

給孫兒女每月一信(monthly letter to grandchildren , April 20 , 2002)

親愛的孫兒女們：

我在上(3)月13日(星期三)起，由朋友丁時範先生的介紹，參加這裡老年人中心舉辦的作家聯誼性質的組織，名叫“作家圓桌會”。每星期三上午9：30到12：00。

從那次起我每次都去了。約有十來個會員。多為老年婦女作家，僅四位華裔。餘均為白人。有一老師。開會時由教師根據她所發給講義講解寫作方法和技巧。會員隨時出討論。隨後每人輪流誦讀一篇先一星期會中指定撰寫的短文。讀畢老師講評，旁人討論。十一時左右可以自由離席。非常輕鬆愉快而有益。我所提寫的文章。計有下述：

1. 寫一篇假定你突然因停電被困在一電梯中如何處置脫險故事。
2. 假定兩名警察，一好一壞，和一嫌犯的對話。
3. 假定你為一寵物(或動物)設身處地的自白。
4. 寫出你悔不當初的事。
5. 列出一些你所知的“迷信”事項和一宗迷信故事。
6. 寫出你此生認為最好的歲月。
7. 談雪--說出你對它的感覺、滋味、景像---對你有何意義---回憶你為雪困擾的往事。可以是事實、也可為虛構。

以上前六篇我都曾參加撰寫。第七篇交卷的時間尚未到。我將儘可能寫。為不使這信太長、我僅將其中第四篇引述在後。下面是其翻譯：

“人們在一生中免不了做些‘聰明事’和一些‘傻事’。多數的行事既不怎樣聰明、也不怎樣傻。人到老年多對往日所做聰明的感到得意，對傻事懊悔。我個人得感謝上蒼，以往沒有做重大傻事，晚年退休後生活還過得可以。不過現在想來還是些有悔不當初而深感遺憾的‘傻事’。有四宗略述如後：

1. 回想我在四歲到六歲是一被寵壞的孩子。對我母親和兄姊曾有不少不良言行。深深傷害了他們。至今不安。我四歲喪父。我對父親印象不多，沒有內疚感。

2. 我年輕時對牙齒沒有好好照料保養，晚年牙齒不好，感到痛苦。
3. 我以往在學校沒有將英文學得更好。否則在目前講英語環境中更能肆應自如。
4. 我深悔在 兩年前買進些不該買的股票，否則我的財務情況還要好一些。

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Dear Grandchildren:

On the past 3/13 (Wednesday), through the introduction of my friend Dr. Peter Shefand Ding, I joined a valuable group of people in the local city senior citizen (Josely) center, namely "Writers Roundtable, which is a social group of people in our city community consisting of a retired famous veteran writer lady teacher working voluntary basis, and some 17 members, four men 13 ladies. The "roundtable" meets every Wednesday from 9:30 AM to noon at the Josely Center, discussing writing methods and skills. Other activities include but not limited to giving instructions by the teacher based on distributed printings, and giving a weekly assignment for members to write. The members are supposed to present their writings to read in the next week meeting. Other activities are free chatting mostly in relation to the subjects of their writings. Members are allowed to leave at about 11:00 AM though the meeting is running to 12. Ever since having joined, I have being liked the meeting and submitted six writings leaving the last pending to write. Topics of the seven assignments are as follows:

1. You are in elevator and it suddenly stops. Who else is in there? How do you get out? Absurdly and in unreality written.
2. Write a police station scene. Don't use "he said" or "she said." The people in the scene are a good cop, a bad cop and the suspect. Use only dialogue.
3. Write from this prompt: "I wish I never would have".
4. Write from the point of View of a pet (or any animal), Describe the experience

of an entire day in the life.

5. Write a list of superstitions. Choose one and make up a story that explains

how it all come about,"

6. You could have been born in another time period, where and when would you have liked to live? Write about your life in this setting.

7. Write about SNOW -- How it feels, tastes, and looks--What it means to you--Recall a time when you were surrounded by snow. Fact or Fiction.

I have written six the above leaving the last to be accomplished in the coming two days. Besides, I take the opportunity to show you one the above number 3 as an example as follows:

" I shish I never would have"

People in their lifetime are inevitably doing things some smartly and some stupidly. The majority of the things are usually done in a normal way, neither

smart nor stupid. People reaching old age have the tendency to be proud of the smart things done and regretful of what are deemed as stupid.

Personally

I have to thank God for having not made a big mistake in my past life, so now I can enjoy a well off retirement. However, looking back at what I have done in the past, I do have some remorse. There are things that I wish I never had done. In the following I list four of the above-mentioned remorseful

things:

1. I clearly remember the occasions when I was a spoiled child at the age about four to six years old; I had behaved very badly caused some trouble and hurting my mother, sisters and brothers. My fatter died when I was only four years old so I don't have any memory of wrong doing to my father.

2. I did not take good care of my teeth when I was young, so as a result my teeth are in poor dental condition and have caused a lot of problems.

3. I did not study hard enough on my course in English in my schooling time and the afterward. Otherwise I would have better ability to face the present English-speaking environment.

4. Two years ago, I should not invest on some of the stocks such as YAHOO, AOL, and the like. Otherwise I would be a little bit richer.

This monthly letter to you is ended here. Love you all.

Grandpa on 4/20/2002