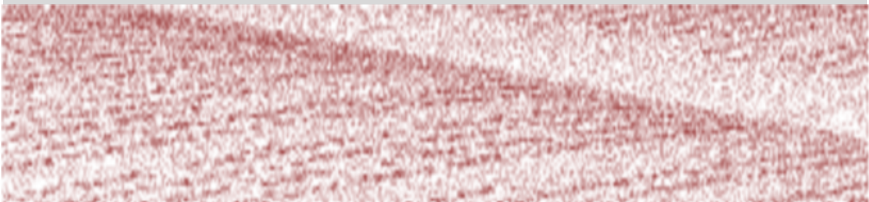


ONE-PAGE STORIES

No. 11 — MARCH 2021

A Cooperative Journal for the National Amateur Press Association

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Things I Didn't Want to Tell My Mom, #1

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

AS A CHILD, I WAS A TOMBOY. I loved to play outside, running here and there with my best friend, Dianne. We didn't get into trouble; we were basically "good girls." However, there were occasions when something happened that I really didn't want to tell my mom. One of those occasions was during fourth grade.

Dianne and I were at the school playground. We swung as high as we could in the swings, hung by our knees on the monkey bars, and pushed the merry-go-round as fast as we could, then jumped onto it. That particular Saturday something didn't go right and I fell off, bending the first two fingers on my left hand back toward the arm. They hurt! Not wanting to play any more, I went home.



That little incident seemed to fall into the category of "something that I might get into trouble for," which happened fairly frequently, so I didn't tell my mom. Instead I just sat on the davenport with a pillow over my hand, listening to Liberace on the radio. (We didn't get a television until the next year.) When the pain got too bad, I would saunter down the hallway to the bathroom and run cold water over my fingers to numb the pain a bit. Somehow I made it through the night.

The next morning at church when it was time for the offering plate to be passed, I automatically reached with my left hand to receive it but soon realized I wouldn't be able to grasp the plate and quickly thrust that hand under my skirt and used my right hand instead. Even though I hadn't told Mom my fingers hurt, she didn't miss that maneuver and asked to see my hand. Reluctantly I showed her my swollen fingers. We left church immediately to drive the six miles back to town to see Dr. Andersen. He put my fingers in a splint, wrapping them together. It took several weeks for my fingers to heal, but since I was right-handed, I was still able to do my homework. However, I didn't get on the merry-go-round again for some time.

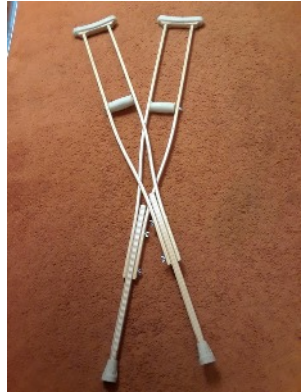
Things I Didn't Want to Tell My Mom, #2

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

JUST BEFORE FIFTH GRADE STARTED, I went to visit my sister's classmate who lived in the country. Mostly the impetus was that I wanted to ride Mary's horse. Ernestine, one of my cousins, was also visiting Mary. We played a bit and rode the horses, then went into the pump house to rest — and have a snack. I went into Mary's house and got a pitcher of Kool-aid. Leaving the house, I had to go down three steps, but I missed the last one and fell, landing on a foot. I managed to save the Kool-aid, so continued to the pump house, favoring my left foot.

After our snack, it was time for Ernestine to go home. Mary and I rode the mile with her, then back. With every bounce of that trot, I was in agony. Once again, I figured this incident was “one I would get in trouble for,” so I didn't say anything. I stayed the night, as planned — even dreaming that someone jumped on my foot and made it better.

The next morning Mary's mom drove me to an uncle's farm where my family was staying so his family could go on a real vacation. Without me saying a word, Mom quickly realized I needed to see a doctor. Once again it was Dr. Andersen who took an x-ray, wrapped my foot, and gave me a pair of crutches. Soon I was back on the playground and pretty proud that I could walk the balance beam at the schoolyard on one foot (and two crutches). Several weeks later I was able to ditch the crutches.



There was a barrier about three feet high between our country school house (which had been brought to town to add a classroom) and my home. Once the crutches were gone, I went back to my habit of jumping down to the sidewalk instead of walking the extra twenty or so feet around. I always made sure to land on my right foot, still favoring the left. Where was my friend Dianne all this time? Right by my side, playing with me and reminding me not to limp on that foot. Pretty smart for a ten-year-old. Not too surprisingly, Dianne became a nurse when she grew up.

Things I Didn't Want to Tell My Mom, #3

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

IT WAS A SIX-HOUR DRIVE from our hometown in northeast Iowa to Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. I didn't have a car so that meant it was a twelve-hour trip for a parent to come and get us for a holiday. The Thanksgiving holiday was brief, so my sister Chris, her friend Mary, and I decided we would stay on campus my sophomore (and their freshmen) year. It seems we were invited to an off-campus bonfire by some classmates from Blair.

