

# ONE-PAGE STORIES

No. 1 — FEBRUARY 2020

A Cooperative Journal for the National Amateur Press Association

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Edited, printed and published by Bill Boys, 184 Reinhard Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43206

# A Christmas Eve Children's Program Remembered

BY BILL BOYS

**S**O YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW about a memorable Christmas from my past? How about this one from 1950.

My dad drove us all downtown to drop us off for our Christmas Eve Worship Service and Children's Program at the biggest, oldest Lutheran Church in downtown Cincinnati. We kids in the parochial school had practiced for weeks on The Program. Featured Attraction, we gathered. Big stuff!

But dad got us there too late. The sanctuary was full. The school kids had already processed and taken their places way up front in the chancel, beyond the Communion rail. The service was already in progress.

I had failed to show up in time! I was mortified! I refused to make an embarrassing spectacle of myself by walking late up the half-mile-long side aisle, so tardily stepping up in front of everybody through the center gap in the Communion rail, and floundering through the rows of kids to my spot. I just knew everybody in church would be gawking. "Why is Billy Boys so late!?" "Can't he get here on time, for goodness' sake!" "Why is he spoiling this beautiful Christmas Eve Service with such a careless spectacle?!"

I felt so ashamed, so frustrated and so helpless. I may even have burst into tears—I don't remember clearly. But for the rest of the service I stayed put in the back of the church.

When the service was over, as the kids recessed they were given a little Christmas gift bag that held a real orange and some other goodies. Someone tried to offer one to me, too, but I knew I was undeserving, so I wouldn't accept it.

"But it's okay to take one because you did all the work of practicing," they said. But I wouldn't take something I hadn't earned, didn't deserve, and that was meant for those who followed through and did their duty: presenting The Program.

To this day, when I'm running late to an important event, I'm afraid I get anxious and a bit impatient. Any connection, you think?

# Foxy and the Litter Patrol

BY BILL BOYS

WELL, WE WALK FOXY, our dog, twice a day anyway so why not use the opportunity to pick up litter along the way? So we are regular, though unofficial, litter patrol persons. Recyclers, too, since part of the litter is plastic and glass bottles as well as aluminum cans, some of which are already conveniently street-flattened.

Our equipment consists of a little bag and a long gripper tool. Our beat is Schiller Park and several blocks surrounding our house in the German Village historic neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. Our walks aren't long; half a mile or less.

Even so, this brings us some visual recognition since we're out there somewhere or other every day. People see us and notice.

In turn, this sometimes brings words or gestures appreciation. Other walkers say "Thanks for helping keep the neighborhood clean." People in passing cars roll down a window and say "Thank you," or "The earth thanks you," or give us a smile and a thumbs up. Even away from home, someone will say "Oh, I've seen you picking up trash around the Village. That's so nice of you."

People who actually know us kid us with quips like, "Oh, supplementing your income?" (Besides the cans, we *have* found money on the sidewalks. Biggest find so far was a \$1.37 in coins.)

I suppose when some see us picking recyclables out of trash cans in the park, they might think that's really true. Oh, well, so be it. I'd guesstimate we average two or three recyclables every walk. During picnicking weather in the park, that's double, triple, or more.

At the Brown Bag Deli, just two blocks around the corner, they noticed we were picking up in their sidewalk dining area, so in appreciation one of their workers came out one day and gave Foxy a piece of bacon. Well, guess what? Now almost every morning our route *must* go by there, and Foxy sits politely and patiently by their side door until the bacon-bearer steps out with her lucky windfall.

If Foxy ever happens to get off-leash during a walk, I think we'll have an idea where to start looking.

# Snowy Oak Tree Farm

BY BILL BOYS

WHEN I MENTION it to friends, I usually get “Oh, is it a Christmas tree farm?” Well, I imagine they must have harvested some evergreens for that purpose, but at 388 acres it’s a *whole lot* more.



So much more that it was named the Ohio Tree Farm of 2019 by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). And I’m proud to say it is owned and run by cousins of mine, Paul Mechling, and his wife, Joanne.

