

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

© 2020 Pen & Ink Writers' Group

April 2020 – Hoard or Horde

The Apples of Velen By Mark Moe

An unlikely duo traversed across Old Magnolia Road heading towards the Velen Apple Orchard. Robin is a stout dwarf who also happens to be one of the few Druids for her race. And although she would have preferred to be traveling with another dwarf, she was assigned to go with this large Paladin named Kriv, who looked like he was a descendent of a dragon. His race calls themselves Dragonborn, but to her he does not look much different than the evil race of lizardmen other than, he does not have a long tail. There is no doubt that he is a holy Paladin though, because he seems to have this golden glow around him in how he acts and what he says.

They have been traveling for two days and should be approaching the Velen Apple Orchard within the next hour. This orchard was known for producing the most fragrant and sweetest apples that were used in making the Velen apple wine. The shipments coming from the winery have suddenly dried up with no immediate explanation from the current owners. "Do you think we can find out what is going on at the winery?" asked Robin. Kriv responded, "We will know if my god Bahamut wants us to know. I have a sense that something evil awaits us at this winery."

Once they arrived at the winery, the two travelers found signs of a Goblin invasion and the filth that follows them everywhere. In the main distillery, Kriv and Robin found a horde of drunken Goblins which they quickly dispatched or rather, Kriv waded through them like a hot knife in

butter. The surviving Goblins ran to protect their ill-gotten hoard of apple wine in the shipping section of the distillery. The Goblins believed if they could drink more of this wine, they would each possess the strength often Goblins and be able to kill this Dragonborn Paladin who has pursued them relentlessly ever since he stepped into the distillery. They also knew that their Goblin king named, Jareth was mighty and he would not fall to the likes of him.

As soon as the Goblins got into the shipping section, they closed the huge, solid oak doors and barred them with a large, thick oaken bar. "What are you fools doing?" yelled Jareth as he sat on an improvised throne made from shipping crates. One of them replied, "We are being chased by a dwarf with green hair and a demon dressed like a Paladin! The demon Paladin is right behind us! Give us the apple wine so we can be strong enough to help you kill him!" Right at that moment, Kriv arrived at the door and started to attack the door with his body and his two-handed great sword. The door moved inward but did not break. "He won't be able to break that door! We are safe from him, you idiots" exclaimed King Jareth

It was silent for a few moments on the other side and then a bright flash of golden, holy light could be seen in the holes and cracks in the wood. Kriv had channeled his divine power into his sword and the next thing all the Goblins saw was a flaming sword plow through the center of both the oak door and its oaken bar. The door exploded into thousands of wooden shards that impaled themselves into all the Goblins that were hurrying to consume the apple wine. They all fell dead with looks of surprise and horror on their faces. Upon seeing that he was the lone survivor, Jareth surrendered because he knew he could not match the power of this demonic Paladin.

###

The Wario Brothers: Wario and Waluigi

By Jarrod Fields

The Wario brothers are the most greedy and evil schemers in the mushroom kingdom. They like to rob banks, cheat in competitions, and sometimes work with Bowser. For the right price, they will do anything. The biggest problem that they face is the Mario Brothers. This is all because of the fact they always stop whatever evil schemes they have started. Much like how the Mario Brothers always find ways to stop Bowser, it is even easier for them to stop the bungling actions of the Wario Brothers. The one fact in their favor is that they are always able to escape before the Mario Brothers catch them. After they make a hasty escape, they go back to one of their hideouts to hoard all of their money they acquired during their scheme.

###

Outside the Jail

By N. Stewart

The horde of on-lookers stood, standing outside the jail, waiting for Joe to be taken to the court house to await trial. Shouts could be heard damning him for what he did to the girl. He has

no right to live, prison is too good for him, he needs to be dealt with immediately, hang him from the nearest tree chanted the milling crowd.

The sheriff watched out of the office window as the horde swelled and the fiery tempers rose even hotter. Davy was leading the group and egging them on, shouting and cussing. "Dang it," said the sheriff, The sheriff thought whether guilty or not justice needs to prevail and Joe was going to have his day in court. The jury would decide his fate not a bunch of loud-mouthed cowboys. The sheriff stepped through the open office door with his Winchester raffle cradled in his arms. "Boys, go on home, ya hear. This is a matter for the law to handle. I don't want to be arresting any of you, now git!"

Davy squared his shoulders, put hand to gun and said, "Sheriff, you ain't goin' stop us. We don't cotton to the likes of him, what he dun, and we're gonna take care of him right now. No need for a trial." The others in the horde shouted their approval and moved closer, surrounding Davy.

The sheriff raised his raffle and took aim at Davy's heart "I told ya to go on home. Like I said git!" Behind the sheriff stood 2 deputies with raised shotguns, pointing into the crowd. "This here is a civilized town and there ain't no room for vigilante justice. There's gonna be a trial like the law says and if he's found guilty, he'll be punished by the law, not you or your boys here." The sheriff cocked the raffle, as did the deputies, and the sheriff took aim at Davy's chest. "I mean it Davy. The law is the law and I'm here to make sure it's carried out with a fair trial and id a peaceful manner. Do ya hear what I'm saying, boy?"

Davy lowered his hand away from his gun, but his face remained beet red. "I'd like to know what you'd do 'twas your kid sister got beat up. You saw her all bruised, cut lip where he hit her, eye swelled shut. No one does that to my sister and gets away with it."

"None of us was there to see what really happened. Joe says he didn't do it. He fought off the stranger that hit her and that's what he said. Your sister is hurting and unable to tell us who attached her," said the Sheriff. "We'll wait 'til she recovered some and is able to answer questions.

