

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.

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October 2023 Selection – Hurricane

“How do we Resolve Human Hazards & Disasters Worldwide”
by Frank Avila

Over the years, we have been seeing a lot of Hurricanes and Volcanoes affecting the average person throughout the world due to Climate Change. This could be due to a warmer sea surface temperature, sea level rises, and changes in the atmosphere. Recent discoveries suggest that climate change can also directly affect volcanic eruptions. "Sea level rise, glacial melting, aquifer depletion, and mountain erosion can all affect the likelihood and frequency of volcanic eruptions."

In 2022, the Emergency Event Database recorded 387 natural hazards and disasters worldwide, resulting in the loss of 30,704 lives and affecting 185 million individuals. Earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, tsunamis, cyclones, wildfires, and pandemics are all natural hazards that kill thousands of people and destroy billions of dollars of habitat and property each year.

Throughout the centuries, we had tribes fighting against each other causing havoc throughout the world. And in 2023, we instantly see human hazards and disasters worldwide due to our Social Media Technology. Each post on Social Media has a different perspective about how to present their view to other people which in turn influences various groups of people on how they perceive the human hazard and disaster.

This concerns me, because I have four granddaughters and two grandsons ranging in age from one-and-one-half years to 27 years. Everyday in the news, the Social Media people are giving their views on Religion, School Shootings, Carjacking, Robberies, Conflicts in various countries around the world, Drugs Cartels, etc.

I am trying to teach my grandchildren to be kind, considerate, and loving towards other people. I want them to learn swimming, math, technology, languages, exercise, Religion, and good nutrition. I would hope that my grandchildren would always have a SMILE to make people feel comfortable, and relaxed.

At the end, I would like my grandchildren to be able to reduce the human hazards and disasters in today's world.

###

House of Flies **By N. Stewart**

I opened the cottage as usual on Friday afternoon. As the door opened, I saw black spots on the living room carpet. What on earth I thought. I opened the door further and stepped into the house. I was met with flies flying around the room, swirling like a hurricane and I was in the eye of it. I was in shock. I walked to the window and lifted the shade to find thousands of black bodies hugging the window pane. There were thousands of flies on the inside of the window and in between. All 8 southern-exposure windows in the living room were covered with flies. I walked into the dining room and kitchen facing east and the inside windows were just as black with flies.

I stood in the kitchen frozen in place, not knowing what to do, what to touch, or where to go to escape the situation. My suitcase remained locked in the trunk of my car.

I was near tears as I reached for the vacuum cleaner, plugged it in, and began sucking flies from the windows, and then dead bodies from the living room floor. The see-through vacuum cleaner was half-filled with broken body parts. As I got rid of the flies from one window and moved to the next, the first window was covered with more flies. I finally got the upper hand and after a while the flies appeared to be gone.

I called all the listed exterminators I could find, but being Labor Day Weekend, no phones were answered, no calls returned. Thank goodness for the Internet where I was able to research the habits of flies.

Soon, however, the flies returned and I begin the horrendous, gross chore of vacuuming again...and again.

Checking all around the foundation and in the crawl space, no rotting carcasses were found. Nothing decaying had set them off. They appeared out of nowhere. Loew's was the next stop and I bought every kind of fly repellent, fly paper, fly trap, and placed them all over the house. I

washed and disinfected every counter, every window pane, every piece of woodwork, every flat surface there was multiple times.

At night, flies sleep according to my Internet research and that was reassuring in that flies wouldn't be landing on my face all night. A light in the living room remained on to draw the flies to it. Alongside the light, hung fly paper. The bedroom and bathroom doors on the north side had been flyless and stayed closed.

The traps worked as did the fly paper. The next day the flies weren't as plentiful and the following day almost non-existent. The 3-day Labor Day weekend was spent cleaning and vacuuming and being stressed out and anxious.

The day after Labor Day, the flies seemed to be gone except for one or two that I enjoyed killing with the fly swatter. I finally reached an exterminator that day, telling me that nothing is done for fly invasions because as the weather changes they disappear. They were willing to come out for a fee, but didn't think they would be of any help. She further advised that as the weather cooled the flies would disappear. The weather had been extremely hot the previous week and was expected to turn considerably cooler in a few days.

