***Slate & Style***

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**From the Keyboard of the President** by Eve Sanchez

In the last issue I had said that life was crazy. I under estimated the effects it would truly have. It seems that not only life is crazy but our world has gone crazy as well. I hope that you are all surviving the turmoil to your best abilities. With the release time of this issue it is likely apparent that life, and the world, have been allowed to affect me. I apologize.

On the brighter side of things; I have completed grad school and am now a Nationally Certified Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind and am back home with my family in Arizona freezing my hind end off. Who said that climate change was a hoax? No, wait. I remember…

**On The Slate**

Here we will have another installment of the 2016 writing contest winners. Specifically it will be the Adult Non-Fiction and the Poetry from both Adult and Youth. The Honorable Mentions will be released in the Spring.

I hope you find enjoyment in reading these works. The authors put some imagination and soul into each and we must applaud their efforts.

Remember that the 2017 Writing Contest is now open for submissions and the guidelines are included near the end of this issue. Be sure to read them thoroughly. This also goes for the submission guidelines for Slate & Style, also included, as we really appreciate being able to showcase a variety of great and budding writers. We look forward to your entries and wish you all good luck in crafting your masterpieces.

**A Motivating Friend** by Barbara Irvin

If I had to choose one person who inspires me, I would definitely pick my friend Kristi. Not only is she interesting and intelligent, but she is also visually impaired. Like me, she cannot see out of her left eye. Having the same type of partial blindness (Retinopathy of Prematurity) allows us to communicate openly about the issues we encounter in our daily lives. We give advice to one another. For instance, she recently had a problem with a device which helps her to read printed material, and I suggested she talk to someone who works at a center that provides help for

people who are blind or deaf. Because of my advice, she was able to get the assistance she needed.

The story of how Kristi and I became friends is interesting. We started communicating on an online forum devoted to classic television. I remember the show we were talking about was *All In The Family*. Not only did we discover we enjoyed discussing old television programs (as well as films and music), but we found we had other things in common as well. As I wrote in the paragraph above, we had the same issues with our eyes. In Kristi, I found the big sister I never had. She was five years older. She had a brother, but not a sister. So, Kristi thought of me as someone she could talk to as well.

The only drawback was we lived such a distance from each other. She resided in Illinois, and I lived in Pennsylvania. To make up for this, we communicated by E-mail often. Sometimes we would exchange letters by postal mail or call each other on the phone. Our conversations were always fun, and we talked for a long time.

One of the things I admire about Kristi is that she is a college graduate. She studied English and has always loved writing. She has so much potential, and I think she could become a great writer if she continues to work on her craft. I keep nudging her to do this because I think she can motivate others to follow their own dreams.

It is wonderful to see someone who must work extremely hard to overcome challenges succeed. Kristi is no exception. She might not be able to see well, but she lives independently and accomplishes what she aims to do. So much can be learned from the example she has set.

**Barbara Irvin** has been interested in writing since her early teens. Even then, she dreamed of becoming a famous author. There is nothing like seeing one's name in print and having your words impact the lives of others. She feels that is the best part about being a published writer. She has written for newspapers, magazines, and literary journals. These include *The Washington Post*, *Quill & Scroll*, and *A Long Story Short*. Currently, she is studying children's writing and poetry, and is hoping to add novelist and playwright to her credentials.

**Be Happy Raindrop by Delaney Brooks, First Place Elementary Poetry**

Have you ever considered a raindrop can feel?

Its emotions and conflicts are terribly real.

Like when the sun dries him up after falling,

It could make him feel like pathetically bawling.

Or when the wind redirects him from the path he wants to take.

His insides fill up with anger and hate.

But with these emotions he makes a terrible friend.

So he tries to stay happy from day start to day end.

And that is the right way to be as a rule.

Be kind, be yourself, not mean or cruel.

**My Weird Dream by Abigail Wahlers, Second Place Elementary Poetry**

Last night I had a dream. But the theme did not seen real.

I saw a panda on the street that made me smile.

So I said “Hey let’s talk awhile.”

The panda said “Ok let’s have tea.”

So panda and me walked down the street,

Just panda and me

**Little Brick Hut by Ryan Menter, First Place Middle School Poetry**

I live in a little brick hut,  
Upon the edge of town.  
I live there with my mutt,  
I also own a basset hound.  
  
