



For Writers Published... Or Not

Fall 2022



NaNoWriMo Inspiration

by Jaimie Bruzenak

During NaNoWriMo, the National Novel Writing Month of November (<https://ywp.nanowrimo.org>), the goal is to write 50,000 words or 1,667 words/day. The discipline of writing is appealing. But what if you are not a novel writer? You can still participate. One year I chose a topic a day to write about and completed my goal that way. I was doing an RV-related blog so many were usable. If you don't have a blog and don't write fiction, I have a suggestion for this year!

I'm doing Story Worth. It's a way to write your memoir but in perhaps a more interesting way than a chronological report of your life. For 52 weeks, Story Worth sends a question each week to write about. If you don't like the question, you can modify it, choose another one or make up your own. You could write about 30 of the questions during NaNoWriMo and have more than half your book finished. Yes, at the end of the year, Story Worth will produce a book of your writings, perfect for gifts for children or other interested parties or to treasure.

I've started Story Worth already but am modifying most questions. For example, "What are your favorite foods?" is now Foods. I write about the type of meals we ate growing up, foods I hate, some experiences that are food related, etc. For "What are your favorite songs?" I don't really have any so I wrote about music in my life: piano lessons, playing the cello (ugh!), classical guitar and autoharp and my grandmother leaving her baby grand piano to me in her will and then rescinding it before she died because I wouldn't pay to have it tuned!

If you've been wanting to write your memoir, NaNoWriMo and possibly a tool like Story Worth could get you off your butt and get you started.

Think about it!

Editor's Note

from Ellen Behrens

When we think of fall holidays, Halloween and Thanksgiving loom large. But there's another special event during this season many writers anticipate more than the arrival of the Great Pumpkin: NaNoWriMo, National Novel Writing Month. Not a fiction writer? No worries! Jaimie Bruzenak tells us how to make it work for memoirs, too.

Lew Leistikow offers a personal look at a common experience among all pet owners in "The Chief." Marisa Wolf gives us more insight into Lew himself in her Member Profile. Don't miss the other great articles in this issue – it's packed!

We didn't have any takers for our "I Do My Best Writing When..." contest (aren't you sorry now you didn't enter?!? **You would have won!**) so I'll put it this way: if someone sends something on this topic for the Winter 2022 issue (deadline November 15), we'll have the contest again. One entry = one guaranteed winner. More than one = random draw. PLUS we'll be giving away the prize for the Win-Win Contest (see last page for entry info on that one).

Have an idea of your own you'd like to share in the newsletter? Drop me a line at ellenbehr@aol.com.

Happy pumpkins, turkeys and falling leaves!

Ellen Behrens, Editor

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Jaimie's Tips

from Jaimie Bruzenak

If you are thinking of publishing a book, read this article in *Writers Weekly* 7/21/22 about Xlibris.

It and a number of other companies are owned by Author Solutions and there are tons of complaints.

<https://writersweekly.com/angela-desk/angry-complaints-about-xlibris-author-solutions>

In *Writers Weekly* 7/21/22 is also an article on writing for markets that write about writing. You may have something to contribute or you could find one to subscribe to that could take your writing to the next level. <https://writersweekly.com/this-weeks-article/10-markets-that-pay-writers-to-write-about-writing-by-karoki-githure>

For the poets in Penwheels: It can be more challenging to get poetry published. Here are 6 paying markets. This is from *Writers Weekly* 8/5/22. <https://writersweekly.com/this-weeks-article/6-paying-poetry-markets-for-writers-by-timmy-peace>

From the Authors on the Road FB page from Gene Jurrens (GKJurrens.com):

You savvy veteran authors already know this. But in case you don't, here are a couple of places I hadn't initially thought about leveraging to publicize or reference my books:

For example, regardless of your feelings about Amazon, I maintain an author page over there for those who don't mind buying from the big gorilla. Couldn't hurt, right?

<https://amazon.com/author/gkjurrens>

I also maintain a "universal book link" for each title. For example, here's the link to my latest book. Gotta spread the word to shed the old cloak of invisibility...

<https://books2read.com/u/3y1Oyn>.

I created this link by using Draft2Digital (for eBooks), and then added my print links manually on Books2Read. Pretty slick. Your mileage may vary. Good luck!

Braggin' Rights

by Joanne Alexakis



The *Escapees* May/June 2022 issue includes these fellow Penwheelers:

Gerri Almand SKP#159441 writes of the support & care she found at *Escapee's* Co-Op Park Sierra in Coarsegold CA. She even met with their writing group on Zoom! - page 24.

Janice Lasko SKP#14104 reminds us of the excellence of our *Escapees* magazine with a salute to Kay Peterson - page 25.

Janice has more!! She gives us experienced pointers on calling 9-1-1 and handling medical emergencies - page 26.

Deb Sanders SKP#120952 supports the Day's End Directory by supplying campsite directions and info on page 19. Boondockers Thank You, Deb!

Contests Galore!!

Entry fees, deadlines, links to more information -- it's all here at Heystacks!

<https://sourceful.us/doc/336/betas--bludgers-writing-competitions-list>

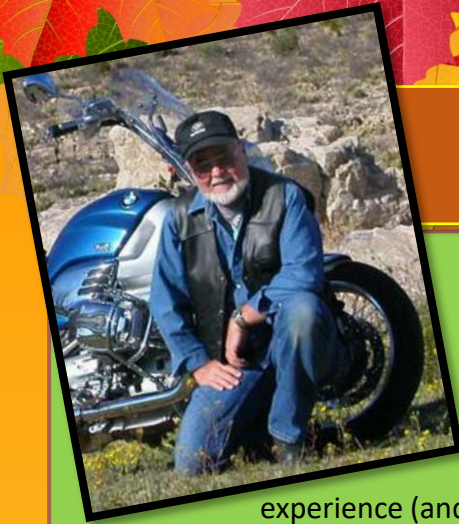
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Marisa's Member Profile: Lew Leistikow

Lewis Leistikow started writing by focusing on facts: as a young Navy man, he was charged with completing evaluations of junior staff. With coaching, and across multiple ranks, that continues for 30 years.

