

# ONE-PAGE STORIES

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# “My Pennsylvania Home”

BY SUSAN STAUS DUFFEY

**S**OMETIMES A SONG COMES ALONG that is so meaningful and evocative, it deserves to be recast into prose form for others to ponder and supply their own state of mind. This one happens to be the state of Pennsylvania and the title is listed above. You have to supply the music. [-Tom Duffey.]

I think of all the miles I've traveled in my life. Just searching for the big time, for some children and a wife. I think of all the places 'cross the sea and cities tall, where a man could be a big success or end up feeling small. For it's lonesome in this big old world; I wonder why I roam. My heart keeps going back there to my Pennsylvania home.

I think of all the people – some I know, but most I don't. My wand'ring ways held promise once, but now I know they won't. I think of that old mountain town where I was born and bred. The fancy life is done with me; my heart goes there instead.

I think of Mom and Daddy, how they worked so hard for me – their tears and lifetime's labor so they could set me free. I think of my old uncles, sipping wine and telling jokes; my aunts there in the kitchen baking bread for all us folks.

My blue-eyed girl from younger days, I hear at last she's free. I wonder, after all this time, she'd take a chance on me. I think of how it could have been, what I have gained and lost – What might be waiting there at home when these last miles I've crossed.

I'll do my best to start again where friends are friends for life. And I may come at last to have my children and my wife. And when my life is over, no more I'll be alone. With all my kin I'll rest there on that hill with granite stones.

Yes, it's lonesome in this big old world, but never more I'll roam. My heart will rest forever in my Pennsylvania home.

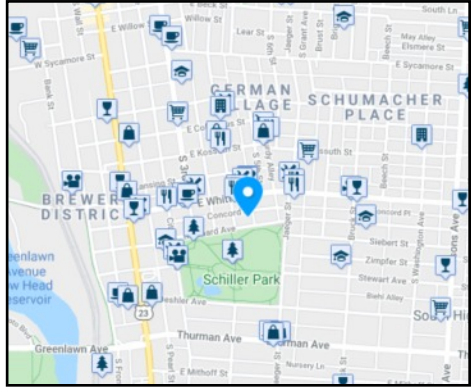


# My House Has a Walk Score?

By BILL BOYS

**W**ELL, IMAGINE! MY HOUSE HAS A “WALK SCORE.” So does yours, probably. This kind of scoring has been going on at least since 2007, but I just found out about it in September when browsing my library website. I came across Melody Warnick’s book, *This Is Where You Belong: The Art and Science of Loving the Place You Live*. “Walking is one way of getting to know and hence to love your place.” We agree.

The score is based on how close essential services are, how much public transportation is available, and how bikeable the neighborhood is within some radius – a mile? (I don’t know what the algorithm uses.) Scores can run from 0 to 100. I don’t know what would have a zero score – a desert island, maybe? The Mojave Desert? But around my address the walk score is 86, the Transit Score is 42 and the Bike Score is 67.



*One square mile – our house sits in German Village. Surrounding neighborhoods are Schumacher Place (E), Merion Village (S), Brewery District (W) and Downtown (N).*

What do those numbers really mean? Our neighborhood is . . .

86 = “Very Walkable, most errands can be accomplished on foot.”

42 = “Some Transit, a few nearby public transportation options.”

67 = “Bikeable, flat as a pancake, minimal bike lanes.”

One website says German Village is the second-most walkable neighborhood in the whole city of Columbus. Some realtors advertise walk scores in their listings, I found. Some buyers decide by them!

I wonder if our score might drop a bit after 2020. Our nearest supermarket is closing at year’s end. A developer is trying to get approval to build a 330-unit apartment on the site. There are still two Krogers within a mile, but I fear at my age I wouldn’t walk to them and back with groceries. I guess those remain car trips. But we do love the walkability of our Village and Schiller Park nonetheless.

# The Spirit of Harley Earl

BY TOM DUFFEY

**A**ROUND 2002, SOME SLICK TV COMMERCIALS drove us down memory lane. One featured car: Buick. This brand was undergoing an identity crisis, so the creators brought back Harley Earl, famed at one time as GM's first head of global design – a title held by only a handful of designers, to the present day. Actually, in the ads, it was the ghost of Harley Earl played by an actor.