My hut's surrounded by fence,  
The trees are thick and dense.  
My hut's on a steep inclination,  
It's a mile to civilization.  
  
The hut is square and  small,  
The bricks are a rather dark red.  
The grass is very tall,  
And my rabbit's name is Fred.  
  
The door is painted white,  
Out front is a fluorescent  light.  
In the palm is a cardinal nest,  
And the blueberry bush's blueberries are the best.  
  
This hut is very nice,  
Although there's mice.  
But it fits me and my crew,  
And that's all it needs to do.

**Battle of Time by Rocco Romeo, Second Place Middle School Poetry**

Time can’t be stopped or slowed,

It can’t be beaten with slime!

The Battles of Time between Dark Matter

and White Matter to the tick of a clock,

to the clicks and clangs times goes on,

Times shifts away from the Big Bang.

Art couldn’t start the Universe!

Only the Battles of Time can crash!

The science of speed is of greed,

Reading makes time fly,

But it doesn’t change the ticking of time!

**A Phrase Once Said by Jessea Vaughn, First Place High School Poetry**

The course a phrase once said may take

Is often, almost always quite strange.

Along the way, the course may change

For it in an infinite number of ways.

Sometimes, it quite simply shrivels up

Like a raisin or a prune and dies in peace.

Without a word, its existence may cease.

No longer shall it see the sun come up.

On other occasions, it simply stays

And waits for what it knows will never come.

At least that’s how it seems not to all but some.

Most of the time, that’s how it spends its days.

Other times, it hides but then,

It emerges with a start of such a speed

That the heart of its host may race or skip a beat.

And sometimes, this will happen again and again.

Sometimes it will fester and stew,

Sit there and over the negative moan,

Like a pain or ache which seems always to groan.

Usually, this kind will stick like glue.

Sometimes, it starts to do one of these things

And then, for some reason, its plans will change.

As one can see, there’s quite a range

Of courses like these the future may bring.

So many paths shall most likely await,

All with outcomes by which lives have been led.

There are many courses a phrase once said

Can take and some change in many ways.

**Celestial Army by Joseph Brock, Second Place High School Poetry**

At night I see them,

Giving us light.

With all the different colors,

Showing us different sights.

When they come out, they form constellations,

And protect us throughout all nations.

Around midnight, they form a great line,

And who better to be their leader than the

Great Orion.

Yes, this army is genuine and true,

Demos, be wary now,

You should be with the rising of the sun.

But should you turn your minds from evil,

You join the cause,

You will feel good,

And your soul will not be lost.

**Metamorphosis by Jamie Allison, First Place Adult Poetry**

A butterfly is not born

With wings of rainbow hue.

It starts out as a lowly worm,

Its potential seen by few.

It crawls along the lowly ground

With many obstacles to meet.

Yet it rises to the challenge

Knowing one day 'twill be complete.

But the hard days of life

Make it want to hide away.

It builds itself a special place

Where it can safely stay.

It crawls inside and hunkers down

In comfort, yes, at last.

It stays there quite content

Until a great many days have passed.

but then one day, it finds itself

All cramped up in the dark.

It decides it’s had enough of that.

It is now time to embark,

On the rest of its life journey,

That had been long put on hold.

It breaks its way out of its cocoon

And spreads wings of colors bold.

It feels a breeze

And just like that

It flies up with the wind.

It looks down from the majestic sky

And will never crawl again.

So we all should try to remember

When our lives feel oh so tough,

We pull ourselves into a dark cocoon

Because we have had enough.

The tests and trials of life, though hard

Are not to make us cry.

They bring about a metamorphosis

So that one day we can fly.

**Face In The Window by Jamie Allison, Second Place Adult Poetry**

There is a face at the window.

I see it peeking in,

So I interrupt the game

That I am playing with my friend.

My mother and I came

To pay a visit on this day.

I was happy as could be

To have a friend with which to play.

At first, I stopped and looked at her.

Her skin was very dark.

And across her cheek, I noticed that

Something had left a mark.

Her hair was short and stubbly

And as black as it could be.

But I thought that she was pretty.

I wondered what she thought of me.

My friend just stood there waiting

And then I finally found my words.

"Who's that pretty girl?" I asked

And then I shuddered

From what I heard.

I do not know her name

My friend told me in dismay.

My mother tells me “no” every time

I ask if we can play.

She is staying with some neighbor

Who lives just down the street.