Upon retirement, he and his wife took their part-time RVing to full-time adventure, and he applied his accumulated writing experience (and his wife, an avid historical romance novel reader, inserted more color that rubbed off on Lew over time) to fabulous Christmas letters. Before long, he and his wife were co-authoring quarterly newsletters with their own, Lew-designed letterhead. "The Tumbleweeds" sadly went on hiatus through his wife's illness and eventual passing, and Lew went back on the road alone.

After a few years of solo travel, he remarried—to the Postmaster at what was once Lakewood, NM—and while they settled in a house, they still traveled frequently. Writing returned, this time in the form of daily journals he shared with their circle. People enjoy a great story, and the tales of their adventures—and mishaps—met with rave reviews and kept Lew writing.

Lew's been RVing since 1968, starting in a VW Westphalia van, driving Airstreams, 5th wheels, Class A's, Class C's, and is now on his 21st rig, a Class B. His all-time favorite place is in the Rockies, and the draw of the West shows up in his writing—travel is a huge influence.

A true Penwheeler, he finds the words come more easily when he's describing the latest drive, scenery, or adventure, and of course the RV life has provided some great opportunities. He attended a writer's workshop at an RV Resort in Tucson, had a lot of fun, and came out of it with a Western-themed short story that he loves and has shown to a few friends. Most of his stories and musings are found only on his computer and binders on his desk, though he has been published here in our very own Penwheels, and in *Trailer Life* and *Escapees* magazine (in the latter, most recently with "I Long for the Days Gone By," sharing how he misses his days on the road).



[Continued on page 9]

"Reading is the sole means by which we slip, involuntarily, often helplessly, into another's skin, another's voice, another's soul."

Joyce Carol Oates

Little Free Libraries

"I have always come to life
after coming to books."
Jorge Luis Borges
(1899-1986)



And we thought only books were exchanged at the Little Free Libraries! Technically, many book swap stations can be found around the country; those designated as Little Free Libraries are part of a formalized program.

Given that, this "JR MCS Music Library" is all about music. Sheet music adorns its surfaces, the shelves are strewn with – guess! – sheet music and the occasional magazine and book about music and musicians.

No explanatory sign was around, but it appears to get some traffic from the musicians in and around Sandpoint, Idaho.

Little Free Libraries in Ukraine

More than ten years ago a woman in Ukraine created a Little Free Library in Kyiv designed like a birdhouse. Her inspiration moved many others to build more than a hundred LFLs around the country. Before long, she began coordinating the publication of "story anthologies that groups of kids wrote and illustrated with professional writers and artists," and those anthologies were placed in the LFLs. Sounds like a great idea!

[Apologies! The link I had for this article has expired. You can try searching the Web for more info or photos – perhaps you'll have better luck than I did!]

Grammar Quiz

This sentence from an actual book blurb has an error in it. Can you spot it? "A forensic accountant discovers during a routine bankruptcy fraud investigation, an evil plot by two high-ranking government officials with ties to a terrorist organization."

[Answer on page 11]



Great Opportunity or Scam

"We believe that your book has a great potential to be picked up by major industry players such as Harper Collins, Penguin Random House, Simon and Schuster, Hay House, and other major traditional publishing houses. I am Jenny Bent, Senior Literary agent / Direct Acquisitions. The main goal is to bring authors like you to these major traditional houses for direct acquisition."

These promises are hard to resist when you are a struggling author looking for the big break. The desire to see yourself in print is what scammers count on for their income. When the link leads back to the actual Brent Agency, how can you tell if it is legit.

Writers Beware's Victoria Strauss is the expert to contact when ferreting out this type of scam. "Impersonating reputable agents, editors, and publishing people is a very common tactic for [the fake literary agency scams](#) that are so common these days. I've written [a number of posts](#) about this phenomenon." She warns readers that "real agents only very rarely reach out to writers directly. For scammers, on the other hand, it's their main recruitment method."

You are invited to read her research to prepare for the world of publishing and its pitfalls. She keeps you updated on the current bevy of phony literary agencies, electronic magazine scams, marketers, and publishers.

Book Not Selling

Dave Chesson, my favorite guru in the book marketing arena, authors [Kindlepreneur](#). A blog that belongs on the top of your list, it not only answers, or attempts to answer, all your questions about book marketing.

"Have you ever been in this situation: you publish your book, you spend a lot of money on the cover, you spend even more money on advertisements to drive traffic to your book, you put a lot of time into writing the book description, not to mention the book itself, you put that book out into the world and...nothing."

In this blog, Chesson points out the major problems that might deter sales. He also provides a step-by-step solution. [How to Identify a Book's Sales Problem: Follow These Steps.](#)

- ❖ Unprofessional or Unremarkable Cover Problems
- ❖ Confusing Cover Problems
- ❖ Poor Book Descriptions
- ❖ Useless Keywords
- ❖ Poor Reviews or Low Reviews
- ❖ Poor Launch Tactics
- ❖ Amazon Honeymoon Period
- ❖ Lack of Continual Popularity

Chesson stays on top of current strategy changes in the industry including Amazon. He knows marketing in the current sales environment is tough, so throw out all the old tactics and start again.

Margo Armstrong, writer and publisher, has over 20 books now available on Amazon.com. Her book, [Writing & Publishing Books for Fun and Profit](#) is available in eBook and print at Amazon. Latest book in progress, (working title) *Women Over 55: Tips to Stay at the Top of Your Game*. Margo encourages you to contribute your tips (name credit given). Send to: Margo@TheMaxwellGroup.net.

