

ONE-PAGE STORIES

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The Best State Fair - Part 2

BY LINDA L. SHIVVERS — DES MOINES, IOWA

IT'S ALMOST TIME AT THIS WRITING! Anticipation for the Iowa State Fair 2021 is high. The Shivverses are looking forward to their favorite activities. Remember the draft horse shows mentioned last time, and the trophy presented by Linda and Mel?

It's so exciting to see twelve six-horse hitches in the arena at one time. At one of the events, Linda was invited up on the wagon for the victory lap. The driver was welcoming and was getting ready to signal the team when one of the mares got excited, jumped the single-tree and fell. The crowd of several hundred went dead quiet. The driver remained calm; Linda sat very still. Handlers from all around the arena jumped in and helped to keep the other horses calm, and the downed horse quiet (unhurt). The lead team was hitched in front of the wheel team, and the victory lap commenced with a four-horse hitch. Back in the barns how do you get down off that wagon? You get help from one of the handlers.

Beyond the horse shows there's so much to see between the Pioneer Hall, the Ag Building, Varied Industries Building, and the animal barns. A road goes up a hill by the cattle pens. An exhibitor was taking her cow and calf to the show arena, but was having a bit of trouble because the calf was trying to nurse as they went. Then there's the Tractor Parade, Car Show, Fiddler Contest.

Other things occur, and if you're *here* watching *this*, you'll miss something else *over there*. Sitting on a bench to rest, or eat a treat, isn't all that bad. You might get to see a little boy pop out of his stroller, run up to the cotton candy stand, decorated with wooden decals representing the fluffy treat, and start licking the pink puff. There's always the little kid who drops a hot dog right out of the bun onto the street, picks it up, looks it over, wipes it off, sticks it back in the bun and eats it.

You can't see all the contests going on but sometimes you might see an entrant go by such as the kid who had entered the Pigtail, Ponytail, and Mohawk contest. The winner being a boy sporting a Mohawk hair-do in the shape, color and with the eyes of an iguana. The kid made the front page of the newspaper.

And that's only bits and pieces of eleven days of fun, food and folks!

Ohio Loves OSU Football

BY GARY BOSSLER — MASSILLON, OHIO

IT'S KNOWN AS BUCKEYE FEVER – how the population of Ohio and especially Columbus supports the Ohio State University football team.

A story goes: “The team hired a new coach. On opening day he was amazed at how the 100,000 plus seats filled up. As the time for the kickoff approached, he noticed about half way up on the 50 yard line, there was one empty seat. He noticed it remained so through the first and second quarters. He decided to check it out at half time. He found an older lady sitting on the aisle seat, an empty seat beside her. He asked her about it and she said that she and her husband had season tickets for twenty five years, but he had passed away. The coach said he was sorry to hear that but couldn't she have given the ticket to a friend or family member? She said she could have, but they all went to the funeral.”

Back in 2006 when Hal Cheney became Official Editor of *The National Amateur*, I was charged with getting the bound volumes to him. At that time Hal lived in Illinois and I discovered he had a son who lived in Columbus. I contacted him and he said he would be visiting his dad and would be glad to transport them to him if I could get them to Columbus. Hal's son was a fan and attended all home games. I said I would be happy to drive them down to Columbus on a Saturday but it had to be when Ohio State had an away game. The traffic is heavy on home-game days.

Actually it's not just Columbus that catches Buckeye fever. I have friends and acquaintances that have Buckeye football parties, especially those friends that have a 50" flat screen TV. And they can have them even when it's an away game.

Some Ohio State Alumni Clubs around the country regularly have game-day watch parties at sports bars or restaurants (depending on whether they have minors present), as do alumni clubs associated with other major football team universities. But naturally, here in Ohio, Buckeye Fever is especially rampant and highly contagious.



Mine Too

BY “CHASE” / PEGGY ZORTMAN — REYNOLDSVILLE, PA.

HOW DO YOU DO, FOXY.

Your story “My Owners Have ADD” so impressed me that I just had to comment.

Let me introduce myself . . . I am Chase, Former Shelter Dog. About five years ago I adopted a couple of senior humans and named them Mister and Missus. I get treats, I get naps and I have my own man cave (they call it a crate). I also have adventures where I’ve learned things like “Stop!” “No!” and “Bad Dog!”

Our lives, yours and mine, seem to be pretty much the same — but different. We live in the country so my walks are different. After intensive training I can finally let Mister and Missus at home while I have a little freedom — such as a game of tag with the neighbor dogs. However that time I went for an extended tour of the neighborhood I was in trouble. Why?

