

**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**  
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**September 2017 selection – Limp**

**Movement**  
**By Val Collins**

She reached a stage in her life when one tends to evaluate and assess the journey... and thus she delved into reflection. When we're young, she thought, we run for the sake of running. We run because we can. We run with abandon and ease. Our muscles are supple and strong and our minds and intentions are robust. We have not yet experienced the full measure of life with victories and triumphs as well as quagmires and quandaries. To be truthful she now often yearned for those days of carefree exuberance in both body and mind. Years piled upon years and the reality of life was realized. Instead of a strong run, she was now often forced into a beleaguered limp. Not down and out and incapacitated was she but instead made to walk and yes even at times limp. In fact the recent death (and there have been several over time) of a very dear friend nearly brought her to a complete standstill. How I yearn to run with face to the wind, with wind brushing my hair and caressing my skin, she thought. How I long for the days when life was still in its innocence and loss was not a consideration. How I yearn to scamper and gallop and sprint instead of hobble and limp.

In this reflective mode, she realized that throughout the course of a lifetime there are hills and valleys where movement ebbs and flows and mental state of mind does likewise. Our pace is steady and strong, our spirits are high and receptive, then we have set backs, and are sometimes brought to a complete standstill only to rebound and pick up the stride once more. We leap, and sprint, walk and limp, then run again. It is this thing called LIFE.

Thus she took a good solid look at what life for her currently provided...and it was fine indeed. She had the comforts of hearth and home, she had a lovely circle of family and friends, she had a healthy collection of interests and activities and her health was reasonably adequate. So yes there were bound to be times which required one to limp but also those that moved her right along into a steady gait, a brisk walk and might we even venture to say a bit of a run!

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**The Worst Limp of All**  
**By Susan J Wilfong**

People limp  
If they have a pain  
In their foot or leg  
Or even an ankle sprain.

I don't mind  
Those limps at all  
But there is one limp  
That makes my skin crawl.

A "Limp-wristed" handshake  
Is something I just hate.  
I just can't stand it.  
It's not up for debate.

When I extend my hand to you  
And you grab mine back,  
Let me know your hand is alive  
And those muscles you don't lack.

You don't have to crush my hand.  
I don't want it to break.  
A "Limp-wristed" handshake  
To me, is totally fake.

Shaking hands with a cold limp hand  
Is something I hate to do.  
I promise not to hurt your hand  
When I shake hands with you.

A nice, friendly, firm handshake  
Is the way I like it best.  
No other kind of "Limps" bother me,  
But a "Limp-wristed" handshake, I detest.

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**A Good Limp**  
**By Elvira K. Castillo**

Looking at “Gunsmoke” every day on TV  
It’s hard to imagine how, for me  
Matt Dillon’s side kick, Chester Good  
Prancing around on a stiff leg that looks like wood!

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**A Watchful Eye**  
**By N. Stewart**

I noticed him because he had a limp. One leg appeared to be shorter than the other. He was cute – one of my criteria for bothering to get to know some one. Yes, I know it is shallow, but I want to be able to glance without wincing at the sight.

He sat at the table next to mine and opened his Starbuck’s coffee with great care, taking the cover off in a regimented, precise manner. Equally as careful, he picked up the cup and moved it to his lips and took a long drink. I could see the pleasure of that sip in his eyes, he almost sighed with delight. His whole body seemed to come alive with that single dose of caffeinated enchantment. He was indeed pleasant to look at as I watched him over the rim of my tea cup, sipping the brew.

The table vibrated and he picked up his phone to read the message. His demeanor immediately changed. He tensed up and reached for the cup of coffee, gulping quickly. He rapidly fired a short message and almost instantaneously his phone pinged back. He was almost growling at the phone as he tapped out a longer return message, punctuating each letter with a stab of his forefinger.

