

A photograph of a dense forest with tall trees and green foliage, serving as a background for the title text.

ASJA Pacific Northwest Chapter

October 2026

**For ASJA members in
Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Oregon and Washington**

<https://asjapnw.org>



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Our Next Meeting

Our next chapter meeting will be Wednesday, October 21, 2026 11:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada). We are using a new online meeting platform that is browser-based. Direct your browser to this URL:

<http://meet.jit.si/ASJAPNW-meeting-room>

This is the same platform (but different room) that the ASJA Coffee chat (via ASJA HQ) uses every Tuesday at 1:00 PM Eastern.

From the President

Rosemary Keevil



Kill Your Darlings

When I was managing editor of the professional women's magazine, *Scarlett*, I had to write a monthly column. Someone once asked how I decided what to write about.

The answer was simple: Deadlines forced me to be decisive. To me, deadlines are sacrosanct. I belong to a couple of writing groups, and I am always floored when people don't meet deadlines. It's not rocket science.

There are some hard and fast rules in journalism. Meeting deadlines is right up there, along with: If in doubt, check it out. And, if still in doubt, leave it out.

Another very important rule is respecting a maximum word count. If your max word count is 500 then you can't submit a 501-word article.

This takes me back to when I returned to university in my fifties to take my Master of Journalism. I was taking a creative nonfiction writing course and the prof started talking about "killing your darlings," which is exactly what I find myself doing when I am over my word count. I researched a bit about the origin of this saying and AI reported the following:

"Many scholars point to British writer Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch who actually wrote 'murder your darlings' in his 1916 book *On the Art of Writing*. Much more recently, Stephen King had this to say in his book *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*: 'Kill your darlings, kill your darlings, even when it breaks your egocentric little scribbler's heart, kill your darlings.'"

Don't ya just love, "breaks your egocentric little scribbler's heart"? Now that is a darling he clearly couldn't kill!

I learned in a manuscript writing course that there are additive and subtractive writers. Subtractive writers write sparingly from the get-go. Additives, like me, download and then cut. The cutting is where killing your darlings plays its powerful role. For example, I may think I have a perfect article, but it's 1,200 words and the max word count is 1,000.

My problem right now is I am already at 336 words and the word count for the Prez' Note is only 300. But it sounded like a soft 300. (Quote from one of Carolyn's emails: "...it's OK if it goes over 300 words, just try to stay under 400.")

I am going to quit while I'm not ahead. Word count is 388 so no need to kill my darlings (396)!

*Rosemary Keevil is a freelance journalist and the author of **The Art of Losing It: A Memoir of Grief and Addiction**. She has been a TV news reporter, a current affairs radio show host, and managing editor of a professional women's magazine. In another life she was a can-can dancer in Dawson City, Yukon. Rosemary lives in Whistler, British Columbia, with her husband, Doug, and their two doodles, Romeo and Hamlet. rosemarykeevil.com*

An Editor's Note

Randy Stapilus



What features should we have?

Following up on my note from last month, consider submitted a request for suggestions:

The cover image (including the words “ASJA Pacific Northwest Chapter”) has been going through some iterations, and the regenerations have left it a little worn. A new Pacific Northwest image to launch our newsletter would be welcome. Suggestions (and if you'd like to supply one, that's good too) are welcome.

Beyond that, we've been considering what features we might include in the newsletter. Not that we're looking to drop anything, but what would you like to see added? And would you be interested in adding it? ...

Randy Stapilus is editor of the ASJA Pacific Northwest Chapter newsletter. He is a writer and publisher based in Carlton, Oregon, and contributes a weekly column to the Oregon Capital Chronicle. He can be reached at stapilus@ridenbaugh.com.

Seen in Portland

Catherine Kolonko

These are two photos I took of a 6-foot tall crow sculpture, which is part of a citywide art installation in Portland.

Called Wildwood: Follow the Crows, the project includes 30 giant crow sculptures by local artists. It kicked off this summer and runs through November when the sculptures will be auctioned off for charity. This purple sculpture is titled Sir Chester by artist Nina Oberlin and stands in front of Lan Su Chinese Garden in downtown.



Self-Publishing aka Self-Loathing

Rosemary Keevil

It's nobody's fault but my own. I'm beating myself up about it, the poor choice of self-publishers, that is. I thought I did decent research. But, in hindsight, I guess the overall approach of the company I hired to help me self-publish should have tipped me off.

The book I am publishing is a short research book called *The Truth About Losing It: Voices on Grief and Addiction*. It is a follow-up to my memoir, *The Art of Losing It: A Memoir of Grief and Addiction*.

Anyway, the "corporate executive and strategist" at this company set me up with a package, which included an "Expanded Distribution and Premium Publishing Plan" for \$1750 USD.

