

Perspective

So you want to write, do you?

"Since you're not doing anything, how about running to town and pick up a part for me," my husband hinted heavily. "I'm busy," I replied. "Do it yourself."

"Well, Excuse me," he said. "I can see Exactly how busy you are staring at that blank sheet of paper." And he left.

Why is it that if you are not sweating dust or operating heavy equipment, everybody thinks a writer isn't working? I work an average of eighty hours per week in order to meet my magazine deadlines, to say nothing of the duties that accompany a yard, a house, a husband, and this column, and I still have people ask me when I plan to stop writing and go to work.

You've been telling me that you want to learn to write. I am not going to glorify this trade for you today because there is little in it. However, I am qualified to write about this profession because I have spent twenty years floundering around in it. I cannot say that it has been wonderful; only that it is wonderful, on occasion. It is a wretched craft that can only be acquired through the likes of drawing blood. I know things...ugly things that other writers probably won't tell you. Like how my personality ranges from docile to days when my meals must be pushed to me through a crack in the study door.

There are times when I can't even write a decent suicide note.



As Craig Vetter once said, "blank paper is God's way of telling us that it's not so easy to be God." Every writer and would-be writer should have those words welded to the front of his typewriter or stapled to his forehead.

I have, on numerous occasions, been asked to "teach" writing. One of these days I may break down and actually try it, but it is my firm conviction that teaching someone how to write is no more possible than teaching them to think. I can show you the nuts and bolts, but it's Your soul that must push the pen, not mine.

Absolutely nothing will happen on your blank sheet of paper that you do not make happen. If and when you complete a page, you can be assured that it has become a signed confession to one or all of your writing faults. Even on your good stuff, some editor may pen in the margin: "this is the worst mess I've ever seen," or "don't bother us anymore."

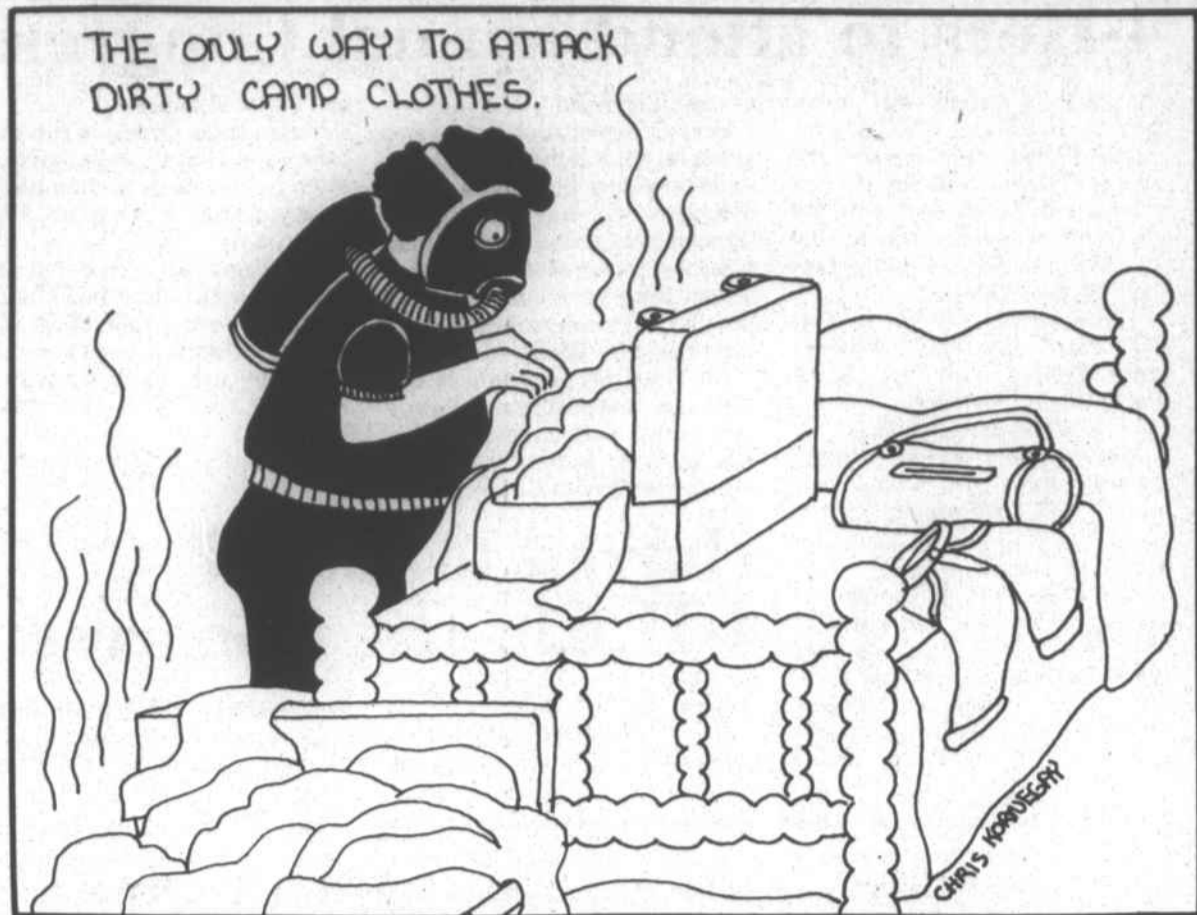
With the possible exception of wrestling alligators, writing is the hardest way to earn a living. No one but you will ever under-