"There was blood smeared on his clothes when I found him with her. His hands was all bruised from hitting. What more evidance do ya want. He dun it. Get out of the way Sheriff, we're taking him."

A loud bang sounded. "I told you to break it up. That is my only warning. The next shot will take out your right knee. Is that what you want Davy? Push it and you'll find out my word is good as gold. I'm not playing here. Now, all of you move along. Go home, the show is over. There's nothin' gonna happen tonight or any other night. " The crowd, grumbling, started to slowly disperse. Only Davy stood his ground, tightening his fists at his sides. "You, too. Git on home, Davy. The situation is under control. Stay by your sister's side and come and git me when she's ready to talk. Do it and don't cause no more trouble. Joe's under arrest, and in jail, and he's going to stay there until his trial. He's not going anywhere. Now, move along."

The sheriff and deputies went back inside the jail when Davy with his head bowed, shuffled his feet in the dirt, and then walked away, mumbling to himself.

###

Hoarding Hordes **By Pauline Bastek**

Literally, Hordes of people, hoarding, guess what, toilet paper. My eyes couldn't; believe what I was seeing at our local Cusco. Three weeks ago, after Governor Pritzker announced the Stay in place edict, I decided to stock up on essentials so I could be a good obedient citizen in the foreseeable future. Talk about being naive. My son who lives in Seattle had spoken of people hoarding items as if preparing for a nuclear siege. I listened but in the back of my mind I still thought of Seattle as the western outpost of liberalism, second only to California, the state my late husband referred to as the place where fruit and nuts walked the streets. This was the Midwest, sure I remember politely standing in line with my aunts after World War II for nylon hose, but wasn't prom time or homecoming and these weren't teen age boys on the rampage to T. P. the homes of the popular girls. These were all ages of adults, twenties to seventies. Yes, the carts were overflowing with cleaning items, paper goods, bottled water. But, first and foremost, 48 packs of toilet paper, not one not two but as many as they could pile in carts. O My God, Finally after the first week or two or hordes hoarding toilet paper Costco stationed a clerk next to cartons of toilet paper at the entrance, allowing one 48 pack to one cardholder as I took my allotted pack a customer standing next to me, before the 6 ft mandate was in place, smiled and said she didn't really need it, but someone in the family was sure to be happy to receive it. I asked her if she was stocked up and laughing, she said she was on many essentials but toilet paper wasn't one of them.

A light went off in my head, she had what sounded like a French accent and I flashed back to the time I listed a home as a Newby Real Estate Broker that had a bidet. It was a contractor's spec home and his wife who was recently arrived from France had insisted on it. Marcel was a wonderful client and happily explained the purpose of the bidet as aiding in cleanliness but primarily saving on toilet paper and water, especially clogged pipes. When I did a broker's tour on the house, the bidet was a sensation. That house got more showings than any property on the market in the price range. I did not do open houses on it to eliminate curiosity seekers. The house sold at its asking price to a foreign-born couple who had despaired of ever finding a property in that school district having a bidet. When I asked plumbers, I knew the reason for the lack of bidets in the United States, various reasons were given, cost, spec, lack of demand. Given our mania for saving trees and recycling it didn't ring true until Uncle Stanley who served in the occupation during World War II in France heard about my interesting listing, as he called it. He said that the American GIs saw their first bidet in, he paused, trying to find the right word, bordellos, I laughed and he said they didn't have entry to the finer homes and ordinary homes lacked them so they forever associated them with brothels. To this day, a bidet is spoken of with a smirk. I checked and even Home Depot has bidet conversion kits, but middle America even trendy Seattle, prefers to be a part of the horde hoarding toilet paper.

###

Treasure Hunt **By Sara Schupack**

I look both ways. No one else has noticed the treasure. I move in and grab it up, adding to the stack in my cubicle. I can't let the stack get too high, because I'm walking home with my bounty. I like the boxes from Amazon. They're clean and strong. I have no shame; I'm a gal with a purpose. I'll pull them out of dumpsters if I have to, but only clean ones with recycling. I asked at Duplicating Services too. They have the printer paper boxes that I covet most of all. They're great for packing books and look nice enough to be reused for storage. I have one for bags and one for scarves right now, in the mirror-door closet.

I probably look silly as I make my way home, a weird cardboard sculpture in my arms, held into place with my chin. The structure tumbles at least 2 or 3 times in my short walk home, and I have to reimagine the temporary art piece.

My small apartment is cluttered nest of boxes which gradually turn 3-D as I fill them up. Funny how trash becomes treasure. Between each move, I ignore boxes, or feel irritated by their presence. I love the stuff that comes inside of them, but they are only clutter. Not now My heart beats more quickly at the ones that are new, clean, no tears or worn bits.

There's one box that I've had with me through 4 moves. It's a super sturdy huge cube that once held an Apple computer — I think my dad got it for me, because his info is in the sender's corner and my Quigley St address is in the receiver's space. It's practically furniture to me now. I can't bear to part with it.

My apartment becomes a maze with cardboard columns to navigate through.

I am so fervent in my moving preparations that I end up with too many boxes. On moving day, I have to dispose of more than ten empty, flat ones, in addition to all of the cleaning and wardrobe box packing and other details to manage.

As exhausting and difficult as the move is, it quickly recedes in my mind. Now cardboard is forgotten, as toilet paper and hand sanitizer become the new treasures. How much can one purchase before turning into a hoarder? My cardboard museum harmed no one, but if I have a closet full of toilet paper, someone else has none.

I'm a scavenger, a busy ant, a small creature with huge fears, stumbling and bumbling along through one day and then the next. I burrow and nest. I squint out scary news and hide from human contact.

he birds sing. The deer roam through condo complexes. Mother earth breathes. Humans go on our pathetic treasure hunts.

###