But if we see her on the walk

My mother turns so we won't meet.

I think she'd like to play with us, I said.

She seems like she'd be good.

My friend stood and looked at me.

I really wish we could.

But then her mom swept by the door.

She saw the dark, round face.

She strode up to the window

And pulled tight the curtained lace.

The face was hidden from us now.

There was nothing else to do.

We didn't feel like playing,

So, in the silence sat we two.

Right then, I vowed when I was older

And was not forced to obey

I would treat everyone like a person

And I will do it, come what may.

For I will never ever forget

What I saw so long ago.

That pretty, sad face that looked at me,

Through my friend's bedroom window.

**The Power Within by Toni Young, Third Place Adult Poetry**

Crippled by darkness, blinded by fear

No vision of life up ahead

Yet deep down inside, a spark of desire

Flickering amongst all the dread

The spark turns to fire, fueled by the dreams

Of a future burning bright

The flames light the way, showing I have

The power to stand up and fight

**To Take Out or Not to Take Out, That Is the Question by Janet Di Nola Parmerter, First Place Adult Non-Fiction**

Today, our five and a half year old grandson Tyler, who just informed us his name is really Chris, planned to spend a fun filled day at grandma and pop-pop’s house. This thrill packed day would include visiting with his 89 year old great, great Auntie Rena, 82 year old great grandma Nonna, his 84 year old great grandfather Papa, his very patient grandfather Pop-pop Keith, and me, his “Let’s play hide and seek” grandma Janet.

What could we do to entertain all of them at the same time? How about taking them all out to lunch? Could it really be a *relaxing* afternoon taking out three octogenarians and a feisty five year old boy? Well, we thought we would try, so we decided to take out the whole group to the Loganville IHOP. The relaxation began as we left the driveway. Daddy, who ran Pepsi Cola plants in New York City, took over. Of course he no longer drove a car, and had only lived with us for the past two months, but, he was certain he knew the best way to get everywhere. Keith patiently listened to daddy, as he explained the way Keith was going was the long way, and Keith needed to coast in order to save gasoline.

Once at the IHOP, the first step was to get Tyler, (Also Known As Chris), and our three seniors into the restaurant what a sight! Energetic Tyler, Auntie Rena with her dizziness, dementia and epilepsy, my father with his cane, heart problems and neuropathy in both feet, my mother with her lung ailments, diabetes, and numerous other problems,, and me with my white cane.

Since no one except Tyler could walk on their own, as we entered the restaurant, Keith and I tried to hold onto everyone, including little Tyler, while simultaneously opening the heavy glass double doors. Unfortunately, my bent over father with his speedy cane, always wanted to be first. Barreling past everyone, he knocked Mom into Auntie Rena, and Auntie Rena knocked into me. At different times the doors closed on each and every one of us, as we bounced into and off of each other like rubber balls. After foolishly looking like some Charlie Chaplin comedy skit, we finally all made it through the double doors.

Before being seated, we quietly informed the hostess not to give Auntie Rena a menu, because if she read it, she would not eat anything. The problem is poor Auntie Rena still thinks it is somewhere around 1940, and if food cost more than a dollar, she refuses to order anything except water. Auntie Rena is literally shocked when seeing menu prices, and ALWAYS complains, “Oh my, how can they charge that much for a hot dog? I’m just not going to eat anything.” Then, as soon as any one of us turn our head, she picks food off our plate. Since the child menu has lower prices, occasionally, and I mean only occasionally, she will order from there.

Immediately after the hostess seated our happy group, dad called the waitress to the table and ordered his lunch. As she handed the menu to mom, dad said, “Alice, the waitress wants your order.” Mom replied with, “I just got the menu.” The server said, “No problem, I’ll come back.”

However, always running the show, dad put his hand up and said, “No, wait,” as he complained, “Alice, it’s the same thing all the time. You know what’s on the menu, just order.” Mom, who loves to read everything replied, “I like to read it anyway, I’m not ready.” Uncomfortably, the server looked down not knowing whether to leave or to stay at this unusual table dispute.

Sensing the discomfort of this patient waitress, I quickly added, “We’re not ready either, why don’t you come back in a few minutes.” Gratefully, she rushed off as Dad let out a huge sigh of dismay.

