

Seven Reasons Why Compiling an Anthology is a Trip!

By Terri Elders



"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"—so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.

~*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll

Now that *Not Your Mother's Book...On Travel* is about to be released, I'm reflecting on how very much compiling an anthology is like planning a trip. The quotation above from Lewis Carroll particularly resonates with me since I'll be spending a week this coming July at Christ Church, Oxford University, where Charles Dodgson—aka Lewis Carroll—held a mathematics lecturer position for over a quarter of a century.

If you've read the *Alice* books, you'll know they are filled with puzzles and brainteasers. One famous riddle is the Mad Hatter's "Why is a raven like a writing desk?" Though Carroll protested that the joke is the fact that there is no answer, through the decades folks have insisted on coming up with solutions. One

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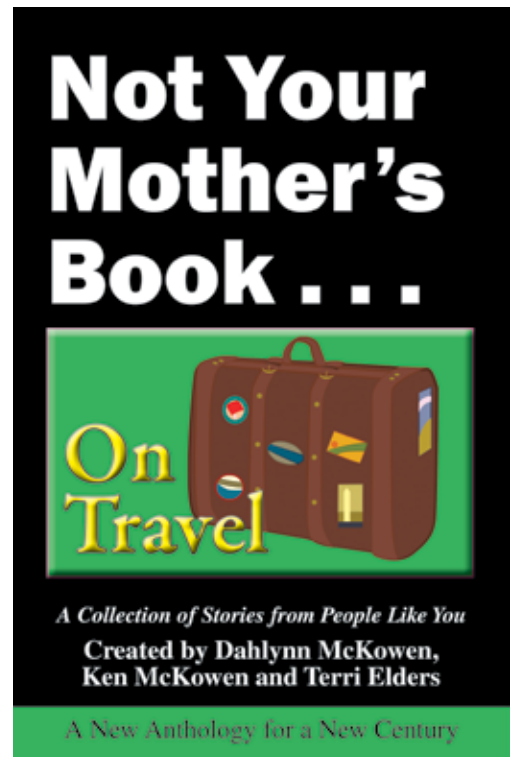
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was Aldous Huxley's conundrum, "Because there is a B in Both and an N in Neither." Or the popular, "Because Poe wrote on both." True maybe, if not so clever.

Alice, though, like most travelers, wanted legitimate answers. For people like her, and for anybody interested in putting together an anthology, here are some reasons why this analogy is apt:

#1: Direction. You've got to know where you're headed. It's got to be somewhere! In *Not Your Mother's Book... On Travel*, the McKowens—my fellow co-creators on the title and the series' founders—and I agreed to define "travel" loosely. The stories we sought could involve road trips, plane trips, ocean voyages or just jaunts to local haunts. All we required was that they featured people leaving home and how such a venture away had impacted the traveler. Nonetheless, we found that some submissions simply didn't focus strongly enough on the travel aspect, that they dealt more with relationships, or were simply reviews of lodgings and eateries in exotic locales. And some simply were not stories. We received rants, religious epiphanies, editorials and articles that might appear in a newspaper's travel pages. They didn't make the cut.



#2: Itinerary. Just as most of us compile an itinerary when we're planning a journey, we fashioned a preliminary itinerary for the book, including suggested chapter headings that would cover different aspects of travel. As it turned out, those headings changed considerably throughout the course of putting the book together. Nonetheless, the suggested headings spurred potential contributors into thinking through their experiences that might fit what we were looking for.

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#3: Research. Most travelers enjoy reading up on possible attractions to visit once they arrive in an area or at a destination. In creating *On Travel*, I liked figuring out how to attract potential contributors. In the beginning, I posted story call-outs on websites devoted to memoir writers and sent individual emails to every writer I knew, asking them to submit stories. I discovered three or four newsletters that post anthology call-outs without charging a fee. I nagged on Facebook and even Tweeted. I contacted people who had appeared in previous anthologies with me and begged them to tell their friends about how to submit for NYMB. Story contributions came in at a steady rate.

#4: Reservations. Once I started reading and scoring the stories that seemed strongest, we were ready to send out the permission release forms (PRF). PRFs are much like reservations, though we made no guarantee to anybody that their story would definitely appear in the book. We let people know that their work was under consideration and asked to reserve the right to use it.



#5: Budgets. In planning a trip, I always figure out what I can afford for transportation, lodging, meals, entertainment and incidentals. In compiling an anthology, I learned to budget space. The McKowens provided an estimate with how many words the manuscript should come in under, with allocations for introduction, table of contents, dedication, photo pages, contributors' bios and co-creator bios. This provided some basic structure. I found myself toting up word counts just as I would expenses.

