



Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not
Spring, 2010

MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

"Writing is an adventure.

To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement.

Then it becomes a mistress, then it becomes a master, then it becomes a tyrant.

The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster and fling him to the public."

~ Winston Churchill

It's been a stormy weather season for us. We survived four unforgettable storms, some reputed to be the worst ever, certainly the worst we have experienced in our ten years on the road but they do make for great stories.

The 100-word Submission for the next Newsletter – *What's Most Important to Me* – grew out of a discussion on the Penwheels Forum about memoirs. I then realized that my book [*Jacob's Tails . . . \(Back-to-the-Land\)*](#) was just that – my memoirs of our seven years going *back-to-the-land*.

A couple of our valued members gave notice this past season. I've included their announcements. Joan and Kay, we hope you will stay in our Penwheels nest with the limited Escapees membership.

Oops! Barbara Bowers pointed out Barbara Kaufmann, not her, wrote *The Man and the Mirror*, Nature's Pathways Magazine, December 1, 2009. It is the prequel to the article: "Michael: Thanks for the Mirror". ***Thanks, Barbara!***

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

Thanks and Enjoy!

Lynne Benjamin

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

This issue:

- Penwheels BoF - Financial statement for 2009
- What's Gone on between Then and Now
- "100 Word Submissions" Writing (Goals) Survey
- New Members and Profiles
- Farewell Announcements
- Contributors
- *I've been published* – Bragging Rights!
- Penwheels History
- BLOG List
- *Memoir Prompts*

"100-Word Submission" for the Summer Issue:

What's most important to Me

Send hard-copy Submissions to:

Lynne Benjamin
c/o Joanne Alexakis
140 Rainbow Drive #4093
Livingston TX 77399-1040

Soft-copies to: 2firststep@gmail.com

Submission due date: June 1, 2010

Announcement from our Membership Volunteer – Joanne Alexakis**The Penwheels BOF newsletter is offered on-line – paperless as well as hardcopy!**

- Registered on the Penwheels electronic bulletin board (<http://groups.yahoo.com>)
 - *On-line only* newsletter subscribers receive 6 issues (1 1/2 year's worth)
 - *Hardcopy* newsletter receive only 4 issues - sent to you via snail mail.

Renewing your Penwheels BoF newsletter subscription is easy!

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

Receive on-line notification of expiration date- (**make sure your email address is up-to-date**)

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

PENWHEELS BoF**Financial statement for 2009**

Balance January 1, 2009	\$451.77
Income Jan 1 - Dec 31	\$280.00
Expenses Jan 1 - Dec 31 (photocopying newsletters, postage)	(\$195.76)

Balance December 31, 2009	\$536.01

Number of members on Jan. 1, 2009 = 71

Number of members on Dec. 31, 2009 = 57

Submitted by Joanne Alexakis, SKP #19367

Penwheels BoF membership coordinator

Submitted - January 1, 2010

What's Gone on between Then and Now**North Ranch Writers' Group – Contributed by Helen Taylor**

The North Ranch Writers' Group keeps on grinding out mostly essays, some from life, some fiction, some prose, some poetry. Everyone gets a chance to read their contribution to the weekly "subject" and hear critiques, if they wish. Some of these are just a hoot. Most are being saved for posterity or whatever. The group will be doing a fourth "Presentation" for any and all North Ranchers or visitors who want to sit in. Each of these has been more fun than can be imagined. Each writer who wants to participate is given a "person to be", a situation or theme of the presentation, and suggestions on details to write about (it's kind of hard to explain - you really have to be there). No one knows what anyone else in the group will actually cook up for their part, but the pieces all do fit together pretty much in the end, providing a little surprise, shock, laughter, all kinds of reactions. We have some really strange sense of humor by some of the writers!

Writers' Get-together at RoVers Roost – Contributed by Lynne Benjamin

While we were at RoVers Roost in Casa Grande from mid-December to mid-January A bunch of us writers got together to talk about writing. I was surprised at how many folks attended our get-together – we are all so different, aren't we. We talked about ourselves and writing and used a *prompt* exercise that Alice sent. Most of us have moved on but there sure is a lot of potential there!

