

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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September 2018 selection – Hunt

The Hunt Is On
By N. Stewart

My computer stopped working. Just like that – in the blink of an eye. The on/off switch would not turn on and therefore would not turn off either. I couldn't access any of my files, send any e-mails, write any stories or essays. It was dead. Caput. Thank goodness for my smart phone so I could keep in touch with the world with all the necessary vital news in today's electronic environment.

I remember the trauma I endured with the last computer that ceased to exist without warning. After working for many years, I had returned to school to complete my undergraduate degree. It was the week before final exams with every class requiring a term paper encoded with lots of references and footnotes. All research was tucked away in the "old" computer ready for the final preparation of the lengthy, multiple page term papers. If I learned one thing while working it was to never leave anything to the last minute to do because something always goes wrong and I would panic and totally fall apart. So when the computer wouldn't work as I had expected...I, of course, panicked and totally fell a part. My understanding of computers and their functions was and still is practically non-existent.

The hunt for a new computer was on. I went to multiple computer stores and listened to a multiplicity of salespeople expound over their best computers and all the wiz bang

features they had; the many, many amazing things they could do. My head spun and I left each store not buying anything. That did not solve my problem, however, as the date for the term papers was looming even closer. I went out again looking and took someone with me as help. I bought what looked pretty, not serviceable, not functional, just pretty. That's the way I buy a car, too – eye appealing and pretty. But I digress. The computer worked. The term papers were completed on time and I passed the courses.

That computer lasted many years and eventually became obsolete as the various systems no longer supported the software. I managed to limp along some additional years until it, my computer, had had enough of the world and ceased to be. One day it worked and then the next it didn't. No help was available to fix it, no technical support for outdated equipment existed and all advised me to buy another computer - they're cheap I was told.

So I did. Still not knowing about computers and their functions and probably knowing even less then before, I stepped up. Just the basics is all I wanted, to be able to write stories, essays and send e-mails. I did not need all the bells and whistles that I would never learn to use anyway. Didn't go on a hunt this time but went to one place and bought there. Didn't have any idea what I was getting for my money as my eyes glazed over from too much technical information again.

The Geek came out and hooked up the computer and, ripping apart my old computer for the hard drive, transferred data from my old computer to the new one. He did exactly what the big box store said he would...and nothing more. Then, he left before everything was updated because he said my service was too slow and he couldn't wait around for the software to finish downloading. But he did leave his card if I had any questions.

The first question was how do I turn this blasted thing on. I figured it out by pushing buttons until...but I can't figure out much more on my own. Considerable progress has been made on computer software and I was obviously way behind the times. I ask: How does a person that grew up without a computer attached to finger tips find a level of technical help that is understandable? All I want is for someone to listen to me while I explain how I want the screens to look and how I want the computer to function, and then do it my way. Doth thou ask too much? Oh, for the good old days of yore when things were simpler and easier to do - turn it on, turn it off. And then there was the issue that I needed a new printer because the old still-working printer was not compatible with the newly purchased computer. But the connecting of the printer is a story for another day.

Note: Please excuse my typos and misspelled words as the new computer spell check will not let me spell check.

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Hunt **By Edward Scheffler**

Courage in the willingness of pursuit offers rewards and penalties of their own. As the hunt can become but a game of the predator against the intended victim A tragic occurrence. Should the charm of seduction have its way. Or for a better purpose when inherent values are foreseen. With an expedition of search and seek.

The quest for something substantial and virtuous. "Seek...and Ye shall find when you search with all your heart."

Scripture:
For here lies TREASURES.
Not for the taking
But
For the asking.

To qualify as a worthy and faithful recipient.
To arrange an agreement for mutual benefits
A hunt for enriched relationships.

Whence friends you are seeking...
Are seeking you.

For even FULFILLMENT offers the capacity of more.

Quote from George Moore)- "A man travels the world in search of what he needs...
And returns home to find it.