I don't remember much about the bonfire besides the fact there was a fire. We got back to our dorm by the appropriate time and went to bed. The next thing I knew Chris and Mary were knocking on my door, just across the hall from their room. There had been an uninvited visitor in their room!

We rushed down the steps to our housemother's apartment and woke Mrs. Laaker and her husband. About that time a young man came stumbling down the stairs. We ducked down behind the desk until he had gone out the door. Piecing together what had happened, we decided he had just balanced on a ledge on the outside of the dorm, creeping along the wall until he found a window that was open, then crawled inside. He must have walked down the hall, checking doors to find one that was not locked. He just made himself at home in Chris and Mary's room, even playing a guitar and talking to Chris while Mary pretended to be sleeping. He wanted to wake Mary but Chris convinced him she would scream and wake everyone else up, which would not be to his advantage. Finally he left, evidently looking for someone. We didn't know him but questioned if perhaps he had been at the bonfire, therefore knowing that there were some girls in the dorm.*

This incident just seemed like another one of those "things I didn't want to tell my mom." Even though nothing happened, this time it was for my mom's benefit I kept quiet. None of us wanted our parents to worry.

It was a scary incident for Mary and Chris. Following that weekend, both of them remember making sure to lock their door at night.

* Thanks to Mary for the details.

My Father, the Musician

BY ALICE PLASTERER STICKLER

MY FATHER, EIFFEL G. PLASTERER, LOVED BEING a science teacher. But even before that, he discovered his love of music and wanted to be part of a band. As a high school student he told the band teacher he wanted to play a tuba, but did not have an instrument. A janitor and the band teacher found an old tuba in a storeroom and gave it to him. He cleaned and polished that beat-up, neglected old horn, It became his most prized possession. He played in the school band and joined the Erie Railroad Band. He played in the marching band at DePauw University. He returned home and began teaching high school science, first at the Huntington Township school and then at the Huntington, Indiana, High School. But he kept on playing his tuba – a city orchestra/band, the Sunday School orchestra at his church, and the Erie Railroad Band.

One of the directors was businessman Frank Bailey. He liked the tubas, but wanted a deeper bass sound so he ordered two Conn four-valve low B-flat sousaphones for his bass players. One of those horns was my father's instrument of choice throughout his next fifty years. He was a member of Mr. Bailey's marimba orchestra, which played for many of the township schools at their commencements.

My father was a part of the Huntington Erie Railroad Band when the band rode the train to New York for a festival of all Erie Railroad bands. He marched with the band at the Indy 500 speedway when the raceway surface was still bricks, and in many local area parades.

In the late '30s and early '40s, as he developed his "Bubbles Concerto" soap bubble presentations, an important part was special background music. Sometimes he used a trumpet or a valve trombone the the soap-bubble presentations. Even at 80+ years of age he was invited and participated in the first band clinics hosted by the local college for high school musicians. He always encouraged young people to learn to play an instrument.

My father shared his talent by playing his beloved sousaphone almost as much as performing his "Bubbles Concerto" on stage. He blessed us with a legacy of deep-toned bass sounds and the beautiful soap bubbles he created for over 60 years. That beautiful old sousaphone now proudly resides in the music room of an Erie Railroad Band member. My father often quoted Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Frogs Croak, People Die

In Memory of My Mother

BY KEN FAIG, JR.

I WILL NEVER FORGET SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1976. I had come down from Chicago to spend the weekend with my parents in Joliet. About 5:30 a.m. my mother died, emitting a loud noise. She had suffered a heart attack in her sleep, and the loud noise was cardio-pulmonary arrest. She went by ambulance to a nearby hospital but was dead on arrival. My father and I were back home by 8 a.m., and I had to begin the process of calling friends and relatives. My aunt and uncle went in person to tell the bad news to my grandparents in Cincinnati.

My parents had moved from Cincinnati to Joliet in 1969. They had lived most of their lives in Cincinnati, where my mother was born on June 18, 1919 as Edith Francis Kennedy. Leaving her home in Cincinnati to move to Joliet was hard for my mother, but she eventually made new friends in Joliet.

I guess most of us have expressions we hate to hear, or even to read. For me, the expression I hate the most is the tough guy slang “croak” used for dying. When I hear it, I am always reminded of that Sunday morning in Joliet when my mother died. I am tempted to tell the speaker, “Frogs croak, people die.” But I never do.

