

Penwheels

For Escapees Writers . . . Published or Not

Winter, 2012

MUSINGS FROM THE EDITOR:

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

~ Natalie Goldberg

I can't tell you how often I wonder why I write, or for that matter, why any of us write. I think each one of us writes for different reasons. One writer I met at an Escapees Park told me she wrote only to make a living. Many of us write out of a passion to share our experiences with our friends and families; others want to influence change in the society; while still others may exercise their creative juices by writing fiction.

If your motivation is to sell your writing, it takes an entirely different set of skills than it takes to write. When I first wrote *Jacob's Tails* my biggest challenge was to find a way to publish it. Over and over again, I got the message that publishers were not willing to take on new authors. They wanted either already-published authors or authors represented by an agent.

An agent?? I didn't even know that there was such a thing as a *Literary Agent*.

I self-published first; found that marketing was not my chosen activity; published the book as an E-Book, thinking that I would not need to market it but found that no matter what mode of publishing is chosen *marketing* remains a big part of the process.

It is time for a change!

I want to tell you how much I have learned and enjoyed my experience editing this newsletter over the past five years. I have met so many wonderful fellow writers (both virtually and in person) and have been tremendously influenced by their knowledge and experience – it is immeasurable and never ending.

Having said that, it is time to move on. This will be my last Newsletter – It is time for new ideas and a new approach.

Thank you so much for all your wonderful stories and support.

Thanks and Enjoy! Lynne Benjamin

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

This issue:

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Penwheels Bits and Pieces

Great Writing Experience

We need a volunteer to take over with the Spring 2013 issue. I would be more than willing to work with the new editor for a time. I use MS Word software but WordPerfect is also viable. The goal is to convert it to a .pdf for uploading. Please contact Jaimie Hall Bruzenak at calamityjaimie@gmail.com or post your interest to the forum.

Meet your fellow Penwheelers

Post your photo at the Penwheels website, so we can 'get a look' at each other. It would be awesome for me personally to visit our PW bulletin board and see our entire group smiling back at me.

Joanne Alexakis SKP#19367

What Should We Do With the \$\$\$?

The majority of the responses said that the extra \$\$\$ should go to CARE.

Thank you so much for your input!

New Penwheels Members

Robert Malain SKP# 91630 James Browne SKP# 20964 Cheryl Keeffe *Welcome!*

Cheryl Keeffe's Introduction

A funny thing happened to me on the way to the "forum"...I took the time to read the newsletters and fear that I may be in over my head here. I am still in the wannabe stage of writing and play at my little blog at lifeinacannedham.blogspot.com.

I do this for a couple of reasons - to make me write each day (well, most days) and to keep a chronicle for myself of where and what we've done.

If I am to pursue my wish to be a writer, I need a "push" and joining this group is my first step in chasing that dream.

After reading "When I'm Sixty-four" I could really relate to the lackluster reaction of the family, the people that know you best, and are often the least supportive.

I look forward to seeing where this group takes me and meeting some of you on the road. We just started full-timing six months ago, so this is all very new to me and I've got lots to learn. But what an adventure it will be!

What's Gone on between Then and Now

News from the River Bottom Writers - Contributed by Lynne Benjamin SKP# 86190

This is the new Writers Group I jointed just before we came south this season. I am so impressed with their process and their dedication.

Each week (yes, I said week) they meet and share. First they read a chapter from a "How To . ." book ("A Writer's Book of Days" by Judy Reeves); then they present three prompts and we all write for a ½ an hour and then each writer reads (or not – your choice) what s/he wrote. The energy and creativity in this group are outstanding. They send me the weekly newsletter and I look forward to joining them again when we get back in April.

I have included a couple of ideas from a recent mini writers' workshop facilitated by a local editor, Kaleen Harding in the *Resources Section*.

The A to Z Writing Challenges

"Life in Six Words" - Contribution by Betty Prange

The map unfolded; I was off.

My Life in Six Words – Contributed by Barbara A. Bowers, SKP #77439

Me? Daughter, Sister, Wife, Friend. Self???

All She Ever Wanted by Barbara A. Bowers, (SKP #77439)

All she ever wanted was to enjoy life for the time that she had on earth. Actually, I do not know what she wanted, or if she could even have any wants beyond food, shelter, and love. She was my baby sister. She lived sixteen and one-half months, dying at the same age I had been when our middle sister was born. Although I cannot know what she wanted, I know how she lived: with joy. The seizures began at eight weeks, her brain damaged enough to eliminate speech, walking, or even crawling. However, they could not take away her ability to roll from one end of the house to the other or her ability to giggle. It has been nearly forty years since her passing, but I will never forget the joy of a life too short.