His resentment showed as he reached for the coffee cup and drained what remained of the coffee. He got up from the table, picked up the empty cup, and limped toward the trash can at the front door. He viciously threw the poor, defenseless cup into the container, and flung open the door to step outside. I watched as he limped to a car, got in, and pulled away. Please drive safely I silently prayed. I wondered what that was all about. An angry boss? An upset wife or partner? A demanding client? Someone had gotten him very upset in a very short amount of time.

I looked around to see who else I could drop in on while I finished the remainder of my tea. My eyes followed a forty-something lady in a yellow dress as she ordered one of those thousand calorie cookies with her “extra hot” cappuccino and I watched as she sat down by the window. Who was she and did she come here every day for a tension-

relieving snack? I kept an eye on her as she slurped her coffee with the plastic cover still in place and attacked the cookie, finishing it in what appeared to be a single bite. So different from that cute limper that I watched earlier. She seemed to me to be uncomfortable or perhaps even wary of her surroundings. As I looked, her eyes quickly darted around the room from place to place. What is she up to?

There, I caught her. Her eyes landed on me yet again and lingered a bit too long before glancing elsewhere. It would appear she is watching me. Did she think she knew me? Was she curious about me? Or was she upset because I had been watching her and she caught me?

Well, I was ready to leave anyway, picking up my cup I began walking toward the door, gently threw my cup in the trash and stepped outside. I turned slightly and yes, I could see that her eyes were following me as I walked through the open door and the eyes stayed on me as I stepped into the parking lot. I felt a chill run down my back.

How dare she? Go find yourself another target, lady. I'm gone. I slipped into my car, started it up, and immediately left the parking area.

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### **To Be Limp and Limp**

**By Pauline Bastek**

Two by two they came, limping down the aisle, as the organ rant out the traditional wedding march. Sixty years ago, in a country church in Indians, to the accompaniment of an old upright piano, they had literally rushed down the aisle, after those memorable words, "What therefore God had joined together, let no man put asunder" and no man, or woman did. Sixty years, a lifetime, had wrung the life out of her and left her as limp as the long grey hair she could feel clinging to her neck. He would not hear of her cutting it. It so dragged her down.

She noticed she was limping, but she never limped and could not remember hurting her knees. In fact, after the knee replacements, she walked quite effortlessly. Oh, no wonder she was walking with him, which she rarely did, only if she absolutely could not avoid it, and he was too stubborn to get anything replaced if it still functioned, never mind how well, so he just limped down the aisle, as he had limped through the six decades of their marriage, and while with him so had she.

Before their first anniversary, while waiting for their first baby, she had slowed down her former pace which always had people asking her, "Where's the fire," or "What's the hurry." She attributed it to the clumsiness of pregnancy, the additional burden she was carrying later she felt she had slowed down to keep pace with the children when their short legs could not keep up. As her pace slowed down, so did her life. Seemingly she limped along with as much life as her limp, straggly hair. The bounce

in her step was replaced with a limp when walking with him, as was the bounce in her dark curls with those lip grey strands clinging to her neck as he clung to her arm.

The rented limo had stopped so they must have reached the hotel where their children had arranged for a reception to celebrate the occasion. Without waiting for the driver to come around to open the door, she pushed it open, bounced out, quite gracefully for an eighty year-old, and stood waiting for him to limp out in his usual stumbling manner

As his foot missed the curb, his arm reached out for her as he always did while limping through life, but this time she was overtaken by an absolutely awful urge to sneeze. Her arm suddenly raised to her nose, wasn't there for him. Down he went. The curb meeting his head so quietly, she hadn't finished wiping her nose, when she saw him in a heap at her feet. The driver kept saying that he should have waited for someone to help him get out.

Their children who had been standing chatting waiting for them to come were shouting to get an ambulance, call 911. But, she was quite sure it was too late for that. As usual he had expected her to help him as he limped out of the limo, but this time she wasn't in step, limping along with him. Yes, too late for him, but not for her. She felt so much lighter as though a weight had been lifted what she needed was a good haircut, with a nice bounce, not that long limp hair style that simply dragged one down.

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