See all her books at [AuthorCentral](#).

For more information on how you can help with her new project, [see page 13](#).



Fiction Tips: Syntax – Have you got it?

by Deb Sanders



The new buzzword in my writer's groups is "syntax." It's one of those ambiguous tags like "voice" where everyone knows the term but few attempt to explain it, save for those who identify as experts. Unfortunately, many of those experts leave their audience with a vague interpretation that creates more questions than answers.

I'm not an expert. I've published over twelve fiction and non-fiction works with ten still publicly available but that doesn't make me an authority on writing. I consider myself a perpetual student of the process. Each month, I sit in on 2-3 virtual courses or listen to accomplished authors discuss the industry and craft.

So what is syntax? Kurt Vonnegut touts a theory that only six plots exist in the whole of fiction writing (others say seven or nine). Those plots are recycled to create every book we read. Syntax is like that - a recycled version of an old-school writing term called sentence structure. There is more to the topic but if I were to jump down the rabbit hole of linguistics and grammar, I'd need several more days and some extended happy hours.

Simply put, syntax is a set of rules controlling the order of words in a sentence to create mood, meaning, and effect. Some authors create recognizable rhythm and voice through their use of pacing, aesthetics, and atmosphere. A few who come to mind are Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, and William Faulkner.

Manipulating syntax in dialogue can help create distinctive characters. Any Star Wars fan will recognize Yoda's lyrical way of turning a statement into a question. Don't be afraid to capitalize on regional dialect or influences to develop a setting. Unleash your imagination when world-building a fantasy empire like Neil Gaiman in *The Sandman*.

As with most rules, you must know the guidelines before breaking them. Recognizing where to put words is an important part of syntax. The following examples display how re-positioning one word can alter the meaning of a sentence.

- *Only Sally paints seascapes.* Meaning: Sally is the only person who paints seascapes.
- *Sally only paints seascapes.* Meaning: Sally does not do anything else except paint seascapes.
- *Sally paints only seascapes.* Meaning: Sally does not paint any subject except seascapes.

Sentence structure i.e. simple, compound, complex, compound-complex is the basis of syntax, as well as varying lengths to establish pace and tone. A sentence can portray a pleasant or unpleasant mood, a kind or harsh response, calm or agitated environment. Understanding and using syntax/sentence structure is a must for writers no matter what name you give it. The process will generate "feelings" for readers that are remembered long after words fade.

Debra S. (Deb) Sanders lives in southern Arizona where she embraces the Old West, seeks out good hiking trails, and pens cozy mysteries and thrilling tales late into the night. You can learn more about her books and adventures at <https://debsanders.com>



Let's Advance to MIDDLE English

by D. G. Smeall

What I shared in the last issue was just the tip of the iceberg and has not taken us out of the Old English time period. Having said that, I will be extending this topic and adjusting my articles for the future to include a look at the typography of the English language as it shifts over time.

The topic for this issue will focus on the advance to Middle English's similarities and dissimilarities to Old English and how this affects us as writers.

First of all, we need to be aware that by the end of the 18th century, when Modern English makes its appearance, much of the English language with regards to its spelling, grammar, and punctuation is very much the same as it is today. Still, a few exceptions do exist. Grammatical trends would muddy the comprehension of the existing English language due to subtle shifts in linguistic pronunciations and varying views of English professors, grammarians or linguists. For example, William Cobbett's *Grammar of the English Language in a Series of Letters* (1829) posits that there are some irregularities in past tense usages:

(e.g. I bend vs. I bended) and also in past participles, an example might be: to chide would be chidden. But, of course, a person today would simply say, "I scolded/chided" rather than "I chiddened". For my personal preference, I find the English language to be a bit overwhelming and I would prefer to use simple language rather than twist my tongue around formal verbiage.

The first half of the 18th century brought attention to a need for imposing order on the English language, in the way of the introduction of Samuel Johnson's Dictionary. (Crystal 74) Said dictionary was just the starting point from which grammarians began to take their own stands regarding English grammar and the finer points for conversation. There were many grammarians who were sought out during the Modern English period as being authorities in the English language venue.

Between 1750 and 1800, over 200 books (dictionaries and grammar texts) were written in defense of the English grammar, but the ones that seem to have stood the test of time are 1) Bishop Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) which inspired a Pennsylvania lawyer named Lindley Murray to write *English Grammar* (1794).

CEN'TRE (sēn'tēr), *n.* [Gr. κέντρον; L. *centrum*; It. & Sp. *centro*; Fr. *centre*.]

1. (*Geom.*) A point equally distant from the extremities of a line, from every part of the circumference of a circle, or the surface of a sphere.

2. The centre of any plane curve is a point in the plane of the curve which bisects every straight line drawn through it and terminated by the curve. The centre of a regular polygon is a point equally distant from all its vertices. The centre of any surface is a point which bisects all straight lines drawn on it and terminated by the surface. *Eliot.*

3. The middle point of anything; the middle; as, "The centre of an army or of a nation."

4. (*Arch.*) A framework, usually of timber, for sustaining an arch while it is building.

Centre of attraction, or centre of gravitation point to which bodies tend by gravity. — *Centre of gravity*, a point in a body about which all the parts exactly balance one another, so that, if it be supported, it will remain in equilibrium.

Worcester's centre entry, 1860.

cen'ter, cen'tre (sēn'tēr), *n.* [F. *centre*, fr. L. *centrum*, fr. Gr. κέντρον any sharp point, the point round which a circle is described, akin to κεννέω to prick, goad.]

