



Should You Be Blogging?

By Peg Silloway

Sure. Maybe? No Way. Absolutely!

These are all good answers, and one is right for your writing career.

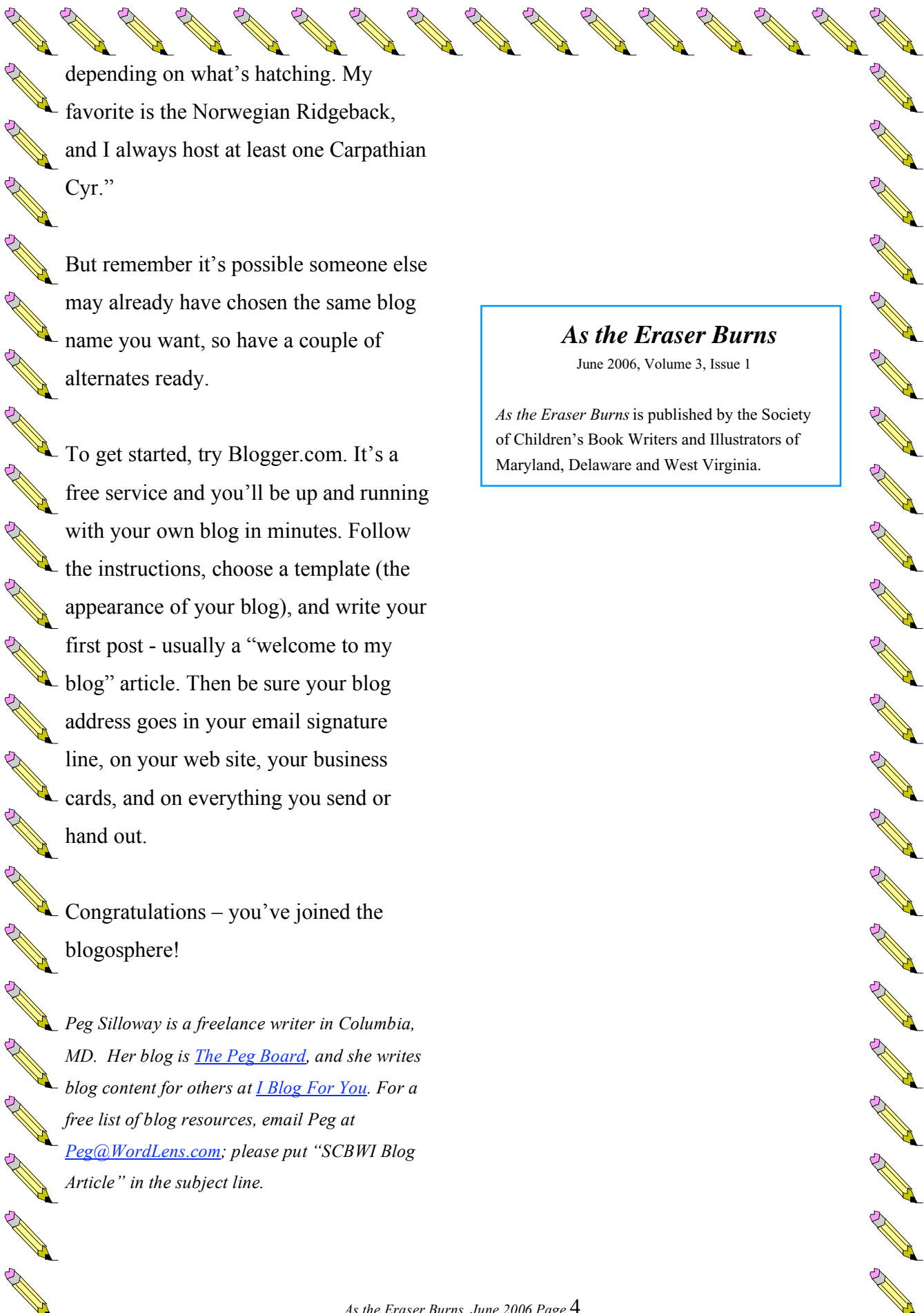
A blog – short for “web log” – is an online journal that can boost your promotion efforts, whether you are a published author or still working toward that goal. A blog complements your relatively static website because you update it frequently with new articles and commentary. It can be a solo effort, or you might join with other authors to spread the writing work.

Think of a blog as an electronic newsletter full of brief articles, commentary, and anecdotes. Your blog can allow reader comments on what you write, and you can then respond. This virtual conversation leads to a feeling of familiarity for readers, which can be good for sales. Chat informally with your visitors but keep the BSP (blatant self-promotion) low-key; this is a conversation, not an ad, and you want people to come back often.

Yes, it takes time. But if you turn out 200 to 300 words, once a week or so, you can have a successful blog. Just remember the basics of focused writing for the Web:

- People reading on line rarely read every word. They scan for something interesting and then move on.
- Know your audience and speak directly to them. Grab them with a good “hook” at the start of your article.
- Focus on one topic per article; keep it concise.
- Avoid long text passages; split up sections with subheadings.

Start by thinking of a title for your blog, craft one sentence describing your blog, and write a brief profile of yourself. Say you want to blog about dragons. You might choose a blog name “DragonFire,” and describe it as “The blog for those who know, absolutely, that Dragons walk among us.” This description will appear under your blog title. Then write a brief paragraph about yourself, like “I’ve known dragons since I was seven, and now live with 15 or 20 at a time,



depending on what's hatching. My favorite is the Norwegian Ridgeback, and I always host at least one Carpathian Cyr."

But remember it's possible someone else may already have chosen the same blog name you want, so have a couple of alternates ready.

To get started, try Blogger.com. It's a free service and you'll be up and running with your own blog in minutes. Follow the instructions, choose a template (the appearance of your blog), and write your first post - usually a "welcome to my blog" article. Then be sure your blog address goes in your email signature line, on your web site, your business cards, and on everything you send or hand out.

Congratulations – you've joined the blogosphere!

Peg Silloway is a freelance writer in Columbia, MD. Her blog is [The Peg Board](#), and she writes blog content for others at [I Blog For You](#). For a free list of blog resources, email Peg at Peg@WordLens.com; please put "SCBWI Blog Article" in the subject line.

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