

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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October 2018 selection – Clutter

Clutter
By Carol Karvon

I've tried to give this topic the attention it deserves, but every time I seek inspiration my brain seems to get clutter freeze.

I start out with good intentions to concentrate on clutter, what it is, what it means, how it affects my life, but I get sidetracked and think instead of everything I have to do, or somewhere I have to go. My mind gets distracted and wanders.

A lot of other things take over my thoughts and I lose sight of what I'm trying to do. I don't know why, but I think of everything except "clutter."

Sometimes, I have a mental image of past days; of coming home to a cluttered kitchen counter and getting ready to yell at someone else for creating a messy environment. Then, I realize I'm the only one there and it's my mess; my clutter of mail and newspaper clippings, saved for a later day's perusal.

Maybe distractions are really a form of clutter of the mind.

Sometimes, I think my brain is protecting itself; getting distracted to keep from focusing on things I really need to concentrate on or things I'm supposed to do, but don't want to, like getting rid of the outdated news articles or junk mail.

It's one thing to have a cluttered desk — I've heard it said that a busy person has a messy, cluttered desk — so what does that say about an empty desktop?

Or if you want something done give the job to a busy person. They'll see it gets done. Think about that for a moment. I'm not quite sure how this relates to clutter, but it's an example of how my mind goes off on tangents; sort of like a roaming adventure of the mind. You know — one thing leads to another and another and so on.

One of Webster's definitions of clutter says it's a confused or disordered collection or state; a jumble; confused noise, clatter.

I attended a program at the library yesterday afternoon. It was an audience dialogue with a murder mystery author living in Chicago. She was an unassuming and interesting woman.

When asked about her writing style and how her days were spent, specifically, if she could walk us through her typical day, she replied, "haphazard". She mentioned haphazard a few times and said that's what works for her. She does not have a plan or an outline ahead of time and doesn't know how things will turn out. I think her characters take over and develop their own lives and she goes with the flow. That's how I thought of it, anyway.

I think haphazard could also fit into Webster's definition of a confused or disordered collection or state.

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Ambition
By Kathy Van Ormer

While taking a neighborhood amble,
I witnessed a woman, in shambles.
Her face was pallid and white,
She seemed to have suffered a fright.

Sprawled on her front stoop, gasping for air,
Clothes all rumpled, snags in her hair,
She looked like she'd been roughed up,
Shattered to pieces, like a china cup.

I rushed to her side to provide some aid,
As gasping and face-down on the steps she laid.
I asked her to tell me where she was hurt,
She grunted and mumbled something about "dirt".

"I've recently retired, you see,
An event that filled me with glee,
But came with the cognizance that,
I'd finally have to deal with the Pack Rat.

So, I set about making a plan,
Loaded salable things in a van,
Sent boxes and bags to charity,
Adhering to the strictest regularity.

I've worked and slaved nearly a year,
And only a few pathways are clear.
I fear I can't go on long,
The force in there is just too strong."

I watched as the dear lady lay down her head,
In a moment, I thought she was actually dead.
Then with effort she issued the faintest mutter,
"Done in, after all, by my nemesis, clutter."

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A Lone Man Standing on the Shore

By N. Stewart

It was an unseasonably cold October day where the temperature had dropped from 80 degrees to 43 degrees overnight as the cold front moved in over the area. The sky that afternoon was dull and overcast with heavy cloud cover but only a slight chance of rain. The wind was strong and steady out of the northwest. A fisherman stood alone by the rocky shore, casting his line into the clear water of the lake. Over and over he threw the line out and time and again reeled it back empty. The wind whipped up the hood of his jacket and the word LUND on the back in a dark shade of red appeared. He reached up and secured the hood concealing his neatly trimmed white hair. The wind continued to play against his back and took turns puffing and sucking the air into and out of his waist banded black jacket.

He threw his line out, landing it in the water about 15-20 feet from shore and waited, watching for the bobber to be pulled down below the surface of the water. A sure sign that a big fish had taken the bait he offered. After a certain period of time with nothing happening, he would reel the line in yet again, checking to see if the bait was still on the hook or if a passing perch had managed to nibble the bait away. He pulled the line out of the water, checked for bait, attached new bait, and then tossed it back out into the water. Then he waited. His stance was firm on the rocky shore and he appeared determined to catch fish no matter how long it took or how many attempts were needed

What thoughts ramble through the mind of a fisherman when he has thrown out the line, pausing as he looks outward toward the mesmerizing wavy water of the lake, waiting for the half red, half white bobber to bob and then dive. Time slows and all things stilled. His troubling thoughts that had cluttered his mind begin to fade away with each new cast of the line. Was this the cast or the 50th, it made no difference to him. No fisherman counts the number of times he throws the line out and reels it in. He just counts the fish he catches.

The break comes with the suddenness of the hit. Awakening stirs. Jerk the rod upward, quickly to the left. Hook the fish. Feel the fight in the fish as it attempts to escape capture. Net the fish. Remove the hook ever so carefully. Admire the catch. Release it by returning the fish to the lake water. Feel the surge of power, the control, the accomplishment. Savor the thrill of that moment. No thoughts, no troubles - only him and the fish. Man is one with nature. Only after the catch does the fisherman slowly return to this world.

He walks a little further on down the shore, starting the process over at perhaps what he feels is a better location for catching fish. Baits the hook. Throws out the line. Watches the bobber. Waits. He is tired, and weather beaten from the wind and cold, but continues on for yet one more cast, for one more chance at catching that record-setting fish before calling it a day.

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