

The truth is...we gather on the Third Monday of each month to practice our writing skills. We listen and share in each other's work. We are small in number and our commitment is strictly to produce and foster creativity among our members.

We started in July 1999 and consist of adults that enjoy writing memoirs, commentaries, essays, poems, and/or prose. Our simple method each month is to use a pre-selected word or phrase as the basis of a story, an idea, an opinion, a derivative of, or an implied essence of and write a 1 to 1 ½ page document. We share our stories, comment, and in that way build up our writing skills through practice and presentation. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and the feedback is gentle.

Curious? Always wanted to try writing for fun, entertainment, or even profit? Come visit with us at any of our open meetings. Bring a sample of your work. Sit in and see what we do. If you like it, join us every month and become a member.

Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group
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December 2017 selection – Tempo

The Tempo of Our Lives
By Carol Karvon

I suppose most people would think of tempo as having something to do with music; keeping a beat or rhythm; playing in a band or orchestra in harmony with others. I think of tempo as the pace of my life. Sometimes the tempo is fast and airy, like a happy lilting melody. The day speeds along until suddenly I realize it's nightfall and there's darkness all around. Those are good days.

Sometimes, the pace is so slow I think time is standing still and the day will never end. Tomorrow seems so far away. That mainly happens when I'm anxious or worried about something. I just want time to hurry up so I can get past the obstacle of worry I've created.

Just the other day, I was waiting for an important phone call. I had called someone and, unable to reach them, I left a message on their answering machine. I waited and waited and waited for a call back; getting more and more frustrated. Being unable to concentrate on anything else but that call, I started pacing the floor. Of course, that made my anxiety more intense.

I decided to call again on the chance she didn't hear my first message. Still no answer. A second message was left and the waiting began anew. With each passing minute, my anxiety grew like the crescendo in a musical composition. I could almost hear crashing cymbals in my head.

I was starting to imagine all sorts of things, mostly negative, of course. Perhaps the other person was ignoring me. Perhaps I had offended her somehow and she wouldn't

call me. My mind was racing and keeping up a furious pace of thoughts. The tempo of my day was getting more and more frantic.

I had been researching information for an article and needed to verify a couple of facts. I couldn't proceed until I had answers that only my friend could provide. My deadline was fast approaching and I'm sure that was the cause of my stress.

Why was I doing this to myself? I had no control over the situation, yet I let it affect my mood. Why couldn't I just be patient? There's a thought. Since I couldn't do anything about the outcome, I finally realized I was worrying needlessly.

Just as I decided to relax, my phone rang.

"Hi Hon," greeted me as soon as I picked up the phone.

"I'm so sorry I couldn't call you sooner. I just got home and heard your messages. It was a horrendous day at work and we all had to stay late. So, what's up? You mentioned something about checking some dates for your story. Tell me again what you need. I hope I can help."

At that moment, the relief I felt was enormous. I asked her about dates and a few other facts I needed to verify and she immediately gave me answers.

I felt very foolish and drained; all that time spent worrying. When I relaxed and it let it go, my huge imagined problem was resolved. And, I would make my deadline after all.

There's much truth in the old saying about making mountains out of molehills. I'm an expert at that and don't need anyone's help. It just comes naturally.

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Tick-Tock Tempo **By Elvira K. Castillo**

Tick-tock, tick-tock - Whatever happened to the Metronome? According to Webster's Dictionary a Metronome is an instrument designed to mark exact time by a regularly repeated tick. Metronomic or Metronomical means mechanically regular in action or tempo.

I remember the small wooden instrument that sat atop the piano when my oldest brother John was taking his piano lessons. It was shaped like a pyramid and had a metal stick in the center with a small weight, which you could push up or down to set the required tempo, and a button on the side to wind it up. I believe the higher the weight was set, the slower the tempo. I loved the Metronome and wonder if anyone uses it today while playing the piano

John was the only one fortunate to take piano lessons as the Depression began in 1929 with the stock market crash, the same year my middle brother Marvin was born and I was born in 1935. Guess my parents were busy trying to survive financially, as they lost their two-flat building in the city and moved in to a small wooden house on the northwest side of Chicago where there were no streets or sidewalks. Thus piano lessons were out of the question for Marvin and me.

Getting back to the Metronome, although John still enjoyed playing the piano, he didn't have the Metronome so I thought it was just gone after so many years had past.

When my Mother passed away in 1983, I was in charge of clearing out her home, and guess what? I found the small wooden pyramid shaped Metronome in the attic tucked away in a wooden chest filled with old photos and various memorabilia.

I promptly wound it up, set the weight near the middle, released the stick and it tick-tocked away. I knew this treasure would please John, so I brought it to him at Christmas. He placed it atop his piano, set the tempo, and cheerfully played a great Scott Joplin tune. John passed away in 2009, so I am again wondering what happened to the lovely small wooden Metronome shaped like a pyramid?

###

The Boy Choir **By N. Stewart**

(Tap, tap, tap) “Stop, stop, stop! Johnny, you sound like a run away train. You are ahead of everyone else. Slow it down. All of you watch my baton and it will provide the tempo. And, what are you smirking at Tommy? You are dragging your wagon and a little behind. Boys! Stop laughing and stop being silly. Pay attention. All of you are to start each word at the same time and not make it sound like one giant slur. Let’s try again.”

“Ss-i-lent night, H-o-ly night. Allll is calm, all is bbbright.”

“That’s a little better. But all of you need to watch the baton. I will give you a count of 3 since we are in 3/4 time to get ready to sing. Watch me. On 1 I’ll bring my arm down, representing the downbeat, on 2 my arm goes across to my right, and on 3 the arm goes up again. Then on the next downbeat you will start, saying “Si,” sliding the syllable and off we go. Now, let’s give it a try. Shall we?”

“S-i-lent night, H-o-ly night. All is calm, all is bright.”

“Good, keep going. Don’t forget to breathe.”

“Round yon Virgin Mother and Child. Ho-ly In-fant so tender and mild.

“Catch a breath. Watch the baton”

“Sleep in heav-en-ly peac-e. Sle-ep in heav-en-ly peace.

“Now hold that last note and watch me so that we all end at the same time. Two, three and, stop. Your families are going to be so proud of all of you at the Christmas concert. Let’s do it once more and then we will take a break and have some cookies. One, two, begin.”

*Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.
Holy Infant so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace.
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

“Give yourselves a hand. Let’s take our break now and have some tea and goodies.”

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Edward Von Scheffler



Not just what is said .
But the way its expressed ...

The cadence in meter with intermittent Rest

Essential in all forms of expression.

Music

Dancing

Drama

Poetry

Oratory Skills