1. The middle point or place; a point at the average distance from the points of a body or figure; strictly, the mid-point, about which all points of a figure are disposed in pairs of equidistant diametrical opposites; as, the center of a circle, ellipse, sphere, line segment, regular polygon or polyhedron, etc.

2. The middle or central point or portion of anything; also, a person or thing placed at such point.

3. *Math.* The origin or fixed point of reference in polar coordinates. See COORDINATE.

4. That about which a body revolves or rotates; the principal or important point of concentration; the point around which things are gathered or to which they emanate from which things, etc., emanate, proceed, or derive their source; an object of attention, action, or force; center of attraction.

5. *Astrol.* The pointed end of the metal strip, indicating the star's position in the "rete" of an astrolabe. *Obs.*

6. The earth as the center of the universe, or the mid-point of the earth. *Obs.*

7. *Mech.* a One of the two conical steel pins, in a lathe, upon which the work is held, and about which it revolves. b A conical recess, or indentation, in the end of a shaft.

Webster's center entry, as published in an 1890/1920 revision.



[Read more of Donna's article on [page 14](#)]

The Evolution of Keeping in Touch the RVing Way

Jaimie (Hall) Bruzenak

It will be 30 years this year since I began RVing with my late husband, Bill. At the time, I had a laptop and an AOL email address. I had barely begun to use them. My first experience even using a computer had been on the job I had before we hit the road. I was able to buy a laptop through the company, which I took on our travels. Actually cell phones had been invented and a few people had "bag phones," but I knew of no one who did. My first sighting was a man strutting importantly through the airport talking into a phone, carrying a bag which contained the battery and receiver/transmitter. George, also late, carried a heavy satellite phone when he went backpacking on his mental health getaways in case his terminally ill wife needed to reach him. Both were uncommon when we hit the road in 1992.

The years blend together and I can't remember all the details and certainly not the years but these were some of the ways we kept in touch in the 90s and even into the 2000s.

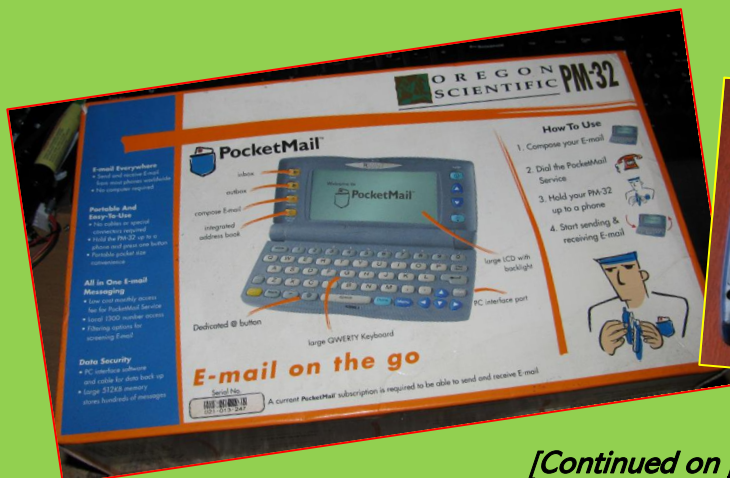
Back in the day, most of us Boomers (Escapes BOF) kept in touch the old fashion way. We wrote letters. Receiving our SKP mail was highly anticipated since it might contain letters from friends or family. The Boomers had a snail mail newsletter we also got through our Escapees mail service. Penwheels had a paper newsletter for years too! Contributions had to be mailed to the editor. Usually another member was the one who took a copy to a copy shop and then mailed it to members. Penwheels (and other BOFs) no longer have dues since we don't have the expense of copying and postage.

From the start, nearly every RVer had an 800# answering service. I started with FMCA but got so many calls from employers they kicked me off! I moved to another but can't remember which one it was. It was reassuring to family that they could reach us though some didn't understand why it might take days for a callback. I do remember the challenges of getting my father to use my voicemail. He would call the number, then lose track of our code as he was trying to input it and be cut off before he could get it in. Lessons didn't help. You had to buy long distance time to make and return calls.



In the mid-90s we began stopping at libraries to use their free internet. For me it was mostly about job research. Once I identified an employer, I wrote for an application and mailed completed ones back to them. I don't remember anyone I knew at the time sending emails though I occasionally got one from my father and later my sister but that had to be later in the 90s.

Gradually email became more common and many of us had Pocketmail devices for email (photo below, left). At Quartzsite there would be a whole line of us waiting by a pay phone. When you opened the device, there was a small screen and keyboard for typing and reading messages. To transmit, you placed the back of the device (photo below, right) up to a landline or a pay telephone, dialed a toll-free number and once the connection was established, sent and received your email! Sometimes an RV park would let you use their landline but pay phones were most common. Nowadays pay phones are scarcer than hen's teeth! We also continued to have 800 numbers for retrieving voicemail until cell phones became more common.



[Continued on page 11]

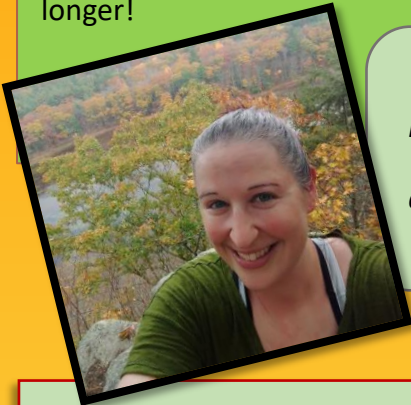
Marisa's Member Profile: Lew Leistikow

Continued from page 3

He writes more when the spirit moves him than from any regimented routine, and there are times when the travails of real life all but demand to become a story. Such as when he and his wife had to take a trip to deal with a house they'd sold that had gone into foreclosure... and had become a meth house. Storms, police, the court system, and other complications combined to make a capital-A Adventure—no question something with enough twists and turns for a dramatic and satisfying story.

