

**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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#### **August 2020 – Interest/Interesting**

##### **“What Happens in Budapest, Stays in Budapest” By Mark Moe**

Clint Barton looked down from his perch atop of the Police Palace as it is currently called by the locals. He had a full view of the staging area where his partner, Natasha Romanoff a.k.a., the Black Widow was in disguise dressed as one of the local government officials that had been complicit with the Hungarian mafia. She had captured the lady earlier in the day and taken her place wearing her clothes. She was wearing a special facial prosthetic to change her facial features and a brunette wig to hide her long scarlet hair. He tapped a small comlink control on his headset to activate a subvocal microphone on an encrypted channel so he could talk with Natasha.

“Nat, do you think this event will hold Ambrus's *interest* and attention?” he asked. He saw her casually shrug her shoulders while she was in the middle of a conversation with another official who would not stop talking. Nat responded, “Does every woman who works for this fool prattle incessantly about their makeup?”

“Would you rather every woman to have intimate knowledge of the operation that Ambrus is planning tonight?” he asked. “I would prefer it, but I know I could not trust it because Ambrus is notorious for misinformation and sniffing out traps,” replied Natasha

Before Clint could say something else, Natasha exclaimed, “Heads up! The party is about to begin!”

At that point, Hawkeye switched his optic glasses back to panoramic view to see four black, unmarked vehicles pull up to their staging area. It was amazing how many people piled out of these cars. You would have thought that each vehicle was a clown car with infinite clowns piling out of it. In reality, the cars were mostly full of Ambrus's guards and hopefully Ambrus himself, but the idea made Hawkeye chuckle. He readied a four-stage electrical shock arrow that would immobilize most of the guards. "Ready when you are, Nat!" exclaimed Clint.

Natasha stepped on a hidden pressure plate and hidden wheel locks engaged on the four cars. This prevented the cars from leaving and would make it easy for Hawkeye to shoot vehicle-based electro-magnetic pulse arrows to disable the cars. The last thing they wanted was to give Ambrus the opportunity to escape before he could be captured. Ambrus's criminal network would topple if everything went as planned. Beyond drugs and human trafficking, Ambrus also had a large illegal weapons market. He had provided a large arsenal of weapons both to dangerous individuals and governments across the globe.

As the wheel locks trapped the cars, a barely audible sound of an arrow being released and separated into four separate projectiles. The projectiles landed in the center of the four guard groups and dispersed a large amount of electricity to incapacitate those groups. Ambrus and his personal guards reacted by trying to escape in the same car that Ambrus had just exited. The guards were physically restrained and unconscious in a manner of seconds by an athletic, brunette woman with hidden wrist launchers. Ambrus looked around in a panic trying to find anyone to help him, but he was all alone.

Ambrus thought that whoever was trying to take him out would be sorely surprised when his aerial backup arrived in the next few minutes. He pushed a button on his watch to activate his personal distress signal which would wipe the confident look off of this woman's face. He also pulled a 9mm Beretta out of his holster and began firing at this would be assassin. He fired off several rounds to keep her from advancing and keep her pinned down until his two personal, fully armed Blackhawk helicopters could finish her. Naturally after she was dead, he would leave in the helicopter.

Natasha's comlink clicked on as Hawkeye stated, "I guess he forgot about me. Do you need some help? He seems to have pinned you down a little bit." "Really, I did not notice," replied Natasha. Just as she commented, another arrow flashed out from above and landed in front of Ambrus. It released a gas that made Ambrus gag. He dropped his weapon but, in the distance, two helicopters could be heard approaching.

### **Bowser's Amazing Castle** **By Jarrett Fields**

Bowser's castle is "*interesting*" to say the least because of several. One of the reasons is that the castle always becomes more intimidating every time I play through the levels. Another reason is the castle is always changing and every experience is never exactly the same. The last reason is the realistic design of the castle that helps to keep you coming back for more adventures.

**An Interesting Saying  
By Pauline Bastek**

There is a Chinese curse that has stayed with me from the time I first heard it. It fascinated me. It seemed to me more a compliment than a curse. Have you heard it or read it – “May you live in interesting times.”

A curse, surely not, after all we spend our lives, our money looking for interesting things to do, interesting places to go, interesting people to engage with, we judge on the basis of interest level. And then came COVID. From where did it come? We seem to agree that Wuhan China was where this virus originated. We also agree that if the commonly accepted definition of interesting is different, we are living in interesting times. We would be hard pressed to describe the times we have been living in for the last six months as a compliment. So, perhaps, the inscrutable Chinese had intended this phrase as a curse when they used the word interesting.

Then again it is interesting to try to make ourselves understood when wearing a mask, and social distancing has a benefit when we no longer need to give hugs and kisses to those we always wanted to keep at a distance. I could keep on going but then you would think me an introvert at best and an incipient agoraphobic at worse. No, I, too, pray daily for a vaccine, too many have suffered and died, and yes, these interesting times are a curse but also a compliment to our resourcefulness as we live in these interesting times.

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**That’s Interesting: “Trump admits bid to obstruct voting”**

**By N. Stewart**

A rather misleading Chicago Tribune headline appeared on Friday, August 14, 2020 using loaded words and providing an unbalanced biased article in an attempt to sway readers toward the views and opinions of the Chicago Tribune and its owners.

A reader sees the headline and takes truth from the strong words. The words become fact in the mind of the reader. As a title to a piece of writing is meant to grab the reader’s attention, the loaded headline does so also. Many readers today can only hold concentration for about 140 bytes or less same as that of a tweet or an instant message. They may or may not read further into the article, but the headline as presented created the titillating, sensationalize and controversial desired effect.

In journalism, the code of five (5) principles still exists and they are: Truth and Accuracy, Independence, Fairness and Impartiality, Humanity (or do no harm), and Accountability. Accordingly, the journalist gathers information, writes news pieces in an honest and balanced manner with the goal of keeping the public informed.

With some journalists as those in this article, that code seems to be merely words without meaning and is, therefore, not applicable to the piece. The authors secondhandedly interpreted and selected specific words from a TV interview discussion with the President on the funding of the Post Office portion in the relief package as the basis of their story. As readers of the article, we were never allowed to know the original question posed in the interview that perpetuated the given answer, but only were given quoted selected words or phrases. The reader received the message that the president was obstructing all voting when in fact the issue was with the single issue of mail-in voting. The article then goes on to quote and state the opposition party's thoughts and opinions at length, favoring the mail-in funding no matter what the cost. But the authors never balanced the information by providing any facts or reasons against the proposed funding portion of the relief package. Thus, providing only half of the story.

Whether the reader reads beyond the headline or not, this article does not provide an unbiased and truthful view of the issue. However, the headline in all probability has successfully manipulated the reader to believe something that is not the truth.

On a personal note: I thought the package was to provide monetary relief and aid directly to Americans and others that were under mandated lock down and couldn't work or lost their jobs because of the COVID pandemic. And, not to spend money elsewhere on other things. We already have a secured absentee balloting process in place and we have authorized polling places throughout the country where a citizen can go to vote on Election Day. Why now is there a need for an unsecured mail-in voting process? Aren't the current voting processes we have enough?

And my closing words: I plan on standing in line (gloved, masked, and self-distanced) at my polling place on Election Day so I may exercise my right and duty as a citizen to vote my choice and to be correctly counted.

God Bless America

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**Quoted Words of Wisdom  
By Ed Scheffler**

Common Interest  
Does not warrant compatibility.

Also

Most Interest...  
Lies not in commitment.  
Rather but a dispassionate curiosity.

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