

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 document of no more than 1000 words (approximately 2 pages). 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. Contact Nancy at nestewart@ameritech.net for information. [The Pen & Ink Writer's Group returned to the Eisenhower Library on July 18, 2022.](#)

Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group
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November Selection - Paradigm

Mark Moe
The Centurions: Desolation of Sky Vault

A lone computer hacker just outside of Cleveland started a new search for a new system to test his skills. He had already broken into several different government agencies, but this secure database kept calling to him. The database was linked to some inactive satellite that was in minimal power mode.

“Let's see what you are my little friend,” stated the hacker as his fingers raced up and down the keyboard trying to use different algorithms to unlock the database and its corresponding satellite. After what seemed like an eternity of combinations and a total loss of time, he finally gained access to the database at least. “What is the Centurion Project?” I have to know more about this! This sounds so cool!” As he opened different menus, he found a personnel file with four names listed: Ace McCloud, Jake Rockwell, Max Ray and some woman who went by the name, Crystal. “So apparently, the three men were test subjects of a fusion between man and machine to achieve power extreme. The satellite was capable of beaming specialized weaponry to each of them to assist them when they were confronting an evil entity referred to as “Doc Terror.”

“‘Doc Terror,’ that sounds like some bad cartoon villain from 1980s cartoons. It says here, he had a cyborg minion called Hacker. He sounds cheesy, but he can’t be any worse sounding than ‘Doc Terror.’ The Centurions’ weapon systems were designed for aerial, land and naval combat. I can’t believe these guys had missiles, torpedoes and depth charges strapped to them just to fight a couple of cyborgs. I mean it sounds like fighting the Terminator, but clearly overkill. If it were me, I would have just hacked their cpus and disabled them both in one fell swoop. I guess hacking was not their forte. It is too bad they could have focused their considerable talents throughout military hotspots all over the world.”

As he continued to examine their files, he opened up Crystal’s file to discover that she was their primary technician who lived in Sky Vault and controlled the delivery and retrieval of any equipment the guys requested for fusion with their exoskeletons. After Doc Terror was defeated, she married Ace McCloud and the couple moved to Nevada to continue to work in the Aerospace and Technology industries. “I remember hearing about a hacker who went by ‘McCloud’ a few years back who was a crusader for exposing other hackers and all those check cashing schemes. I wonder if that ‘McCloud’ was actually Ace’s wife. It seems too much of a coincidence for that to not be the case. Anyway, the four of them sound like *“paradigms”* of well-intentioned, goodie two shoes who leading boring lives.”

While the hacker was busy talking out loud to himself, he neglected to notice that his own system was being hacked. The unseen force found a way around his careful defenses and alerts that would have let him know about the intrusion. This hacker was only concerned with watching the Ohio hacker to see what he learned about the Centurions and if he sought control of the satellite that was tied to the database. For Crystal McCloud, this was not the first time she had to protect Sky Vault from an intrusion possibly leading to a complete system takeover. As long as she was alive, she would not allow Sky Vault, her baby to be taken over by some joy-riding hacker from Ohio. She stood ready to send a deadly computer virus to wipe out his operating system, hard drive, and cpu if he even accessed one of her twelve firewalls she put in place.

Right now, like herself, he was just looking around the database for information to lead him to start the satellite access. “Good luck finding any indirect or direct links to logon to the server for the satellite, my midwestern friend. I removed those references years ago,” Crystal stated out loud to herself. “The database just has a little more information than what a Google search would turn up, but otherwise, it is a dead end.” She brushed her long, wavy, red hair back from her face with her hands and placed it in a ponytail using a sky blue scrunchie. One of the advantages of being in the tech industry was her ability to work from home unlike her husband, Ace. He was only able to telework some meetings because he was so involved with Aerospace testing which required him to travel different testing facilities throughout Nevada and California. Fortunately, he was working from his office today and it was not far from the house so he would be home at normal time, five p.m.

As she debated if she should just stop him so she could wait for Ace, the hacker sent her a message directly into her command prompt, “So I noticed your database has no direct or indirect links to the separate satellite server which I am guessing you did as a way to dissuade people like

me finding it. Job well done. So, I will do something out of character for me and simply ask for direct monitored access to Sky Vault itself. I believe your beaming technology was underutilized and I want to offer it to the U.S. military. I have several contacts with them and I am sure they would love this on a massive scale.”

Crystal’s shock at the brashness of this Buckeye state hacker caused her to reread the text repeatedly to verify his insane request. When she finally responded, she found herself agreeing to the request, but only to show him the degree of what he was really asking. For she knew that this technology did not work well on the scale he had in mind. It was designed to transport weapons to three men, not an army.

