

**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 2019 selection – Primary**

**Of Primary Concern  
By Carol Karvon**

After dropping Janie off at her grandma's, Lisa and Jim Scott barely made it to the 7pm meeting Janie's 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Novak, had requested. Mrs. Novak was actually standing in the doorway of the classroom waiting for them, impatiently tapping her foot.

"Please come in Mr. and Mrs. Scott and have a seat," she said.

"I requested this meeting to talk about your daughter, Janie. My primary concern lately is her behavior in class. Up to now she has been a model student. She was always a friendly and happy little girl. She was involved in the class and among the first to respond to questions. Her work was done neatly and on time and she got along well with all the other kids in her class. Her popularity was apparent even in the school yard. Her classmates gravitated to her likeable personality and everyone wanted to be on her team.

But, here comes the "but," lately she seems detached from everything and very distracted. I've observed her just sitting at her desk, staring out the window. I'll ask her something and she has no clue what I'm talking about. At lunchtime she sits by herself and doesn't talk to anyone anymore. She seems to spend most of the day waiting for school to end so she can

bolt up from her desk and run out the door. I wonder if you know of anything that has happened at home or outside of school to upset her. I have to warn you though, that if her behavior doesn't improve, I'll have to give her a low grade for participation and she'll fall behind in her studies."

The Scotts were puzzled why Janie would have changed so much in the few short weeks since the school year began a month ago. They hadn't discussed it, but now that Mrs. Novak brought the matter to their attention and labeled it her "primary concern," Lisa and Jim realized they, too, had noticed a change in their usually outgoing fun-loving daughter.

"Mrs. Novak," said Lisa, "we'll talk to Janie and see if something is bothering her. Hopefully we can have an answer for you in the next day or two."

The Scotts picked up Janie and drove home. They had decided not to mention the meeting with her teacher just yet. They wanted a chance to observe Janie more closely. Janie threw open the car door and ran up the front step. She still had to wait for mom and dad to unlock the door, but was in quite a hurry to get inside.

Once the door was unlocked, Janie ran inside and hurriedly started for the kitchen, "Silky, where are you? Come on, I'm home."

Janie's parents looked at each other in amazement. Could the answer to the problem be so simple? Janie seemed like a different person once her puppy came into her waiting arms. She picked up her little Scottie pup and hugged her.

The next morning Lisa had difficulty getting Janie up and ready for school. She normally loved going to school, but now she didn't want to leave the house.

"Janie, are you afraid of someone or worried about something?" asked Lisa.

"Mom, I just don't want to leave Silky all alone. She's my new, bestest friend and I miss her so much when I have to go to school. What if something happens to her when I'm gone," said Janie.

Aha, thought mom, the dog misses you too, all she does is sit by the door and whine until you come back, but she didn't say any of that out loud. Janie and Silky had developed a close bond in the short time they were together. Janie had even named the dog Silky because her black coat was shiny and wavy.

The Scotts devised a plan, but would need the cooperation of Mrs. Novak to put it into effect. At a second meeting with the teacher, at their request this time, they approached the subject of starting a "Bring Your Pet to School Day". They thought that once a week, perhaps on a Friday afternoon, the parents of one or two students could bring their pets to school for a short visit. The students would have to earn this privilege and it had to be different students each week. It would be an incentive for the students and something to look forward to; kind of a "Show and Tell" day.

Mrs. Novak thought it an interesting idea and promised to bring it up to her principal and let them know what she said.

"Keep your fingers crossed," she said.

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## **A Big Decision** **By N. Stewart**

Whitney walked her little 6-year-old son to school, holding his hand. It would be the first walk of many before he got too old to do this with his mother or she would let him go on his own.

She had moved from Florida to Wisconsin shortly before the start of the school year, enrolling him in primary education at Field Elementary School. Kindergarten was filled but because of his age and abilities he was placed in first grade. Before moving, she had worked at home with him to tie his shoes, learn the alphabet and to count numbers. He loved to read and quickly moved from picture books to reading simple stories. She believed he was ready for first grade.

At the street corner near the school she asked if he wanted to walk alone into the building or if he wanted her to go up the stairs with him. Brad said that no, he could do it. He was a big boy. She let go of his hand, kissed him lightly on the cheek and sent him on his way. He took several steps before stopping to look back at her. She waved and smiled as a tear formed in the corner of her eye. That was her baby. He turned, stepping forward he cautiously went up the long flight of stairs and disappeared into the doorway of the big building.

He was starting a new adventure and they were starting a new life. She slowly walked back home, thinking about the lonely hours ahead until she would meet him later that day at the same corner where she had reluctantly bid him goodbye.

Once home, she looked around the small apartment and wondered if she made the right decision. The divorce had been bitter. She had no one in Florida and no reason to stray there. Originally from Wisconsin, she decided to return to a friendlier territory. Her company honored her request to transfer her to their home office in Milwaukee. She packed up their belongings, arranged for movers, got in the car with Brad and some personal items, and drove straight through with only one overnight stop.

Now, she looked around the apartment. This was just way too small of a place to live for the two of them. The house in Florida had 5 bedrooms, 3 baths, and an enclosed swimming pool and lanai. The apartment was a total of 3 rooms. No, this would not work. Reaching for the telephone, she called the real estate agent that had found the apartment, asking her to start looking for a house for them.

Whitney unpacked a few more boxes that she had brought. The day went faster than she had thought it would, and soon it was time to meet Brad. She picked up her purse and began her walk to the street corner near the school. She waited.

Brad came down the stairs of the school with a new buddy, laughing and pushing each other. He saw his mom, waiting on the corner and played it real cool. He said goodbye to his new friend and slowly walked over to her, nodding in recognition. They walked together down the street, maintaining a comfortable distance apart. She asked how his first day was and he told her about his new friend, Billy, the pretty teacher, and that he thought school was going to be fun. As they walked further on, he coyly reached for her hand, looking up at her. She took his offered hand, melted inside from his look, and felt a grin start to appear on her face. She knew then and there that everything was going to be all right for them. Her decision had been the correct one. She tightened her grip on his little hand as they walked together to their small apartment.

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