My late father-in-law, Alfred Gaber, used to complain that some folks went to church only to be “hatched, matched and dispatched.” Birth, marriage and death are such pivotal experiences in the trajectories of our lives that a certain degree of solemnity tends to attach to them. Marriage is usually an occasion for joy, but even so many people resent any display of drunkenness or lewdness in its celebration.

The nanny photographer Vivian Maier compared life to a ride on a Ferris wheel – we get on at birth, ride for our allotted term, and then get off to allow others to ride. When my time comes to get off the wheel, I hope no one will say that I croaked – whether I die with a loud noise or not. Perhaps we should not be envious of folks who are said (at least in death notices) to have died peacefully. Maybe a loud noise emitted at death (whatever its physiological origin) can be interpreted: “Attention! – a human soul has departed.”

Celebrating Danny's Unexpected Years!

BY NANCY HEBER

DANNY WAS ONLY SUPPOSED TO LIVE to around the age of 10 years. So to live to 35 is remarkable, indeed! For those of us who love Danny dearly, these extra years have been a gift!

When Danny was born, he was the delight of the family! First grandchild. Need I say more? Of course he was cute; of course he was smart! That's what all grandparents say. But he really was! He talked in sentences early for his age. He came over to his grandparents' house around the age of two and said, "OK, Nana, let's play on the computer!" He would climb up on my lap and touch the various keys and say, "That's an 'A.' Let's find the 'G.'" Amazing! He even knew the semicolon key. Another love of his was (and still is) BOOKS! Reading to him was a favorite time for him, as well as the one reading to him.

So it was devastating when he was diagnosed at age three with epilepsy, and a rare form, at that. How can this be? This hit us all very hard. But later when his various types of seizures were given a name, Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome, we knew it was serious because there is no cure; we knew that it meant there would be developmental delay/cognitive impairment; we learned that for 30% of individuals with his syndrome the cause is unknown. (It is now known that genetic factors account for most previously unknown cases).

As the years have gone by, Danny has had all kinds of medications to try to control his seizures; he even had brain surgery. His cognitive level is about that of a 2-3 year old. His body kept growing



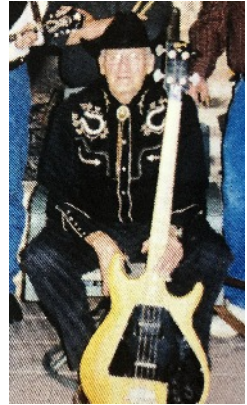
Danny's mother, Karen, holds the new iPad while Danny holds a new book.

to a little over six feet. His talking is limited, however he is using words and sentences more meaningfully now at the appropriate times. His favorite birthday presents were: BOOKS and an iPad. That has not changed over the years. Neither has our love for him changed over the years. As time has gone by, we continue to consider him a joy, a treasure!

Maestro

BY TOM DUFFEY

DANIEL (DON) MARCHIONI WAS a well-known barber when my wife and I moved back to her hometown in 2001. His shop was simply called Don's. This was his day job. He was also the long-time leader of what he called his "orchestra." During his early days, he had actually played bass guitar with the opening-act groups backing Loretta Lynn and Marie Osmond.



Don Marchioni

Don held a practice every Monday night in his barber shop. Walking by one evening and glancing through the shop's window, I noticed they were missing a drummer. I went inside and introduced myself, and played along with a few of their country tunes on their drum kit. They welcomed me into the band! During summers, our major gig was the county fair. Otherwise, we played mostly nursing and personal-care homes. We were together for fifteen years.

One evening, I was driving down Main Street and I glanced again through that picture window. I witnessed Don's young granddaughters working on him in his barber chair. They had gelled and spiked his hair as though their "customer" were a slick, street-wise dude. They would spin him around so he could check out his "do" in the wall mirror.

Don's ancestors were from Rome. His father had taught him an Italian waltz on the harmonica, which Don called his "mouth organ." In his eighties, Don took a vacation with his lady friend to Italy to visit family. They made a side trip to Venice. Late one night on the Grand Canal, while being poled along in a gondola, he began to play that waltz. Tourists gathered on the walkways bordering the canal, enchanted by his song.

Don continued barbering until his 92nd birthday. Even then, some of his customers were older than he. One in particular was 102 and still driving his own car. Don died at age 95. A photo album keeps this memory alive, among many, for generations to come.

Spouse Story – Part 2

BY LINDA L. SHIVVERS

MEL IS FOREVER MISREADING STUFF, like ads in the newspaper, or promotional items. One promo was about a special event at one of the stores in the mall. It was the time of year when some clothing stores have a gentlemen's night and the store associates help these poor guys with their shopping and gift wrapping. This one card was advertising women's apparel, and a special event. Mel calls his friend, Dave, "Hey, there's a really neat thing going on Friday night. They're going to show nightgowns and robes and stuff. Wanna go?" It's a good thing Dave had a choral society rehearsal that night, otherwise they would have gone to a Fitting Clinic. I wonder what they would have gotten fitted for.