Since 1974, they have planted more than 140,000 trees representing 21 species on reverted agricultural land in Ashtabula County, Ohio. They have worked with ODNR to build three wetlands totaling 11 acres, and there are eight miles of trails to explore. Paul has been an Ashtabula County SWCD [Soil and Water Conservation District] supervisor since 1998. He is also a governor’s appointee on the Ohio Wildlife Council and the Ohio Forestry Advisory Council. (Info gathered from the *Highland County Press* and the *Akron Beacon Journal* as well as personal communication.)

Ruth and I (and 450 others) toured the farm in September when ODNR sponsored an open house day. So great to see conservation like this going on and being recognized. You can watch a beautiful 11-minute aerial drone tour (it caught the photo above) on YouTube – just search in your browser for “Snowy Oak Tree Farm.”

# Exploring Glen Echo Ravine

BY DAN WILKENS

↓ Olentangy R. ↓ High St. ↓ Calumet St. ↓ Indianola Ave. ↓ R.R. ↓ I-71



Google's aerial view of Glen Echo Ravine. Olentangy River (left), to I-71 (right).

**T**HIS SUMMER I finally got around to exploring the miniature wilderness of Glen Echo Ravine in the Clintonville neighborhood of north Columbus, Ohio. The Olentangy River is fed by several steep ravines which wind their way from culverts under I-71 in the east down to the riverbed. Much of their length is bridged over by the major streets, so they are a hidden oasis for wildlife including deer, fox and coyotes. I've been curious about Glen Echo specifically because two Army officers and their men got several wagons stuck there during the War of 1812, and had to send north to Worthington for teams of oxen to haul them out.

I first explored the area to the east of High Street. It's a hidden canyon filled with trees and rocks, but there is an access ramp behind a local grocery store for city workers. The streambed here has been engineered into a concrete culvert to funnel stormwater under High Street, and a giant cage made of I-beams shields the tunnel entrance from trees and other debris that may get washed down the canyon. This is a popular spot for urban explorers and skaters, who call the area "the gates of hell". Someone has decorated the tunnel mouth to look like a monster with orange fangs.

I came back another day to explore the other side of the stream. It is accessible by walking north from the Olentangy bike trail along the side of a concrete dam. There has been a dam of some sort here for 200 years, since settler David Beers built one for his grist mill in the early 1800's. After the mill burnt down, the Olentangy Amusement Park used the inlet of Glen Echo for a row boat rental. Today there's little trace of either structure. The streambed is even more rugged than it is east of High street, but with care and low water I was able to pick my way up to the other side of the tunnel. I only spotted one rat!

# Home Again, Full-Circle

BY FRANK SCHWINNE

**I**N 1964 MY PARENTS HAD A HOME BUILT in the north end of Columbus, Ohio, near the now-gone Northland Mall. At the time, twelve people lived in this house – my parents, their nine children and my paternal grandfather. This is the house where I and my siblings grew up.

A few of my memories:

- Celebrating family Christmases for many years with all of us gathered together. The tree was in the front room, before the window and showed brightly from the outside. A Santa Claus face hung from the top of the window and was also quite visible. On Christmas morning the room was filled from one end to the other with presents.
- My grandfather died at home during my junior year of high school. In those days, it was common for the family doctor to come and officially pronounce the person dead and the parish priest to come and administer the “last rites” to the deceased. I vividly recall the undertaker rolling my grandfather down the hall on a cot while the family stood watching silently.
- My brother and I formed a musical group, sort of. My mother snapped a Polaroid Instamatic picture of us with me playing the trumpet, my brother on the violin, and the family dog on the upright piano. None of us could carry a tune, but it was fun pretending.

In 1977 my parents sold the home to a Greek couple who actually came from Greece. They owned the former Fisherman’s Wharf restaurant that was in the neighborhood. One of the sons currently owns the famous, historic Bun’s Restaurant in Delaware, Ohio.

In 2003 I was able to buy back this home from the same people who purchased it from my parents. I still live in the home with my brother and sister. The home has brought back many fond memories and still does, such as those noted above.

The house seemed so large when my parents built it and there were twelve of us living here, but maybe it is just that I was smaller and younger then. It seems small now.

And now those of my family who still live in our home are creating new memories.

