Spring 2023







by Marguerita McManus

You may be wondering about TikTok and BookTok but YouTube is where I started and YouTube is probably where *your* audience is. My target audience is older women and believe me, they find my videos, which have been watched 2.5 million times, and that number keeps growing.

WHY video? I needed to find a way to market my first non-fiction book with no budget at all. And I'm a hermit. I had no newsletter to speak of, but I had some valuable tips to share, a small camcorder, and a friend who pushed me to do it.

WHAT do you need? A fairly new smartphone is all you need to record video these days, but an external microphone can make it better. A simple upload using YT's interface is easy to do, but video editing with basic software can be a fun skill to learn if you want to go one step further. Adequate lighting is important, if the camera is on you, and a silent background is essential. The interior of a car is a built-in sound booth when it's parked in a quiet spot, but a walk-in closet can do in a pinch, until you get your own custom recording studio built that is (just kidding).

[Continued on page 9]

CRAMMED inside this issue...

- § Jaimie's Tips § Braggin' Rights § Fiction Tips § Member Profile
 - § World of Publishing <u>A Hole in My Heart</u> § RVillage Caution!
 - § Leprechaun's Ode
 - § Little Free Libraries § Letter to the Editor
- § Interview with Jane <u>Holcombe</u> § Win-Win Contest § Not Getting the Newsletter? § Free Stuff!

Editor's Note

...from Ellen Behrens

Several years ago, Joanne Alexakis came up with the original Penwheels logo and it perfectly represents our traveling, writing community - an inkwell in a wagon. With her permission, the original has been updated a bit to allow for more digital flexibility. Thank you, Jo!

Sadly, we're losing many of our longtime members. Some are no longer writing, and we understand not wanting our friendly writing-obsessive newsletter littering their inbox. But others have said they're no longer traveling or no longer Escapees.

We don't want to lose you!

If you're no longer an Escapee, I'll still accept your submission as a Guest Contributor. I appreciate Charlie Parker's emotional Letter to the Editor for forcing me off the sidelines and into making a final decision on something I've been waffling about since becoming editor. You can read his letter here. Thank you, Charlie! (Don't miss his poems, either!)

Just remember: publishing something here might make a difference in getting it published elsewhere, so check your options.

I'm sorry to report that Margo Armstrong's final World of Publishing column is appearing in this issue. 8 Here's hoping she'll continue to contribute—she has so much experience and wisdom to share! Meanwhile, if you'd like to pick up where she's leaving off in providing interesting news about publishing, let me know!

Last year's Win-Win Contest was popular enough that it's on again! AND to show our regular columnists how much we appreciate them, I'm also going to do a random drawing at the end of the year to recognize all their hard work.

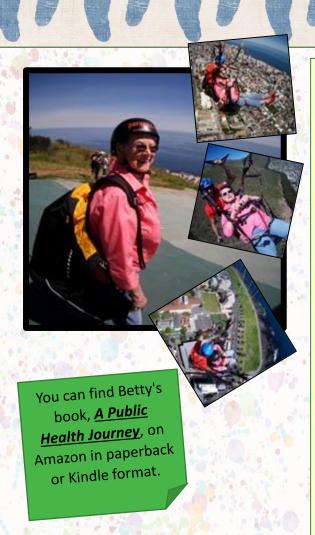
I'm holding out the carrot how hungry are you?!?

Ellen

"With freedom, books, flowers, and the moon, who could not be happy?" - Oscar Wilde







Don't be shy! Your fellow Penwheelers would love to meet YOU in a future issue! Just drop Marisa an email to let her know you're game to be interviewed: marisa.wolf@gmail.com It's easy and fun and something cool to share with fellow SKPs!

Member Profile: Betty Bowers by Marisa Wolf

Betty (Gonzales) Bowers ran off a mountain at age 85 (paragliding in Cape Town, South Africa), and that's only one of the countless incredible adventures she's had in her 91 years of life.

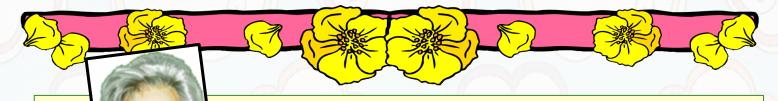
She, her first husband, and their six children did a great deal of tent camping over the years, often to state and national parks, to appreciate the beauty of our country. She started RVing with her second husband in 1994—leaving their snowy driveway behind for adventures in warmer climates. Throughout her life, she traveled to sixty-seven countries, for work and for pleasure, leading to even more truly fascinating stories.