#6: Insurance. Whether or not to purchase travel insurance is always a source of debate. For some trips, I have, and for some, I've figured the insurance was just too costly. In setting out to co-create an anthology for NYMB, I'd been warned about backing up all my work once I started editing. Another co-creator suggested making space in the cyberspace "cloud." I relied instead on two flash drives. Each day, before I closed down my laptop where I do my writing and editing, I downloaded the day's work to each of two flash drives. I figured that if my computer AND a flash drive crashed, I'd still have the third storage source. It worked for me.

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#7: Snafus. Experienced travelers expect the unexpected. Stuff simply happens—flat tires, late plane connections, cancellations because of blizzards. It's not always smooth sailing. Similarly, a co-creator should be prepared to be flexible. Perhaps that story you've fallen in love with really doesn't fit the general lighthearted tone of the book. Maybe a contributor decides to pitch a hissy fit over a minor edit and either withdraws a story, or the publisher withdraws the story on a matter of principle. (Insider note: The McKowens are protective of their co-creators, stating that they do not have to deal with difficult contributors, and have created an internal list of those contributors who have been banned from being published in any of their anthologies.) Two good stories may just be too similar in theme or style. I learned it pays not to set your heart on any individual contributor or any single story. From the onset I had a fall-back list of alternative stories, if needed. As it turned out, I even rustled up a few from other categories in the Publishing Syndicate database, and discovered some that came in after the *On Travel* deadline.

A writer friend asked me, after *On Travel* went to press, if I'd be interested in ever again compiling another anthology, if I thought the effort was worthwhile. I laughed. She might as well have asked me if I'm interested in future travel. Like Alice, I'm not afraid to plunge down another rabbit hole or walk through another mirror. I'm looking forward to co-creating *NYMB...My First Time* and *NYMB...Sharing Secrets*. It will be a trip!



Traveling friend Jane Conn (L) and Terri on the London Eye, the world's largest cantilevered observation wheel. With more than 3.5 million visitors a year, it is also England's most paid-for tourist attraction.

Terri, who lives in northeast Washington State, returned last week from a trip to England. She said she went to get over the wintertime blues. Here she is standing in front of the refurbished Dickens Museum on Doughty Street in London.

Woo hoo!

Terri mentions *NYMB...On Travel* in her article, but neglected to say that the book's official release date is March 26th! More information on page 6 of this newsletter.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TERRI ON HER FIRST PUBLISHED BOOK!

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Contests and More!



Early Bird Deadline: May 6, 2013
Entry Deadline: June 3, 2013

This is taken directly, word for word, from WD's RULES & REGULATIONS:

You may enter as many manuscripts as you like in each of the following categories:

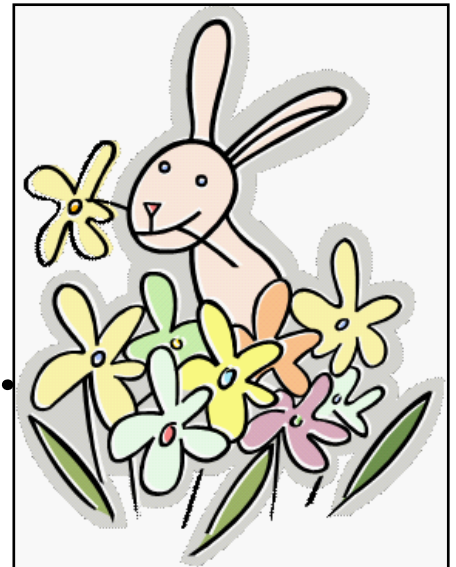
- Memoirs/Personal Essay, Magazine Feature Article and Children's/Young Adult Fiction: 2,000 words maximum.
- Mainstream/Literary Short Story and Genre Short Story: 4,000 words maximum.
- Inspirational Writing: 2,500 words maximum.
- Rhyming Poem and Non-rhyming Poem: 32 lines maximum.
- Stage Play Script or Television/Movie Script: Send the first 15 pages in standard script format, plus a one-page synopsis. Complete scripts are not eligible. Scripts—original or written for any series in production on or after January 1, 2013—are eligible; adaptations will not be accepted.

More info: <http://www.writersdigest.com/competitions/writers-digest-annual-competition>

Poetry Contest List

Found a great poetry contest list by "CreativeGenius" on HubPages.com. The blogger has posted gobs of poetry contests that are free to enter. It's an amazing list. Be sure to scroll down past the chart to read information on each contest. Good luck!

