

Writing is an odd discipline. Unlike talking to someone in person or even on the phone, there is no validation or even verification of one's words. Perhaps, that is what draws average people who are not normally writers to the social media platforms. As I understand it—though I do not participate in any such forum—it is the reaction to one's words that is much of the reason for the posts.

Writing for this website, on the other hand, is, instead, a more reflective activity. There is not, in this case, a “counter” that lets us know how many people visit our site. Every week, I write into the void. I have no idea if anyone is reading what I write. I don't know, after I hit “send,” if any of my words will make an impact on a reader, or if, indeed, there will even be a reader.

So, why write? Other writing I do generates a small income, but writing for this website does not. There is a short answer to the question of why I write these essays, and there is a longer explanation.

The short answer is that I have to write. When I was a child, I made a family newspaper, aligning columns on sheets of ordinary notebook paper, writing articles and “opinion pieces,” and sometimes badly drawing pictures to accompany the articles. I wish one of these papers would emerge from a forgotten box or drawer sometime, but I know they have been gone for a very long time—probably shortly after composition. But, the fact that they did exist is the part that is important—if one can even say that there is any importance in a person's dedication to words. And it illustrates the point—that writers, however competent they are—have to write. There is no substitute for the written word for those of us who feel compelled to put words on paper, or even on a screen on the way to a website.

But, there is also another explanation for some of the essays that appear on this website. Even though I have no idea who reads these columns, like most writers, I hope to also persuade. And that persuasion cannot come through intimidation, bullying, or falsehoods. Even though that has come to be acceptable in many quarters, it destroys the integrity of the written word and of the person who writes in such a way. I would like to think that I do not violate this code.

Living pretty much here by ourselves in a very rural area, we don't have the opportunity to engage in a lot of dialogue with people outside our family and a small circle of like-minded friends. There is not much diversity in our community. There is divisiveness—but, it shows up mostly in post-election statistics. But, there is very little dialogue among people of varying views. And, when statements are made, they are seldom in a spirit of productive or even explanatory discourse. The “why” is almost never addressed.

I hope that what I compose in these essays delves a little more, when I write about issues and personalities of the times, into that “why.” And into the consequences, as I see it, of certain actions by public figures.

When I write about life here on Coe Creek, it is my goal to give any readers who might be “out there” a glimpse of rural life that is not conducted with “blinders on” concerning the outside world. And yet, I want to demonstrate the fact that ordinary life does not have to be so married to

money, power, and every trapping of modern society. There is another way. And, each of us must find a personal route through the maze of our times.

So, if you are reading this, I don't know who you are or why you have found this essay among the millions and billions of words that flow through the internet. But, if you are "out there," I hope you are taking a serious look at the troubles inherent in our times—environmental, political, social, confrontational—and are looking for a better way.