Betty was a pioneer in the field of surgical birth control, first in the United States and then internationally. In 1991, she wrote a surgical textbook and training guide for a then-new technique called *No-Scalpel Vasectomy*, translated into many languages and used internationally. The technique has since become standard. In 2012, with encouragement from historians interested in documenting the history of the field, she wrote *A Public Health Journey*, which details much of her work to teach both counseling and surgical skills to people in the developing world. The second half the book goes further into detail about her travels during that time.

She came away with a number of reflections—how people are the same all over, even if the details shift. How many tasty and unusual meals there are to be had—and how sometimes beer is safer than water to accompany those meals. That the more people are informed and in control of their choices, the better their quality of life.

Her own domestic travels were a part of her and husband's retirement—exploring beautiful parts of the country, having excellent potlucks at SKP parks, and finding a favorite destination in Cajun Louisiana. She and her husband celebrated many a Mardi Gras there, especially enjoying Betty's RV park in Abbeville, LA. Her favorite place was the SKP park in Summerville, Alabama. Even after her second husband passed, she'd drive with a friend and stay nearby to visit old SKP friends and the woodcarvers BOF.

[See page 10 for more about Betty and to learn about Marisa]



World of Publishing Barnes & Noble: Back in the News

by Margo Armstrong

The good news in bookstore sales for self-publishers these days is the entry of Barnes & Noble into the field. The company is set to begin selling your self-published print books!

Read the "fine print" first, but in the grand scheme of things, this is beautiful music to the ears of self-publishers. The big book publishers are getting some competition, Barnes & Noble is back in the news.

Barnes & Noble, with 640 bookstores in 50 states, offers the prestige that makes most authors salivate in silence, not to mention the extra royalties. With B&N, authors have the opportunity to participate at in-store events including book signings and discussions. Yes, you can sell your print books and meet fans. The big dream of many self-publishing authors, frame and fortune.



As usual, there is a catch. The new program is for "eligible" NOOK Press authors, defined as "those print book authors whose eBook sales [of a single title] have reached 1,000 units in the past year." The *in-store* promotion offer only applies to "those print book authors whose eBook sales [of a single title] have reached 500 units in the past year."

To qualify initially, authors must submit their print books "for review by Barnes & Noble's Small Press Department and one of the company's corporate category buyers." For *in-store events*, authors need a "review from a Barnes & Noble store manager." Of course, we would expect nothing less.

So far, there are many unanswered questions. How many copies does B&N order, how long do they keep your book in inventory, where is it displayed, and the most important question of all—what is the policy regarding returns of unsold copies? As an example, most bookstore chains give your book 30 days to sell, the remains are returned to you (as a self-publisher) with the cost deducted from sales or they toss it in the clearance bin. Bookstores often charge the distributor (you) for a prominent place on the shelf and its location. Does B&N create new policies for self-publishers or not?

Self-published authors can't afford to ignore print; it still accounts for some two-thirds of book sales overall. This is certainly true for my annual book sales. Entry into the 2,311 outlets operated by the American Booksellers Association (ABA) seems impossible. Getting self-published books into non-bookstore outlets like drug stores and supermarkets is just a dream. Independent bookstores are more open to self-publishers, but usually small inventories are the norm. This makes Barnes & Noble's new venture a big deal for self-publishers.

A program this size takes months to implement. Obviously, nothing is going to change quickly. It does give new life to the dream of seeing your book through the plate glass display window of Barnes & Noble. Stay tuned!

Margo Armstrong is the author and publisher of over 20 books available on Amazon. Her book "Writing and Publishing Books for Fun and Profit" is available in eBook and Print format. Listen to her podcast "RV Lifestyle Expert" on your favorite podcast platform (now available on Amazon Music). Her RV Lifestyle blog can be found at MovingOnWithMargo.com



A HOLE IN MY HEART A FINAL POEM FOR MY WIFE

by Charlie Parker, Guest Contributor

I wrote this for 'Gayle's Celebration of Life.' She died 2/18/2022 and the Celebration was 4/3/2022.

