

**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](mailto: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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**January Selection – Procrastinate**

**Sometimes You Can't Procrastinate**  
By Carol Karvon

Julie's heart almost skipped a beat when she looked in the window of her favorite consignment shop.

She had been making it a habit to check the shop's window display a couple of times a week. She was delighted to see the item she had been eyeing for the last two months was still in the window. She hadn't realized she had been holding her breath in anticipation until then.

She had been procrastinating trying to make up her mind whether she wanted to spend the money for the beautiful pink ring. It was lying there in its purple velour lined ring box beckoning her. It seemed to her it had her name on it. She told herself time and time again just because she loved the ring and wanted it, didn't mean she should buy it. Sometimes in the past, she would buy something she really craved and then let it sit unused.

She realized that for her often the thrill of finding something was even better and more satisfying than possessing it. Sometimes these longings became obsessive.

So, she went round and round in her head imagining one scenario after another. It reminded her so much of a ring her aunt had when she was a child. She always loved how light lit up the pink stone when her aunt wore the ring.

Since Julie was named after her aunt, Aunt Juliet always told her she was saving the ring for her when she was old enough to appreciate it. To Julie that meant now, but her aunt was reluctant to part with the jewelry.

That's why Julie was so excited when she first saw the almost identical ring in the consignment shop. The fact it was still there after all these weeks must mean something. Maybe it was meant to be hers. She wanted some kind of sign that she should go in and finally buy the beautiful ring. But she needed to rationalize to herself buying another piece of jewelry. She didn't need it; she just wanted it. She had to make a decision. She had to stop procrastinating and obsessing about a piece of jewelry.

Julie was on her lunch break and had only five minutes left to return to her job. The decision and ring would have to wait. Tomorrow was another day.

The next day Julie left a little early for her lunch break, planning a stop at the consignment shop to purchase the lovely pink ring. She'd never gone in and tried it on for size so wasn't even sure it would fit her. She guessed she could always have it sized by a jeweler, especially if it was gold or silver. The color of the metal band looked like white gold but could be sterling silver.

When Julie got to the shop, she was stunned to notice the ring wasn't in the window. Had they sold "her" ring to someone else? Maybe they just moved it from the window to make space for a new item. She went inside and questioned the man at the counter, and he confirmed that the ring has been sold just last night. Julie was heartbroken but it was her own fault. Her procrastination was to blame.

Her indecision led to the procrastination she had currently experienced. Ironically, she was the manager of her department and often had to make tough decision. That was never a problem for her. She had always relished the opportunity to prove her worth to higher management. This was different. She would have spent her own hard-earned dollars not the company's funds, and that was harder and took much more forethought.

Sometimes you had to act not procrastinate.

###

**Cara Delevingne Attended the Met Gala Topless and Painted In Gold  
By J. Smetana**

Hey man do you believe in the Bible?

Of course!

Did you ever read it?

No man I don't have time!

You watch three hours of TV every day. Verily verily I say unto you: don't PROCRASTINATE.

###

## **I Need This Done *Now***

**By Kelly Tansor**

I wake up to the feeling of water up my nose. My sinuses are absolutely flooded. I sigh and feel phlegm around my throat. When I swallow it feels like knives against my throat. The realization that I am sick makes my head throb.

I had taken a solo trip to Texas to celebrate my 20th birthday. I spent the week visiting historical landmarks, trying out the city's best-rated restaurants, and seeing the most amazing sites I had ever seen. On the plane ride home, however, the man next to me must have been sneezing and coughing every 15 minutes. I can't tell if this cold came from him or the drastic change in temperature (Texas and Colorado obviously have very different climates and pressures). Either way, this is a horrible way to start my day.

I purposely came home on a Saturday so I would have all day Sunday to unpack and relax. So at least I have the day to get better.

After taking a hot shower, I look at the kitchen counter to find all the dishes I had washed just before leaving for vacation. The mountain of pots, plates, glasses, and silverware gives me a sense of dread because I know I have to eventually put them away.

However, there is a bigger mountain I need to tackle - my laundry. I have over a week's worth of clothes to wash, mostly from vacation. I unload my clothes onto the floor and separate the colors and whites. I'm fortunate enough that my building has a laundry unit downstairs. I take my first load of clothes and rush to the basement to find that the washing machine is luckily empty. The dryer is still going - surely another tenant's clothes - but at least I am able to get started on my laundry.

Once my clothes are in the wash, I trudge up the stairs back to my apartment. Running downstairs like that when I'm already sick felt draining, and my head pounds with each step. I head to the bathroom and splash cold water in my face. I then notice how dirty the countertop looks, and how streaky the mirror has somehow gotten. Ugh, I have to clean this at some point, too.