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Hunt v Journey **By Sara Schupack**

I'm on the hunt. I'm picturing myself crouched, with spear in hand, sneaking up on my prey. Hunting for bargains. Hunting for a song lyric or factoid or long lost relative or faraway friend on the internet. If there isn't a spear, there is a lasso or strong hands and there is always the hunted, the prey.

What I am hunting for is a desk that I can love. I go online first, just to get a sense of what's out there and where to look. I trust my gut. I'll know it when I see it. In a few seconds I dismiss the one that's too pale, the one that's too new, too cutesy, or too clunky.

If you're on a journey, you enjoy the process, and the asides, detours, or digressions. You might encounter a happy surprise and realize it's what you wanted after all. House hunting, hunting for a boyfriend, bargain hunting, whatever the search is for, if you're too

focused on the end game, the victory, you may discover, too late, that your goals weren't quite right and there's this wonderful option that you pushed right past.

Will I be aggressive enough when I track down the desk I want via Craigslist or Next Door? The person welcomes me into their home, and there's inevitably a sick older parent or a cute, needy dog, or the person is leaving the Bay Area in a panic, or there's something else sad about them that makes me shy about saying no, even when I discover a disappointing scratch, or that it's actually made of particle board or plastic or the drawers aren't deep enough.

But I'm the hunter. I circle and zoom in on my prey. I do not waver, I am not sentimental. I must eat.

Then I find Poor Honey's. It sounds like a blues club, so I picture Honey a big black woman with loud clothes and a mellifluous, strong voice. The proprietor is a middle-aged white woman with a big personality named Judy, not Honey. She talks a lot. I find out about her bad back and her son's wife who is expecting twins. The huge, dusty space hold such a range of treasures — antiques to vintage to junk. I'm told that the distinction between the first two categories is that antiques go back at least 100 years, and vintage is newer than that, but old enough to seem special, Junk is everything else. I love it all. I love the variety, from a gramophone complete with cylindrical wax record to a glass-topped table with gaudy lacelike metal stand and a chunky, no-nonsense bookshelf with one shelf missing. Yet, I don't stop to enjoy an object that I don't need. I dizzily rush past all sorts of treasures, because I'm here for a desk, and maybe a table and bookshelf. That's all I see. Later, when I indicate my choices, and say, "You have really nice stuff," Judy replies drily "Sometimes."

The yellow retro dining table, (plastic? Formica? What's that called?) with beveled metal frame, slightly curved legs with plastic caps over their feet, with a 1960's diner look, calls out to me and I have to have it. My heart pumps quickly as I ask how I can reserve it. It turns out that Billy, the scruffy assistant who appears, but doesn't smell, drunk, is happy to follow me around and put sold" labels on the stuff I want. I rush around purposefully, greedily. Luckily my tastes are pretty cheap. I'm not sure how "special" in terms of real-world value the desk is, but I know it when I see it. Polished dark wood. It isn't cherry wood — is that a thing? Or walnut. It has a marbled, mottled kind of look. One skinny drawer across the top would work well for mailing items. The deeper drawers down each side are perfect for documents, office supplies, bigger stuff. A scratch on one side I decide adds character, like a sexy scar on an attractive face. It is on the small side, not as deep as it is wide. I am 100% sure that laptop, printer, lamp, and the friendly accessories that I find necessary, like my Chinese porcelain pencil holder and at least one framed photo of my son, will fit, but I convince myself that they will.

It's harder to avoid particle board than you might think, but I decided to be firm on that expectation. Once I have a bookshelf that I am pretty sure is wood, I feel complete. It is a lighter color than the desk, but I'll put it in a different room, so that will be fine. I feel victorious. I have gotten to those items before anyone else.

After the hunt is over, does the hunter lick her lips, sit and gloat over her catch? Does she quickly plan the next hunt? Would I tire of my desk or my bookshelf and decide I needed even better ones? No. I am determined to cherish what I have, appreciate it every day, and next time, choose the journey.

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