I asked you, dear Gayle, to become a part of my life.

You became the best part of me when you answered yes to becoming my wife.

24/7, we were joined at the hip.

We stayed so for 100's of trips.

As we matured, our love still endured.

That it would get only stronger to each other, we assured.

Traveling North America for over 12 years

We trusted each other and had no fears.

No doubt in our minds that this day would come.

The sound of the bagpipes, the fife, and the drum

The sound of the bagpipes, the fife, and the drum
The song of "Amazing Grace" will fill the air.
Only one of us would remain in a state of despair
To the one left behind, it will never seem fair.
Regardless of which of us stays, there will be no regret.
As the remaining one, I have memories I can never forget
As I watched you fade and finally depart
A hole that may or may not heal was torn in my heart.
You are in a place much better, they say

You are in a place much better, they say
Nonetheless, I will miss you until my final day.
Yes, I watched you depart.
Tearing a hole in my heart.



Be Cautious When Using RVillage

If you're on RVillage, the popular RV-oriented social media site, you can find Penwheels there, too -- and we'd love to chat with you there!

HOWEVER... be aware that when you opt to post there you're giving them permission to... well... I'll let them tell you:

By using or posting Content in, or through the Services, you automatically grant us an irrevocable, perpetual, fully paid, worldwide, royalty-free, transferable (with the right to sublicense) license to publish, copy, transmit, reproduce, adapt, modify, translate, perform, transmit, sell, exploit, and otherwise use Content in connection with the Services in any form, medium, or technology now known or later developed.... You irrevocably waive, and cause to be waived, against RVillage and its users any claims and assertions of moral rights or attribution with respect to Content.

You can find the full documents on the RVillage site. And you should read them.

You should also be aware that RVillage is owned by a major RV manufacturing company (or owned by the same company that owns both... hard to sort out the relationships between these entities, sometimes). Given that, there's incentive for them to be particularly alert to what's shared on RVillage.

[Continued on page 12]



AS ONE YEAR ENDS AND ANOTHER BEGINS CROSS ALL OF IRELAND A STORY OF LEPRECHAUN SPINS ONE BRIGHT DAY, PRECISELY AT DAWN THE VILLAGE DRUNK SEIZED THE WEE LEPRECHAUN UPON HIM WAS PLACED A VERY TIGHT HOLD IN AN EFFORT TO CAPTURE HIS POT O' GOLD BUT THERE IS MUCH MORE TO THE STORY THAN THAT 'CAUSE THE LEPRECHAUN HAD MAGIC UNDER HIS HAT! WITH A TWINKLE IN HIS EYE AND A NOD OF HIS HEAD HE SHATTERED THE LOCK ON HIS HOLDING SHED! HE LEAPED; HE JUMPED AS AWAY HE RAN PLAYING THE FLUTE LIKE THE GREEK GOD PAN AS HE RACED AWAY ACROSS THE EMERALD ISLE HE LOOKED BACK AT HIS CAPTORS, OH SO VILE HE ARCHED HIS HAND ACROSS THE SKY A RAINBOW APPEARED AS HE HOLLERED, "GOODBYE" HIS GOLD ONCE AGAIN IN A PLACE SO SAFE A SMILE OF DELIGHT, IT CROSSED HIS FACE CATCHING A LEPRECHAUN IS NOT ALL IT IS CRACKED UP TO BE

'CAUSE HIS MAGIC WILL HELP HIM DON'T YOU SEE

WHETHER YOU BE FROM DUBLIN OR KILLARNEY, OR COUNTY CORK

IF YOU GRAB A LEPRECHAUN, YOU ARE REALLY A DORK!



Little Free Library Contributed by Jaimie Bruzenak

"Honey's" Little Free Library in Coronado, California, is guarded a nearby gnome. What have readers donated to this library? Patricia Cornwall's *Unnatural Exposure* and *The President's Daughter* by James Patterson and Bill Clinton are just two to choose from. Depending on how hot it is, the book titled *Arctic Chill* might be plucked from the top shelf!



Many thanks, Jaimie, for sending your discoveries!

Best Book Covers of 2022

Do you agree with these choices? Does it make you want to revise your own book cover?