Suddenly there is a rumbling in my stomach and I realize I forgot to eat today. I have plenty of snacks in the refrigerator, but not enough to cook a full meal. Whenever I go out of town, I try not to have too many leftovers or fruits in the fridge in case it all goes bad. But now I'm paying for it, and I do *not* have the energy to go grocery shopping. Even though I have been wanting to save money on food delivery services, I order a late breakfast and have it sent to my house. My head throbs again. I lie on the couch with a hot rag on my head until my food arrives.

While I eat, I get a text from my dad. "Just got your sister's birthday present. Excited to see you both Friday." *Shoot!* We are celebrating my older sister's birthday next week, and I still need to get her something! Should I try my luck at the mall when I feel better? Should I order something online? If I do, will it get here in time?

After I am done eating, I look online for ideas. Clothes...makeup...jewelry...new headphones, maybe...what could she possibly want? I keep searching and scrolling, but my eyes soon begin to droop. It's not long before I can barely hold my own head up. I need a nap. Badly. But I can't procrastinate on this! I need to do this now! If I don't do this now, I'll wait too long and it'll be too late.

I look at my dad's text again. I have until Friday. Surely, this can wait until later this afternoon. I close my laptop and lay on my couch. Just 15 minutes...maybe a half hour...

I slowly wake up and let out a huge yawn. My throat feels rough, but it's not as painful as it was before. I crack my neck and check my watch. I've been asleep for 2 hours.

*2 hours?!*

I run downstairs, remembering my clothes in the wash. Are they going to smell bad by now?

Luckily my clothes are just fine - soaked, but not smelly. It doesn't matter, since there are still clothes in the dryer. There is no way of knowing whose clothes they are, so I'm still stuck waiting. I lean over the washing machine and put my head in my hands. Laundry, dishes, groceries, cleaning, birthday presents. I need these things done *now!*

That's when it hits me - why *do* I need these things done now? I still have clothes on my back and in my closet. I still have *some* food in the fridge. I can put those dishes away at any time I'd like. No one's giving me a "due date" on any of these things - except me.

I write down all of the things I need to do. Some will take longer - laundry, buying groceries - but they aren't as immediate. Some will actually take no more than 5 minutes - putting dishes away, cleaning the sink and mirror in the bathroom - but, again, can be done whenever I'd like. Even ordering a present for my sister won't take long.

The most important thing right now is that I feel healthy. I vow to call my doctor in the morning since they are closed on Sundays. In the meantime, I spend the rest of the day taking medicine, finishing only the laundry I already started, and relaxing in bed. Later that night, I order a jacket for my sister that I know she's had her eyes on for a few weeks now. She'll love it - and if she doesn't, at least there's also a gift receipt.

###

### **"The Devil is on Your Shoulder!"**

**By Sherry Avila**

When I do something wrong, my Step Dad "Chief" says, "The Devil is on Your Shoulder!" I cringe. I do not like the idea of the Devil being on my shoulder.

However, when it comes to Procrastination, perhaps the Devil is on my Shoulder.

I can hear that Devil shrieking, "Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! You don't have to do that now!" And, the Devil on my shoulder is beating a drum, Boom! Boom! Boom!

"Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Turn on the TV and watch that mindless nonsense." Boom! Boom! Boom!

"Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Call somebody on the phone and waste an hour or so." Boom! Boom! Boom!

"Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Don't put anything away! Leave all those piles of clutter!" Boom! Boom! Boom!

"Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Don't read a good book and learn anything! Boom! Boom! Boom!

“Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Don’t attend a class when you can do anything you want!” Boom!  
Boom! Boom!

“Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Stay home and uselessly waste your time!” Boom! Boom! Boom!

“Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Stare at a wall! Look out a window!” Boom! Boom! Boom!

“Sheree Babe! Procrastinate! Look and look and look at your Smart Phone and your computer.”  
Boom! Boom! Boom!

“Sheree Babe! Nooooo! Why are you writing a silly story for Pen & Ink Writers’ Club when  
you could procrastinate? Boom! Boom! Boom!

Devil! Get off my Shoulder! And, stop beating on that drum! I do not want to procrastinate. I do  
want to write a story for Pen & Ink Writers’ Club since that allows me to express myself and  
share with others. I enjoy listening to the stories by my writing friends. And, I will bring  
delicious cookies for them.

My Step Dad was wrong, there will NOT be a Devil on MY shoulder!