# Remembering Harold Shive

BY JACK OLIVER

**I**N THE APPROXIMATE FIFTY YEARS that I've been a member of NAPA I may have attended ten conventions. To be honest, I usually felt like an outsider except for a couple of members that always made me feel more welcome. When I was young so many of the members had been getting together with others not just at the conventions but also on other occasions. Everyone always seemed like old friends except for me.

At the Annapolis convention Hal Shive took a liking to me I guess, as we usually enjoyed breakfast together along with a few other meals.

I enjoyed talking to him as I was very interested in hearing about the Risograph printer of which he was so proud.

The next convention that I was able to attend was at the International Printing Museum at Carson, in southern California. The first morning I was walking around a small strip center looking for something for breakfast. I happened upon a donut shop, one of my favorite food groups, when Hal walked in for the same purpose. We renewed our acquaintance and enjoyed breakfast every morning as well as a dinner along with President Michelle Klosterman.

Hal's journals always interested me and I always looked forward to them in the bundles. He and his journals will be missed by many in addition to me.

Harold receiving his Laureate Award in Misc. Prose at the 2003 Chattanooga convention.

*Gary Bossler photo*



Harold at the 2001 Wilmington, Delaware convention.



[The late Harold Shive, a 25-year member of NAPA, died this past November 12th. Other reminiscences of Hal were published in the December issue of *The National Amateur*, which should soon be available in digital format at [www.AmateurPress.org](http://www.AmateurPress.org). -Ed.]

# Christmas with My Daughter

BY JACK OLIVER

**T**HE PAST TEN YEARS OR SO, my daughter hosted a Christmas dinner for some of her friends and me. She always serves prime rib along with other great-tasting food. This year I, along with eleven others were in attendance. It has always been my job to slice and serve the succulent roast. As I served a young lady I asked her which piece she would like. She said, "The one with the most spice," so I gave her one of the ends. My daughter always well spices the meat which is probably why her guests keep coming back each year. I was seated next to the young lady so in the course of the meal I asked how she was enjoying the slice that I had chosen for her. "Delicious," was her reply, which didn't surprise me as the meat tasted great as usual.

This year my daughter bought a jar of creamy horseradish sauce. I asked the young lady if she would like to try some. She did and exclaimed, "That's very interesting." She put a small glob on her plate and continued with the meal. A bit later she spread what she thought was butter onto a piece of roll only to discover that it was the glob of horseradish. Not sure if she'll ever try it again.

I usually always leave after dinner so I can drive home to Las Vegas with little or no traffic. However, this year my daughter requested that I stay over as they were going to pick up their new black lab puppy in the morning. Knowing how much I enjoy puppies, I decided to stay the night.

The next morning my daughter greeted me with the news that the roads were closed so we wouldn't be able to pick the dog up as planned. In addition the Cajon Pass is closed which is my primary route back to Las Vegas. I was disappointed that I would miss out seeing the new dog but worse was that I was anxious to get home. I decided to take I-10 home, a much longer route. I estimated the return trip home would be between five to six hours but because of the others who took this detour and the weather, I was on the road for close to nine hours. The I-15 route with normal traffic and weather is about four hours. I hope I never encounter this situation again.



# Front Porch

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

**T**HE FRONT PORCH was a wonderful place to play! There were three or four columns and a waist-high (for adults) flat railing, perhaps 12 inches wide, definitely great for walking on (or jumping from!). There was a bench swing where Chris and I would swing with our dolls or our kittens, dressed in doll clothes.

Everyone in the family drank milk — lots of milk! There was a dairy in town (Kubichek's) that delivered bottled milk; often ten or twelve bottles lined the top step. Sometimes there were even small bottles of whipping cream (for Mom to make apple salad with just apples and whipped cream and sometimes walnuts). Occasionally it got cold before the milk got taken indoors, and there would be a 2- or 3-inch column of ice-milk, lifting the cap into the air.

Birthday parties for Chris and me often took place on the porch. At a couple of my birthdays, I had a “lamb cake” — a cake shaped like a lamb, with coconut to symbolize the wool. The year I was in seventh grade, Chris' party was on the porch. She had a few friends over and we played “hospital.” I hadn't been feeling well all day; I pretended I had pneumonia as that was basically the only disease I knew. (Sister Marie had it nearly every winter.) The next day I felt even worse and was put in Mom and Dad's bed with chills and a fever. Yes, it was time to see a doctor — and to the hospital I went, suffering from pneumonia. (As my pastor mentioned, fortunately we hadn't been playing “mortuary”!)