Quartzsite- Contributed by Darlene Miller

Betty Prange led a writers group in Boomerville on Saturday, January 16, 2010 in the RV of Terry and Darlene Miller. Using the writer guidelines of Natalie Goldberg from her book, *Writing Down the Bones*, we wrote using the words, "They loved the surprise."

The surprises were all different but delightful. Introductions were given as we exchanged what type of writing each of us is doing along with our future goals. Terry Miller took the photo of the writers: Sam Penny, Betty Prange, Lee Pease, Carol Lamb, Ginger Lau and Darlene Miller.

**January 21, 2010**

The writers group met at the fire pit in Boomerville and quickly adjourned to the Miller RV because of the wind and spitting rain. A Penwheels Newsletter was shown to anyone who was interested. Betty Prange led the meeting using guidelines from Natalie Goldberg's book, *"Writing Down the Bones."* The writers wrote for ten minutes using the words "the sky was a violent mixture of smoke and ash." The second exercise used the words, "librarian who bought a motorcycle- travel- and goldfish". Again the delightful results were read by the writers. Jaimie spoke to us about her and

Alice Zyetz' new e- book which is a guide for beginning full timers. George read us his short story which he named "The Prospector." After rolling up the carpets, and bringing the slide- in inside the RV, Terry took photos of the windblown and damp group which included Jaimie Bruzenak, George Bruzenak, Lee Pease, Tom Doyle, Betty Prange and Darlene Miller. Later in the afternoon, the worst storm that hit the area in 20 years, pelted rain and wind throughout Quartzsite. Our weather gauge measured 3.84 inches of rain in one hour. Wind gusts up to 80 MPH were reported in the little desert town. Fortunately, Boomerville received only a lost wind sock, a missing front rug and a torn topper over a slide-out RV.

"100-Word Submission" for the Summer Issue:

What's most important to Me

Submission due date: June 1, 2010

Contributions - "100 Word Submissions"
Writing (Goals) Survey

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

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

Contributed by Beth Ramos

1. What I most desire - is to write clearly, daily on a blog that will eventually become a book.
2. The due-date for my goal - The book date is sometime before my 80th birthday (10/24/27)
3. I let other people's "just this once" or it can only happen today priorities overtake my own.
4. Skills? A more assertive posture (learning to say "no" with a smile)
5. Practice, practice, practice.
6. Encouragement, encouragement, encouragement.
7. My first activity and due date is to answer this questionnaire!

Contributed by Helen Taylor - SKP 295

What is the one writing goal you most DESIRE? To finally get something I've written actually, really, truly "published," and for pay, if possible!

1. What is the DUE-DATE for your goal? With any luck, before my 75th birthday, which will be later this year (2010)
2. What are OBSTACLES to achieving your goal? Finding the right place to pursue the publishing.
3. What SKILLS do you need to overcome the obstacles? I just need to stick to it - not give up easily.
4. How will you ACQUIRE them? Develop the mindset to persevere.
5. What ASSISTANCE do you need? A good kick in the butt, or just some pushing by my friends.
6. After answering the questions above - what is your first activity and its due date. Make a decision - quit dillydallying. Due date of March 1, 2010, giving me 30 days to get my act together.

Contributed by Alice Zyetz

1. What is the one writing goal you most DESIRE? To finish writing my mystery story
2. What is the DUE-DATE for your goal? December 1, 2009
3. What are OBSTACLES to achieving your goal? Sitting down finally to do it
4. What SKILLS do you need to overcome the obstacles? Stop talking and start writing
5. How will you ACQUIRE them? DO IT
6. What ASSISTANCE do you need? nanowrimo.org (National Write a 50,000-word Novel in a Month)
7. After answering the questions above - what is your first activity and its due-date? Follow precepts of NaNoWriMo and write 1067 words every day for the month of November.