###

**With Thanks to the Bard  
by Vicki Elberfeld**

My dad loved Shakespeare’s Hamlet - read it, quoted it, listened to recordings and  
attended every possible performance - while my mother distanced herself as far as possible from  
that play. Mom divided the world into two kinds of people, doers and dreamers. Though she  
considered herself a doer, she did appreciate the creativity and lack of aggression of dreamers,  
into which category she placed both me and my father. She wanted Hamlet to be more of a doer,  
however, and when it was pointed out that if he were, there would be no play, she admitted that  
would have suited her just fine.

Hamlet’s psyche and behavior have been described as depressed, indecisive,  
overthinking, and melancholic. In addition, scholars debate whether Hamlet was only feigning  
madness or was suffering from the real deal. Whatever the conclusion, I think Mother might have  
spared at least a modicum of sympathy for this tormented soul, fictional yes, but nevertheless  
relatable to so many.

She didn’t have much sympathy for me or my father either when we tripped ourselves up  
due to indecision or procrastination which happened more often than I’d care to admit. Rather  
than reason with Dad or continue to frustrate herself with expectations he would never fulfill, she  
simply took over any responsibilities he didn’t complete in a timely fashion and lo and behold!  
Our bills were always paid on time, and appliances needing minor repairs were fixed before we  
even knew there was a problem.

Nowadays I believe Mom would be called a procrastinator, someone who jumps into her tasks at the earliest opportunity. But rushing to complete something immediately can be just as bad as waiting until the last minute, at least if it's a task of any complexity. Our ideas need some time to ferment in order for us to do our best work. Mother was a highly intelligent person who wasn't a perfectionist, and I believe she spared herself significant amounts of stress and misery by getting her tasks out of the way before they could begin to either ferment or to fester.

A friend of mine, a frequent overthinker, told me with relief and some pride that he has discovered the reason for his failings in a book published in 1989 entitled *The Hamlet Syndrome: Overthinkers Who Underachieve*, by Adrienne Miller and Andrew Goldblatt. I did say Hamlet is relatable, as indeed he must be in order to have his very own syndrome.

When I think of Hamlet, I picture him as an attractive, well spoken, intelligent young man burdened with profound responsibilities. He struggles mightily to resolve his ethical dilemmas, as he very much desires to behave in accordance with his values, to do the right thing. His warm relationship with Horatio and his deep grief over losing his father demonstrate he has a tender and passionate heart. Though his vengeance for his father's death was delayed, this seems scarcely a failing when viewed together with his noble virtues.

Mother called me a dreamer which is a far kinder designation than slacker or procrastinator, yet I do have serious difficulty settling down to write, clean my house, schedule medical checkups, or make difficult phone calls, especially those requiring me to deliver bad news or to deal with bureaucracies. I am very much ashamed of my procrastination, a major obstacle to calling myself or even thinking of myself as a grownup.

I suppose the best way to avoid being called a procrastinator is to stop procrastinating, but that isn't as easy as it might seem, and in my heart of hearts, I don't trust that I can actually follow through. Yet I needn't wallow in these feelings shared by the vast majority of the human race. And nowhere is it written that I have to call myself a malingerer, slacker or, worse yet, lazy bum!

I shall patiently explain to whoever wants to know that I am, as are many of us, a grownup who is only human. Yes, I take my time in fulfilling certain obligations, but I have my standards, and I want to do things correctly. After giving it some thought, I've concluded that I'm not really a procrastinator at all. I merely suffer from the Hamlet Syndrome.

###

**Procrastination**  
**By Pauline Bastek**

We seem to consider procrastination as a negative character trait and in the many years I worked as a real estate broker I would have agreed. But there's always that exception to the rule and my client, Terry Trimble was it.

I met her when I was selling the house next door to her property. I was planning to hold an open house and prior to setting a date for it, I called on the neighbors on either side to be sure it would not interfere with any plans they had for that afternoon and personally invite them. This also provided a measure of safety as open houses had cost realtors their lives and rare as it may have been, it paid to have familiar neighbors aware that I would be ringing their bell to say thank you when the open house was over.

As it turned out, that particular property sold within days and over the asking price so I would not be holding an open house. After delivering copies of the signed contract to my client, I rang Terry Trimble's bell to tell her. We were already on a first name basis as I had seen her outside when I had stopped by my client. She answered her door and rather than asking me in, stepped out onto the porch to join me, asking me to sit down on the glider if I had a few minutes. Happily, I did and she joined me while I explained about the sale of her neighbor's house.

She told me that she had been considering selling her house but was in the process of finalizing her divorce. I agreed that it was best that the property settlement was agreed to by both parties. She smiled and said that her husband had quit claimed the property to her prior to starting divorce proceeding but she had not decided on an attorney to represent her.