Take a look and see:

https://lithub.com/the-103-best-book-covers-of-2022

Remembering an SKP Book Project An Interview with Jane Holcombe

by Ellen Behrens

They called themselves "The Girls of Summer": eight women from the North Ranch SKP park who decided to learn the ins and outs of writing a book by doing it, rather than reading about it. Published in 2006, the paperback book is still available online. Sadly, many of The Girls of Summer

have passed on, but we're fortunate to have the insights of Jane Holcombe, who not only helped write the book but served as project manager and production manager.

The wonderful introduction explains how Norma Scheall, founder of the North Ranch Writers' Group, dreamed up the project, wrote the first chapter, and "assigned" chapters to the rest of you. Did the group outline what would follow her first chapter? Or did each writer just wing it?

At the first book project meeting Norma informed us that she had written both the first chapter and the last chapter. It was true that she had completed a first chapter, but it wasn't until we neared the end of the project that she confessed that she had not actually written the last chapter. Kaye Huckelberry and Carol Butterfield took that task on, wrapping things up neatly. As a group, we did not have an outline for the book. The story and the characters often took the writer to unexpected places and events. We each understood that we were writing about North Ranch as we knew it then, as well as some of the history of this community. Most writers on this project did "just wing it." Some came up with ideas, without much writing. Then, Norma, Kaye, or I helped them organize their ideas into the written word.

How did you as a group work through any challenges with the story itself?

As a group, we reviewed the completed chapters, which helped those with subsequent chapters move the story forward.

What did you learn most from doing the project?

Mystery at North Ranch

> I learned to listen to the creative ideas of others, even when I believed they were modifying the storyline beyond what I envisioned. It was, after all, a group effort. No one person "owned" this project, although we owed its inception and inspiration to Norma Scheall.

If another SKP group was thinking of doing a project like this, what advice would you give them?

I would advise anyone taking on a group writing project to be open to ideas, to have the writing edited by a third party, and to be ready to rewrite. Many inexperienced writers believe that once they have done the work of putting their ideas on paper, they are done. From what I have read about successful fiction writers, their work is edited by at least three types of editors (there are at least a dozen types) and they all have done major rewrites of their original first pass. My textbooks go through several editing cycles.

Is there anything I didn't ask that you'd like to mention?

Your questions were complete. The only thing I would add has nothing to do the Mystery at North Ranch but writing in general. Many of us do not have great ideas for writing novels, but we all have life experiences. Many (most?) successful fiction authors draw from real life in their fiction. They write what they know, even when it is integrated into an entirely fictitious story. Each of us has actual life experiences that should live on. Consider putting your memories into words and using your creativity to write nonfiction: creative nonfiction. My favorite creative nonfiction author is John Angus McPhee. During the years I traveled nearly fulltime as a technical consultant and instructor, I often read his books on my return flights. They were a soothing contrast to the technical books and magazines I read on my outbound flights.

Many thanks to Jane Holcombe for sharing her memories and advice with us! In our next issue, I hope to share an e-interview with Kaye Huckelberry about this same project. Meantime, you can get a copy of Mystery at North Ranch at Amazon!



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by Marguerita McManus

[Continued from the first page]

Adequate lighting is important, if the camera is on you, and a silent background is essential. The interior of a car is a built-in sound booth when it's parked in a quiet spot, but a walk-in closet can do in a pinch, until you get your own custom recording studio built that is (just kidding).

Video ideas start with reading a chapter, or two, or your whole book and yes, people really do buy the book even if they've listened to you read it. How about a few minutes on why you chose that genre, title, location or the theme of your books. If you really want to experiment, record a Zoom interview about your book. You can script the questions you want to be asked. As a non-fiction author, I made videos that related to my how-to quilt books: tips about sewing machines, threads, needles, fabrics, batting and how I handle a big quilt. I explained the specifics of my favorite techniques on video so that readers could see more than just the photo in the book. What tips can you share that will grab a reader's interest?

You can use photos instead of being a "talking head" or put your book cover in a 1920x1080 jpeg as a visual.

On Facebook, there are groups for authors, self-publishers, and yes, even a group called Audiobooks on YouTube (https://www.facebook.com/groups/362518349070415). Started by Victorine Lieske, an Indie Author/Publisher who has almost 2 million views to her videos, the group's focus is to help other Indies take advantage of this practically free resource.