While Lew and his wife don't get out on the road quite as much anymore, they still try for a few days here and there, and so we have reason to hope there are plenty more stories to come. Perhaps with fewer meth houses they have to deal with... but sure to be entertaining all the same.

Short story long, Lew says, but really, with tales this good we can only hope for them to be longer!



Marisa Wolf has been writing since the age of six when she penned and illustrated "Sarah and the Idaho Potatoes." A science fiction and fantasy novelist, Marisa's latest novel, Ally, is now available. She and her husband have been full-timing for the past year and half. Find out more about her books at marisawolf.net.

Did You Know...?

Silent reading (rather than reading aloud, even to oneself) is a learned skill and wasn't something people did until long after writing was invented.

Will Buckingham, in his article for *Oh Reader* magazine titled "Reading in Another Tongue," explains: "The first unambiguous reference to this strange art can be found in Saint Augustine's *Confessions*; Augustine writes about his meeting with Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, back in the fourth century. Augustine was astonished that when Ambrose read, he didn't sound out his words. 'When he was reading,' Augustine wrote, 'his eyes ran over the page and his heart perceived the sense, but his voice and tongue were silent.'"

So... when you read silently, you're doing something that amazed Saint Augustine. Pretty cool, huh?

New Book By Penwheeler ERIC DIEHL

Eric Diehl released his third novel in March. Here's the blurb from Amazon:



The Great Houses of Kast'ar have grown complacent. Technological adaptation bolsters a fragile biosphere, but one quandary remains unattended. Lunar-based harvest vessels orbit continuously, extracting their toll of moisture from the upper atmosphere.

Over time, the planet dries.

ikes! Sounds a little familiar, doesn't it? With droughts everywhere these days, we might identify more than we care to with these characters.

Find out more here:

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09VQT3WQV/>

Congratulations, Eric!



The Chief – Part 1

by Lewis Leistikow

April 6, 2020

Today is a dark, gloomy and sad day. We have lost a dear, devoted and loving friend. Our hearts are heavy and with a level of grief that won't soon pass, we must tell you that a very close member of our family has left us. He has reached the end of his trail; his journey is finished.

There was that day when, as we passed his cage at the Rescue Center, he had a look in his eyes that said, "I'd like to go home with you. I'll be good. I'll love you, and you won't be sorry."

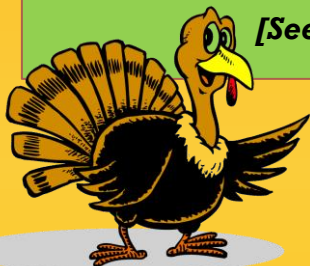
Well, of all the dogs needing homes, this brown, flop-eared character's looks melted our hearts and we adopted him. He was said to be 'about' 4 years old and that was 7 years ago. A long time, I guess in dog-years.

Eleanor had had dogs all her life and while 'on the road' as a full time RVer, I resisted. It was impractical, I told myself and then said so to her. Excuses, because dogs didn't mean anything to me. When, our travels were ending or at least slowing, we finally settled in a home. Then she asked, "Can I have a dog now?" I had run out of excuses and my love for her persuaded me to relent and say, "OK". That was seven years ago.

So, today, I grieve – Eleanor grieves – for that furry, brown 4-legged friend, beloved family member. "The Chief" was tired. His mind, his soul didn't know that he was old, becoming lame and reaching the end of his journey. But though he had grown tired, he still responded to an invitation to have his face and neck scratched. Soon, he'd turn and face away so that I could scratch his butt. Till the very end, just minutes before the good and caring Vet came to 'help' him relax, I gave him his wonderful neck and butt scratches. And to the end, his tail was still wagging.

Farewell, good and faithful friend....

[See Part 2 on page 12]



Free podcast interviews for writers!

Okay, I confess I haven't tried this, so be cautious if you do. The Authors Show® has been conducting author interviews since 2005. To see if this is a good marketing fit for you, check out their FAQ:

<https://wnbnetworkwest.com/faqs>

Daily Word Prompts:

<https://wordofthedaychallenge.wordpress.com/>

*Give in to the temptation
to share...*

Send something!

Fall Issue Deadline: Aug 15

Winter Issue: Nov 15

Spring Issue: Feb 15

Summer Issue: May 15

*Publication follows the first of the
next month.*

The Evolution of Keeping in Touch (*Continued*)

Jaimie (Hall) Bruzenak

As online access improved and RVers found ways to be connected, many RV groups like Penwheels had Yahoo groups online. Once a day any posts would be sent to members. Not all were able to participate, but it was a faster way to get the word out in between newsletters. I began moderating forums for Workamper News in the very early 2000s. By then Bill and I were only part-time RVers. We used an Aircard when RVing to get online.

Beginning in 2005, George and I progressed through Hughes Satellite internet, a Verizon Aircard and boosters to receive signals when traveling. Hughes was iffy; the further north you traveled, the less likely it was you could hone in on a satellite. Once George and I were in Glacier National Park in their campground. George found a tiny hole through the trees and got a signal. He got quite skilled at setting it up on its tripod and locating a satellite.. Hughes oversubscribed their capacity and are no longer popular among RVers.

When George and I traveled together, we chose the RV park to stay in by whether or not they had free WiFi and would request a site that had a strong signal. People were just starting to stream movies and, in a park, that could mean the signal would drop to snail-like speed because the park had exceeded their data limitation. When George volunteered in Big Bend and we got a landline, it could take multiple tries and even an hour to get through - especially after school or weekends when so many were trying to get on. There were only so many slots available.