After the confusion of ordering was done, I played giant tic-tac-toe with Tyler as my mother went through her normal routine of calling the server back numerous times. First it was, “Excuse me, may I have another napkin?” Then, “Excuse me; do you have another type of syrup?” Then, Excuse me, could I have this and that, then, excuse me, could you please change this spoon?”

Finally, Dad said, “Alice, you are going to drive the lady nuts!” And unconcerned Mom replied with her standard comment, “Whatever!”

While everyone was distracted, Aunt Rena grabbed a regular menu, then threw it onto the table muttering to herself, “Forget this, who would pay that for this stuff?” Handing her the children’s menu I whispered, “Here, Auntie Rena, this one has better prices,” and slipped away the other menu. In a second, she pushed away the paper placemat shaped menu with the games and coloring pictures then angrily said, “This says for one to twelve years old!”

Once I explained the menu was also good for someone one to twelve years under 100 years old, she calmed down and ordered French toast.

Unaware of the varied conversations, Keith and Tyler colored pictures on the paper place mat, as I perused our mixed group and asked, “Is everyone having fun yet?”

After the fiasco of getting everyone into the restaurant, ordering, eating, and paying for the meal, Keith and I were a tad stressed. Nonetheless, since we all live together we now had to get the octogenarians and our little man back home. Much to my dismay, as soon as our feet stepped outside the doors, the floodgates of heaven burst open and it began to pour.

Holding tight to rambunctious Tyler, we trailed behind 110 pound, five foot two **i**nch, white haired Auntie Rena, who seemed entirely confused by the raindrops stared at the sky and rumbled as if bowling balls were falling from the clouds. Half under her breath she mumbled, “Oh my, oh my, look at this I’m getting wet!” At a glance, she could easily have been mistaken for an afternoon drunk, as she swayed back and forth, stumbled over her own feet, and vigorously swirled her arms around trying to push away raindrops.

Meanwhile, my bent over father with his sturdy “hold me up cane” and heart problems, speedily raced past Auntie Rena so he could be first at the locked car. In his jogging suit, sneakers and baseball cap obviously annoyed, he waited, until we all caught up at the still locked car.

After paying the check, my ever snail paced husband Keith, who constantly brags, “I only have two speeds, SLOW and STOP,” unsuccessfully tried to catch up to Dad. When Keith finally reached the vehicle, he could not get the door open fast enough for my impatient annoyed father waiting on the sidewalk. Dad was shaking his head from left to right while audibly huffing in dismay. As dad struggled to step off what seemed to be a Mount Everest size curb, he held onto the car mirror. Now, out of breath, he huffed and puffed and complained about the door still being locked.

Pulling up the rear was my 82 year old mother and her wheelie walker, oh no…I’m sorry, that day I forgot the walker so, she only held onto her extra cane and my left arm. However, the hand of my shared arm, also firmly held Tyler who desperately tried to escape the infamous grandma grip. Unfortunately, I could not use the other hand to grasp Tyler since I use my right hand to hold my white, red-tipped cane for the blind. What a sight! Mom’s walking cane verses my extended white cane, as they dueled for the “number one lead cane” spot. To avoid becoming a tangled threesome, Tyler, mom, our two canes and I slowly shuffled our way to the handicapped parking, which seemed a million miles away.

At last we arrived at the van. After doing a quick Mommy hand off to Keith, I ran around the van, helped Dad climb into the middle row behind the driver and still never let go of Tyler’s slippery hand.

Oblivious to everything around her, Auntie Rena pulled herself onto the middle row of the van, stared out the window and did this pretend whistling thing she does prior to having a seizure. After a second, she pushed the button to open the door, and hopped out and into the van about three or four hundred times. At some point, Keith somewhat frustrated said, “Auntie Rena, stop that and stay inside the van.” Since she never quite understood the automatic door, as she tried to climb in she pulled the handle and of course, as the door began to close, it started squeezing her frail little body. Hurriedly, I stretched over dad, pushed the button, and reopened the door as senile Auntie Rena yelled at the door, “Hey, now you stop that!”

Amidst all the commotion, my plus size mother partially climbed onto the front seat. Feverishly she wheezed and gasped for breath as if she just ran the four-minute mile. Hearing the panting command, “Keith, help me,” he ran around the car to mom. With his feet solidly planted, he gave a heave ho and hoisted Mom into the front seat. With half her body still hanging out of the car, he lifted her other leg, pushed her bottom onto the seat and slammed the door.