stand that you are working while staring out the window, or that the two most beautiful words in the English language are "check enclosed." Some day, I hope to earn enough to pay for all the photocopies I must make to keep my portfolio of published work updated.

So, you want to write, do you? All you have to do is spend eighty hours a week doing "nothing." There is no need to tell everybody about all the whining and floundering about that it took to write a salable short story or to pad and prune this column to fit into this space. Neither will anyone ever believe the slice from your check that is required just to meet your postal obligations.

So, with all of this, why do I write, you ask? Because I'm as addicted to the written word as a drunk to a bottle and a Baptist preacher to the Book of Revelation. I was born to it, and I'll die for it and never question why.

Do not expect to be "taught" to write. Just take a deep breath and go out in the world and Live. Run a connecting rod from your heart to your brain and keep the power switch on "high." Then write. About life and death. About love and hate. About all the emotion and the beauty in the world. Write it as it is...no more, no less, and do not question why. Some day you'll understand. Or at least maybe someone else will...from Your written words. And that's what it's all about anyhow.



Summertime pests arrive

Summertime has arrived in the area. I know this for a fact because three of life's greatest pests are in full view at my house. The yellowflies have returned, and they have brought

answer to that question is "no," it is inevitably followed by "Why?" Long ago I broke a solemn promise to myself that I would not ever say to a child of mine "Because I said so." I have given this answer repeatedly for many years, and will probably continue to do so.

From a two-year old these questions are cute. When the questions continue to be asked by an adolescent they are nerve-racking. I've even heard these questions from 22-year old, and frankly, by then it's a bore.

Let's face it we don't send our children through 12-plus years of school to enable them to whine out the word "Why?". We'd like to think that their grasp of the English language has surpassed this phase, but unfortunately that is not the case. There is, however, hope. I am thoroughly convinced that at some point in their lives these questions will cease. When the questions stop, I feel that it will be safe to assume that our children have reached adulthood, and that our obligations as full-time parents will have ceased. Unfortunately, I can't tell you how many more years you'll have to wait.

Well folks, I guess this is it. As

many of you know by now, I am finishing out my last days as editor of The Perquimans Weekly.

Saying goodbye to you is one of the most difficult tasks that I have ever had to face. Although I am happy about the path I have chosen to take for my future, it saddens me to end the association that I have had with each of you and with this newspaper. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve each and every one of you during the past five years. I thank you for your support, and ask that you continue your support of the paper and its new editor.