Earl was born in 1893 in Hollywood, California. Most 2002 viewers had never heard of him, but there he was, coming out of the shadows suited up and wearing a dapper fedora which, in fact, Earl had rarely worn but it suited the ad men. A voice-over repeatedly mentioned his name as being proud of his Buick legacy – especially the latest model. “Wouldn’t you really rather have a Buick?”

Harley Earl designed the 1927 LaSalle as Cadillac’s companion marque. The success of this car convinced General Motors to create an Art and Color Section. Earl designed, and had built, some really futuristic concept cars. He got some ideas after viewing the Lockheed P-38 Lightning. Also, during the space age, rockets were garnering a lot of attention. All this, and more, culminated with garish tail fins – especially on the 1959 Cadillac – the look of the “future.”

Of special note was his project that morphed into the 1953 Corvette. He was influenced by the English and European sports cars on the road-racing circuits after World War II. It was originally branded as “Project Opel” and began as a highly secret operation. When he offered it to Chevrolet, they quickly accepted, then built and marketed the finished car starting in 1953.

We recently bought a 2011 Buick Lucerne CXL – one beautiful automobile. The color is Opal White with three portals on each side of the front fenders – looks to be going 80 at the curb. A six-speaker stereo pumps the car with a jumpin’ jazzy joy. Light brown leather and a dashboard that resembles dark burl wood add a dash of class. We got a golden name plate bearing an elegant script engraving of Harley Earl’s name and had it mounted on the “wood” trim.

Harley Earl died in 1969 at age 75. But we now have our very own 2020 version of his legacy. We like to imagine that, in spirit, Harley Earl is along for the ride.

# Taking the Post-Stroke Driver's Test

BY BILL BOYS

**WHAT IF I DON'T PASS?** Sure, it's a good sign that my rehab doctor gave formal approval to take the test, but how affected *am* I by my stroke? One staffer at the rehab hospital told me only 30% of stroke patients pass it. The test is two hours long.

And I haven't driven for over six months. Maybe I'm just plain rusty. If I fail I guess I'll have to sell my cars, and I hear that there's a glut of used cars on the market because of the coronavirus pandemic. I'll need to keep on relying on friends, neighbors, public transportation. Since Ruth, my wife, stopped driving two years ago, maybe we'd have to think about moving into a retirement home now?

The day of the test finally came. It's actually two tests. Part 1 is in the clinic. Test vision. Test recognition of traffic signs. Test memory and mental acuity. Test reaction time moving the foot off the accelerator pedal to the brake pedal on a special device. If I fail this first part, that's it. Finish. Check out. Go home.

I was half a second too slow on the reaction time test, but better than average for my age group on the rest. So we go outdoors and take Part 2, the actual driving test – in a car belonging to the Assistive Technology Center of the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center clearly labeled “Student Driver.” Mary, my monitor, drove us to a huge empty parking lot and then I took the wheel. Mary moved to the front passenger seat, where she had a duplicate brake pedal on the floor, just in case. She very professionally gave me directions for several different circuits of various parts of the lot, turns and straightaways, and going into and backing out of parking spots. Okay so far. Out to the roadways next – all stops to be full, speed limits to be observed to plus or minus 5 m.p.h., take streets and turns per her instructions – repeated twice – and kindly reduce chit chat. We drove through neighborhoods, on feeder roads, on main roads, and finally on a six-lane divided highway. Back at the clinic I got her assessment: I had a little bit of a heavy foot, and at stop lights I pulled up too close to the cars ahead. She suggested to keep enough distance so I can see the rear tires of the car ahead. (The same advice I got from a Senior Driving Course I took three years ago.) But I did pass the test.



# Garden Mail

BY TOM DUFFEY

**T**HIS IS NOT RELATED TO “GREENMAIL.” Leave that to the corporate takeover specialists.

This is relative to a friendly habit that developed over time in my small-town neighborhood. I have a neighbor who is a master gardener. Her garden, in full bloom and flower, is like a paradise come to earth. She plants her raised beds with such love and care, along with the knowledge that comes with mature study.