Now doing the Tyler handoff from me to my husband, Keith took our little man to the back of the van and lifted the hatch. Since dad and Auntie Rena were finally settled, we had no intensions of disturbing them to put in Tyler and his car seat.

Going through the hatch was the only option to slide Tyler and his car seat onto that third row. There was no possible way our little man could pass three exhausted, immovable, elderly obstacles.

In the meantime, as Keith plopped the car seat onto the back third row, and bent down to lift Tyler into the van, dazed and confused auntie Rena, who is always intimidated by dad, decided to move as far away from him as possible. She crawled to the third back row alongside the car seat and proceeded to fasten her seat belt. At the same time, she sat on the belt needed to fasten Tyler’s car seat. From outside the van, Keith stood up holding Tyler in his arm, struggling as he stretched over the trunk space and back seat to place the car seat in the van. Realizing Auntie Rena was sitting on the belt, he attempted to unfastened her belt and free the other seat belt. Finally, finding the other strap, he clicked in the car seat, placed Tyler in his chair, slammed the hatch, dropped into the driver’s seat, sat back without moving a muscle and with a frustrated unamused look, just stared through the windshield as the wipers rapidly flapped back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

During this strange moment of silence, not a word was spoken. Finally, everyone was settled and ready for takeoff, yet, inside the car, it remained unusually quiet and still. In silence, we all waited for Keith to start the car. Surprisingly, even Tyler did not utter a single word as pop-pop took time to calm down. Tyler remained silent, scrutinizing the last thirty minutes.

With our relaxing lunch experiment over, and fatigued family securely strapped in, Keith started the car. Robotically he drove onto the highway, chauffeuring his tired family home from their big day out.

Tyler, still abnormally quiet from his deep meditation, looked around at this elderly entourage, and with a smile announced his brilliant deduction... “Grandma, do you know why it’s REALLY good to be five or even six years old?” Curiously, I responded, “No little man, I don’t! Tell me why.” Patting his legs, he proudly answered, “Because my legs are good and I can walk!”

In conclusion, to take out or not to take out, that was definitely the question. Now, what was our answer? After analyzing the past five hours, Keith and I decided the next time we choose “take out,” it will be the traditional way! Pick up the food, take the food out, and peacefully bring it home to the family!

**Sentimental Keys by Rebecca Shields, Second Place Adult Non-Fiction**

Ever since I can remember, and even today, my parents have had an organ in their home. While growing up, whenever my father would sit down to play a number or two, I could tell what kind of mood he was in by what song played. I remember falling asleep hearing the Christmas carols one by one as the eve rolled over in to Christmas morning. On many occasions my relatives would visit our home and always want him to play for them. I loved it when my grandmother would sing along the old Mexican tunes. At times the polkas had the children dancing around, and the adults singing the words they could remember. His talent of making beautiful music molded my appreciation for it.

At an early age at the school for the blind he had hours of lessons. The piano, organ, saxophone and accordion were all introduced to him. As a student he was taught braille music. His performances of playing for chapel and recitals at the school prepared him well for his future. As a young adult he played in a band for dances. No longer did he play by reading music; his preference was to do it all by ear. Memorizing names of songs and how each one is played truly added to his talent.

He was well known in our community. People often asked him to play for funerals, weddings, graduations and church services. For 23 years as a second job for 3 nights a week, this talented man played the organ in an exclusive restaurant during the evening hours. Thousands of folks enjoyed listening to a variety of songs while they ate their meal. Beyond that for the last 45 years he has been the musician for the many different lodges to which he belongs throughout the Masonic order. His position has been both at the local and state level. Now at 84 he is feeling a little tired. It's harder for him to play the old tunes these days. His home organ needs some work on it. But when he can manage to get it going the sound is just as lovely as it always has been.

Not too long ago I attended a meeting he played for. The room was full of people. Outside the night air was cold. But the warmth that came over me as the organ began could have melted an iceberg Suddenly a feeling of life growing old and becoming a little frail overwhelmed me. Each note that sounded out in the lines of some of my most favorite pieces caused me to tremble. In a moments flash I was reminiscing in my mind's eye, about the days of long ago hearing those same notes. No matter where I heard the song being played by another it wouldn't hold the same meaning to me. I shuttered at the thought of someday, not having my father around to make moments like this so heart filling. Then through my onset of fear and sadness, I hung tightly to life's eternal rod of strength. Like magic! I found myself embracing the love and admiration that I have always had for him, and recognizing how commitment and work ethic brought him success. It is joyous to understand the depth of the gifts that God

has given him. Tenderness, faith, hope and

generosity are really the keys that will ring forever in the hearts and memories of us all. child

**Mrs. Bullwinkle and Yogi the Bear by John Batran, Third Place Adult Non-Fiction**

My life has always been quite an adventure. It was only enhanced the day I married my childhood sweetheart.