Carefully packing and more than ready to leave the cottage. I closed and locked the door and got in the car to go to Illinois.

The next weekend, I wondered what I would find when I opened the door to the cottage. Alas, the flies were gone, no dead bodies on the carpet, no flies clinging to the windows. I found a few dead ones but nothing like the initial fly invasion. The weekend again was spent cleaning windows, vacuuming furniture and carpeting, washing and disinfecting all surfaces.

One good thing came from this, the house is immaculate.

Where did they come from and where did they go? Only Mother Nature knows. I sure don't.

###

Hurricane **By Carol Karvon**

You knew the moment Beth came into a room. She was like a whirlwind who created her own draft. Her parents tried to get her to slow down and take her time, but she had her own ideas and going full speed was one of them.

It seemed Beth learned to run before she learned to walk. When she was little, she was on the go constantly and was quite a challenge for her laid-back parents. They had three older children, two boys and a girl, before Beth was born. They weren't novices to parenting but Beth was different.

When Beth was just a toddler and in constant motion, her dad called her his "mini hurricane" and that title stuck.

She was now a teenager and secretly loved the nickname but never told that to anyone. In fact, if anyone other than her dad called her a hurricane they were in for an argument. Oh, her best friend, Carla, may have caught on, especially when she was at Beth's house and her dad referred to her as a hurricane. Sometimes he just shortened it to "hurry, which kind of fit her perpetual state of motion she thought.

The two girls had been best friends since their kindergarten days at Peacock Elementary School years ago. They had both been brought to the first day of school by their mothers and each clung to their mom.

When the mothers were getting ready to leave, both girls and their mothers burst into tears. It was a traumatic day for all four of them. The moms felt like they were abandoning their babies. That was surprising since the girls each had older siblings. Maybe the moms felt a loss at seeing their youngest child start school and enter a new life cycle of self-assurance and independence.

The teacher assured the moms the girls would settle down once they left and school started. She didn't take the attitude that this was just kindergarten. She knew it was important for children to interact with others. She walked Beth and Carla over to the group already sitting in a circle on the floor and introduced them to each other and the rest of the class.

When Beth and Carla's moms started out the door, they both happened to look back into the classroom and noticed the girls seemed to be happily chatting with each other. Beth and Carla chose to sit next to each other and that was the start of a beautiful friendship.

They all got through that first day of school and soon it was time for them to go home. When Beth and Carla's moms came back to pick them up, the girls were having so much fun they weren't anxious to leave. The promise of coming back tomorrow finally sank in – and also the other promise of ice cream on the way home. Some might call it a bribe, others a reward, I call it a strategy that worked. The girls became friends and so did their moms from that day forward.

###

Hurricane
By Pauline Bastek

While the very word, hurricane, strikes fear into the hearts of residents of coastal areas and the naming of them has caused trauma to the lives of many young women unfortunate enough to bear the name of a particularly vengeful hurricane, (Note: Young women), after a certain age, I have found among my senior friends, many seem to be rather proud to have a strong force such as a hurricane associated with them as opposed to our waning strengths in so many areas.

To me, hurricane, first and foremost brings to mind happy childhood memories of the forties, sitting at an afternoon matinee at our local third run movie theater, The Oakley, Located on Chicago Avenue between Western Avenue and Oakley Boulevard, hence its name, it provided for the price of twelve cents admission and an additional fifteen cents for a box of buttered popcorn, a safe and entertaining escape. An escape into a black and white film of an island paradise starring the glamorous Dorothy Lamour in a sarong, modest by today's standards, but oh so risqué by the standards of ten-year-old girls from a catholic school. The movie I so well remember was, yes you guessed it "Hurricane."