After what seemed like an eternity, the Ohio hacker saw a secure link open on his screen. “I can’t believe she is giving me access to Sky Vault!”

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I hear a new world
By J. Smetana

Jerry says you’re going to start a sex farm like Dave Koresh.
That’s true.
Do you call that a PARADIGM?
I call it love!

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The Train Ride
By N. Stewart

Margaret was riding the Metro train to Downtown, quietly reading the newspaper when a man and his three kids entered the car, getting on at Irving Park Station. The kids ran into the car and all three bounced on the seat behind her. They immediately began kicking her seat and chattering with their very loud outside voices. The man sat across the aisle from them, saying nothing about their bad behavior.

What a rude family she mumbled under her breath. Can’t he hear and see what they are doing? Can’t he be the adult and correct them?

She sat there being annoyed until the passenger, sitting in the seat facing the rest of the people got up and headed out of the car, shaking his head. Margaret moved to that seat, away from the kicking feet and rode backward for the remainder of the trip where she had full view of the entire length of the car. She picked up her newspaper and started to read again.

All three kids were screaming at each other now. One got out of the seat and began running up and down the aisle yelling like a wild banshee. Another soon followed, doing the same. The little girl jumped up and down on the seat. The train started with a jerk as the cars

began to move forward, leaving a station. She almost fell off the seat and caught herself by hanging on to the handle of the seat in front. The running kids were thrown off by the sudden movement and bounced into seated passengers where they pushed off them and continue their tirade up and down the aisle.

Margaret saw on the faces of the other passengers that they were also displeased with the shenanigans of these three little monsters. She scowled and gave the father an angry, foul look, but he did nothing, not even acknowledge that he was aware of what they were doing. He was obviously ignoring his kids and sat there conversing with the lady next to him. Margaret attempted to return to the news article, reading the same words over and over again without capturing their meaning. Her mind was focused on what out-of-control brats they were. What a poor excuse for a father he was. Aggravated further, she tried to get his attention by clearing her throat, but still there was no reaction from him. He was totally oblivious to what was happening with his kids.

An elderly lady, got up from her seat and started to walk down the aisle with her cane. Margaret knew what was coming and sure enough the bigger boy ran right into her and almost knocked her down. He stared up at her and said nothing – not I'm sorry, not get out of my way - nothing. She smiled a warm grandmotherly smile, rearranged herself, picked up the cane off the floor and continued walking down the aisle to the train's vestibule. Neither the kid nor the father made any effort to apology to the old woman.

The train car chaos continued.

Finally, the man got up from the seat and called to the children to follow him, saying they were getting off the train. There was a mad scramble in the aisle as the three of them rushed to get to their father first. And, with a cloud of dust left behind, they were gone.

Margaret watched out the window as he herded his pack down the street. She settled back and picked up her newspaper again to read. Peace and quiet descended upon the train car. What an ignoramus, she mouthed to no one in particular.

A few stops later, Margaret got her things together and headed out to the vestibule to detrain. While standing there, the woman the man was talking to came out to the vestibule platform to wait for the doors to open. Margaret, thinking she was a fellow sufferer, started the conversation with what a rude and obnoxious family that was and continued by berating the heartless, uncaring father.

The woman looked directly at Margaret and said "You're wrong. I don't agree. He was doing his best. His wife was in an auto accident last evening, severely injured and since they were new to the area, he had no one to leave the children with overnight so he took them to the hospital. The children were in the ER waiting room all night and were frightened and unsure of what was happening to their mommy. His wife survived her critical point and was moved to ICU. Before she was moved, the children were able to see their mother one more time and then he and the children left the hospital. His neighbor is going to look after the children, so he can return to the hospital. He was on the train, bringing them to her. The kids needed to blow off some steam

and he was sorry but he was too exhausted and drained to correct them. They all had had enough and the kids needed to be just kids for a little while.”

The train stopped at the station and the woman stepped out the door and down onto the station platform.

Feeling embarrassed from her unfair conclusion, Margaret sank back into the shadowed corner of the vestibule as she felt the shift in her thinking. Had she known of the situation, she would have better understood and would have been more tolerable of it. She would not have been so quick to judge the family or the father.

At last, before the doors closed, she moved forward, went down the stairs and stepped onto the platform.

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Paradigm Edward Scheffler

Which writer doesn't become conscious of grammatical form. While applying words in which adapt to variance. As in the suffix of elements, mood, gender, and voice. We apply this pattern to assist us onto the clarity of expression.

For years I was deficient in the social skills of communication,
being shy and reclusive
Ever slowly to realize that attentive interest into others will
assist in the exchange of thoughts and impressions.

Revealing the existence of a whole new world.
For with change onto development comes purpose.

Latin reference - Non sum quails esse solebat

“I am not what I used to be.”

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