An old mailbox stands in the far corner of her garden. Every Friday, I read the “Home and Garden” section of the Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review* which includes a special column written by an expert on plant life and gardening, usually along with a beautiful photo. I began the tradition of enclosing these articles, in a fresh, white unmarked number ten envelope. On my weekly trip to our public library, I stop by the garden and put them in the mailbox and raise the flag to announce – “You’ve got mail.”



Sometimes, the flag will already be up, which means that there is something for me in the box. There would be, for instance, a beautiful Christmas card with heartfelt written greetings. There might be a packet of seeds garnered from her beds of colorful wildflowers of the type you might see on a highway trip and marvel at the fields of beauty blanketing the hills and dales along the way. I would then plant the seeds around my property and await the growth and the gift of their natural splendor. Sometimes, there would be a clutch of ruby-red cherry tomatoes for my wife.

Once, she made a nosegay for us. This is a small flower bouquet typically given as a gift. The term arose around the fifteenth-century, combining nose and gay (the latter meaning “ornament” and appealing to the nose). This evolved from the language of flowers. Doilies traditionally are used to bind the stems in the arrangement such as the one my garden friend gave to me.

I treasure the sight of my neighbor’s garden and the steady care we take to keep our tradition alive, even on the bleakest winter day.

This story, in fact, will be my friend’s next piece of garden mail. Thank you, Nancy.

# Lunch with the Rag Man's Son

BY TOM DUFFEY

THE ERA WAS THE LATE 1980s. The area was Washington, D.C. There was a news article in the *Washington Post* that Kirk Douglas was soon to appear as the guest of a book-and-author luncheon at the Washington Hilton.



*Kirk Douglas.*

Spring was in the air during this time and the cherry blossoms were in bloom. My wife and I decided that this would be an excellent time to experience the downtown lunchtime ambience of the capital and also see some of the *Post's* featured authors. Studs Terkel, the author of *Working*, was also on the bill with Mr. Douglas. My wife was much more interested in the eminent oral historian.

Kirk Douglas had actually been in a movie in which he portrayed an old rag man on a rickety horse-drawn wagon going through a neighborhood yelling, “Raaags! Raaags!”

We arrived at the hotel and purchased copies of the authors' books for autographing later. Most folks there already knew who Kirk Douglas was but a dignified introduction was in order, given his star status, so this was done by the publisher of the *Post*.

When Kirk Douglas took the mic, he spun a few Hollywood tales and then came across with the “closer.” He related that there was a time when he lived in Palm Springs, California, and had to make a drive to Los Angeles for some film-studio work — about a four-hour drive. I imagine he was driving a rather nice car.

As he explained it, he started out on the drive and a short distance out of town he passed a hitchhiker. He drove on by and didn't think much of it. After a short distance he had some second thoughts that it might be nice to have company on the drive. He made a U-turn in front of the hitcher and pulled up next to him. Mr. Douglas said that the guy, upon opening the passenger-side door, looked at him and blurted out, “Do you know who you are?!!!” This story caused a hilarious reaction in the audience and I remember that part of his presentation to this day.

# Is There a Quilting Gene?

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

**M**Y MOM EVEN HAD STATIONERY that was emblazoned with “I am a quilt lover” at the top of the sheet. She loved to quilt! And she was so skilled at making tiny, neat stitches.

The first quilt that I remember on my bed (and a similar one on my sister Chris’ bed) was an appliqued quilt called “Sunbonnet Girls.” It was on light blue and white squares. (My own sons used that quilt – until one of them colored it with a red magic marker: it was hidden in the linen closet.) Later there was a quilt made out of the samples of wool that came on lightweight cardboard (I assume for clothing stores). It was backed with a yellow and black fabric – that was in the days that yellow was my favorite color. Mom also pieced a quilt for my wedding called “Dresden Plate,” and she quilted one of state birds and flowers that my sister Marie had embroidered. Over the years she sewed all kinds of quilts – appliqued, embroidered, or cross-stitched. In her later years several of the quilts were baby quilts, for children of friends and for her own grandchildren. She hand-quilted all of the approximately 175 of them.