She laughed and said that she was a hopeless procrastinator and it had driven her husband to divorce her or so he told her. I offered to do a market analysis for her and said that it would be in the vicinity of the neighbor's price as the homes were similar two-story colonials. She took my business card and I was surprised to hear from her within a week. I made an appointment to view the house at the earliest possible date expecting her to postpone it as I found procrastinators were likely to do.

I showed up at her door on the date and time agreed to and was pleased to see that while the rooms would show better with half the furniture, there was no sign of hoarding. The property was dated but neat and clean. I went throughout and asked and answered her questions and set a date to come back with a complete market analysis. That's when Terry Trimble Procrastinator Extraordinaire came out. Always extremely apologetic, when calling to change my appointment but three months later I was forced to tell her that market conditions were beginning to take a dive and interest rates were creeping up and she might take a loss if we didn't move on the sale.

By this time my clients were ready to close on their sale and mentioned that Mrs. Trimble had asked them if they found me satisfactory. They told me that they sang my praises and told me that prior to me visiting the Trimble house, she had teams of services carrying out years of accumulated clothing, memorabilia, and enough canned food to feed a school. Service Master made several trips and they wondered if her husband knew as the final straw for the poor man was when he fell over a delivery from QVC left right outside the back door on his way to work and broke a hip.

He quit claimed the house to her after she signed the initial divorce papers but was at the end of his rope, waiting for her to sign the final documents. They told me his health was really being jeopardized by her procrastinations and he was only hopeful that I could get her to sell the house before her QVC and other on-line addictions filled it up again.

A month passed and I was planning to stop by unannounced when I received a call from Terry Trimble to tell me that her husband had suddenly died of a cardiac attack and invited me to the wake. Surprised that in view of being divorced she was arranging the funeral, she informed me that the divorce was still not formalized so she would be selling the property after the burial and would like me to also handle the sale of other investment properties he had that she had not been made aware of.

She thanked me for not pressuring her to sign the listing agreement and said she looked forward to working with me and she did, and she no longer procrastinated. I could only surmise that her reason for procrastinating had gone.

###

**Procrastinate**  
**By Edward John Scheffler**

Postponement  
say enhance the purpose of presenting  
a better finished product.

Doesn't the aspiring artist stop on  
occasion,  
But to consider every brush strike on the canvass.  
It was Leonardo Vinci who procrastinated,  
awaiting four years to complete the Mona Lisa.

Gothic cathedrals required hundreds of years onto  
completion  
With work stoppage and discontinuance due to the  
shortage of material and skillful labor,

Supplanting the expeditious for an appropriate conclusion.

As attentiveness to detail is the summons  
of refinement onto perfection,

To wait...to wait and see where it is taking us.

###



## **Seven Deadly Sins: The Castle at Edinburgh Part II**

**By Mark Moe**

As the first rays of daylight began to stretch across the vast landscape, two young boys barely teens themselves could be seen traveling side by side on their own brown horses. One was the son of King Meliodas and Queen Elizabeth of the Kingdom of Liones, Prince Tristan. The other was the half-human/half-fairy son of King Ban and Queen Elaine of the Western Fairy Kingdom, Prince Lancelot. Tristan inherited his mother's natural platinum-silver hair and has one bright blue eye and one bright green eye. Prince Lancelot has naturally grey hair, but unlike Prince Tristan whose hair is long and wild, Prince Lancelot keeps his hair very short. The two princes continued heading east on the road to Edinburgh Castle without the expected escorts that one would normally send with royalty. After Queen Elizabeth had taken ill as a result of a curse that her Goddess abilities could not cure, the two friends raced off in search of the magical source of her curse using Tristan's inherited Goddess race abilities as their guide.

Tristan sensed the power coming from the east, so they went east. Lancelot readjusted his magical spear on his back and said, "Tristan, how long do you think we will get away from our parents locating us?"

He responded, "I know my father will find us soon. He was the Captain of the Seven Deadly Sins, Meliodas the Dragon Sin of Wrath before he was chosen to be the successor of my grandfather. When things are important, my dad does not "procrastinate." I hope he does not try to stop us. I know I can save my mother. In fact, I may be the only one that can."

Lancelot nodded in agreement and asked, "What do you know of Edinburgh Castle where you seem to be leading us?"

We don't know for sure that the magical source that caused my mother's curse is actually residing at Edinburgh. I mean we won't know that until we get closer. But to answer your question, my father told me that it was built as a haven for a large group of vampires long ago until they were driven out by the Seven Deadly Sins with some other ally kingdoms. It has been supposedly abandoned for quite a long time."