PENWHEELS HISTORY

doris hutchins: historian
18TH ANNIVERSARY.... 1994-2012

Contributed by Doris Hutchins, SKP #29167

- 1994--Myrna Courtney is the founder of the BOF. Just after she started the group, Illa Alfredson took over the newsletter. It didn't go too well and there wasn't much response to the new BOF, so Illa dropped it and Myrna picked up doing the newsletter. She continued to produce a 2 page newsletter, as news was sent to her. There were 10 members in the beginning, and 20 paying members in 1995. Betty Prange became Membership chairman in 1994.
- Some of the early members were Myrna Courtney, Betty Prange, Dick Wood, Joan Wood, Delores Price, Loren Lesher, Christenson, Denise Christenson, Joy Hale, and Arlene Redstone.
- Joanne Alexakis and Jaimie Hall became members in 1995. Jaimie served as editor for two years, Joanne handled Membership. Delores Luhr was a great help in printing and distributing the newsletter. Ed Waters has been contributing at least a poem each issue since 1995.
- Other early members were Verna Baker, Verna Oxford, Jan Lasko, Stephanie Bernhagen, Ed Waters, Joyce Lewis, Harold Michelson, Tom Doyle, Coleen Sykora, James Hussman, Peggy Randall, Jack Stewart, Walter Head, Mary Ann Trevathan, Ken Harnish, Karen Pearson, David

- Bridgeman, Norma Scheall, Roberta Smith, Hyale Smith, Carol Hunter, Jim Cook, Dianne Harlan, and Pat Swann.
- Members who wrote poems and/or stories were Donna Knoth, Peggy Randall, Joe Peterson, Nancy Dole, Jack Stewart, Lou Nach, Frances Armstrong, Ron Shaw, Betty Crawford, Judy Martin, Maxine Stroup, Sharon Klein, Chuck Wright, Judy Myer, Jeanne Albers, Sabine Hartman, Carl Hildebrand, Sharon Cook, Peggy Randall, Lori Nash, and Hayle Smith. Roberta Balfour, Vern Hotchkiss, Yvonne Hill, Joyce Lewis, Joan Hill, Maxine Stroup, Jane Albin, Cliff Jensen, Norma Paci, Norman Crook, Jack Stewart, Donna Freeland, Barb Hansen, Ann Greenwood, David McReary, Roberta Balfour, Carol Mumma, Verna Hotchkiss, Rose Kortright, Phyllis Frey, Sam Penny, John Birmingham, Ray Schneider, Hugh Beattie, Kay Black, Jayne Freeman, Lloyd Treichel, Doris Hutchins, Darlene & Terry Miller, Marianne Wilson. Ann Rose served as editor.
- Writers-in-Residence are RVers who are living in one place (instead of traveling) and who are available to meet with traveling PWers. Carol Ann is listed as our only Writer-in-Residence on the back page of the PWNL.
- The PW BOF members and "wanna-be's" occasionally meet at Quartzsite & Escapades. Penwheels Bulletin Board (PWBB) has been around for about 4 years now. Joanne Alexakis and Jaimie Hall started the PWBB (1999-2000)
- Our Moderator then was Alice Zyetz (Alice passed away in spring of 2012. Currently the position is open)

Myrna Courtney says,

"It is a milestone and has taken the club into the present century".

There are currently over 100 members.

- Sue Cobun did Printing & Mailing in 1997 & 1998.
- Donna Yeaw did Printing & Mailing in Spring 1999
- Alice Zyetz wrote "Writing Practice in 1995".
- Jaimie Hall wrote "Hook into the Internet" in Spring 1998,
- Verna Oxford wrote "My Father Loved Spam", in April 1996.
- July 1997 Carol Mumma wrote "The Most Unforgettable Ladies Room I Ever Saw",1997
- "My Dinner with Kathryn", by Jim Cook
- Joe Peterson wrote an article-"Self Publishing" July 1996 and it was published again in Winter 99
- Carol Ann Sutherland wrote "Someday" in Winter 99
- Ed Waters wrote a poem named "Epiphany"
- Joan Wood wrote "Is There Life After Football?"

