

## **Pen & Ink Writers' Group**

**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 © 2015 Pen & Ink Writers' Group**

#### **September 2015 selection – Voyage**

##### **Voyage: AKA Believe! By Mercedes Martinez**

As I sit here, (sigh), sipping on my salt-trimmed Margarita, listening to a wonderful traditional Mexican song from my dad's age group, trumpets blaring the 'when she comes back and I love her so and I will wait for her forever' theme. Well, I am reminded of the movie, 'Voyage to the Center of the Earth.' However, a voyage represents a journey, trip, expedition, excursion or tour.

How about a voyage to the 'Inner Self'? How many brave souls dare to consider, much less, put into practice measures to actually listen to their inner voice guiding them along the journey of their life? Hmmm....

I recalled the story of a boy who observed the struggles of a caterpillar from his bed in the hospital, where he himself struggled to move due to his own challenging illness. As he watched the caterpillar struggle, kick, push, resist, and then stay dormant and so very still. Suddenly, abruptly, the boy decided to put an end to the caterpillar's struggle. He leaned forward with a pair of scissors and cut open the cocoon.... too soon. In his effort to free the caterpillar from his life long struggle with self- development, he overlooked that the caterpillar's physical struggles were essential in its development of its unique, extraordinarily beautiful, kaleidoscope of colorful wings designed to camouflage him from its surrounding predators who lay in wait to end its short life. Aren't we all just a mist that appears for a little while only to vanish in an instant?

How many of us struggle, as the caterpillar did, to escape our own personal agony. Only to discover if we just held on, if we only just persevered, enduring the onslaught of another deception, betrayal or disappointment or worse yet the 'F' word, 'failure', then perhaps, just maybe, we would develop our own set of unique extraordinary set of talents, God given gifts to heal this world of apathy and defeat.

Fly, Fly, Fly, high to the greatest heights our soul's purpose can take us to if we just, just "Be Live", "Believe it to be so and so, it is."

###

### A Voyage on the Wild Side

By: Susan J Wilfong

I like to watch animal shows.  
Animal Planet was made for me.  
To me, most animals are majestic,  
But they're still as silly as can be.

I saw one program  
Several weeks ago,  
That showed baby animals,  
And we watched how they would grow.

I saw how a mother lion  
Taught her cubs to kill.  
And how a mother mongoose  
Ripped open a termite hill.

A monkey taught her baby  
The leaves that were good to eat.  
And the raccoon would scour the ground  
For something that tasted sweet.

There were so many animals.  
I just loved that show.  
But the show that followed, right behind,  
Set my heart aglow.

It showed the same animals  
Striking out on their own.  
For now, the babies were adults  
And all were fully grown.

Some had learned quite well,  
The things their parents taught.  
Others just had a mind of their own,  
And didn't do as they ought.

But the thing that I remember most,  
Was the voyage that many were taking.  
Making choices on their own  
Their parent's lessons forsaking.

It really was quite funny  
Watching these big critters  
Acting so out of character,  
The "Bad-boys" of their litters.

They stumbled as they walked,  
Their eyes held a distant stare.  
They seemed to have no worries  
They seemed to just not care.

What was it that made them topsy-turvy?  
What was it that tamed the wild brute?  
Then the mystery was solved.  
They all ate fermented fruit.

They were not tamed,  
Yet they felt no pain  
As in their drunken stupor  
They all chose to remain.

###

**Life as a Voyage**  
**By Valerie Collins**

It has been written that life is a journey. I like to think of life as a voyage as well. The passing years flow in ebb tide and ascent rising like waves majestic and graceful then descending to the surface with rhythmic assurance that this composition will replay again. There is assuredly life that grows and flourishes through the years and tragic occasions that alter or stop life in its tracks. We see this in the human condition as well as in the plant and animal kingdom. So is the surge of the sea. So is the cycle of life.

The waters of this voyage do not always operate with the high energy of the oceans' rolling swells but will settle into the calm tranquility of ripples sometimes hardly noticed in the serenity of the scene. These occasions of peace and quietude are welcome as we embrace the comfort and the rest it effectuates. It is restorative and good. Our bodies and souls garner the energy for what is to come.

This voyage is typically a long pilgrimage into a future of unknown circumstance. We navigate the route traversing waves and surges then finding restful relief in calm waters. The goal always is to keep the vessel steady and arrive at an intended destination but it is the unexpected surprises along the way that make this journey enchanting. There is exhilaration in the waters that take us for a thrilling ride up and over billows with bouncing invigoration. There is delight in the sea creatures that appear from the depths of their water world and in the sea birds that inhabitant the sky. On our voyage there is also the pleasure of anticipated occurrences that await us daily. The magnificent sights of sun rising and setting offer a color show of unequalled beauty. The starlight-covered sky envelops our world and illuminates the darkness that follows the day. The twists and turns of life bestow blessings sometimes unexpected, yet always welcome, while the anticipated blessings fill us with hope and joyful expectation.