Soon after I signed the contract, I received an email from my project manager. We had a phone conversation, and I had a hard time understanding him because my hearing isn't great and he had a strong accent. I suggested we talk on Zoom because it would be easier for me. So, here is the weird thing. He said they have a policy to not talk to clients on Zoom, but he would check and let me know. I guess the powers that be deemed it was okay for him to have one Zoom meeting with me. What is that all about? My antennae should have already been up.

I was happy with the book cover design, but the project manager kept on at me about the social media campaign. I thought this was premature because I had not seen a clean version of my manuscript. He kept sending me supposedly edited versions with mistakes. It was starting to drive me crazy. You'd think my pea-brain would clue in and consider jumping ship.

He wanted to handle the social media campaign because it cost more money. I did fork over more for a video shoot at my house. I was not happy with the footage or stills, so we were planning to rebook the shoot. I said I wanted to hire my own still photographer, who lives in my hometown and with whom I have worked before. I put her in touch with the project manager, and she peppered him with many questions, such as, "What is your registered business name?"

The PM took great offence. He told me he did not want to deal with my photographer. My photographer in turn told my husband and I about a friend who was scammed out of \$125,000. She saw warning lights here too.

I started adding up suspicious, questionable things that had happened and came to the brilliant conclusion that I should end the relationship with this company. The company even failed to develop a mistake-free version of the book, with such basic errors as a colon where there should be a semi-colon, or missing quotation marks.

Then, I went to the publisher of my memoir, She Writes Press. It is run by the dynamo Brooke Warner, a publishing expert and TEDx speaker. SWP is a hybrid press which means your manuscript needs to qualify and then you pay for their professional services which include proofreading of the final manuscript, custom cover and interior design and traditional distribution by Simon & Schuster. The total package costs about \$12,000.

The reason I did not go to She Writes Press originally was because I had assumed that my new book was not up their alley. As it turns out, it is. But Brooke wants so many changes that I basically have to go back to the drawing board and do more research, including conducting more interviews.

I was able to wash my hands of the other company with little difficulty and no more expense.

But now you know why the title of this article includes “Self-Loathing.”

Tech tip: File transfers the easy way

Bruce Miller

Sending big files to a friend or associate can be a pain, because email attachments have file size limitations. An app under the radar that solves this problem is blip – from blip.net.

The free version allows you to send any size file to anyone who also has blip installed. The free version may throttle the speed when going through the Internet. When using blip within a Local Area Network from one computer to another, there is no throttling.

Using it is a breeze. Get the email address the receiving person used for signing up, use it for the destination, add the file, and tell it to send. The recipient may need to accept the file.

If by chance you have more than one computer associated with the blip account, the notice to receive shows on all computers. Just accept the file on the computer at hand and the deal is done.

Because there are apps for Windows, iOS, and Linux, sending a file across operating system platforms is easy.

Bruce Miller finds blip to be useful when he wants to move a big file without using a USB stick, or putting a big file into Dropbox, or fighting with cross-platform network failures.

THE WORKING WRITER'S PIVOT IN THE AI AGE: EVOLVING FROM DISPLACED TO DOMINANT

THE AI ANXIETY TRAP



THE AI-EMPOWERED WRITER



by Bruce Miller

Did You Know: Heisting a Country

Bruce Miller

Before you head to the movie theatre to see *The Man Who Stole Portugal* you might want to check out the book by the same name that inspired the movie.

The book is by Murray Teigh Bloom, one of the founders of the Society of Magazine Writers, now the American Society of Journalists and Authors. The 306-page 1966 book, about a crime of fraud involving the Bank of Portugal, produced a movie option in 1966, but apparently that did not result in a movie. A new option happened in 1969 and no movie. In 1975 a film option was acquired by Noel Marshall, the executive producer of the hit movie *The Exorcist*. That also did not become a movie. The 2026 production is apparently real and directed by Thomas Napper.

Bloom's acknowledgments in the book suggest a huge amount of source material. Among his notes: "Most of the research and interviews for this book were conducted during three trips to England and Europe between 1963 and 1965." In a footnote Bloom notes that "The London trials required some 2100 pages of legal-size transcripts. The Portuguese trials covered 75 volumes, 32 annexes, for a total of 22,000 pages."

A portion of the book was written in New Hampshire: "Finally, there is a continuing debt to the MacDowell Colony of Peterborough, New Hampshire -- one of our great social inventions -- for granting me the boon of a stay long enough to finish this book."

Bruce Miller has been looking into ASJA history.

Tech Tip: Organize with browser tab groups

Bruce Miller

Losing track of your browser tabs? Put related tabs into a group for segmentation and organization.

These browsers support browser tabs (and this might not be all of them):

Chrome - Windows, Linux

FireFox - Windows

Safari - Apple

Probably the best way to get up to speed on tab groups are Youtube videos, such as these:

Chrome on Windows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kM8ubnb8GM8>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09aS_FOCBws

Safari on Apple

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9VUP3c8ReI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTawbyiRpqE>

Most tab group functions also allow color coding, so you can know which tab is in which group.

Bruce Miller has has reduced tab headaches with tab groups.

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