Attending Chico Escapade 1999 (submitted by Betty Prange) were Chris Tegger, Elena Montenego, Sam Penny, Dave Holbrook, Marilyn Prewett, Patricia Chesson, Bee Lay, Verna Baker, Judy Myers, Judith Annan, Bob Amdor, Juanita Mujasaki, Betty Crawford, Phyllis Frey, Myrna Courtney, Betty Prange

- October 1995: an eight page newsletter was produced.
- 1996: a contest was held to design a logo for Penwheels. Joanne Alexakis was the winner. Penwheels badges, with the logo, were made available for those interested in purchasing them.
- 1998...Carol Ann Sutherland became Editor
- Winter 1999....Joanne Alexakis became Membership chairman.

2004 - Editor is Joanne Alexakis,

- Membership is Carol Ann Sutherland,
- Printing & Distributing newsletter & Historian is Doris Hutchins.
- Ann Rose served as Editor.

Myrna Courtney says:

"Happily the club began to grow and is now a thriving organization of talented people. What's not to love about that?"

Thanks, Myrna, for giving us this outlet for our creative writing abilities...

De-Junking the Shed - Contributed by Myra Jean Winniford

The book, *Clutter's Last Stand* by Don Aslett, came to me at a time in my life when clutter was overwhelming me. I have always tended to be a clutter bug. When one is young and strong, moving clutter from one place to another or cleaning around the clutter, is work, but manageable. As I've aged, I've found the junk much more difficult to control. I wanted to de-junk my life and the book has been a good guide line. At least it got me started.

Saturday was the target day to clean and de-junk the shed. I started taking things out of the shed a little after 9.00 AM. When I began I could not get into the shed. A few days before I had risked life and limb by standing on a thin strip of floor near the door and hanging onto something solid inside so I could reach an umbrella I wanted to take to the beach. Having so much trouble getting the umbrella convinced me the shed had to be de-junked. If the shed is not clutter free, where would I put the junk I will be taking out of the trailer?

First out was the recycling. I save cans and newspapers and take them to the recycling plant in Harlingen. It has been some time since I've been there, so I had lots of recycling to remove before I could begin on the other things. I also had to be careful removing the recycling as some of the other stuff was balanced on top of it. When I had most of the recycling out of the shed, I placed it in the back of my truck. I needed the rest of the lawn for the other clutter.

As I took things from the shed, I made a number of piles. One pile was items that for sure would go back in the shed. These are things like lawn chairs, lawn tables, garden tools, purchased items bought in bulk and stored in the shed, items used for different events in the park, things I want to keep like my shells and rocks which will eventually be placed in the flowerbeds for decorations and mulch. Another pile was things I definitely want to go in a garage sale. I don't want them but they are too nice to throw in the trash. One was a pile of wood. Some of it I would use and some I would toss. Then there was the biggest pile. This was the items I wanted to think about a bit more.

The shed was full to the door. So even though it is only a 6x6, it took a long time to take everything out. My piles were beginning to crowd each other and the entrance to the shed. I moved a few items I was planning on taking to the dumpster, to the back of my club car. When everything was out of the shed, the junk covered the yard with only trails leading back to the patio and separating the piles of clutter.

Gradually I returned everything in the keep pile to the shed. Then I had to store the garage sale stuff. Finally I began on the undecided pile. By this time my back was hurting, I was exhausted from the heat and I was beginning to burn in spite of the sun lotion I had applied early on. what I wanted most was go inside, shower, and lay down to ease my back. But I had to finish first.

Bit by bit the pile went down. I began to put things on the club car that were destined for the dumpster. It took two trips to take everything I was tossing. I also took a few boxes into the house to sort later. When I finished with that, I locked the shed and looked at the clean yard that had been full of junk earlier. Then I looked at the patio. I still had items there that needed attention. At least the patio was in the shade and there were not very many items to attend to.

One of the garage sale boxes I had taken to the porch to clean as it was shady there. As I was taking care of the last few items I noticed something that needed to go in that garage sale box. When I opened the shed I realized I had packed it to the door and could not get to the garage sale stuff which was in the very back. All my efforts had earned me a clean shed but not a de-junked shed. Now I will have to do it all over again. I think I will start in the cool of the evening next time. I do hope that when I get to the trailer with my de-junking that I have learned to be better at tossing what is not needed.