We couldn’t outrun the cars that were chasing us when we left the church. We changed out of our wedding clothes and we were off. We only had to travel four hours to reach our honeymoon nest, a log cabin nestled on a very quiet lake.

We remembered everything except food. I guess we were really going to live on love. I was lucky that other people were looking out for our best interests, because someone packed a basket of goodies for us. The next day we had to find a place that sold groceries. We asked a local woman, and she informed us that the nearest place was twenty five miles back down the road.

So, down the road we went. First we came to a store that sold sandwiches and sodas, so we decided to eat first and find a place to buy groceries later. Just past the little store was a small pond with a waterfall about 50 feet tall. It was quite picturesque. One of the wedding gifts we had bought for ourselves was a Polaroid camera. It was a black and white Swinger.

We ate, taking our good ole time, found a grocery store, and headed back to our home away from home. We were about half way there when my bride of twenty four hours saw a baby moose just inside the woods.

“Stop and take a picture, please!” she said.

I explained that mothers in the woods do not like it when people bother their babies, but she argued that the mother was nowhere in sight.

“You just don’t see her, but she’s there somewhere.”

“Please, Johnny, get a picture for me.”

With a sigh, I said, “O-O-O-K-K-A-A-Y,” grabbed the camera, got out of the car, went to the passenger side, opened the door and told my bride, “Slide over behind the wheel, just in case.”

When she was all set, I left the door open and went to take a picture. I stepped behind the car and raised the camera when she said, “No, get closer!”

So, like a good husband, I went about halfway down the embankment, once again, picked up the camera to get the picture, when…once again, I heard, “No, get closer!”

By this time I was about a foot from the baby moose, getting ready to take the picture, when at the same time I heard my wife scream, heard crashing off to my right and not very far away, at least not far enough. I turned and broke the record for the 40 yard dash, with the mother moose trying to beat my record. I let out some screams that any woman would be proud of as I ran for my life.

I was almost to the car, if my heart would just hold out. I thought I was going to make it. I couldn’t believe my ears when all of a sudden, my wife said, very loudly:

“Take a picture!”

As close as the moose was, if I would have stopped, that moose would have run over me like a runaway freight train. So I kept running, put the camera over my shoulder, and shot.

Just as I got to the car, my new bride floored the engine! With squealing tires, spitting dirt, I screamed once again and tried to break another world record.

I caught up with the car just as she slammed on the brakes. I hit the door but it stayed on, thank God! I jumped in and shut the door in time to see my wife laughing so hard that tears were running down her cheeks.

I asked, “What is so funny? You almost became a widow and all you can do is laugh?”

“You looked so funny with that moose right behind you. Boy, you can sure run fast!”

“You won’t think it’s so funny when you have to wash my underwear tonight.”

She giggled one more time and said, “Did you get the picture?”

I passed her the picture and she laughed again when she saw the shot I took of the mother moose. Even though the film was black and white, the nostrils were flared, her teeth were yellow and her eyes were very red. The flash probably saved my life. She probably gave up at that time, thank God again.

I let her drive back to the cabin. I didn’t think my legs would carry me around the car anyway, after the sprint I had just taken. I needed the rest.

After breakfast the next day, we set out again, but this time we headed the other way. I didn’t want to run into Mrs. Bullwinkle again, just in case she had Mr. Bullwinkle with her this time.

We rode about 7 or 8 miles when we came to a road that went to the right, so I took it. It didn’t look very well traveled, but was passable. About a half hour later, we turned a corner and sitting in the middle of the road was the biggest black bear I had ever seen! It probably weighed over five hundred pounds and didn’t look too happy to see us either.

I slowed to a crawl and said, “Oh, crap!” because he got up and looked like he wanted to collect a toll.

I said, “Sorry Yogi, we have no picnic basket today.”

He seemed to understand and roared very loudly.

I said, “Yogi didn’t care for that remark, I guess.”

“What are we going to do?” asked Mil. “We can’t sit here all day.”