The cat situation is different too. You seem to have a great relationship with your cat sister, Isabel. I have a “watch-out” relationship with Neighbor Ned. He put a mark on my nose. I guess he doesn’t like to play tag.

You have the wonderful Brown Bag Deli. I have no nearby stores, but I go everywhere with my humans. Each human I meet is a potential dog feeder. I just sit, look cute and stare. It works every time.

Let’s get back to that sense of smell thing. Soon after I moved in Missus baked a cake — then lost it. My nose found it on the kitchen counter. I knew it was for me so I grabbed, just getting an edge. It broke apart in my mouth so I grabbed again . . . I left half for my family.

Suddenly I heard, “Chase, what have you done! Bad dog, bad dog!” Missus has Aroma Deficit Disorder (ADD). She didn’t understand. I hid in my man cave. I found a lost cake. I cleaned up a mess on the floor. What did I do wrong? I don’t understand humans!

This is Chase signing out.

Paper Boy

BY TOM DUFFEY — REYNOLDSVILLE, PA.

I WAS TIRED MOWING LAWNS FOR VERY PICKY people and wanted to step up to a more “regular job.” I started hanging out with our neighborhood paper guy who was a Senior in High School. He was more mature than I and allowed me to tag along as his helper. It was a huge route and I wanted to take over because he was headed to college. I was in eighth grade at the time.

At the far end of the route was a sizeable trailer court. He cautioned me not to let any of these customers get behind in payments because some tended to move out at night leaving their bill behind. When this happened, it was up to the paper boy to make up the difference.

An exotic dancer who worked downtown in Canton (Ohio) – the other side of the tracks – lived in the court. She had “star” status and was picked up in a stretch limo for the ride and her grand entry in front of the theater with furs and hoopla. It was a theater known as the State Burlesque. There would always be a crowd.

I gained entry a few times because there was a hot drummer in their combo. I was interested in drumming and technique.

I always looked forward to making my Saturday collection at the trailer where she lived. She was always flirting with her eyes in a playful way. One time in particular, she wanted to link arms and walk with me a ways. Her comment was “Let’s give ’em somethin’ to talk about.” Ha! I didn’t mind that at all.

I experienced a theft after one Saturday collection. One of my school friends wanted to go with me on the route. When I got home, I put all the money in one of Mom’s empty fruit jars in the garage. The next day – gone. I didn’t make a police report. In later years, he went to prison. In a Karmic way, it was bound to happen.

The paper route made me realize how to own up to responsibilities. On Sunday, I had to carry double bags so as not to make return trips to the paper drop. I had to stop at every telephone pole to relieve the strain on each shoulder. My dad wouldn’t drive me; he said Sunday was his only day to sleep in. And the nasty Ohio Winters served to toughen me for later years in the Army and marching up hills.

Boomba Time

BY TOM DUFFEY — REYNOLDSVILLE, PA.

MY DARLING WIFE, SUSAN, HAPPENS TO BE POLISH. She loves her polkas. They play live on our radio every Sunday morning and afternoon. She is referred to as the Reynoldsville Meteorologist. She gives the temperature and if it's raining she says "Polka Sunshine on the inside." If it's sunny, it's "Polka Sunshine *all over the place!*"

Twenty-some years ago when we moved back to her hometown, we went out to dinner at a senior center ten miles away in Punxsutawney. There was a polka band entertaining the diners and she was transfixed by a kind of folk instrument that looked to be made from a heavy broomstick with cymbals on top, a tambourine on the lower part, a cow bell and jingle bells. The leader of the band took note of her interest and invited her up to make some rhythm with a polka tune. She gave a broad smile. That gave me an "aha" moment. I found an actual maker of this instrument and ordered one for her birthday. I had it sent to a neighbor's house because with all the loud jangly stuff affixed and the size of the box, it was dead giveaway. I put a ribbon on the box and brought it into our house for her to open and be surprised.

As luck would have it, I was the drummer in a local country band and we played mostly nursing and personal care homes. Our big gig was the Jefferson County Fair once a year. One day, I decided to sit down and write a song for the boomba. The Polish have a polka for practically everything – even bowling – but no song for the boomba. I wasn't having much luck. Got a couple lines down and they were worth the "round file." My wife, being a very talented writer, put together a really neat song and it is copyrighted in the Library of Congress.

