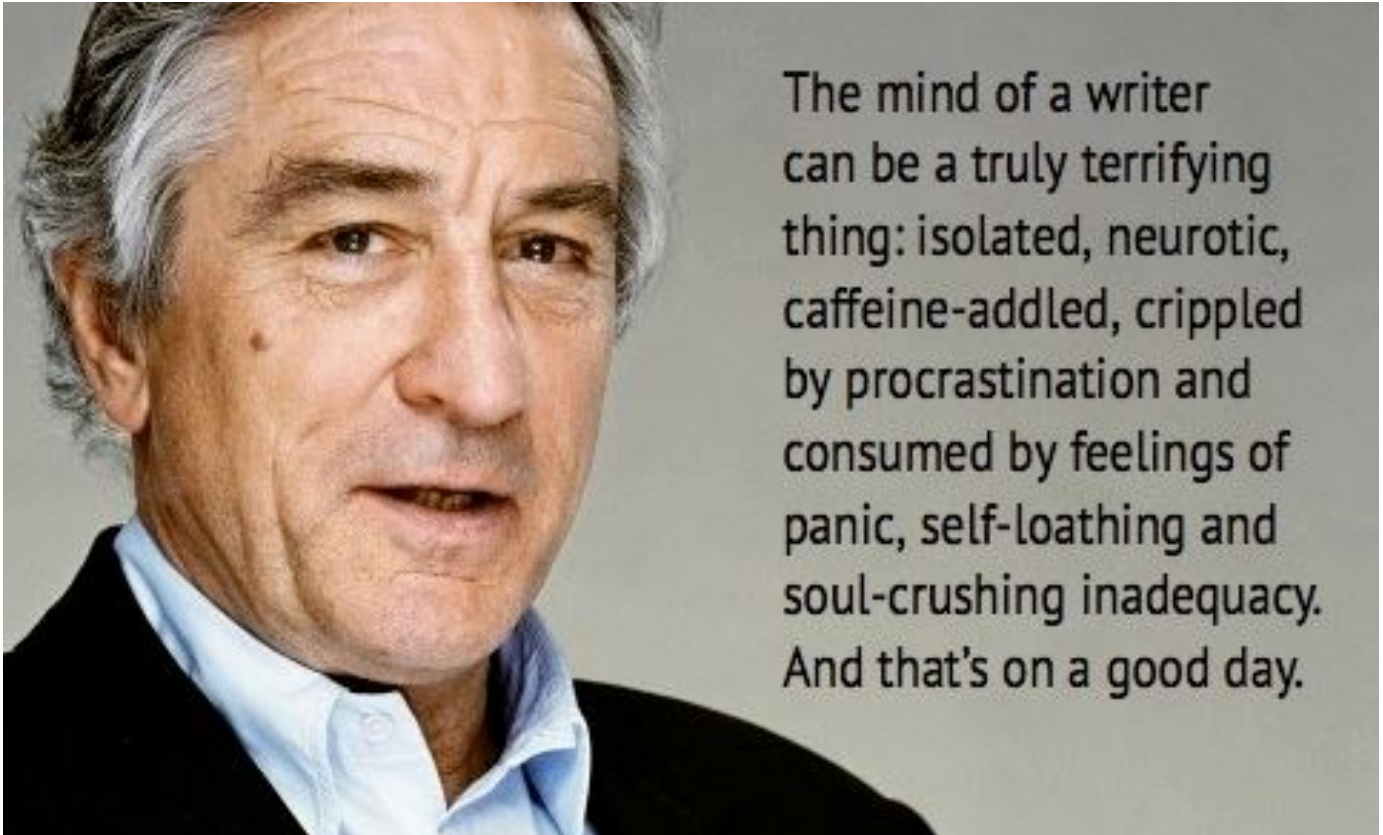


The Reading-Writing Connection

In partnership with The Haliburton County Public Library

Website: www.reading-writing-connection.ca/

July 2014 Newsletter



Robert de Niro

Do you recognize any of these qualities above in yourself? Welcome to the club. Please don't run away.

Meeting for the Month of July: One meeting and one event. (*Mark your calendars.*)

- Wednesday, July 2 at the Howard Robert's Room of the Dysart Library—10 a.m.
We extend an invitation to all members to join us for lunch at a local restaurant.
- **EVENT on July 16:** See Tall Pine Tales below.

THE MEETING IN MINDEN IS CANCELLED ON JULY 16 BECAUSE OF THE EVENT THAT EVENING.

Upcoming Events: (Mark your calendars for those you would like to attend.)

Wednesday July 16 at 6 p.m.: **Tall Pine Tales** at the Community Room in Haliburton

BUFFET / PRESENTATIONS / DOOR PRIZES Cost \$20
Tickets available from Diana, Pauline, Irene, Sharon




Wednesday, July 30 at 7 p.m.: Joining Muskoka Writers at Baysville Library

Sunday, August 17 at 7 p.m.: RWC members visit the Haliburton Forest Festival: Featuring Barbara Budd at the Logging Museum
 Contact [www/madeinhaliburton.ca/](http://www.madeinhaliburton.ca/) for tickets.