“Why not,” I said, “Yogi has the upper paw. I will try something, but I don’t know what.”

Then I decided to honk the horn. The bear reared up and came at the car.

Again I said, “Oh, crap.”

The bear pushed up and down on the car’s hood, I think to check the shocks, and must have found them satisfactory, because after a couple of minutes, he stopped and jumped on the hood.

Right on cue, my wife said, “Why don’t you take a picture?”

“I think I’ll try to scare him with my windshield wipers first.”

He wasn’t intimidated. Instead, he ripped off the blade, tossed it aside and looked at me with, “Got anything else?”

“Yeah, I got a camera,” I said.

So I gave it a shot. It flashed off the windshield and almost blinded us,. The bear climbed on the roof, was annoyed with the whole thing and went to sleep.

“What now?” said my new wife.

“Have you got a pair of scissors in your purse?”

“Yes, why do you ask?”

“Do you see those nails? We could give him a manicure while he’s asleep.”

I thumped on the inside of the roof. He thumped back.

“No, that’s not a good idea. He’s not asleep enough.”

A few minutes later he slid off the roof, onto the trunk and I took the opportunity to drive ahead, spilling him onto the ground and leaving him way behind.

“Oh,” I said, “We didn’t get a picture.”

“That’s okay. That is one picture we don’t need.”

“I was afraid you would want me to turn around and go back.”

“No, maybe we will come across another one later, with not so much spirit.”

“We can only hope,” I replied.

It wasn’t long before the road turned right once more, and once more the animal gods were against me.

In the road was a turtle.

“No problem,” I said. “I will get a picture and then get him off the road for you, honey.”

So I took his picture, put the camera back in the car and went to move the little fellow. When I bent down to grab the thing, it wheeled around and my wife yelled, “No, it’s a snapping turtle!”

Again, “Oh, crap. That is what they look like? I guess I have never seen one before.”

So, I looked for a stick I could use to move him with. I found one and put it down by his mouth. He bit it in two. I had to find a bigger stick. He bit into that one and it held, so I dragged him across the road only to watch him run back across to the other side again.

“I give up! Animals don’t want or need my help.”

The sooner I got off the road, the better. It wouldn’t be too soon for me.

A mile or so later we came to a sign that said, “To Route 6.” It came out at the store with the waterfall. Finally, luck was with me. We had lunch by the pool and the waterfall. After the adventure I had had, I was ready to go home.

2017 WRITING CONTEST GUIDELINES

The annual youth and adult writing contests sponsored by the NFB Writers’ Division will open January 1st and close April 1st for all aspiring writers whether blind, sighted or visually impaired.

Adult contest categories are: short Fiction, non-fiction, stories for youth, and poetry.

Youth contest categories are: Short fiction and poetry. The youth contest is divided into three groups, determined by grade level – elementary, middle, and high school.

As always, in both adult and youth contests, there may be up to three prize winners (1st, 2nd, 3rd), and one or more receiving honorable mention. Additionally, a prize winning entry may be published within the Writers’ Division’s magazine, Slate & Style.

All contest winners will be announced during the first week of July, at the Writers' Division business meeting, during the NFB national convention to be held in Orlando, Florida.

PRIZES

\*Youth contest winners will receive $30 for 1st place, $20 for 2nd place, and $10 for 3rd place.

\*Adult contest winners will receive $100 for 1st place, $50 for 2nd place, and $25 for 3rd place.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

YOUTH CONTESTS

\*This is a contest for students who use Braille.

\*Note: if you are 18 years old, or older, you must enter the adult contest.

\*Entries must be submitted in hand embossed Braille, either with a slate and stylus or Braille writer, and there are no exceptions.

\*Submissions must be Brailed by the entrant.

\*All submissions, no matter your grade level, must be in contracted Braille. Let us know if you “know” or are “learning” contracted Braille. Additionally, let us know if you have chosen to use UEB, or not.

\*Each entrant must provide an identical electronic copy of the cover letter and contest entry as a Microsoft Word file [doc] or as a Rich Text Format [rtf] file).

\*Attach the electronic copies to an email and send them to- EvaMarie Sanchez at thirdeyeonlyinaz@gmail.com.