My family and I will remain in Perquimans County, a place that we have grown to love and call home. We look forward to hearing from you all from time to time, and want you to know that we cherish your friendships.

To the staff of this publication, both past and present, I offer you my thanks for your dedication and loyalty. I also want to thank each of our faithful readers and advertisers for your support. Together you have made my tenure here a gratifying experience, and I wish only the best of luck and happiness to you in the future. Love ya, Jane.

We can't forget our veterans

Even in these times of renewed patriotism, many Americans are still willing to forget our veterans.



Recently in Raleigh, city employees recommended in a survey that they would prefer to drop Veterans Day if one of their paid holidays had to be exchanged in favor of one honoring civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

In case you aren't familiar with the story, let me tell you more.

In an effort to recognize King, the Raleigh City Council asked its employees to complete a survey to determine how they felt about establishing such a holiday. Due to the cost of adding an additional holiday, the Council is opposed to such, and had suggested employees decide which holiday they preferred to exchange. The days involved included Easter Monday, the Friday following Thanksgiving, and Veterans Day.

It should be noted that of the employees who responded, 55 percent preferred to see no changes made. But those who did, voted overwhelmingly to substitute Veterans Day.

Perhaps the message sensed is not accurate. By giving up one of the other holidays noted, employees would not be able to enjoy a long weekend. Possibly, this was the greatest concern. But one veteran did note in his response: "As a veteran, I hate to see this choice necessary." It shouldn't be.

It is disturbing to think our veterans are so easily forgotten in exchange for a long weekend, though I'm not surprised. We seem to forget so quickly the sacrifice thousands of men and women made throughout our history so that freedom could survive. While there is a renewal of spirit that made America what it is, there are still those willing to forget.

We should not and we can't. There are too many simple white crosses throughout the world that should remind us of the huge debt we owe these men and women. There are too many broken and crippled men and women, though fortunate to be alive, who must go through life with the pain of war as a constant reminder.

We've all had contact with

someone who suffered as a result of answering the call. While awaiting discharge at Walter Reed Hospital, I experienced firsthand the destruction of the human body.

Some were worse than others. Some, though displaying no visible injury, would never be able to function as a member of everyday society.

I'll never forget one man I had daily contact with. Perhaps, I should say kid, for he was no more than 19 years old.

Injured in Vietnam, he served as a vivid reminder of the horror so many faced, and will continue to face as long as man lives.

He was a black man, and I in-

clude this only to more vividly display the human suffering he endured. Chances are, he will never overcome the marks inflicted, as he had been hit by Napalm, a chemical that peeled most of the skin from his face an upper body. Only a small section of skin remained on his scalp to identify him. Those who were there will remember the horror of such wounds.

There were others. One man had been stricken in the face and lost most of his facial features. All that remained of his nose was a huge scar and the nasal openings. Plastic surgery may have made him look normal again, but the scars of what happened will always be with him.

Christopher Nicholson became a Carolinian

Despite cruel and malicious treatment from the Massachusetts authorities, Christopher Nicholson remained in Marblehead for a few years after 1660. As the eldest son, he assisted in settling his father's estate, bringing suit against John Devereux in 1661 to settle the accounts of a 1660 fishing venture.

Christopher had other disputes with Devereux, who sued him for trespass in June 1662, charging Christopher with pulling down

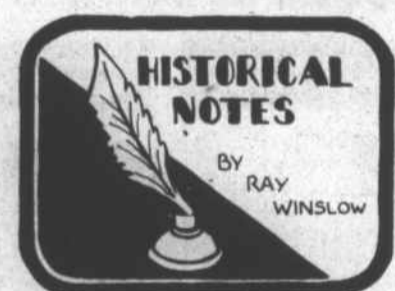
his fences. Nicholson may have been in the right, removing a fence which illegally blocked his access to the sea, but Devereux was a powerful man and the fence was replaced.

The independent Christopher pulled the fence down again, and insisted that however often the fence was built he would remove it.