It is sure easier to stay in touch nowadays. Smartphones are wonders and cell phone data networks are faster and have greatly expanded. Rural initiatives in some states make signals widely available even outside cities. It's not perfect but it sure is faster than snail mail! In fact, today I only have one person I exchange letters with - George's 93 year old sister in Minnesota who is in a county home and has neither phone nor computer and is practically deaf! Her handwriting is harder and harder to read but oh, the joy and anticipation of seeing an envelope with her writing and return address! A real letter! They have almost gone the way of bag phones, Pocketmail and flip phones. Sigh!

Jaimie began writing about travel, RVing and working on the road while full-time RVing with her late husband Bill. It led to writing and working for Workamper.com and publishing books and articles, some with her co-author Alice Zyetz. She now resides in Tucson, AZ in an over-55 mobile home park, still traveling, but no longer by RV.



Grammar Quiz Answer

Here's the corrected sentence: "A forensic accountant discovers during a routine bankruptcy fraud investigation an evil plot by two high-ranking government officials with ties to a terrorist organization."
Explanation: Specific rules define how commas should be used, and this doesn't fit those rules. Eliminating the comma, however, does make the sentence sound awkward. Best to rephrase this: **"During a routine bankruptcy fraud investigation, an evil plot by two high-ranking government officials with ties to a terrorist organization is discovered by a forensic accountant."**
Though grammatically correct, this sentence is still a bit awkward because it tries to include too much information. Eliminating some unnecessary words and/or creating two sentences to hold everything would be best.

"We are only here for a minute, we are here for a little window, and to use that time to catch and share shards of light and laughter and grace seems to me the great story." - Brian Doyle (1956-2017)

The Chief – Part 2

by Lewis Leistikow

April 7, 2020 – The day after

The house is quiet and empty today. Though looking out the window, I can see the sun shining, but inside, there is a cloudy, melancholy pall hanging over us. A new hole has opened in our lives. It's quiet. In the emptiness, memories of Chief seem to be echoing from room to room. As soon as we left Chief at the Vet's, Eleanor got rid of most all traces of him; beds, food and water bowls, even the rugs on the floors we had down to keep him from slipping on the slick floors. It was a difficult evening. A sad and dark time for us. We talked some, reminisced some and cried a lot. And, this morning, we woke up to an empty house, and lives that are now also emptier.

I guess for all pet owners, this time must invariably come. And most I know have been through this before – more than once. It's never easy, never gets any easier. You are parting with a loved one, a family member.

But for me, in my adult life, I have had only one other dog. When I was younger – almost 50 years ago. A smooth or short-haired Collie, and a great dog for our little family. But somehow, although I liked him and thought the world of him, I guess I never grew really close to him. When he became tired and crippled up with arthritis and that day came to ease his pain, to put him at rest, I didn't shed a tear – didn't mourn for him. Looking back, I see that I was callous and lacked sympathy for my wife who had to take him in and stay with him through the procedure. I didn't offer her much love and understanding. I didn't understand.

So, The Chief was only my second time to live with a dog. I was older. And Chief was a different personality altogether. He was a lover. And though he liked everyone, he was Eleanor's dog. Laying on one of his many beds, he was aware of her whereabouts at all times that he was awake. If I was busy scratching his head, face and neck, not 10 or 15 seconds would go by that he didn't turn his head to see Eleanor. To see if she had moved or was still there. If he woke up and she wasn't right there, he was apt to go from room to room to find her. When she was in the bathroom, he'd 'nose' open the door to check on her.

This furry four-legged friend was a dog to love. Our Collie just didn't work his way into my heart the way this guy did. In the later days, Chief would be sound asleep in the living room while we watched TV. Often, we'd turn out the lights and TV and go to the bedroom to get ready for bed while he slept. Then, at some point he'd awake, see we weren't there and get up to come into the bedroom to join us for the night. He had two cozy corners where he slept, one on my side and one on Eleanor's. He might begin the night on my side but soon moved to Eleanor's side to sleep the night through near her.

We'll grieve – I don't know for how long, but we will remember him and I know his spirit will live on in our hearts. Looking back on our lives with this phenomenal gift that the Lord has seen fit to share with us, we will be grateful. We feel blessed that we were led to him at the 'Rescue Center'. Of all the dogs in those kennels, he looked at us and his eyes seemed to say, "Take me home. I'll love you." How could we resist? So, we brought him home, and he kept his promise. We loved him, and he returned the love ten-fold.

And Chief, I have to believe that dogs do go to heaven, and you have an Angel there with you, scratching your neck, and after a while, you'll turn around and have them scratch you butt.

Rest well, old friend. You will remain in our hearts forever.



Help Contribute to Margo's New Book

Women over 55: Tips to Stay at the Top of Your Game

Looking back over the years, I see a pattern of thought that leads to a lifetime of being at the top of your game, whatever that may be. This book is not about money, success, or even happiness, but that feeling of self-importance that defies outside criticism, prejudice, ignorance, intimidation, and misogyny.

Women who survived the last 55 years without bitterness, hatred or revenge and still maintain a clear picture of NOW must have maintained certain traits, principles, or characteristics, that could be shared with younger generations for the benefit of all. I believe they are going to need all the help they can get.

Here is the thought process for my new book (that may evolve with the writing of it): "If you are or have been recently (no more than 5 years ago), at the top of your game... name at least one (no more than 5) mental and/or physical process you feel helped maintain that level. Items like diet (list only the most important natural food and/or supplement), pharmaceuticals (list only the most important), physician/healer, book, friend or family, exercise, physical geography, philosophy (including religions), failures, mistakes, luck, etc.

Please offer a paragraph to explain who/why/how this experience changed the course of your life. You can send them to margoarmstrong85@gmail.com.

My basic idea is to compile and include the best submitted (credit by name only or not, as you wish) and turn them into an ebook/softcover print, available worldwide. March 2023 is the projected publication date. If you include your email address, I will send you a free copy for your contribution.