Contributions that are too long or don't fit the Newsletter can be uploaded as files to the Penwheels Bulletin Board by Alice. If you want a copy of something via snail mail send a SASE to Alice at: 45120 Hwy 79 S, #426 Aguanga, CA 92536 and she will send it to you.

Contributed by B. Bowers

1. What is the one writing goal you most DESIRE? My most desired writing goal is to focus on the enjoyment I get from putting thoughts on paper.
2. What is the DUE-DATE for your goal? There is no specific due date for this goal, it is one that I want to achieve each and every day.
3. What are OBSTACLES to achieving your goal? The biggest obstacles to reaching my goal are focusing too much on writing for publication, worrying that it will not be "good enough", and just doing it.
4. What SKILLS do you need to overcome the obstacles? I have the skills to overcome my obstacles; I just need the courage and discipline to follow through.
5. How will you ACQUIRE them? I already have the necessary skills. I just need to put them into practice.
6. What ASSISTANCE do you need? I might appreciate assistance through people who make me accountable—although in the end, it is to myself that I must be most accountable.
7. After answering the questions above - what is your first activity and its due-date? I think I have already done my first activity towards reaching my goal. I have actually started writing again.

Contributed by Joanne Alexakis SKP#19367

1. What is the one writing goal you most desire?

I remember when I was younger-a lot younger-reading various articles by Maynard Ferguson in the Saturday Evening Post magazine. His short stories were so normal and everyday, but written in such a funny, clever style that they held my youthful interest. I recall laughing at his tales and rereading the pieces several times over just to have another giggle. It felt good to read his articles.

I believe this is my goal, my desire: to write with a flash humor and bring people some cheer and a little enjoyment.

Questions 2 thru 7 are all yet to be answered – give me time.

New Members

Margaret (Margo) Armstrong, SKP#47139 - armstrm@ix.netcom.com

Diane Koeb, SKP#38249 - ddkoeb@escapees.com

Pamela Lear, SKP#104541 - Lear4752@yahoo.com

Welcome Margo, Diane and Pamela!

New Members Profiles

Margo Armstrong, SKP#47139: As an SKP member (12 years) and a fulltime RVer, I have written several articles for the Escapees magazine over the years. My primary writing focus in the past has been computer technology. As a Technical Writer for 20 years in the high-tech industry, I have written hundreds of technical white papers, manuals, brochures, etc.

My goal for the future is to move into a more elevated expression in my writing. It has not been an easy transition moving from "just the facts, madam" to bringing my personal experience and intelligence onto the page. "What Determines..," anticipating that someone in the group can offer some helpful advice. My website that displays all my technical books:

www.themaxwellgroup.net

I am very excited about getting involved with other writers. Hopefully some of you are willing to share your understanding of the writing market.

- What storylines are people interested in reading about?
- How many pages should an eBook contain to give the reader a sense of value?

Diane Koeb, SKP#38249: Hello, my name is Diane Koeb, SKP#38249. We have a lot and trailer in Yuma, Arizona at the KOFA KO-OP, and our full-time residence is in Chimacum, Washington at the Evergreen Coho SKP Park.

I have always had it in my heart and mind to write a children's book. We are blessed with two wonderful grandchildren, and the more I read to them, the more my desire strengthens.

My original thought, with two small grandsons, is to write a book about conscience, which seems to have a different definition today than when I was a child of their age. Then I have some ideas for lighter subjects. Our daughter, the mother of our grandsons, is giving me some great suggestions.

When I was reading the latest Escapee magazine, I felt it was a door opening when I saw the Penwheels BOF. I look forward to any and all help and information I can learn from this group. Thanks, Diane aka Grandma "D"

Alice Zyetz – PWBB Moderator

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 me, Alice (youshoulda@aol.com), as well, letting me know that you have subscribed, so as Moderator I can inform Yahoo to accept your request. Include your name, **SKP #**, and when you joined **Penwheels Bof**. Make sure you sign up for the daily digest once you have been accepted. If you don't start receiving your digests, please contact me. Welcome and many hugs, **Alice Zyetz**, Moderator and **Jaimie Bruzenak**, co-Moderator

Farewell Announcements

Kay Kennedy: Joe and I have also decided to cut our Escapees membership to a limited one since we won't be traveling as much, and certainly not as far in the future. At least that's what we think for now. Anyway, I don't know if I will still be eligible for membership in Penwheels, or not.

