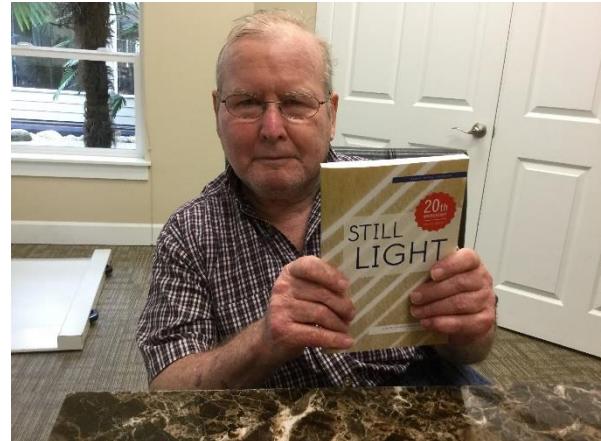


Featured Writer Rob Murphy

Rob, age 67, is a resident of Whitewood Gardens in Portland, where he has lived for 18 months. He is originally from Connecticut. He realized he needed something different, that going to New York every day in a coat and tie was not for him and he knew that the west coast, specifically Portland, was the place for him. Rob holds a degree in Horticulture and Agronomy and has worked in a variety of positions in Horticulture and Agriculture, including working on a dairy farm that supplied the Tillamook Cheese factory. He likes to fly fish on local rivers and looks forward to doing more of that soon.



Frank's Room Rob Murphy

My favorite person in my life has been my uncle who has given me pride in learning crafts that will enhance my expression of the world around us. There are options if one opens their eyes and absorbs the sequences of life around. My uncle was a master fly fisherman who taught me at an early age the excitement of trout fishing on some small streams. My uncle had a special room in his house to house his fly-tying equipment such as blank rods that were on display for future projects. I would always be excited, looking forward to his schedule to take me down to the cellar to do a project with him. It was a beautiful room housing the rods and reels he had accumulated over time. My uncle died ten years ago, and I miss his presence and expert advice about fishing and life in general. At the tail end of his life we took a couple of guided fishing trips to Alaska.

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Interview with Featured Writer Rob Murphy

Interviewed by Clarissa McDearmon, a Write Around Portland volunteer workshop scribe at Whitewood Gardens.

How did you first hear about Write around Portland and this workshop?

I'd say that I was somewhat apprehensive of getting involved because I think of myself as being shy. I was asked to participate by Chris. Chris was my mentor regarding this activity. He is a very knowledgeable individual with lots of enthusiasm and a variety of ideas for people to be involved in their social and other needs that are being homogenized within this culture.

What was your experience like in the workshop?

I found the workshop to be, contrary to my initial thoughts, a very active group with 20 people. I'd say that I joined, sharing ideas and thought for how to improve ourselves personally and generally with other individuals, to express ourselves both in a way that I can evolve our own benefits as well as being able to express ourselves better in our communication skills through the writing group that enhances everyone within the group.

Did you feel you got to know people at Whitewood Gardens better by participating in the group?

Absolutely. Again, I needed a little prodding but I feel being involved in the group is a win-win situation. I'm gaining knowledge, I'm gaining interest in other fields, especially as I am getting a little older I need other activities besides my traditional activities.

It sounds as though it broadened your perspective a little bit?

Absolutely.

I am hearing it was a boost to your confidence. Is that correct?

Absolutely.

Had you done any writing before?

(Rob laughs in response) I chuckle in that I was resistant internally saying "Oh my gosh what have I gotten myself into?"

But you came!

Yes, I didn't back out and I was further positively influenced by the individuals I met at the workshop. I must note that this is the first time I have tried writing as an activity and I have been told I have some good ideas which again, I chuckle, because I didn't think of myself as someone with a pen in hand. But I've tried it for a season and enjoyed it and continue to want to be involved in this group. I see a number of benefits I will gain from participating.

How did you feel about being published?

Well, if you want to get in line.....

For an autograph?

(Clarissa and Rob both laugh).

The piece about your Uncle Frank is the one that was published.

Yes, that's the one that really seemed to get a chuckle.

I'm hearing he was a very important person in your life.

Yes, he was.

What was the favorite part of the workshop?

The cookies!

Clarissa and Rob both laugh.

Do you not usually get cookies here?

We get plenty!

The snacks were pretty good, weren't they?

Exactly.

Anything else that stands out about the workshop?

I would just say that many people in the group found a level of confidence and heightened interest in our social activities via our use of the written format. My reason for being at Whitewood is that I needed medical help, and I still do, but this has been a good part of my experience. I feel that this facility has been interested in seeing the clientele thrive in the environment and make it a setting for growth.

It sounds like for you, this workshop has definitely helped you with personal growth and WWG made the space for it. Anything else you want to say about the experience?

One thing I look forward to in the vein of wanting to grow in my skills and interests, it's like being a sponge. It allows you to go, oh gosh, I am already thinking about the next group of sessions. I have run out of ideas. What can I do to improve my situation as far as mind and matter?

So what I am hearing is that you like the stimulation that gets you thinking.

Yes, and it's done in a manner that I don't feel it's over my head. I feel very much an amateur in writing but this leaves openings for you just don't know what might be the next....It's a challenge if you want to take the time as an individual to again incorporate a portion of your day or whatever to start building an inventory of something of interest. It's like someone going to sit down and paint a picture. They start thinking about what the finished product is going to look like.

There will be a summer workshop here and it sounds like you are up for that.

Yes, I am. And, if anyone asked me I would highly recommend joining the group because you just don't know what lies out there in our minds.