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

- Margo Armstrong
 - ❖ Writing & Publishing eBooks, One Person's Journey
 - Amazon (Kindle);
 - Barnes & Noble (Nook);
 - .pdf at Margo@TheMaxwellGroup.net
- > Lynne Benjamin, SKP# 86190
 - **❖** *Snowbirding 101, RV West* (a new E-Column every month) http://www.rvwest.com/index.php/snowbirding_101
- ➤ Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361
 - ❖ Winter Camping in Arizona, a popular snowbird destination
- > Terry Hager
 - ❖ Old Dude and Precious on the Road, Amazon.com available by Dec. 1- graphic illustrator, Nanette La Salle
- > Darlene Miller
 - * Article and photographs of talks with Ben Franklin and his wife and Abe Lincoln at the Civil War events, Smoke and Fire News, October 2012

Contributors to this issue of the Penwheels Newsletter

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Lynne Benjamin Terry Hager Helen Taylor
Porkers A. Boyyara Dorie Hytching Myra Joon Winn

Barbara A. Bowers Doris Hutchins Myra Jean Winniford

Resources

Resources for Writing

➤ Contributed by Lynne Benjamin SKP# 86190

Some Suggestions from mini-writers' workshop (The River Bottom Writers) Kaleen Harding Passive Voice

http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/passive-voice/

Ask yourself whether there is an action going on in the sentence. If so, what is at the front of the sentence? Is it the person or thing that does the action? Or is it the person or thing that has the action done to it? In a passive sentence, the object of the action will be in the subject position at the front of the sentence.

- The road was crossed by the chicken
- The fish was caught by the seagull

Other examples of passive:

- He began to shout...... He shouted
- She started to walkShe walked
- Her head shookShe shook her head

Adverbs

https://sites.google.com/site/novelwritingsite/adverbs-in-prose-fiction

• "Jess grabbed the handrail tightly. She looked uneasily up to the dark mouth of the hatch opening. A draft cascaded coldly against her skin. She climbed slowly, steadily to the loft. She hauled herself up and sat despondently on the lip of the opening. She looked down uneasily and could see Justin at the foot of the ladder staring harshly up at her."

• "Jess grabbed the handrail. She looked up to the dark mouth of the hatch opening. A draft cascaded against her skin. She climbed to the loft. She hauled herself up and sat on the lip of the opening. She looked down and could see Justin at the foot of the ladder staring up at her."

Telling Verses Showing

- It was cold (She pulled her wool coat tighter around herself as they stepped outside)
- He was honest (Character trait-definitely want to show this. "He dropped a twenty on the table before they left. He was in too much of a hurry to wait for the bill")
- He was elite (put in a conversation where other characters talk about him in a way that shows his elitism) "Good luck getting an appointment to see him—he doesn't make time for just anyone."
- The building was made of brick (Sometimes it's okay to tell for the sake of wordiness. If this is purely just to set the scene, this is fine as is. If the brick is interacting in the scene, use the other senses to show-"her shirt snagged on the rough wall behind her as he pushed her against the brick")
- She couldn't remember... (This is in a general sense of a plot point-if the character not being able to remember something is pertinent to the story, show the scene on how it plays out. Don't go into length telling what happened, especially at the beginning of the book.)
- The living room was ugly and smelled bad (The orange and brown paisley couch clashed with the bright red shag. The smell of week old fish was suffocating)
- Spring had sprung (Blossoms were in full bloom on the apple tree)
- She was scared (Her hands shook as she grasped the doorknob).

Careful not to overdo physical symptoms, or they lose their effect.

Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361

New Words – The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again invited readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are the winners:

- 1. Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time
- 2. Ignoranus: A person who's both stupid and an asshole
- 3. Intaxicaton: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with
- 4. Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly
- 5. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
- 6. Foreploy: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid
- 7. Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high
- 8. Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it
- 9. Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late
- 10. Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)

The Washington Post has also published the winning submissions to its yearly contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common words. And the winners are:

- 1. Coffee, n. The person upon whom one coughs
- 2. Flabbergasted, adj. Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained.
- 3. Abdicate, v. To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
- 4. Esplanade, v. To attempt an explanation while drunk.
- 5. Willy-nilly, adj. Impotent.
- 6. Negligent, adj. Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.
- 7. Lymph, v. To walk with a lisp
- 8. Gargoyle, n. Olive-flavored mouthwash.
- 9. Flatulence, n. Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller.
- 10. Balderdash, n. A rapidly receding hairline (Everyone having a high forehead appreciates this concept)

Resources for Selling

Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak, SKP# 19361

- ➤ Interesting statistics- from American Association of Publishers Seen in "Publish Your Own eBooks," an online newsletter.
- Revenues from children's and young adult e-books were up to \$146.4 million in the first half of 2012, an increase of 252% over the same period last year. At the same time, adult trade e-books were up 34.4% in the first half, a marked slowdown from triple-digit growth a year earlier. Meanwhile, trade paperback sales are down about 20%, presumably losing sales to e-book buyers.
- Overall, e-book sales accounted for about 25% of total trade sales, up to \$768 million for the first half, an increase of 52% over the same period last year, according to Publishers Lunch.