I've enjoyed meeting so many of you at Escapade in Wyoming and other RV gatherings, and appreciate all the help I've had from the Penwheels group. I still plan to write, but not be so driven as for the past 25 years! If any of you are in the Cottonwood area, stop by for a cup of java or??? Good luck to you all with your writing endeavors.

Joan Pomeroy: (edited) SKP #75145: After a long time considering our options, Jerry and I have decided to let the membership to Escapees expire, on February 1, 2010. Yuck that almost sound like death...We joined Escapees in 2002 as we were retiring from Los Alamos Nation Lab, Los Alamos, New Mexico. We have been in 49 states, six providences, and parts of Mexico. I became the author of The Pomeroy Travelogues.

I want to thank all of the Penwheels group for your encouragement, support, and friendly dispositions. I sincerely doubt if I will ever find another writers group as wonderful as you have been.

Since joining Penwheel I have become a published author, I have two pieces in *More RV Chuckles and Chuckholes*, *Confession of Happy Campers*, by Darlene Miller that will always

remain in my mind as the perfect example of Robert Burns' "Oh for the gift of God to see ourselves as others see us".

I have also had pieces published in the *Escapees* magazine, *The Los Alamos Monitor*, newspaper from Los Alamos New Mexico, *The Weekly Register-Call*, Black Hawk, Colorado, and our local Texas newspaper, *The Waxahachie Daily Light*.

One of the best lessons I learned while attending the Penwheels meeting: You can not edit your own writing, because you wrote it you won't see the mistakes.

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

Gary Taylor, SKP #86750 www.generationalfathering.com

Beth Ramos, *Reviewed of YA novel Candor* by Pam Bachorz, Celebration Independent News, December, 2009

- Edit our 2 notebooks of condo documents down to a 6 page booklet that makes our covenants/rules understandable. I've also written some
- Poetry and a couple of blog posts that have been complimented by people that matter

Betty Prange, SKP #22195, Cover photo at *Yellowstone National Park*, *Escapees magazine*, January/February, 2010

- *Homes on Wheels*, *Escapees magazine*, March/April, 2010, page 46.

Terry Hager, *RV Rendezvous*, *Escapees magazine*, March/April, 2010, page 14.

Jaimie (Hall) Bruzenak, October 20 page in the desktop calendar, Woman's Advantage.Biz Calendar for 2010.

Lynne Benjamin, SKP # 86190, *Beyond Laughlin: More than Casinos and Bright Lights*, [RV West E-Magazine](http://RVWestE-Magazine.com), November, 2009

- *Death Valley, California: Sun, Sand and Rocks*, [RV West E-Magazine](http://RVWestE-Magazine.com), December, 2009
- *Quartzsite: Before the Tent*, [RV West E-Magazine](http://RVWestE-Magazine.com), January, 2010
- *The Desert I Know and Love*, [RV West E-Magazine](http://RVWestE-Magazine.com), February, 2010

Attention: Contributors to the Escapees Magazine:

When you write the author blurb that accompanies your article, please add a phrase that you are a member of the Penwheels BOF. This will help build an awareness of our BOF in the community. I've met many Escapees in my writing workshops at Escapades who weren't aware there is a BOF for writers.
Thanks and hugs, Alice Zyetz

PENWHEELS HISTORY

PENWHEELS HISTORY

by Historian Doris Hutchins #29167

Featuring Helen Taylor SKP #295



"I've had a couple of articles in the *Escapees* magazine. I've found at least one *Escapees Memories* story. Think this was printed in the *Escapees* magazine, edited down, in the July/August 2003 issue, *Twenty Five Years as an Escapee* also was in the magazine, reminiscing about Escapees in the early years."