<http://creativegenius.hubpages.com/hub/Poetry-Writing-Contests>



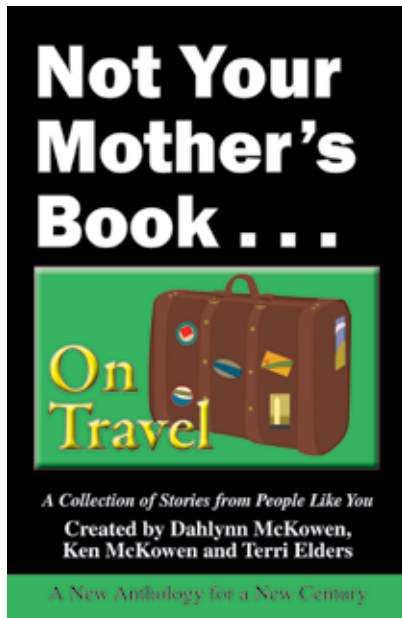
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Publishing Events around the world

BookFestivals.com is a product of JM Northern Media. Founded in 1999, the company "produces entertainment and education events around the world, including the DIY Convention: Do It Yourself in Film, Music & Books; Hollywood Book Festival, and: the New York Book Festival. Their listing of events is admirable—they have a pulse on what is happening in the world of books. Definitely check it out! <http://bookfestivals.com>

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Book Updates...

Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Travel Dahlynn McKowen, Ken McKowen and Terri Elders



The book is done! The official release is March 26th. There are 58 stories total from contributors around the globe. From the jungles of Central America to the highlands of Africa, from the charms of Europe to the mysteries of Norther America, from the sacred sites of Asia to the high seas of the Caribbean, these stories will delight and entertain you.

Whether you are an armchair traveler or an on-the-road-again adventurer, we invite you to vicariously journey around the world with us. But don't forget to fasten your seat belt, because you're guaranteed one hell of a great trip!

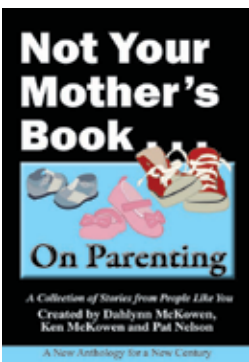
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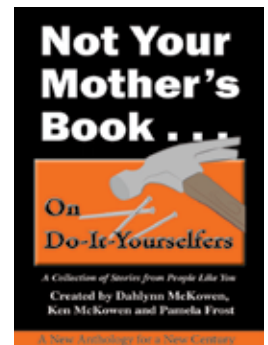


Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Parenting: This book is in copyediting right now. Permission Release Agreements have been sent to those whose stories made the first-round selection, and galleys will be going out for review to contributors soon. Early feedback: What a great read! We are in love with this title and know you will fall in love with it, too.

Release: April/May 2013

Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Do-It-Yourselfers: This book will go into copyediting as soon as *Parenting* is completed. Being true DIYers, we need to fill in a few holes in the manuscript, so some more permission release forms may be issued. Having read the initial stories, we about peed our pants from laughter. Too funny! Thanks for the great stories.

Release: June 2013



SEND IN YOUR STORIES!

Updated 3/23/13

Not Your Mother's Book . . .

A new anthology for a new century!

Stories needed for 30+ new books. Must be written by people age 18 and up. Details and submission guidelines on the PS website.

HURRY! DEADLINES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



On Cats:
May 1, 2013

On Dating:
June 1, 2013



Submission guidelines at
www.PublishingSyndicate.com

OMG! My Reality! Youth Series

Time to get published!

We are accepting stories for four *OMG! My Reality!* titles: *Kids*; *Preteens*; and *Teens*. Stories must be written by those age 25 and younger. Please share this information with everyone. Thanks!



Do you know a teenager who loves to write? Tell him/her to submit stories to the upcoming *OMG! My Reality! For Teens*. **Being a published author is great for college and job applications.** With the fall 2013 release of *Stand Up!*, part of the *OMG! My Reality!* series, we'll be swamped with even more submissions. So don't delay! Send now!

www.PublishingSyndicate.com



My Story is Out: High School Years

Created by Lyndsey D'Arcangelo

The nation's newest anthology for LGBT teens!

Permission release forms going out in early April! But we are looking for a few more stories to round out the manuscript. Must be penned by those age 25 and younger. Send now! www.MyStoryIsOut.com

Dream
of
ThingsSM

Dream of Things has a great line-up of anthology books. On their website, be sure to click on the "Workshop" tab for a listing of titles. Good luck!

www.DreamofThings.com

Go for it! Get published! 