Monday, August 18 at 7 p.m.: Joining Muskoka Writers at Bracebridge Library

Current Projects (if you choose to work on them):

- Your biography (in 60 words or less).
 - A story to read at one of our three summer events combining Muskoka and Haliburton writers.
- Bring any current piece of writing on which you are working. Remember "Your story matters."**

<p style="text-align: center;">Book Donations</p>  <p>In order to raise funds for speakers' lunches and to cover miscellaneous expenses for the group, we ask for donations of a book or two at each meeting. Members pay a loonie for each book they take.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting Donation</p>  <p>We are also asking members who wish to do so to chip in a toonie per session to help cover expenses for our Tall Pine Tales event this summer (posters and programs).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Door Prizes</p>  <p>We have many door prizes for our event on July 16, but more are always welcome. If you have something new at home in a closet that you received as a gift but are not using, you may consider re-gifting it to us to use as a door prize.</p> <p>Please bring any items to our meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tickets for Wednesday, July 16 Tall Pine Tales</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BUFFET / READINGS / DOOR PRIZES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COST \$20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tickets: Contact Irene 705-286-9947 or Pauline 705-489-3878</p>

on Wed. July 2 in Haliburton.

STONE THREAD PUBLISHING

~EBOOKS~

Preaching to the Choir

Jun 19, 2013 10:55 am | Harvey

Hi Folks,

As the title implies, I suspect what I'm about to write will do little good, if any, but I guess I kind'a sort'a gotta write it anyway since I took on the role of Writing Instructor what sometimes seems like a millennium ago. Okay, so here goes. Ready? Okay. Here it comes.

DON'T SUBMIT WORK THAT ISN'T READY!

Now I can understand submitting work that you *believe* is ready. For example, say you've finished the third *necessary* (notice the emphasis on *necessary*) draft of your novel, all your friends have proofread it and an editor has told you it's good to go. Probably it's time to go ahead and submit that work to agents (if you're still glued to the New York Dream) or publishers.

Or say you've written a short story, checked the guidelines twice or three times to be sure 1) your story suits the contest and 2) it's formatted correctly and 3) the right length. Say you've finished the second or third or fourth draft and are finally satisfied that you've worked out all those niggling little kinks that were bothering you. You've read it aloud to make sure you don't stumble anywhere as the story progresses. Probably it's all right to go ahead and submit that story to your target contest.

But what if the guidelines call for tension and intrigue, a terse, "hard-nosed" sense of action that will have the reader leaving fingernail prints in the arm of his chair? Or in the alternative, what if the guidelines call for a parody of such a tale, one that will have the reader snickering throughout and laughing out loud in selective places? And what if your story, wonderful as it is, just doesn't fit either of those categories? Then you shouldn't send it. Not to that contest anyway.

Ah, but what if your story is chock full of tension and nail-biting intrigue, expertly delivered by a true Sam Spade type who's up to his elbows in hard-nosed gumshoe action? Or what if his idiot cousin has come to town and is solving a crime in his own slapstick, giggle out loud reminder that even detectives (dicks, tee hee) shouldn't take themselves all that seriously? Either or both of those seem to suit the guidelines to a tee, don't they? Of course they do. But as hard-charging as the serious tale is and as water-sliding-in-your-underwear giggly as the spoof might be, neither is worth a flip if, at the end of a scene with a massive buildup—nothing happens. Neither is worth the time it takes to read it if you've managed to spend an inordinate amount of time describing things that exist in your mind but have nothing to do with the story. Or if you've allowed your narrator to focus all the reader's attention on him as he rambles on, delivering info dump after info dump and only occasionally touching on something, *anything*, that has to do with the story. And neither is worth the effort the reader has to exert to force his way through misspellings, wrong words (too for two), confusing paragraphing or misuse of punctuation.

I just finished the final reading of the third short fiction contest I sponsored through StoneThread Publishing. Frankly, I felt fortunate to be able to select twelve publishable short stories from among almost two hundred entries. Those twelve ranged from Excellent to Pretty Good. All are worth reading.

Of the stories that ended up in the No folder, several were simply not appropriate for the contest and several more fell far short of the minimum word count. Several more were written in present-tense narrative (in violation of the guidelines) but I attempted to read them anyway. I made it all the way to the sixth paragraph (almost 1 1/2 pages) in the best of those before the present-tense narrative shoved me out of the story. The others kicked me out much sooner. There were stories in which the writer had very obviously and intentionally avoided using the word "had," probably because some moron told him that word creates passive voice or some other nonsense. (Still, if a story held together, it went into the final round. I am an editor after all, so I can fix little things like that.)

But I guess what surprised me most was the number of stories that simply weren't finished. In some, it was as if the writer had simply lost interest and stopped writing. In others, the main character was performing a major, very interesting action, but for no reason discernible to the reader's senses. In several scenes in several stories, the writer set up expectations that were then abandoned or otherwise never brought to fruition. In other stories, the writer allowed the narrator to just ramble on, delivering info-dump body punches over and over and over until finally, breathless and exhausted (and not in a good

way), I stopped reading and went on to the next story.

I think what bugged me about all this more than anything is that I actually know and respect some of these writers, not only through their work, but on a personal, shake-hands-and-smile basis. I've had a beer or two with a couple of them, and I'd like to with the others. So to them I say, "C'mon, guys and gals, you know better than that." And to the others I say, "Hey, don't submit work that isn't ready."

'Til next time, happy writing.

Harvey

Open invitation to visiting friends, or the general public to come out and just listen:

Anyone can record memories for themselves and their families. You don't have to be a professional author, just be a writer, producing for a limited and non-judgemental audience. Come out and listen to published examples of family stories or history and decide when you would like to pick up your pen. It may not be for a year or two, but when the mood strikes, you will have an idea where to start. You may just want to be a closet writer for a while. That's okay too.

Remember, spread the word

Members of the public are always welcome to sit in on sessions of the Reading Writing Connection whenever they wish, even if it's just once in a while.