

Featured Writer Interview with Norma and R.D Kilgore

Norma and R.D. Kilgore have been married 37 years and have taken two Write Around Portland workshops together. Norma, 63, is originally from Kansas. She loves plants and gardening and has a small business that allows her to pursue that passion. She also loves music of all kinds, from classical to country and has been a wedding singer. R.D., 63, was born and raised in Oregon and is a researcher at heart. He is constantly reading and learning new things. As a youth, he had a keen interest in science fiction and wanted to write the great sci-fi novel.



This Time I'll Do It

by R.D. Kilgore

I kept thinking I was going to do it, but would put it off for one reason or another. Each morning I came out, took a look at it and said to myself maybe today I'll do it. Then I would proceed to go about the business of the day and forget about it.

Day after day the same routine would play out over and over as the days became weeks with nothing having been done about it. Finally one day while out driving I needed to stop for gas and realized that this was the day. No more putting it off, it will get done.

After putting gas in the car I pulled away from the pump and drove over to the object of my attention. I got out and inserted quarters until the compressor motor roared to life. I grabbed the air hose and applied the nozzle to the valve stem, letting the air flow into the troublesome tire with the slow leak. This was the last time I was going to refill the tire. This time I was going to drive straight to the tire store and get it patched or replaced.

I wanted to make sure it got good and full this time, just in case. So I watched as the half-flat tire inflated back to full size. When I felt the tire was full I removed the air nozzle and stood back to proudly admire my handiwork. As I did so the popping sounds began. After a few moments the popping stopped and I watched and winced in startled amazement as the tire blew up with a loud bang.

Thank goodness I renewed my AAA membership, I thought to myself as I crawled into the cab of the tow-truck for a ride to the tire store.

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On My Voyage

by Norma Kilgore

It was cold that morning, but I bundled up and grabbed the cup of coffee left for me outside the door. I climbed the narrow stairwell, holding tight to the railing. Up on top, I could see the almost clear sky. The waves were extremely torrid. As I stepped further on the ship deck, a few of the crew were finishing hoisting the sails and rigging down the ropes. We'd been out in the water six days. We left the last small island after picking up supplies. I'd never imagined myself being on the deck of a ship, but here I am at last envisioning what it must have been like hundreds of years ago. The sky overhead is more blue and puffy clouds show signs of possible rain at any time. I hope we make it to the next port without a storm. So far, so good. It's my turn to do dishes after lunch and dinner tonight. Tomorrow, I do the bed clothes, and launder all bath towels. This morning, it's cold, but peaceful on deck. The boat rocks back and forth. The waves have become more gentle and rolling as they guide the ship on its way.

I love the sea. A quick sip of the good warm coffee. Well, maybe I'll see what's for lunch today.

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Interview with Featured Writers Norma and R.D. Kilgore

Interviewed by Patty Wentz, Write Around Portland volunteer facilitator.

How did you first hear about Write Around Portland? What drew you to join the workshop?

NORMA: I was going through therapy treatment for a leg injury I acquired from a medical emergency and I was told there was a group that met that could help me with my sense of coping with what was going on from me. I signed up, and he joined me.

R.D.: When she said I could participate too, I thought it might revive my desire to write, which had been lying dormant.

What was your experience like in the workshops?

NORMA: The workshops really give you an appreciation of what people have experienced in their lives and how they have been able to cope with what they are going through and write things down related to stories from their past they could never do previously.

R.D.: I'm not really a social person in large groups. I tend to not say much. I like to listen and take in the comments of all the members of the group and it was interesting [to hear] where they were coming from. I marveled at people's ability to write from a prompt. It takes me a while to get my wheels turning. As the workshop progressed, I was finding it easier and easier to write and when the workshop stopped, I couldn't stop. It was a movie rolling in my head.

How did you feel about being published in the book?

NORMA: It's amazing that you can see you actually have something you wrote and you can see you wrote it. Like when I used to sing and they recorded it and you listen, you think to yourself, "Is that me?" Kind of like that.

R.D.: I have to say, I was proud. That I was able to produce something, to see it in print for the public to see. For me that was a major accomplishment and inspiring that I might write something big one of these days.

How did you feel about writing and sharing with other people and hearing others' stories?

NORMA: The prompts really allowed me to trigger my thought process a lot better and to write more fluently than I ever thought I would. And to relate that and get feedback was quite interesting. I appreciated that. You write something and get feedback right away. You are writing and not really thinking and it's on the page in the time allowed.

R.D.: I was reluctant at first to have anyone hear anything I've written, especially when I was barely able to get going on something, especially if someone else had written something long. I had to get used to the group of mostly strangers and then I was surprised at the positive responses I often got. It took me back a bit.

What specifically did you get out of the workshop experience?

NORMA: It increased my confidence. Also, in the first group we met with when I initially had the injury, I didn't write about the injury specifically during the workshop, but for my submission I did focus on that. I think as I listened to other people about how they were coping and what they were going through, that gave me the okay to put it on paper.

R.D.: It gave me more confidence and reinforced my desire to continue writing, and mostly I was a bit surprised at how talented she was. She's never done a lot of writing other than notes or a little song. I'd like to hear more of her writing. I appreciated the mixing with people we don't really socialize with and it was interesting to find out what other people are thinking and the thought process they go through and what they come up with in their writing. It was inspiring.

What was your favorite part of the workshop?

NORMA: Getting to know other people. And getting to know where they are coming from through their writing. How much I appreciated how much they could develop from just having a prompt. People create very thought-provoking material.

R.D.: I like the activity where you write a line and you pass it to another person and it comes out a coherent story. And even when it doesn't. Sometime not. And when you do a group activity and create a character and put it together in a story. It was interesting and entertaining.

Would you recommend Write Around Portland to other people?

NORMA: I'd recommend it. I think it would probably encourage people to be a little more appreciative of other people that come from different walks of life that maybe they haven't encountered. They can get quite an education.

R.D.: I'd definitely recommend if you know someone had a desire to pursue writing or develop their writing skills. If you were in a situation where things are not going so well for you, it's a good diversion and builder of self-esteem and gives appreciation for what other people are going through.