It starred the stunning Dorothy Lamour (Note: I refused to believe that she had worked as an elevator operator at Marchall Fields Department store on State Street, where she was supposedly discovered by a talent scout). I preferred to believe that like Venus she rose from the ocean to an island paradise where her island lover, the tanned and bare chested, Jon Hall, swept her up into his muscular arms and off they went to highly imaginative ecstasy among the palm trees. (Note: As an adult, I have to confess that the civilization of Maui, still leaves me inwardly yearning for the paradise shown in "Hurricane.")

When the hurricane came, as all good things must come to an end, their island romance was interrupted by sound and light effects that surely should have brought an Oscar to the technicians of that day, and maybe it did, but love triumphed, I think, and the hurricane blew away.

But the memory of watching that movie at the Oakley show with my best friends, still to this day, Ruth, remains.

No, we didn't have IPADs or laptops, or cell phones. Imagine, we didn't even have television or air-conditioning at home, but we had Dorothy Lamour in "Hurricane" at the Oakley show.

I happily remember those Saturday afternoon matinees and that was the best buttered popcorn, ever.

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Crowd of Orcas

By J. Smetana

He was called the Pope of Greenwich Village.

Who is Charles Baudelaire?

That is correct!

Hey Peaches turn off the television—I feel I don't have your complete, undivided attention.

OK, it's off.

I'm not sure I believe you, Peaches, you might just have the sound turned down and you're still watching the destruction wrought by HURRICANE Andrew.

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All Night Long
By Kelly Tansor

I'm somewhere in my early 20's, and my shift ends at 10:30 PM. After clocking out, I run to the bathroom and change from my deli worker uniform—hat, brown shirt, and slacks—to my outfit for the rest of the night: black minidress and heels. I take the train and walk two blocks to get to the club. Once security lets me inside, I am greeted with bright strobe lights flashing across my face. Dance music blares throughout the room, the bass pounding so hard I can feel it in my chest. I weave through the hurricane of dancing strangers all around me. Some look at me like a piece of meat, and a few even try to get handsy as I breeze past.

Eventually, though, I find my friend near the bar surrounded by mutual friends. She turns 21 at midnight, and a silly argument has broken out over who gets to buy her first legal drink for her. We hug then dance for what feels like forever and an instant all at once.

The clock is about to strike midnight, and someone in the group has bought everyone shots. We wait until there are 10 seconds left. And then we do the countdown before...

3!

2!

1!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

We all down the shots and continue dancing all night long.

I'm somewhere in my early 30's, and my son's cries have shot me awake. Normally he only babbles when he first wakes up, so I'm taken aback by this. I look at the clock, and it's 2:00 AM.

I turn over in bed and look down at him in his bassinet. "Honey, don't worry, Mommy's right here," I say, but it's no use. He continues to cry, louder now. I rub the sleep from my eyes and rush over to the kitchen. Dishes, bottles, rags, and baby clothes are strewn about the room as if a hurricane just rolled through. I carefully make my way through the mess and get to the refrigerator; a pre-made bottle sits on the top shelf. I throw it in the bottle warmer and set it for the allotted time.

I turn back to check on the baby, but I see my husband is already holding him and carrying him to his changing table. I take a breath as a feeling of relief flows down my spine. Parenthood is still new to us, and as we learn more about parenting we have argued more often, but loved more deeply. Each day I find new reasons to love him; tonight, it's his patience and selflessness.

Once the bottle is made and our son's diaper is changed, the three of us sit down on the couch together. My husband insists on feeding him so I can go back to sleep. I ask for one more minute. I lay my head on his shoulder as he feeds the baby his bottle. I could watch this all night long.

###

Return to Gummi Glen Part 6

By Mark Moe

Zummi directed Kylie to a smaller anterior room contained within the Great Hall. Once inside, he closed the oak door and activated a magical lantern with a quick light spell cantrip. The room brightened and he directed Kylie to sit across from him at a small table.

"Now my dear Kylie, I am going to tell you a secret that the others are not aware of but will be soon. We Gummies can change a human into a Gummi Bear. I will have to research whether it is permanent or if there is a way to change you back. It is an ancient spell from the Gummies of old used to award humans who have proved themselves worthy and extend their normal lives by a couple of a thousand years."