Resources for Publishing

The Guardian - Worldwide Freelance Newsletter is reporting massive growth in self-publishing with the sector growing 287% in the last five years and more than 200,000 titles published last year in the US. **Contributed by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak**, SKP# 19361

These were seen on my LinkedIn newsletter and thought they were worth a mention:

- "Why ebook distribution is complete and utterly broken and how to fix it." A lengthy article that ebook readers and sellers should read. Amazon dominates the market but, if you buy from Amazon Kindle, your entire Kindle library could be wiped out in a minute if the giant decides to.
 - http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2012/11/02/why-e-book-distribution-is-completely-and-utterly-broken-and-how-to-fix-it/
- Have you ever started typing in a search phrase in Google and seen the choices that come up
 that you can choose from? This site has printed them and calls them "Google Poetic." Pretty
 cool! http://www.googlepoetics.com/
- There are apps for writing poems. See seven at http://mashable.com/2012/04/08/poetry-apps/Click on the arrow to advance from one to another. (You could list them, if you want!)

Measuring Writing Success - Contributed by Diane Craver (outside contributor)

A few weeks ago on a Sunday afternoon I received a surprise call from an elderly gentleman, Bob. I recognized his name instantly because I knew him from being the photographer at various school events. He'd taken pictures of our children at First Communions, graduations, and had even taken videos at our local public high school back when our older children had their commencements. He'd also been a high school principal and had accomplished many things during his lifetime.

He explained he had a reason for calling me. Bob told me how he was writing a book about the successful people in our township. He then told me about some of the people he had already interviewed for his book. A few had made their immense fortunes in their own start-up businesses and companies. During the conversation he mentioned how he wanted to interview me. Apparently, my name came up when he'd discussed his book with others. I was shocked. I'm not a bestselling author with a big New York publishing house. I thought about mentioning to him that I wasn't famous or wealthy like the other people he had already interviewed.

But I changed my mind when Bob told me, "I'm legally blind so I can't drive any longer. You'll have to drive to my house for the interview." I told him that I'd be happy to be interviewed for his book.

On the planned afternoon, I drove to his house and was greeted by Bob and several huge, well-behaved dogs. I learned Bob definitely was blessed with a gift for storytelling. Before he

started interviewing me, Bob shared so many fun and interesting stories about his life and about the choices he had made as a young man. I enjoyed hearing how he met his wife and how much our small town means to him and to his family. Then he got to my interview and explained that he would have to tape my answers. Sometimes he would stop the recording to tell me something he remembered about someone in his book or about life in general. I realized we both have a deep love for our families, and we know what is really important in life.

If your books haven't made the New York Time's Best Selling Book List and you don't have tons of money in your bank account from your writing, don't fret. Maybe we shouldn't feel valued only by the amount of royalties earned from our writing. How many times have people emailed you or told you in person that your book has meant so much to them? Our books can touch people on some level when we reach deep inside our core to write with passion. Whether you write non-fiction or fiction, your words might have helped some individuals in a dark place to have happier and brighter days. Reaching out to others with the written word will always be important.

People in your lives might share with others how they personally know you and think you are an amazing writer. Maybe your fiction has given them a sense of purpose and hope as they enjoy their escape from their daily lives to another world while absorbing your stories. Word of mouth in this special way means more and more readers will buy your books.

There might even be a Bob in your life wanting a bit of your time because, in your very own spot in the world, people are sharing about you, their local author. Each writer needs an audience somewhere so why not start in your own hometown?

Diane Craver has a new Amish romance, A JOYFUL BREAK (Dreams of Plain Daughters, Book One) and is available in print and ebook. She has recently reissued a romance, MARRYING MALLORY. Diane has published through a variety of houses, including BookLocker.com, Samhain, Whimsical Publications, and Victory Tales Press. To learn more about Diane and her writing, visit her website & blog at: http://www.dianecraver.com and http://www.dianecraver.com/blog.

BLOG and Web-site List

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PENWHEELS

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

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

Editorial submissions are best submitted via e-mail to Doris Hutchins: valentineDH@GCI.net

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PENWHEELS

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