Lancelot responded, "So in other words, we are headed to a castle formerly built and lived in by undead creatures. It is probably teeming with supernatural energy and it might even attract demons. Sounds like fun! I am glad that I decided to come with you. You would be hard pressed to handle all that on your own."

Tristan looked over at the other teen and said, "I can hold my own against demons and anyone else as well. My father, King Meliodas has worked hard training me to fight and he had Sir Gowther the Goat Sin of Lust to train me with my magical abilities and horsemanship as well. He even told me that I could train with Lady Merlin, the Boar Sin of Gluttony the next time she comes back from helping King Arthur in Camelot."

"You are not the only one training with members of the Seven Deadly Sins. My father is

Ban the Fox Sin of Greed. My uncle and aunt are King, the Bear Sin of Sloth and Diane the Serpent Sin of Envy. I train with them all the time. It is just too bad that Escanor the Lion Sin of Pride is dead or I would train with him as well."

Tristan adjusted his twin magical short swords and acknowledged Lancelot by saying, "There is no way Escanor would train with you if he were still alive. If anything, he would train with me because of being closer to Lady Merlin. He loved her dearly and would do anything to spend one more moment with her."

"Well, we will never know who he would train since he is dead. Also I think we need to focus on our problem at hand, In the far distance, I can see the mountain path leading to Edinburgh Castle. Let's find out if your tracking sense is accurate or not."

"I am certain that I am right about the source and I am glad for your natural fairy long sight ability to know that we will be on the mountain path soon. I will save my mother from this curse! I swear it!"

###

### **A Lesson on Procrastination** **By N. Stewart**

Welcome to a lesson on procrastination. I'm Nancy Stewart your leader. Today, I am going to discuss what you need to know about procrastination and what you need to know to avoid it. When you procrastinate you get side-tracked with other seemingly "more important" or "more enjoyable" situations. Time moves ahead and the original objective remains unresolved and not completed. It never seems to go away. I'd like to hear your thoughts, but before we do that and perhaps get side-tracked, let's get into the start of the conversation.

What is procrastination? Procrastination is your conscious decision to delay an issue/activity and having delayed it it brings you immediate relief from the stress or the fear that you feel. It also brings with it a sense of hope that you will not ever have to do it.

When you procrastinate, you are consciously making a choice to do something or not to do it. Procrastination is a negative perception about an anticipated activity, it's the urge to diverge by substituting something less relevant, and it's postponing the inevitable where no successful completion appears possible.

Every person procrastinates to some degree, but we do it for different reasons and in different ways. Perfectionists fear failure, provoking a state of anxiety within themselves and thus delay any action. A person looking for a quick reward might procrastinate by doing some other task that is less challenging. Another finds the issue or activity to be too inconvenient or too unpleasant to do and doesn't bother with it at all. There are those of you that have self-doubt and

can't start to do what is required or there are those so structurally ordered that they can't even begin to think about the doing the task without going through a number of preliminary steps.

There are three types of procrastinators:

The first type are those that avoid challenges, thinking they have plenty of time to do the task. Some others avoid by having a pre-determined order of doing things that must be done first even though the activities are non-related, and still others just don't feel like doing it now, but may attempt later.

The second type are those that have backward thinking and must reason out why they are procrastinating before starting any activity. Some need to determine what it personally means to them, and some require answers to all their questions before even beginning.

Then, the third type are those that are self-handicapped. They blame uncontrollable circumstances for not being able to complete the activity or for doing a sloppy job. They claim a lack of help, a lack of support, a lack of money, or inadequate supplies as reason for not completing the task.

How do you overcome procrastination?

First create awareness. Define what it is you want or need to do. Determine how you feel about the activity. Learn to tolerate some tension, unease, and/or stress when you begin. Regulate your negative self talk.

Think about your method of resolution. Consider repeating the methods that worked and eliminating what did not. Develop new ways to act. Stay open to other possibilities.

Accept reality for what it is and not for what you think it is. Stay focused. Stay with the facts. Don't fabricate. Eliminate all the "what ifs."

Then take action. Determine what is important, is necessary and get started. Plan your approach. Set goals. Apply your known skills, direct and regulate your behavior.

Follow through with your plan. Face your uncertainty, fear, and insecurity that you may feel. Keep a positive outlook.

That completes the lesson for today. I defined procrastination for you, explained its types and how to overcome it. Now it is up to you. If you want to stop procrastinating, you need to take positive action and stick with it until it is completed. It makes life easier.

It's now your turn to further the conversation. Anyone?

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