"But why me, Zummi? I do not think I have done much to prove my worth. I am the descendant of two Gummi allies, and I am a historical researcher who was trying to prove your existence for academic fame and future research money. What have I done to gain that level of worth in the eyes of the Gummies?"

"My dear, it is not the ancient Gummies who would make that call. It is us and as I can speak for the others when I say, there are few others who have helped us the most both in the past and in the present. The ancient Gummies left us the spell in case we were to find a human we deemed worthy. You are worthy and we need another Gummi to help us fix the past."

"But wait, Zummi! If Gummies escaped to a different dimension, what happened to Morgana and the army of Ogres?" asked Kylie.

"Let us rejoin the others and we will see what occurred in the past." When they rejoined the others, Zummi went to the front of the room and said, "My fellow Gummies. Let us look into the past and see what has become of our enemies." He pulled a bag of blue magic dust and scattered it through the air. As the dust scattered, he recited an incantation and blue electric sparks coalesced into a movie image of the moment the Gummies disappeared.

Fifty enhanced Ogres came busting through the walls and breaking through doorframes so as to enter the smaller-sized room where the Gummies were previously cornered. The Ogres created a defensive perimeter around and stood at attention waiting for Morgana and Winthorpe to enter the room. The last remaining undamaged door was blown off its iron hinges and when the smoke cleared, a middle-aged man wearing a full set of dull chainmail entered behind an athletically toned blonde woman wearing a dark green leather top, black leather leggings and matching dark green boots.

"Winthorpe, your stupid Ogres went crashing through the walls again! Can they not just break down the doors and file in like normal soldiers? Where are the Gummi Bears? We had them

trapped in this room. Ogres check your oafish, clumsy feet and make sure you did not accidentally crush them!" Morgana exclaimed.

"Well, you heard the lady, check your stupid feet and find those Gummi Bears!" While Winthorpe continued to yell at different Ogres, Morgana pulled out a small emerald-colored gem, threw it in the air and started chanting a spell. The gem floated mid-air as Morgana kept chanting. Upon completing the spell, emerald beams of light shot out as it exploded in multiple particles.

"Winthorpe! Stop yelling at those Ogres! The Gummi Bears have left this dimensional plane! I do not know where they are, but they used magic to escape from us!"

"So, what am I supposed to do now? I needed them captured so that I could get the secret of their Gummi Bear juice for my future conquests!" Winthorpe exclaimed.

"Look at it this way, you can still follow your conquest goals. It will be easier without the Gummis interfering anyway. I will be ready to deal with them if they decide to return. We have forced them out of their home. I will set up a detection spell in this room and a few others so we can know if they regain their courage."

Winthorpe bowed before Morgana and said, "Thank you, my lady for your continued service to me and my Ogre army."

The movie the Gummis had watched shimmered and faded away as the spell dissipated.

"I am sorry my friends, I cannot keep the spell up any further. We cannot leave those two to continue to do what they want to ruin the past and this present. I also have a spell to give us a seventh Gummi Bear, if Kylie is willing to become that bear?" Zummi informed everyone.

"I am willing to do what I must to help my friends, the Gummis repair their past." Kylie replied.

"Then let us return to the Great Seal with much haste. We have a surprise for Morgana and Winthorpe." The Gummis and their friends headed back to the Great Seal. "Kylie, please go to the center of the Great Seal and just relax while I turn you into a Gummi Bear," Zummi replied.

Zummi dumped a bag of silver dust around Kylie and began to chant in the ancient Gummi language. Again, the Great Seal began to glow and light up the room. As the magic coursed through Kylie, she felt the world around her start to shrink. Her hands and feet became paws. Her body started to grow fur and her clothes adjusted to her new form. As the spell finished, Kylie's new brown fur turned a shade of rose-pink blending in with her bright pink hoodie. "Zummi, get us back to the past so we can summon the ancient Gummi Army and rock those villains like a "hurricane!" exclaimed Kylie the newest Gummi Bear.

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