\*Send your hardcopy Braille and cover letter to:

EvaMarie Sanchez, 1901 N Wilmot apt 1239, Tucson, Az 85712

COVER LETTER

Entries must be accompanied by a cover letter containing entrant's information: Name, address, phone, e-mail, title of the entry, school, and grade of entrant.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

\*We will consider only unpublished original entries.

\*Youth short fiction stories submissions cannot be more than 1,000 words, and poetry of no more than 50 lines.

\*Authors of either poetry or fiction are encouraged to submit multiple pieces.

Youth ENTRY FEES – None

Are you the best Brailler in the contest? Be sure to double check your work. Remember to use Braille paper so the Braille is easy to read. Good luck!

ADULT CONTEST

\*Note: this contest is for everyone 18 years old, or older. One need not be blind to enter.

\*We will consider only unpublished original entries.

\*Fiction short stories can be of any main stream genre, and cannot exceed 3,000 words.

\*Non-fiction entries should be either a memoir or personal essay, and cannot exceed 3,000 words.

\*Stories for youth are stories with content written at an intellectual level appropriate for the younger reader, and cannot exceed 3,000 words.

\*Poetry: We will accept poetry of any length

\*Authors of either poetry and/or prose are encouraged to submit multiple pieces.

\*Adults are required to submit all poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and stories for youth as attachments to an E-mail message.

\*The attachments must be in either Microsoft Word (doc) or Rich Text Format (rtf).

\*Fiction, non-fiction and stories for youth should be written in a normal prose style, with paragraphs being left justified, lines are single spaced, and having a 14 point font of Aerial, regular.

\*No hard copy submissions will be accepted.

COVER LETTER

Along with your entry or entries, include a cover letter providing the following:

\*Your name, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address.

\*List the titles of all submissions, including the category in which they are being entered.

\*State your method of payment for the entry fee (check or PayPal).

\*Finally, the cover letter could be your e-mail message, or a separate document attached along with your submissions.

CONTEST ENTRY FEES PAYMENT AND METHODS

Adult Fees:

\*The fee for each short story, non-fiction piece, or story for youth is $15.00 for members and $20.00 for non-members.

\*The base fee for poetry will cover up to three poems, if the combined line-count of all three pieces does not exceed 108 lines - additional poems require a second fee, following the same fee payment scheme. Base fees are $15.00 for members and $20.00 for non-members.

PAYMENT

\*You may use PayPal from the Writers’ Division website, http://writers.nfb.org

\*Alternatively, you may mail a check made out to NFB Writers’ Division, with a note in the memo line relating to the contest. Send to:

Shawn Jacobson

19541 Olney Mill Rd.

Olney, MD 20832.

\*E-mail submissions should be sent to EvaMarie Sanchez at: thirdeyeonlyinaz@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*We look forward to seeing your words. \*\*\*\*

If you have questions write EvaMarie Sanchez, Writers’ Division President: [thirdeyeonlyinaz@gmail.com](mailto:thirdeyeonlyinaz@gmail.com)

**Let’s Write the Lives We Want**

Slate & Style is a quarterly publication of the National Federation of the Blind Writers' Division. It is dedicated to writing pursuits such as literary pieces, resources, and information about various writing styles. A majority of Slate & Style's contributors are blind, but we welcome submissions from any contributor. We also accept submissions touching on any subject matter. We encourage submissions from both experienced and beginning writers with our goal being to hone our writing craft and share our thoughts.

Slate & Style accepts short fiction, short creative nonfiction, poetry, articles discussing and providing tips for various writing styles including literary, technical, editing, public relations, and academic, literary criticism, resource information, and book reviews.

Subject matter is not limited but will be up to the editor's discretion to publish.

S & S accepts material from adults and children. To find the submission guidelines; go to writers.nfb.org/Slate&StylePage Include an attached cover letter and a short biography. This should be no more than 150 words. Keep your bio to the key items you feel are important for the readers

Multiple submissions per email are fine, but all must be listed in the required cover letter. Use Microsoft Word or RTF. No other formats are accepted. Send all submissions and questions to [s-and-s@nfbnet.org](mailto:s-and-s@nfbnet.org).

Please read through all the guidelines carefully. Submissions that do not follow these guidelines may not be considered for Slate & Style.

Though submissions are welcome at all times, if your submission is specifically about a particular season or time of year and you would like your submission to appear in that corresponding issue, please read the dates and submission deadlines in the guidelines.

For the Spring issue, which will come out on March 20th, the closing date for acceptance of submissions is February 28th.