There comes a time in one's voyage when darkness and gloom prevail. There certainly are different degrees of sorrow and certainly some that stop one cold. These are immobilizing times where skies are dark and weather is stormy. The voyage is at a standstill and one is immobilized, incapable of moving forward. In such a paralyzing event there is only the choice of waiting it through, letting the skies clear a bit and looking, always looking for the sun. Then one day the clouds give way little by little and the glorious thought occurs..."it is time to pick up anchor and catch the wind."

And the voyage continues.

###

### ***My Voyage Story, Such As It Is***

"Your voy, what is his age?"  
"My voy is not a voy; she's a Kirl!"  
"That's not answering my question."  
"Which was?"  
"How old is your kid, dunderhead?"  
"Two or threeish—I can't rightly keep track."  
"Sure, if I had a kid, I'd know its age."  
"Well, take this one then; let me know what you find out."  
"Okay, but what's her name?"  
"Melody Harmony Thid; she comes from a very musical family."  
"I see, but the first and middle names don't seem to go with Thid somehow."  
"Unfortunately, there isn't much we can do about that."  
"You could, you know, but you just won't; I suppose it's too much trouble."  
"Speaking of trouble, that's just what you're going to get when I hand her over to you."  
"No problem; I've tamed the onerousest wild hogs. Surely I can handle her!"  
"I'm going to make a prediction, if I may."  
"Predict away, as you wish."  
"Within a year she will bite off a big part of you and bring it to me."  
"Why would you say such a thing?"  
"She's done it before, and she seemed to like it. Why wouldn't she do it again?"  
"And just what did you do with these bit-off parts of some poor soul?"  
"I made the mistake of handing them over to the dogs."  
"And just what was the mistake of that?"  
"They vomited all over the kitchen and went up and died."  
"Gosh to golly. What did you do with the remains?"  
"That was our next mistake. We chopped them up and fed them to the garbage disposal."  
"I would have thought you would have buried them."  
"Should have. To this day the kitchen reeks of dead dog."  
"Haven't you tried to get rid of the stench?"  
"We surely did. We put down everything into the garbage disposal, and it only made things worse."  
"I suggest you get a new garbage disposal."  
"Fine of you to suggest that. The trouble is that we can't get close enough to take the old one out."  
"I've been thinking, and I have a suggestion that might solve all our problems."  
"Suggest away; what harm can it do?"  
"Blow up your malodorous abode and come live with me."  
"I just might take you up on your proposal."  
"Then let it be done!"  
"The two of us will subjugate this obstreperous kirl that the good Lord went and got me stuck with."  
When they were inside the house, the garbage disposal got a whiff of itself and blew it to smithereens.  
I've spent untold hours in the library trying to find it, and nowhere is there a Smithereens.  
I suspect it is a suburb of some small town. As you enter I imagine you see a sign reading—  
You are now entering Smithereens (down the road from Timbuctoo): Pop. 10\*  
\*subject to change without notice.  
Anyway, the two folks who were dialoguing above got blown up with the house,  
and that leaves Miss Thid alone to terrorize the world.  
It's a bleak ending to an entirely true tale of 526 words copyrighted September 2015 by Jamey Damert.

###

## **Voyage**

**By Elvira K. Castillo**

In 1960 my Great Aunt Margaret and Godmother passed away. Since I was her only Godchild, I was part of her last Will and Testament and given a sum of \$3,000. Shortly after receiving the money, Marge, a coworker and friend of mine, talked about her plan to take a tour throughout Europe. She had relatives in Italy and planned on visiting them, too. Her friend Maryann was accompanying her on the tour, but since Marge planned to visit relatives, she would have to depart from the original tour in order to take time out for her visit and join another tour for her return.

Since I was young and single and now had \$3,000, it didn't take me long to ask Marge if I could join them on the trip. Marge was quite agreeable to have me join, as then Maryann would now have me to accompany her after Marge's departure from the tour. Today, I have no desire to travel, so I am so happy I decided to use my Great Aunt's gift to have a memory for a lifetime.

Our voyage was to begin on the Queen Mary Cunard Line, leaving New York on August 17 at 3:00 p.m., however, the dock workers in England had a strike, and the Queen Mary would not be coming to New York. Our voyage was saved, however, by the S.S. United States ship, and even though we were delayed one day in New York, we arrived on time in Southampton on August 23, as the S.S. United States was a faster ship and took one day less to arrive at our destination. The bad news was that we went through a hurricane, which is quite common, and I became very, very sea sick. The only place I felt good was lying on a deck chair with the hurricane swirling about me. Thank goodness my illness was over by the time we landed in London, and I felt good throughout the twenty-five days on land, traveling through twelve countries, including England, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Italy, San Marino, Monaco and France.

