[The Rest of the Story . . .](#)

Lynne Cantwell wrote a great post on the ins and outs of getting your rights back here.

[Read on ...](#)

Writing Positions at FlexJobs \$\$

\$14.95 for one month to access all the flexjobs available; \$29.95 for 3 months, \$49.95 for one year. No other fees. All jobs are guaranteed to be real positions; telecommute and freelance options are featured.

[Wide Open Spaces Contributors](#)

Full-Time Telecommute Job

Freelance position with the option of remote work. Will be responsible for generating content for an online audience of sportsmen & women who enjoy outdoor pursuits such as hunting, fishing, & shooting. WordPress experience preferred.

[Researcher](#)

Full-Time/Part-Time Telecommute Job

Seeking a Researcher for a remote contract opportunity. He/She will conduct genealogical research, in-depth analysis, and write narrative reports. Must be skilled in MS Office. Prior related experience required. Part-time or Full-time role.