

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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May 2020 – Embarrass/Embarrassment

Operation Nightingale

By Mark Moe

Vice President John Berries entered into the White House and made his way to the Oval Office. The President's secretary was just outside the main office and looked visibly upset. As he approached to tell her good morning she replied, "You might want to stay away from the boss for a while. He is extremely agitated and pissed about the current situation." The Vice President paused for a second to wonder what would be bothering his boss and dismissed the thought of coming back later. He entered into the office. As he opened the door, he saw President Frank Hiden without his jacket and chain-smoking cigarettes as fast as he could inhale them. His trademark blue tie hung loosely on his neck and his sleeves were rolled up. John thought it would be funny to make a joke and he said to him, "You know we have a doctor here who can prescribe medical grade weed for you if you want."

Frank look at his V.P. while putting out the latest cigarette in a loaded ashtray and asked, "John, do you know what is going on today?" He responded, "Lt. General Robert Hammer is scheduled to testify before the House Intelligence Committee on the killing of the leader of the Ten Rings and our Middle East terrorism response. What are you worried that he will not follow the script and *embarrass* you?" The President shook his head and said, "If he

does, I will fire him and make his life a living hell. Especially since the new administration is looking to tap him for the Director of National Intelligence. I refuse to believe the American people voted in that Republican billionaire Bob Rumpfen over my successor, Lindsey Young. She was perfect for continuing our agenda.”

The Vice President acknowledged the President with a nod and said, “Unfortunately, elections have consequences, Mr. President. Until we eliminate the Electoral College, our party will not have total control and unending power.” The President ran both of his hands through his brown-gray hair and said, “We have to find a way to delegitimize Bob Rumpfen and have this election overturned in our favor. We will have to put pressure on different members of his team if we are to have the slightest chance to end Bob Rumpfen’s Presidency before it begins.”

Embarrassed

By Pauline Bastek

It happened over twenty years ago, but it’s as fresh in my mind as if it were today. A close friend had invited me to a Women’s club luncheon at a west suburban country Club. Her sister-in-law was a member and I had met some of the women who would be at our table previously, and frankly they were not my cup of tea. The only reason I was going was to hear the guest speaker, who had a radio call in talk show that I listened to every Saturday morning come hell or high water. The show consisted of her and another woman, both in their forties, one was married with children for the second time and the other woman was divorced with children. They had divergent background which made for interesting conversation. To tempt me into going, my friend said that the speaker would be sitting at our table. That cinched the deal. I arranged to take an extended lunch hour, wore my best ladies who lunch outfit, picked up my friend, and off we went.

We arrived and while waiting for the valet, I asked which of the two radio hosts was going to be the speaker, Kathy or Judy. “What difference does it make?” She said. Quite a bit, I thought knowing some of the ladies who would be there. To say that they were prejudiced would be an understatement. They were first generation women who did not want to remember where they had come from and how their fathers and many of their husbands had made their money. I hoped that the martinis that they were making short work of were mostly vermouth. But listening to the conversation it was apparent they must have been pure gin.

If Kathy was to be the speaker, her Irish heritage and background working for a noted newspaper. Columnist would stand her in good stead, it would be nothing that she hadn’t encountered. Unfortunately, the surprise speaker was her fellow radio host, Judy who would be out of her social element to say the least. She was a Jewish princess and they both laughed about it on the show, but I could only hope that whatever gin fueled comments she heard be swallowed up in the chatter at the table.

Things went surprising well. And, I chided myself for being a worry wart until dessert when suddenly one of the women commented on the Rolex she was flashing around. I was hoping the speaker would excuse herself to the powder room but just as she was getting up, Vanessa in her strident tones told us what a bargain the watch was as Tony could Jew anyone down.

Embarrassment OMG. Three of us started to talk at once, Vanessa fueled by gin, looked confused and to add fuel to the flames said that there were no Jews here. Judy gathered up all five feet of herself, smiled, and said that she really had to powder her nose before speaking. As she left at least five of us came down on Vanessa who simply said, "I thought she was Irish."

"Dummy, her co-host is Irish, Kathy. This is Judy and she's Jewish." I wondered if she would even speak but she did, a very bland speech. Thanked everyone and left without returning to our table. I sent her a handwritten apology that evening. But I never heard from her or heard her mention it on their show. I also never attended any function with that group. That one embarrassment was enough for a lifetime.

Slippery Slope

By N. Stewart

I was 23 years old, and a friend, Mary, planned to get married to her high school sweetheart soon after college. We were not only friends but neighbors, living backyard to backyard divided only by a Chicago alley. She played board games at my house and I played dominos at hers and I was lured to the electronic organ and the piano that sat in her living room. I thought I was more sophisticated, being older and a few grades further along in school, yet we remained friends through grade school, high school, and on into college.

She asked me to stand up for her wedding and I agreed. Her mom was a fabulous seamstress and we went shopping to a few fabric stores to find the perfect color and texture for the bridesmaid dresses. We picked yellow, bright and shinning like the daffodils that bloom in the spring. We selected a pattern that was flattering and floor length with double layers of material. Her mom took our measurements when we returned home. The fittings went well and soon we had our dresses. I was in awe of what her Mom could create out of a bolt or two of material.

The day of the wedding started out with a morning of sunshine. I was anxious about walking down the aisle with everyone staring at me and I knew I would trip on the white carpet, making a fool of myself. To help, my mother gave me a half of one of her Lorazepam tranquilizers that were given fairly freely to any woman with "nerves" years ago. If it would help, I downed the pill.

We left for the church late morning as the sunshine disappeared and the dark clouds gathered over head. We went inside the church and lined up in our delicate yellow dresses, each carrying a small basket filled with yellow and white Plumeria and assorted greens, and wearing a flowered wreath in our hair. Fully confident from the effects of the tranquilizer, I traversed the

aisle both to the altar and back without incident. The thunder rolled on throughout the service and the rain came down hard, pelting the stained-glass windows. It is said a little rain on the wedding day was thought to bring good luck to the bride and groom. With the amount of noise and rain we endured, I knew the bride and groom were going to have a great marriage.

Sheltered under umbrellas, we left the church and made it to the soggy streamer decorated cars and drove around on our way to the reception, waving at everyone and blowing the horn. It was a small wedding and the reception for family and close friends was held in the home of the groom's parents. Everyone crowded into the first floor of their Georgian style home. I was handed an alcoholic beverage and toasted the bride and groom. The anxiety over the actual wedding service was over. I had walked down the aisle with no problem and I was feeling quite good and, as a matter of fact, quite relaxed.

The bathroom was located upstairs and I took advantage of an opportunity to use the facility. Coming down, my slippery soled, dyed to match pump missed the top step and I remember gracefully, and in slow motion, floating down the entire flight of stairs on my derriere. I hit every stair going down but felt not a one. My gown flowed freely around me in a blur of yellow. Upon reaching the bottom step, I royally and magnificently rose to my feet, pulled myself together and smoothed down my gown, acting as if this was the natural everyday way to come down a center staircase. No one, it seemed, let on or had observed my spectacular arrival or my utter embarrassment. I quickly found a corner chair and sat until the reception was over, smiling and pretending that if no one saw, then it really didn't happen.