There was also a quilt in the house that my father, as a very young man, had embroidered, so I was definitely exposed to the hobby of quilting. Since I liked to sew (clothes for my dolls, my cats, and even myself) I thought it might be fun to quilt as well. I would go down to the basement where Mom sat at a quilt stretched on the frame that Dad had constructed for her. I tried to make tiny, even stitches like she did, but mine didn't look nearly as nice. Finally, she hinted that I didn't need to help her in that way. However, she wouldn't mind if I would thread some needles for her before I left. I would thread several, then go back upstairs – still intrigued by the process.



*My Mom displaying her bicentennial flag quilt.*

Years later, I finally tried quilting by myself. I enjoy the process as well as the result. However, if there is a quilting gene, I am proof that it does not come with a guarantee of tiny, neat stitches.



# Scavenger Hunt Quilt

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

**W**HAT A CONCEPT! This summer for my birthday, a friend sent me an article about Scavenger Hunt quilts – using only materials one already had in her “stash.” I wouldn’t have to go into a store to purchase fabric during this pandemic; I only needed to look in my cupboards.

The directions of what to put on the quilt provided an intriguing challenge: a fabric the color of my birthstone, telling the month and day by measuring it in inches; 4 or 5 items I touch every day; an animal or flower that relates to my personality; a thread going from one side to another, representing travel. Sixteen 2-inch squares of fabric that I remembered purchasing – in order! – was the most fun.

The first of these was actually from a favorite dress when I was about ten, with black French knots representing buttons from top to bottom. Heavy pink satin (rather like armor): prom dress junior year. White satin edged in royal blue, the color of the bodice: senior year prom dress. Lilac fabric: my bridesmaids’ dresses. White chiffon and lace: wedding dress. Pajama fabric for one son and jacket fabric for the other. “Little dresses for Africa” fabric. An apron for “bunny girl.” A white whale next to Pika-chu: pajamas for grandsons. Cardinal flannel: my nightgown. It was quilted using stencils from my mom, who inspired me to quilt.

I enjoyed the fond memories as I chose the materials and did the work of bringing it all together!



# Adam Defends Eve – A Joint Reply\*

BY HAROLD W. CHENEY, JR.

Adam addressed the Lord, “Yes, Lord. Eve did take a bite of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. And, after she did so she was able to explain to me why I too should take such a bite. I did. And now I, too, know why.”

**“And your reason?”**

“Our reason? It was, and is, Love, my Lord. Love for You. You must see that before we ate of the apple from that tree, we could NOT Love you to the utmost. Complete Love needs complete knowledge of – understanding of – the object of that love.”

Eve added, “Before we ate of that apple, my Lord, Adam and I were fond of each other. But we didn’t really know each other. We knew about each other. But I could not look into his heart, his soul. He could not look into me.”

Adam took up on Eve’s explanation. “Now, with the knowledge from that tree, Eve can enter into my soul, and I can enter into hers. We can now experience true and full love between each other.”

Both Adam and Eve joined, as best they could, in completing their explanation, “And now, our Lord, being so capable in our love for each other, we are even more so in being more fully in our Love for you. We yet know that our understanding of you is not as full as it could – it will someday – be. Our Love for you will be an ever growing thing for us and for our offspring.”

Eve concluded, “Yes, Lord, we will produce – with your blessing – an unending succession of your creations. Humans – people – whose hymns to you will fill all creation.”

God thought for a moment. **“I accept that. Yes, it was fitting for you to do so. But, Eden is no place for the people who will spring from you. Look there! That is the place I shall cede to you for your new home. What shall I name it?”**

Both cried, “Oh Lord, it is to be The Earth!” And so it came to be.

\* See the August issue for the context and thread of this story. –Ed.

# **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. First-person personal narratives and anecdotes 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. No charge.

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

**And a NOTE TO READERS** — I welcome 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](mailto:williamboys@att.net) (preferred, to save retyping) or by postal mail to 184 Reinhard Ave., Columbus OH 43206-2635.

## Short tips on writing short, short stories

Here are three under-six-minute YouTube videos to get oneself thinking about writing short pieces. (These are new ones, different from ones I've mentioned before.)

**“What's the difference between memoirs and personal narratives?”** by Amanda Werner. (1 min., 28 sec.)

**“The Steps for Writing a Personal Narrative,”** by Mallory Grammer. (2:46)

**“How to Write Creative Non-Fiction,”** by Shaelin Bishop. (5:57)