Thank you so much for caring about this subject matter.



FREE Stuff!!



Everybody loves free stuff, including me. **Remember, some of these are sales jobs.** I've made every effort to try to include only items that will provide some value to you.

Eva Deverell (AKA "Lady Writer") has a website stuffed with all kinds of free advice and handouts. I fell down the "Writing Worksheets" rabbit hole but emerged with a couple of (hopefully) helpful worksheets to help me through a couple of quirky issues. See for yourself here: <https://www.eadeverell.com/worksheets/>

Joanna Penn has been giving great writing advice for years and offers a 77-page guide to writing and publishing for free (yep, you'll be signing up for her newsletter or announcements or something) here: <https://the-creative-penn-limited.ck.page/blueprint>

K.M. Weiland sends you a free guide ("Crafting Unforgettable Characters") if you sign up for her "e-letter mailing list." Just go here: <https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/resources/free-e-book/>

Finally, if you're like me (remember "abibliophobia" from the Summer 2022 newsletter?), you crave book reviews--quick summaries of new releases so you can sort out which books you want to add to your TBR list (To Be Read). For those of us readers who double as writers, a publication that does that PLUS provides some interviews and other stuff, a find like the free e-magazine "In D'Tale" is a goldmine. Take a look at the site and peruse past issues to see if it's for you. If it is, scroll to the bottom of the page for the "Subscribe" option. Here's the link: <https://indtale.com>

What cool free stuff have you found that the rest of us might find helpful, fun, inspirational, or otherwise neat-o? Let us know! Send your suggestions to Ellen so we can all benefit!

Let's Advance to MIDDLE English

by D. G. Smeall

[Continued from page 7]

Both of these grammar books went through many editions and ultimately played a large part in the school practicum of teaching the English language to students.

Other famous persons included in this exploration of English grammar practices included Jane Austen and William Hazlitt.

The Dictionary War

Eventually, a prescient look at how words should be spelled in the English language also brought Noah Webster and Samuel Johnson, both dictionary giants, on the scene.

Webster's argument was that, as we became a new nation, we should have new government and a new take on our English language rather than to embrace the King's Rule and way of speaking. This thinking led to the blue-backed speller called *The Elementary Spelling Book* by Noah Webster.

An updated edition of it was being used in my 1965 first grade classroom. Today, we still use much of what Webster introduced in his dictionary back then to define words and even now, an updated edition plays a continuing role in educating America's students.

Why the choice of Webster's over Johnson's spelling dictionary? Mostly the fact that some words were spelled, for example, with the -our ending as in colour, rather than color which was more English than British in its usage. But due to the inconsistency of these diverging words — British versus English — subsequently Webster (and another grammarian named Worcester) did away with this usage.

The year 1828 brought a new dictionary containing 70,000 words with a clarity of definition and technical terms in two volumes, called *An American Dictionary of the English Language*.

The success of this two-volume dictionary made Webster a household name in America. This doesn't mean that Webster got rich off the sale of his dictionaries.

Once the midpoint of the 18th century slid towards the idea of a World English, other new trends pushed through and past the influences of the British English to introduce new genres of literature and speech patterns.

One of the most prominent of these trends is "breaking the English grammar rules."

Two comic-spelling genre writers, Josh Billings and Artemus Ward often used an intuitive semi-phonetic system of writing. Neither showed much consistency in how they spelled such words like fun or phun, for example. This was seen as being a representation of nonstandard writing. A more singular and exemplary writing example would be to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Four gentlemen held reign in the literary world of the Middle English period, beginning with William Wordsworth (1770-1830), followed by Walter Scott (1771-1832), William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1803), and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). An awareness of the need to provide variety in the literary works of the Middle English helped these men explore new genres of writing thus opening the door for more populations to be interested in the literature of the time.

However, the best of the author/writers is Charles Dickens (1812-1870), who wrote in his "Saxon English" article that "if a man wishes to write for all, he must know how to use the speech of all." Today we call this the language attitude that began pun in mid-18th century and carried through to the 20th century.

[Donna's article concludes on the next page]



Let's Advance to MIDDLE English

by D. G. Smeall

[Continued from page 14]

The previous four gentlemen all concurred that Charles Dickens was the one author/writer who fully illustrated the social, regional, occupational and personal variations of the 19th century's English language throughout all his writings. Charles Dickens was considered to have great insight into speaking to all of his audiences when writing.

Why would this be so important to an author? Well, as we view courses in creative writing of some type (whether it be fiction, nonfiction, sci-fi, fantasy, or a technical trade book), we see those language attitudes sprinkled throughout the genre we decide to employ to engage our readers. These attitudes have a pattern to be followed and observed by the readers and are the key to snaring a new reader to explore your unique venue of writing.

Wow! What an epiphany for me!? I never really understood what my voice was or is until I started to re-read this mammoth of a text. Now, I see that I need more time to review my writings to decipher which of the many language attitudes I have adopted.

Okay, enough said, I have to get back to the writing studio and explore more for our next issue. The next issue will reveal the World English language with its variety of grammar, spellings, and inconsistencies that make it what it is today. So see you next time and may you have a blessed fall.

Until we meet again, carry on and write well!

Source: *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, author: David Crystal, published 1997 by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, New York, USA

Donna Gates-Smeall is an accomplished writer with two books (Com-PEN-di-um and Forever Friends (co-written with Karol Barkley of Tacoma, WA) under her belt, plus plans to write a few more in her lifetime. She has two Associates degrees and a BA in English.

Love winning things? BookRiot is not only a great rabbit hole to get lost down, it has giveaways! Go to <https://bookriot.com/giveaways/>

Can't get that song out of your head? Can't figure out what comes next? Stop going crazy! See if songfacts.com has the lyrics!