My favorite is the bear in Yosemite story. My sister lives in San Francisco and she agreed to go and be our guide out of the city and the five-hour drive to the park. In all fairness to Mel, two weeks before we were to leave he saw a TV documentary on people being mauled by bears. He worried me for two weeks about bears in Yosemite. I've been to Yosemite lots of times, in all kinds of weather and on all kinds of trails, and never once saw a bear. We got to the hotel and the first thing we have to do is sign a disclaimer. "Bears are active this time of the year. If you leave food, coolers or backpacks (bears have learned what coolers and backpacks are for), in your car and it gets damaged by a bear trying to get in, you'll get fined." That evening we were going on a moonlight, open-air train ride through the park. At 9:00 p.m. We're sitting on benches outside the hotel near the drive-up. It's dark, there's a parking lot across the way and a pond. Mel hears a noise, "Linda! There's a bear over there. I think we should go back inside." It was a beautiful night. My sister and I didn't want to go inside, and I knew it wasn't a bear. The tram comes, we get on and as we're pulling away the tour guide gestures toward the pond and says, "Aren't the bull frogs in fine voice tonight?"

One more: Melvin was making Brownies for a friend's birthday. He got 'em whipped up, put in the oven, then went off to do something else. Not too long into the baking time, the dogs and I smelled something. Then saw smoke billowing out of the oven and filling up the kitchen. Ever hear of broiled brownies? That's what the oven was set at. Broil. Oh, my. Life with Melvin.

The Autograph Caper

BY BILL BOYS

WHAT A RELIEF! I WAS IN THE FIRST tier of phase 1B to get Covid-19 vaccinations here in Ohio – age 80 and up. I couldn't wait. My first vaccination was on Jan. 26, the second on Feb. 23 – earliest dates I could get. But I wasn't *always* so eager to take my shots.

One time, in 2nd or 3rd grade, I had a post-vaccination trickle of blood running down my left arm. When I noticed it, if there had been such a thing at that time as dialing 911 I'd have called, in the justifiable urgency I thought it needed. Failing that, I just stood panicked in our hallway at the foot of the stairs – see, even the exact location where I was standing is seared in my memory! – and cried out to Mom! I was sure my life's blood was pouring out. I expected to slump to the floor like a water balloon with a fatal puncture.

A year or two went by and I was still alive. But one day in 4th or 5th grade, the teacher of my class at Main-Montrose School in Bexley, Ohio, made a deathly announcement: in a few days every student had to get a shot for something or other. She gave us all a note about it to take home to our parents. If there was some reason you shouldn't get the shot, they were to send a signed note back with you so she could have you excused.

What to do!? I knew flat out that my parents wouldn't write any such note. What I settled on was to present a blank sheet of paper to my Mom and tell her that I was going to start an autograph collection. "Mom, would you be the first one to autograph my sheet? . . . No, not there at the top. I want to get my friends' autographs up there. You sign below, to leave room for them to sign."

My sainted and trusting Mom duly signed where I indicated. Later I filled in some message at the top such as "Billy is to be excused from this shot." I turned it in at school the next day, I suppose. It worked! In hindsight I wonder – didn't anyone at school notice that the signature at the bottom was different from the rest of the writing? But I never heard any recrimination from my Mom, so she must not have learned what I had done – I would certainly have heard about *that!* Wouldn't it have been ironic justice if I had caught some dread childhood disease of 1948 because of my autograph caper?

Your One-Page Story Could Have Been Here

BY YOU

A personal narrative?

A fiction piece?

How about writing and
sending us one
for a future issue!

See p. 12 for how to.

Write for ONE-PAGE STORIES?

You don't have to be a member of NAPA to submit pieces, although members are definitely invited. (Here's an easy place to practice and present your short-short story writing efforts.)

HOW MANY WORDS? About 350 to 400 words. Less if you have a photo or graphic to go with your story.

WHAT KIND OF CONTENT? Original prose – fiction or non-fiction. Personal narratives, anecdotes and memoirs would be especially welcome, but other genres would be considered as well, as long as they are your own original pieces.

CAN I GET SOME EXTRA COPIES FOR MYSELF? Certainly. Just let me know how many you would like.

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

NOTE TO READERS – Send me your comments on any of the stories so I can pass them on to the writers.

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

Tips on writing – How to Show, Not Tell

Here's another YouTube video I saw on the difference between writing that merely "tells," and writing that "shows." In YouTube's search window, type in the title below.

"Improve your Writing: Show, Not Tell" is only 6 minutes and 7 seconds long, by "Benjamin" (no last name given).

Look over your manuscript and see if you can find any "telling" words and figure out how to write so as to "show" what you mean.