HOW does a free video equal marketing? YouTube is the second largest search engine, behind only Google. That's tough to wrap your head around if you've never considered it, but YouTube is searched almost as much as Google, with more than 1 billion hours watched every day. When I do a presentation on this, I call it, Show & Sell on YouTube, Where Your Customers are Already Searching...For You. People use YouTube to learn about everything, 24/7. When you do an in-person event, you have your audience for that day but when you have a video on YT, it is available to anyone, anytime, forever. It's selling your books while you're sleeping.

BEST OF ALL: Each video description can contain live links. When you plan your closing for each video (called the Outro) you can let viewers know where they can buy your book and tell them the link is in the video description. It just doesn't get any sweeter than that. Your Channel can be linked to Amazon and your website, FB, etc. and your second call-to-action can be to ask viewers to subscribe to your channel. Think of it as a video version of a newsletter.

I am passionate about what I talk about on camera, relaxed and happy to share what I've learned. Admit it, you have a little bit of a show-off in you, don't you? Especially when you get started talking about something you believe in. I bet that there's some part of your book that sparked your writing passion and that, my author friend, is the resource you want to tap into as you say 'hello' to your fans who are already on YouTube, waiting to hear from you.

Author Marguerita McManus found unexpected friends in the sewing community via YouTube when she started marketing her quilting books in 2008. She is currently writing contemporary fiction based on life in her home state of Alaska and looking for Beta Readers. A snowbird RVer, she's happiest boondocking in the desert.

Contact her at MMQuilts@gmail.com



Nervous about Al?

What if I told you artificial intelligence (AI) could illustrate your book for you? Here's how to create an illustrated children's book without making a single drawing:

https://time.com/6240569/a i-childrens-book-alice-andsparkle-artists-unhappy/

Or... how about using artificial intelligence to write your novel for you? Yep, it's possible! (I might just try this one.) Read about it here:

https://www.newyorker.co m/news/our-

columnists/could-an-ai-chatbot-rewrite-my-novel







Member Profile: Betty Bowers by Marisa Wolf

[Continued from page 4]

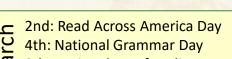
These days, Betty is active in her local Senior Club, encouraging senior citizens of her community to share their stories. She focuses her writing on memories to pass on to her great grandchildren—especially given the enormous changes she's experienced over the decades. For example, she flew in an open-cockpit double-wing plane with her barnstorming father as a toddler, a drastic change from the intercontinental flights of her adulthood.

While she doesn't have a specific writing routine, her preferred method is to marinate on an idea, sit down, and write it all in one day, keeping a conversational tone that makes both the writing and reading of her work zip by.

Her lifelong goal has been to leave the world better than she found it. The legacy she has created proves she has done so, and our lives are all richer for it.

Don't Miss the
2023 Win-Win
Contest!!
Details on
Page 13!

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 over two years. Find out more about her books at marisawolf.net.



8th: National Proofreading Day 19th: International Read to Me Day

2nd: International Children's Book Day 4th: National School Librarian Day

13th: National Scrabble Day

18th: National Columnists' Day

23rd: National Talk Like Shakespeare Day

23rd: World Book Day

28th: National Great Poetry Reading Day



21st: National Limerick Day 21st: National Talk Like Yoda Day 30th: National Creativity Day

Spring Dates for Writers





by Debra S. Sanders

[Continued from page 3]

Genres are dictated by a word count rule. A category romance might be 50,000 words in length but sci-fi or dystopian fans expect a range of 90,000 to 150,000 words. Authors might be tempted to add bloat if their manuscript falls short. Don't do it. A better solution is to review your plot and find areas where you can legitimately add extra scenes.

To sum things up, restraining information adds depth and intrigue to a character and enhances the overall story. Gradually revealing backstory and motivation keeps the audience engaged and allows for the story to unfold naturally. The slow reveal of a character's history, especially a villain or wounded hero, can add layers of complexity and make the character more compelling.

That sounds like a bestseller to me.

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

Free Stuff!

Even on the road as full-timers, we find local public libraries to be welcoming places where we can often get a lending card (we try to repay the kindness to us non-residents by making a donation to their Friends of the Library group, used bookstore or by other means). This has meant free wifi access in places we would otherwise be out of touch.