On hot summer nights, we would often sleep on the porch; second floor bedrooms without air-conditioning were hot. Besides, it was just plain fun — until the night I awoke hearing “click ... click ... click” going across the floor. My imagination went wild. I was terrified! Finally I found the courage to peek out from under the covers and open my eyes. I spotted a squirrel! Its claws made strange little noises as it explored the porch.

It wasn't long after my 12th birthday that we said goodbye to that wonderful porch. By that time I was 5'8”; Chris and Mark were growing rapidly as well. It was getting difficult for all six of us to fit in the living room at the same time. So the front wall was removed and the porch enclosed. The enlarged room now fit our family.

# How My Hometown Got Its Name

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

**T**HE TOWN IN WHICH I GREW UP in northeast Iowa had a rather unique name. Wikipedia states the town was founded in 1853 and named by “soldiers, traders, and railroad workers” who enjoyed the bountiful wild strawberries found in the area.

The way I remember hearing the origin of the name went something like this.

The “Old Mission Road” went northwesterly from Dubuque (on the bank of the Mississippi River) to Fort Atkinson. Troops followed the road to garrison the fort and to help protect the settlers from the native American tribes. On one of those military journeys a woman was traveling with her husband. They camped just west of the current location of the town, in a field of wild strawberries. The wife commented, “They should name this place Strawberry Point!” So the town that formed there was called Enfield.

As the years passed, the town grew. There was a hotel at the stagecoach stop in the small settlement. I’m guessing it was named after an important (or maybe just wealthy) man named Mr. Franklin. Even today the hotel at that spot on the Four Corners is called the Franklin Hotel — and said to be haunted. The name of the town was changed to Franklinton.

Eventually the railroad came through the town. It was decided that “Franklinton” was too long a name to fit on the depot, and the name of the town was changed again, this time to Strawberry Point. Count the letters. Does that make any sense at all?

Besides the Franklin Hotel, Strawberry Point is well-known for its fiberglass strawberry, perched high above the city hall, close to the flagpole where, decades earlier, flagpole sitters used to sit. (Can you imagine having the whole town know when you needed to use the bathroom and a can was sent up to the platform?) One can imagine the newspaper headline after a strong storm blew the strawberry down: “Strawberry Point’s Strawberry Was Creamed!”



# Your One-Page Story Could Have Been Here

BY YOU

Send us one  
for a  
future issue!

See p. 12  
for how to.

## You Can Write for ONE-PAGE STORIES

We are looking for stories/articles. We would welcome a one-page piece of your own original writing, to make this truly “*A Cooperative Journal for the National Amateur Press Association.*”

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?** You don’t have to be a member of NAPA to write pieces for this journal, although members are definitely invited, especially if they don’t have the equipment or the time to publish their own amateur journal.

**HOW MANY WORDS?** About 350 to 400 words. Less if you have a photo or graphic to go with your story. (Here’s an easy place to practice and present your short-short story writing efforts.)

**WHAT KIND OF CONTENT?** We are looking for original prose more so than poetry, either fiction or non-fiction. First-person stories, anecdotes and memoirs would be especially welcome, but other genres would be considered as well, as long as they are your own original pieces.

**WHAT SORT OF FORMAT?** Send plain text in an email or attach any common word processing file. Or It can be a typed, or hand-written manuscript sent by postal mail. Any accompanying image or graphic can be in any common image format by email or an actual photo print, by mail.

**CAN I GET EXTRA COPIES FOR MYSELF?** Certainly. Just let me know how many you would like. No charge.

**WILL I GET FEEDBACK?** I’ll be happy to share with you any feedback I might get from others about your story.

**WHERE DO I SEND A SUBMISSION?** To Bill Boys either by email at [williamboys@att.net](mailto:williamboys@att.net) or by postal mail to 184 Reinhard Ave., Columbus OH 43206-2635.

**OTHER QUESTIONS?** Please ask; we’ll get back to you  
ASAP.