On October 22, 1662, Christopher married Hannah Redknapp in Lynn, Massachusetts, five

miles down the bay from Marblehead. The newlyweds remained in Massachusetts until about 1669, when they removed to the new province of Carolina, which offered more fertile soil, greater religious freedom, and a less rigid society.

The date of Nicholson's arrival in Carolina is estimated on the basis of headright claims, a few of our first settlers actually leaving a specific record of their arrival. Persons coming to Carolina



were entitled to receive fifty acres of land for themselves (if they paid their own way) and for every individual they brought with them.

In February 1694 Samuel Nicholson took the preliminary steps to apply his headrights—evidently inherited from his father—to the acquisition of land; he proved rights for Christopher Nicholson and Hannah his wife, Deliverance Sutton, Samuel Nicholson, Hannah Nicholson, and Francis Symons. Since rights were claimed for Christopher's first three children, but

not the later ones, it would seem the family left Massachusetts after the birth of Hannah the younger (March 1668) and before the birth of Joseph (September 1670).

Christopher acquired two hundred acres in what is now Perquimans County.

The farm lay on the north bank of Perquimans River less than a mile west of the mouth of Suttons Creek, in an area known as Old Neck. The land was later described as "being on the northeast side of Perquimans River joining northerly on the land formerly Joseph Scott's, and southerly on the land commonly called the Log house land."

Christopher most probably became a farmer, although his land was admirably located to tempt him to practice his old craft of fishing upon occasion. He was now a Carolinian. (Part 3 next week.)

Letters to the Editor

Editor
The Perquimans Weekly,

The death of Lennie Bias is like the destruction of the Challenger: In each case, something beautiful, soaring, seemingly perfect was suddenly obliterated.

I have no knowledge of the cause of his death, but my guess is that the same force which made him a super-athlete eventually killed him.

Lennie Bias specialized in the impossible. It is impossible for a big man to move so swiftly and gracefully and to shoot from the outside with such efficiency, yet he did it. It is impossible for a man so small to play the inside game with such power and productivity, yet he did it. It is impossible for any man to score forty five points and single-handedly defeat—even dominate—a great Carolina team, yet he did it.

If drugs contributed to his death, it seems natural to assume that Lennie once again felt that the could do the impossible. Perhaps a friend advised moderation, but Lennie had not scaled the summit of achievement by being moderate. He had always pushed himself to the limit—be-

yond the limit.

Why should this night be different. He had everything. He could do magic with a basketball, why not with drugs too? (Ironically, his death probably suggests that he was not a habitual user; otherwise, he would have known his limit.)

His death is a tragedy to his family and friends and a loss to those who were awed by his athletic abilities. Perhaps we can bring some good from this evil if we become more concerned and honest about the dangers of substance-abuse.

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Editor
The Perquimans Weekly,

Do you remember the sense of pride and appreciation we felt just a few short years ago when our lovely Missing Mill Park was dedicated? The glowing speeches of dedication to the county of a park that we could all enjoy for years to come? Have the years gone that quickly? My family enjoyed that park so much then and for one or two years after. We

had reunions there; picnics for "just us"; playtime and just a quiet solitude on the pier.

Have you been there lately? It is really a shameful statement made by our town and county in that it has turned loose and let go. The rest rooms are a mess; the shrubbery neglected, the pavilion abused; the pier burned; the play area torn up. Who wants to picnic on a table that people sit on? How can you enjoy solitude with boom boxes blaring or where cars are being washed and waxed?

The rules and regulations are not enforced; no one seems to care.

On the other hand the Senior Citizens Department is lovely-well cared for; well planned recreation. Do we have to be senior citizens to rate? Where are our recreational programs for our young groups that we used to have ceramics, tennis, horseshoe tournaments. Many things have gone—as has the park.

I think we should try to have something a little better in our county and town. The people do count, the people should be a major concern; after all without the people where is your county?

Betty W. Beers
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Hertford, N.C.

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