But there's so much more a library card can access, other than books (print, audio or e-), DVDs, CDs. Check to see if the library card you possess also gives you access to free language lessons (mangolanguages.com/libraries), streaming entertainment (kanopy.com), investment information (via Morningstar), or even free access to magazines (ask if your library participates with pressreader.com). How cool is that?!?

A nice, concise, go-get-em book for aspiring fiction writers: "Crafting Story: A Guide for the Emerging Writer" by Kate Johnson; Free on Amazon (as of early February 2023) here: https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B012D5KX7O/

This isn't a book, but rather one loooonnnnnggggg Web page, but it has great info and is worth a look for anyone considering self-publishing who needs a concise description of various platforms and options: https://insights.bookbub.com/ultimate-guide-to-self-publishing-book-distribution-tools/



In 2001, a journalist created The Apostrophe Protection Society because he was frustrated with improper uses of the tricky little punctuation mark in written English.

True! But, in 2019 at the age of 96, John Richards announced that "the ignorance and laziness present in modern times have won!" and closed the society. Lucky for us, the organization's Web site is still live: https://www.apostrophe.org.uk/ Just remember if you check things here, you might get the British rule, rather than something that's conventional Americanized English. (Or... how to make a complicated little squiggle even more complicated, right?!?)

Links of Interest....

It's never too late! One inspiring author whose first novel was published when he was 78 years old gives spot-on advice here:

https://www.writersdigest.com/be-inspired/15-tips-for-starting-your-writing-career-later-in-life

What Are Indie Books?!? Find out about what "indie" means in the publishing world and what it might mean to you!

https://independentbookreview.com/2023/01/24/what-are-indie-books-and-other-indie-publishing-anomalies/

Be Cautious When Using RVillage

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[Continued from page 6]

A few of us have considered whether to recommend moving the Penwheels forum to another site, but other social media platforms seem to have similar language in their Privacy or Terms and Conditions (or similarly named) documents.

Remember, just by posting, you're agreeing to these terms. That amazing photo you took could suddenly turn up on TV as part of an ad -- and you'll never see a dime. Don't bother protesting -- you've already agreed to giving it away for free.

What about this newsletter? Well, it's stored on Wordpress and published on a site bearing my (Ellen's) domain name, so it doesn't carry the same sorts of restrictions. Although the newsletter is copyrighted as a whole, you retain copyright to your own material. No one is entitled to copy or reproduce what you've published here without your express consent. (Do keep in mind publishing here could prevent you from publishing the same material in a magazine, anthology, or other periodical... ask Ellen if you have questions about this.)

Bottom line: always be aware of what you're posting online!



Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor:

At the beginning of Covid, I needed something to do, so I began jotting a few notes related to our travels living on the road. Those notes turned into a 68-page missive with pictures. I failed to include links to our points of interest. Now, I have something to share but am not permitted to do it because I am no longer a member of Escapees. How many others are in a similar situation?

Lew Leistikow's article slammed me between the eyes. I, too, became a loner after my wife, Gayle, died in 2022. We had been married for 43 years. Social gatherings and alone time are a part of the RV lifestyle. Each has its time and place, and each is important. When traveling in an RV, you must wear many hats, both husband and wife and lovers and best friends.

I know many RVers who have lost their spouse/travel companion. Many continue the lifestyle and become members of the Solos BOF. I have observed that during our 43 years of RVing. Gayle and I bought our first RV 3 weeks after marriage in 1979. We were never without an RV until the summer 2016 when we sold our rig to another Escapee. Why is it a lot of the "stick-house" community does not consider friendship a part of the marriage?

I fully understand the need for rules on how an organization is run. Too many have rules about being "forced out" because you do not meet a specific requirement. With true friends, you will stay in touch. Others, though friends, will slowly drift apart.

I want to contribute, but apparently, that is not allowed.

Charlie Parker
Formerly Escapee # 77890
Formerly FMCA 100087
Formerly Newmar Kountry Klub 16183

Charlie -- You raise valid points and hit on something that's been a core debate within Penwheels for some time. What we've decided to do -- and I apologize for not communicating this earlier or more clearly -- is to open the door to Guest Contributors so you, and others in a similar situation, can send stuff in. This is part of the reason I dropped the SKP number after everybody's name (if you look at issues from several years ago, which you can find online, you'll see they included SKP numbers). Our regular columnists will continue to be Escapees, which is in keeping with the Escapees Birds of a Feather designation.

