

WESTERN TALE SPINNER



ODE TO COFFEE AND COLDER WEATHER...

Soon we'll be beyond the August nip-in-the-air, and into outright chilly. Time for a coffee, a tea, or a good solid cup o' cocoa! And some pen and paper or laptop, curled under a blanket, toes by the fire...oh, that's too fast! But there is something about autumn that lends itself to hunkering down for some solid writing time. I hope this issue of our newsletter inspires, or at least percolates...



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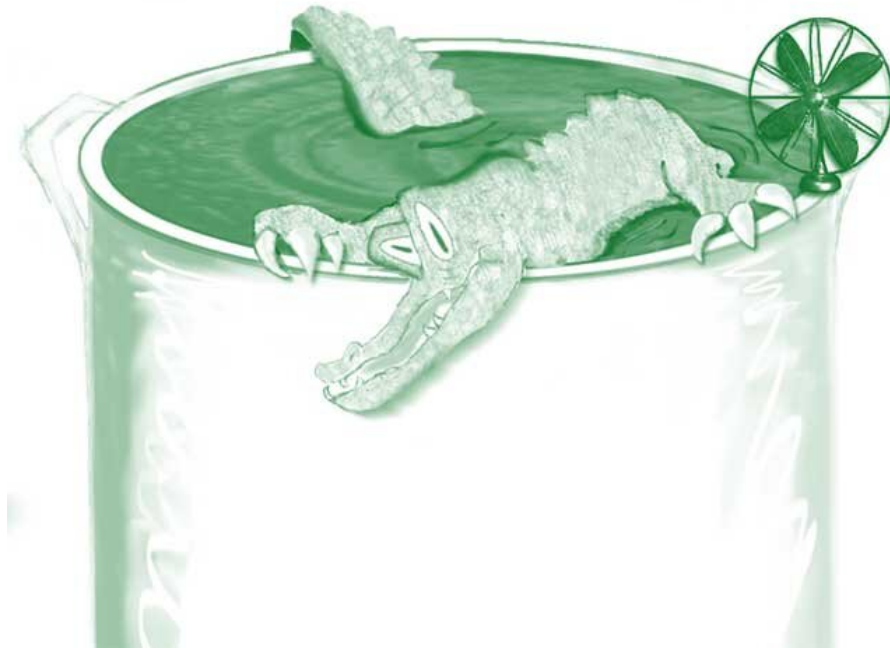
What's Inside

2. Good News
3. In Spite of Parenthood... by Lynn Leitch
4. Advice for Busy Writers by Denise Jaden
6. One More With Feeling by Mggie Bolitho
9. I Can't Believe it's Digital... by Patricia Pinsk
11. Events by Ken Kilback

Illustrations by Raymond Nakamura, Helena Juhasz

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

I can't believe it's a digital illustration – what I need to do that
by Patricia Pinsk



There is an ever-growing trend toward creating digital illustration. Some of the tools on the market are making it easy to seamlessly merge the traditional and digital worlds together. It's getting more difficult to determine whether something is hand or computer generated. And digital illustrations are becoming more abundant as technology develops to allow for more traditional-looking or unique-looking renderings. There are a lot of tricks and effects that you can accomplish digitally that would either be impossible, or take forever to do manually.

So if you want to embrace the digital side, where do you start?

You need a decent flatbed scanner ([Mustek](#) or [Brother brands](#) - look for tabloid size 11x14). It also really helps if you have something like a [Wacom](#) tablet and digital pen. Trying to draw with a mouse is difficult to say the least, and you risk injuring your wrist. You can buy a cheap second hand tablet off of [Craig's list](#) if you don't initially have the money. You will want a tablet with a decent amount of sensitivity points to obtain various levels of shading in your mark-making. The **Wacom Intuos Pen** is a good start, as it has 1024 levels of pressure sensitivity and a resolution of 2540 lines per inch.

WESTERN TALE SPINNER

The next step is obtaining graphic software. [Adobe Photoshop](#) is used by many in the industry. There of course are other products such as [artRage](#), [Mischief](#), [CorelDRAW](#), and [Manga Studio](#) – to name a few. You can usually download a trial version of the software and test these products out before committing to anything. In the end, it's a personal choice of what works best for you, your artistic needs and your budget. If you purchase a new [Wacom tablet](#), the pro versions come with software. If you are a student, or with a non-profit organization, check out [Studica](#) for deals on tablets and software.

There are many digital paint brushes that are now available. Many brushes are free to download and import into your graphic software (check out [You the designer: Brushes](#)).

Once you are set up with you tools, there are great tutorials such as Neil Fontaine's [digital painting video tutorial for beginners](#), and [illustration tutorials on BlogSpot](#) . Once you master one program you'll find similarities between other programs as far as icons, and use of terminology. This makes learning other programs easier as you build on your skills.

The thing to remember is that learning new techniques is constant. The digital world is fast-changing. The upside is that things are getting faster and easier to do as well as learn.

"The world is changing at such a rapid rate that it's turning us all into amateurs. Even for professionals, the best way to flourish is to retain an amateur's spirit and embrace uncertainty and the unknown."

Austin Kleon

Patricia Pinsk's children's and editorial illustrations are multi-media work that is primarily in watercolour, ink, digital photography, coloured pencil and collage. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Vancouver's Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (now called Emily Carr University of Art and Design), as well as a Certificate in New Media from Vancouver Film School. She has studied at Pilchuck Glass School (WA, USA), as well as numerous other art workshops in Canada and the USA.