I have to say this was a fantastic voyage, especially in the year 1960, as two wonderful highlights were the 1960 Olympics being held in Rome, Italy, and the Passion Play, which is only given every ten years, was being performed in Oberammergau, Germany. We, of course, didn't see any Olympics, but Rome seemed to be filled with excitement in the evenings. We, however, did have the fortune of meeting a former Olympic Star, Jesse Owens, who was kind enough to take the two African American ladies on our tour out to dinner. What a treat for them! I remember being pinched on my backside while walking with my friends, which was popular in Italy at the time, and a red-headed Italian fellow threw a coin in the Trevi Fountain wishing for me to come back to Rome. It was also exciting to see Onassis in Monte Carlo, walking along the yachts. Onassis was well known, but not yet the husband of Jacqueline Kennedy.

As I said, we traveled through twelve countries in twenty-five days by bus and by train, and saw many historical and beautiful sights. My favorite countries were Switzerland and Monaco because both countries were, so bright, fresh, and beautiful. I also loved driving by the Black Forest in Germany, and shall never forget the entire town of Oberammergau participating in the Passion Play.

We left Paris on September 15 by bus to board the Queen Elizabeth for our homeward voyage. Maryann and I had a wonderful trip home. And, no sea sickness or hurricanes this time. I understand the Queen Elizabeth had “stabilizers,” which made the voyage smoother than on the S.S. United States without “stabilizers.” Don’t ask me what that means -- it’s just what I was told.

So, thank you again Aunt Margaret and my friend Marge for giving me this marvelous experience. And guess what? The trip only cost \$1,500. Try doing this today!

A sad note to add is that I learned a year or so later that the same tour bus we were on had an accident while going by the Black Forest. Our tour guide and driver were both killed. Guess life is a matter of timing. It was quite a shock for me to hear this, and I realize that my fortune could have been a misfortune.

###

## **11 Terribly Photo shopped North Korean Propaganda Photos** **By J. Smetana**

I always enjoyed watching the ornithological activity in the backyard. Every year we hang up some birdhouses, but the only bird that ever moves in is the English Sparrow, or the House Sparrow, so-called. It’s a shame we don’t get more interesting birds, I was going to say “better” birds, but we get what we get I guess, and I’m sure there must be a reason for everything. I asked the guy who works at the Nature Museum about that and he said, “You have to evict the bird you don’t want EVERY SINGLE DAY if necessary, until the one you do want shows up.” Well, I’m not going to do that. It’s first come, first get as far as I’m concerned, everyone needs somewhere to live, even unattractive little runts. I usually hang up the birdhouses on April 1st--that’s easy to remember--and most of them are occupied the same day. But like I said, it’s always the same boring bird. I just heard they’re doing a re-make of “Saint Elmo’s Fire”--with the original cast! Can you say MOVIE EXCITEMENT?

We have a real state-of-the-art bird feeder on a pole stuck in the garden that gets filled with stale bread from Allegretti’s and there’s a guard around the pole so squirrels can’t climb up and wreak havoc. I made the mistake of hanging toys from the feeder so now a squirrel can grab hold of a toy and hoist himself up like Burt Lancaster. When the squirrels eat out of the bird dish they always have a somewhat guilty look and they’re ready to run. But I’m not about to chase them off if they’ve risked life and limb just to get up there to eat stale bread. Let them enjoy their meal! I just heard they’re doing a re-make of “Cant Stop the Music”--with the original cast! Let me buy my ticket NOW!

There’s four hooks on the side of the garage, each one can accommodate one birdhouse. Those four are the first four I hang up every year, just because they’re the easiest to get to. Then I hang up the remaining birdhouses in the apple tree and in those two ratty-

looking evergreens. I make it a point to put different houses on different hooks every year. That's just for my amusement; I don't guess these animals can remember from one year to the next what used to be where, and how long do they live, anyway? I don't imagine they have much of a lifespan. This year, for the first time, they got attacked, probably by a RACCOON who got on to the garage roof and then just reached down with his little paw and unhooked the birdhouses one by one, tossing all but one onto the ground. This went on for a week. Each morning when I saw the destruction I hung them back up but by week's end the little guys were waving the flag of surrender. Can you blame them? I just heard they're doing a re-make of "Mother, Jugs and Speed" --with the original cast! That's my idea of movie magic!

###