I do live up to my motto -- This is YOUR newsletter. SKP or not, we have many readers we'd like to see more involved in contributing, so shutting someone out because of a change in their lifestyle does seem petty and uncaring -- and is not the Escapee way.

And a P.S.: First, I'm thrilled to include two of Charlie's poems in this issue and more of his writing in the pipeline. Also the Escapees has reported that an RV is *not* a requirement for membership Thank you, Charlie, for raising this issue!

Make your voice heard! Send your Letter to the Editor to me at ellenbehr[at]aol[dot]com and let me know it's for publication. Or just send me a note with suggestions or –better yet!—a submission!



The Return of the WIN-WIN Contest!

What is the Win-Win Contest?

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

How do you enter?

Simple! Just submit something for the Summer, Fall or Winter 2023 issue. Word length: 500-750 words maximum for nonfiction; 1000 words max for fiction. E-mail it as a Word document (if you can't send it in this format, specify what you can send) to Ellen: ellenbehr@aol.com. Put "Win-Win Contest Entry" in the subject line of the e-mail. Deadlines: May 15 for the Summer issue; August 15 for the Fall issue; November 15 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 and short stories are 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 published in this issue 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? And we don't really want to pit our members against each other.

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 Winter 2023 issue.

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

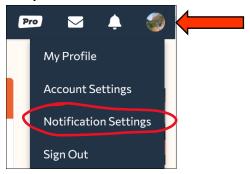




Missing Issues? Learning About Contests Too Late? {This is long but important!}

The only things that's constant is change, and that's certainly true with technology and all things "e-"! If you're missing news from this group or just want to cover all of your bases, here are some tips.

- 1. Make sure the editor has your e-mail address. You DON'T have to be an Escapee member to receive the e-mail. E-mails won't come addressed to you but to ellenbehr@aol.com (the same e-mail address you should use to get on the mailing list); that's because I send a blanket e-mail using a "BCC" option to keep everyone's e-mail address private.
- 2. Check your Spam mail. Look for "ellenbehr" or "Ellen Behrens" as a sender, then save the e-mail address to your Contacts to keep future e-mails from going into your Spam folder. (It might take a few gorounds to make this work.)
- 3. Access the newsletters directly online from the Penwheels Newsletter Archive page:
 - 1. Go to: https://ellenbooks.com/newsletter-archive/
 - 2. Click the link for the issue you'd like to read
 - 3. Pick either "Save" (and the PDF will download to your device in the folder you've designated) or "Open" to read the PDF online (you can save it from here, too!).
- 4. Sign up for RVillage, create a profile, and join the Escapees BOF-Penwheels Group: when new issues of the newsletter are published, an announcement is made here, as are postings about contests and other items of interest. You can contact Marisa, our Penwheels RVillage moderator, to join the group or do it on your own. (Please read the caution about posting on this or any forum!)
 - 1. Once you're signed up, make sure you set your Notifications, so you be alerted when something new is posted. Click the icon in the far upper right corner (on my laptop, this is the image I uploaded of myself) to open a drop-down menu.



- a) Click the "Notification Settings" to set your preferences for how you'd like to be alerted.
- 5. If you don't see the Escapees BOF-Penwheels group on the left side menu on RVillage under "Groups I Have Joined" (the first groups you joined will show), you'll have to do a search to find it. According to an RVillage admin, here's how to do that:
 - 1. When using the desktop version of RVillage, click "Discover" to expose the drop-down menu.
 - 2. Click "Groups." On the left side of your page look for "Groups I have Joined," and click to view all.
 - 3. On this page, you can use the search bar to locate Escapees BOF-Penwheels or you can look through each page if you prefer.

(This isn't much fun, and I've been in touch with RVillage; right now, your Groups appear in the order you join them – last joined, last listed.) Remember: browsers and using a phone could affect these instructions.

Please let me or <u>Marisa</u> know if you have trouble getting this newsletter so we can see if there's anything we can do to help. We'd love to "see" you online!

Ellen