Spend a lot of time out West? Looking for a great bookstore? Check out Alta magazine's [Favorite Bookstores](#).

Thinking ahead to the holiday season? Good idea! Here's a great spot for finding a cool tee shirt for your writing friends:

<https://www.teepublic.com/stores/author-tees/albums/157434-tees-for-writers>

This Quarter's Contest:
OURS!

[See the last page!]

20 Clutter WORDS & PHRASES

We Use Too Often

- 1 **ALL OF** All of Your colleagues will enjoy reading your emails. *All of our efforts paid off...*
- 2 **AS A MATTER OF FACT** As a matter of fact, Your emails have become clearer. *As a matter of fact...*
- 3 **AS BEING** You'll be known as being a skilled communicator!
- 4 **AS YET** We don't know as yet whether we'll close the deal.
- 5 **AT ALL TIMES** Watch out for slacker phrases at all times.
- 6 **BASICALLY; ESSENTIALLY** These words basically don't add value. They're essentially unnecessary.
- 8 **BEING THAT** Being that Because you're the best writer in your team, you'll surely receive praise and recognition.
- 9 **DURING THE COURSE OF** During the course of the writing lesson, acquired useful writing knowledge!
- 10 **EACH AND EVERY** Look for lazy words in your writing each and every day daily.
- 11 **FOR ALL INTENTS & PURPOSES; FOR THE MOST PART** For all intents and purposes, Your skills have improved. *...in-order for you to succeed.*
- 13 **IN ORDER** Get rid of excess verbiage in order to clean up your writing. *just follow my lead.*
- 14 **IN THE PROCESS OF** We're in the process of learning to reduce wordiness.
- 15 **JUST** If a sentence works without it, you just don't need to use this word.
- 16 **POINT IN TIME** You're not supposed to stop reading at this point in time now.
- 17 **PRETTY** If you easily forgot things, it might be a pretty good idea to bookmark this infographic now.
- 18 **SIMPLY** Simply Don't use this word if it doesn't add meaning.
- 19 **THAT** This is a word that you should only use when you need it for clarity.
- 20 **UP / DOWN** We don't care whether you stand up or sit down to write, from now on, try to avoid clutter words and phrases!

Planning an Event?

The Escapees organization has made available two forms that might be of interest to you if you plan to hold an event using the Escapees name. One is a "Release and Waiver of Liability" form and the other is a blank insurance request form. They are available on the Penwheels Archive page.

Questions? I have no answers. Instead, e-mail Jimmy and Lockie Sailer (Escapees BoF Director) at chapterdirectors@escapees.com

What ARE You Thankful for?

FALL PROMPTS

After you've written everything you can about what you're thankful for, try these:

- List the five things you fear most, then pick one and write about why you're so afraid of it.
- Invent a monster. Invent the character who defeats the monster. Write a story about how the monster turns out not to be a monster. What is it, really?
- Write about the best Halloween costume you ever had.

Miscellaneous & Extraneous But Hopefully Helpful Stuff

Hate getting rejected? Don't we all, including Edgar Allan Poe. Writing for Literary Hub in a September 30, 2021, post, Catherine Baab-Muguira tells us "How to Deal with Rejection (and Get Revenge) Like Edgar Allan Poe":

<https://lithub.com/how-to-deal-with-rejection-and-get-revenge-like-edgar-allan-poe/>

"Ten Things Nobody Tells You About the Publishing Industry" originally posted September 30, 2021 by Kilby Blades: <https://booklife.com/authors/09/30/2021/ten-things-nobody-tells-you-about-the-publishing-industry.html>

{And I could add a few more!}

Enter the Penwheels First “Win-Win” Contest!

What is the Win-Win Contest?

You win if your article is chosen, our fellow Penwheelers win because they benefit from what you’ve shared in the newsletter. So it’s a win-win!

How do you enter?

Simple! Just submit an article for the ~~Fall 2022 or~~ Winter 2022 issue. Word length: 500-750 words maximum. E-mail it as a Word document (if you can; if not specify what you can send) to Ellen: ellenbehr@aol.com. Put “Win-Win Contest Entry” in the subject line of the e-mail. Deadline: ~~August 15, 2022, for the Fall issue;~~ November 15, 2022, for the Winter issue.

What type of article should you submit?

You can send in something on the craft of writing (how-to do something) or a personal experience essay (especially something related to your writing and/or RV travels). Poetry is also welcome. If you’ve got other ideas, go with your gut and send it in!

Who can submit?

If you’ve never contributed to the newsletter before, or if it’s been a long time, you’re especially encouraged. The time has never been better to give it a shot! All articles already published in the 2022 newsletters are automatically entered.

How will winners be chosen?

Okay, I confess. Winners will be randomly picked. Every article, column, news item and other tidbit is always of value to someone, right?

PLUS! A random READER will be chosen: just follow directions in a future e-mail blast to qualify.

When will winners be announced?

Winners will be individually notified by e-mail and announced in the Spring 2023 issue of the newsletter (wow! Thinking ahead, aren’t we?!?).

What are the prizes?

The prizes are surprises (is that really a surprise to you?), but you can bet they’ll be writing- or RV-related in some way. But it’s not about the prize, anyway, right? It’s more about contributing to your favorite—no, MOST favorite—e-newsletter and supporting the work of your fellow Penwheelers.

Don’t wait! Get started on your article today so it will be ready to submit!

Questions? Contact Ellen at ellenbehr@aol.com



YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

We’ve expanded our personal essay space in this issue and plan to publish more of your experiences in the future. **What do you think about publishing fiction?** Short stories can take some space to include, but a few Penwheelers have asked about sending in their fiction. Would you like to read it? Submit it? Let me know what you think!

Thanks! *Ellen*