Helen receiving 30 year pin from Joe Peterson

EARLY ESCAPEES MEMORIES

and

Whatever Happened to.....???

by Helen Taylor SKP#29

My very best early SKP memory, of course has to do with food, since eating seems to be what Escapees do best! At our first Escapade in Quartzsite in 1980, one of the meals was a Chili "Potluck" of sorts. Everyone made their favorite recipe and took it to the campfire where Joe and Kay had the biggest pot I'd ever seen. All the chili was poured in together, and it turned out delicious!

Our first RV was a 35-foot fifth wheel that we had at the Quartzsite Escapade in 1980. By the following year's Escapade in Hemet, CA, we had "remodeled" it (mainly so we could haul our motorcycle on the rear, without so much "overhang") to a 31-foot rig and had pictures showing the progress of our handiwork as we cut four feet off the rear (living room end) of the fifth wheel: while everyone else seemed to be going bigger and bigger, we had to be different, going smaller and smaller. Later we spent 10 years or more living and traveling full-time in a pickup camper!

Whatever happened to: Joe's traditional ladies lace panties that got passed around to the joke tellers. If I remember, whoever told the best joke (or worst joke!) got the privilege of keeping the panties until the next rally or get together. One early Escapee, a single guy, I think named George, loved to do magic tricks and jokes, but his favorite punch line to everything was, "Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't!" I catch myself using this line often, it seems.

Whatever happened to: Joe's "fine" cup and "sheriff's" badge? Anyone caught at a function without his SKP name badge (Wayne still has and uses his original badge that you got when you joined.) got fined a quarter - into the cup! An honorary "sheriff" was appointed at each function to keep us all honest! Kay's favorite "part" was being a clown. We bought all of Kay's books, which she autographed for us. We have since donated them all to the library at North Ranch.

Whatever happened to: Joe giving back dues paid if someone didn't "fit in" with the Escapees philosophy. He would just invite them right out of being an SKP!

Whatever happened to: NOT using the terminology "Skips" which was definitely frowned upon. We were/are SKPs or Escapees. We knew not only everyone's name, but also their SKP number.

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/>

Carolyn Harris

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

Kay Kennedy

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

Barbara Kaufmann

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

Patty Lonsbary

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

Bess McBride

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

Darlene Miller

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

Marianna and Bruce Nelson

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

Betty Prange

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

Beth Ramos

- <http://www.rootsandroutes.us>
- <http://www.peaceandgood.us>

Elaine Seavey

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

Contributors to this issue of the Penwheels Newsletter:**Joanne Alexakis****Margo Armstrong****Lynne Benjamin****Barbara A. Bowers****George Bruzenak****Jaimie Hall Bruzenak****Terry Hager****Doris Hutchins****Kay Kennedy****Diane Koeb****Darlene Miller****Marianna Nelson****Joan Pomeroy****Betty Prange****Helen Taylor****Gary Taylor****Alice Zyetz****Memoir Writing Prompts**

- My Favorite Relative/Uncle/Grandpa, etc.
- I met my husband.....
- My brothers helped me.....
- My sisters wanted me to.....
- When I was _____ I went to work at _____ doing _____
- I never got to _____
- My first car adventures!
- Mom taught me to _____
- Dad taught me _____
- I dreamed I was fourteen..
- The door opened...
- On the corner stood....
- How I learned about Escapees.
- What was the most exciting thing that happened to me last week..
- The train whistle sounded...
- And then the phone rang

PENWHEELS

An Escapees RV Club Birds-of-a-feather (BOF) group for RVers interested in writing of all kinds. Some are published and some are not. The purpose of Penwheels is to establish a support network of RVing writers for sharing information, discussion, critiques, and socializing in person, snail and electronic mail.

Penwheels is published four times a year. Subscription is \$8 (USD) per year. In order to belong to any SKP BOF group, you must be a member in good standing of the **Escapees RV Club**. You may contact the Club at 1-888-757-2582.

Editorial submissions are best submitted via e-mail to: 2firststep@gmail.com

Or snail mail to:
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PENWHEELS

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