The song is set up on YouTube and all you have to type in is "Boomba Time Polka." That is me at the beginning saying "one, two" in Polish (*jeden, dwa*) which is kind of like when Lawrence Welk used to say "ah-one and ah-two" when he fronted his band.



Tom Duffey with the boomba he gave to Susan.

Note the Notes

BY JIM HEDGES — NEEDMORE, PENNSYLVANIA

THE SIZE OF THE SCHOOL SOUSAPHONE impressed me – ever since, music has been a big part of my life. I’ve played in dozens of bands over the years, including 20 years in a military band in Washington, D.C. I’ve played all the brass-band instruments. Horns are basically the same: blow into the little end, make an obscene sound with your lips, and the notes come out the big end.

But until this year, the notes were always other people’s notes; I had never conceived any notes of my own. Occasionally though, over the years themes had come uninvited into my mind when it was idling. I had scribbled down and saved the most promising of these on scraps of paper, thinking someday to make harmonious arrangements of them.

This year, the national association of old people’s bands, the “New Horizons” bands, announced a competition for new music suitable for elderly players. My own new horizon beckoned. I retrieved my cache of themes and began writing.

Arranging music these days is done with computers, not paper and pencil. A friend agreed to teach me the necessary program and he monitored my progress. With some practice, it is possible to “hear” the pitch of written notes and to write down notes “heard” in one’s imagination. I entered the melody in a convenient key. Then, I imagined a tuba part and added that. Melody and bass lines established the basic harmony of the composition. Next was to write the drum part, to establish the rhythm. Then to the piano, to test the chords I had imagined. Voicing – deciding which notes to give to which instruments – was last, taking care that no instrument was asked to play impossibly low or unreasonably high, and that the notes in each chord were balanced in volume. A lifetime of immersion in band music made this easy, but each note had to be written down individually, along with tempo and volume markings.

Creativity is 1% keeping the mind open and receptive and 99% dull labor. Arranging just this one march required days, weeks, of effort. But now that I’ve mastered the computer program, I anticipate making quicker work of my remaining themes. More and better marches will be ready for the downbeat by the time the verdict comes back from the elderly contest.

Kepler-62e

BY ERIN A. BROSEY — SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

NOTHING COMPARED TO THE DAY I STEPPED OFF of the shuttle and onto Kepler-62e. Not even the elation that ricocheted through my body the day my application was accepted. I had jumped and shouted, cried and laughed until I couldn't breathe.

That breathlessness was nothing like how my breath left my body when I looked out over the river valley below our base. The glowing vista of purple streaked red rock speckled green and brown was unlike anything I'd even dreamed. When the feed on the air quality monitor flashed green across the internal screen of my helmet, I was the first to pop the seal and remove it. That deep breath I took, the first breath ever taken on another planet, nothing compared. Orange Kepler's light rested gently against my dark skin in a way the Sun never had. In that moment, I knew I had found the home I had always looked for; and I knew I would learn absolutely everything about it. That feeling didn't falter when the first week of deluge kept us inside the base, calibrating equipment and driving ourselves crazy, or when I found myself stuck in mud, so deep, I lost the tide waders that reached up to my thighs.

That sense of awe only grew stronger when a herd of Quillon, Kepler's hooved reptilian quadrupeds, tore through camp and wrecked our communication equipment. It was the first unique order we ever identified, named for our captain who drove them off, screaming and swinging her jacket wildly at them. When I identified the first mammal any human being had seen on another planet, a marsupial the size of a basketball and just as round when it folded around itself to create a den for its young. I named it Domum, Latin for home. When we welcomed our first colonists, I felt a strong urge to wrap my arms around them and welcome them home.

As governor of Kepler-62e I felt no different than I had in my years as a zoologist. Instead of learning everything about the animals here, their environment, and their needs I learned everything about the humans now populating this planet, my home, our home. As I look out on that same river valley, the sun setting below the small city that now rests on the plateau laid out behind me, nothing compares.



Art credit: Alpha-Element on DeviantArt

Do Over

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

LOU WAS CONFUSED.

The last thing he remembered was shoveling snow from his driveway in Somersworth, New Hampshire. It was fairly deep and pretty heavy. He remembers experiencing a sharp pain in his chest and, being almost seventy-six, he was concerned. His wife was constantly on his case not to do this kind of work because of his age and health. He could stand to lose about forty pounds, the doctor had told him recently. The pain forced him to sit down in the snow and that's the last he remembered until now.

He felt like he had just woken up but when he opened his eyes everything was kind of cloudy. It felt like he was on a bed of sorts but without a pillow as he was used to. Although he could move his arms and legs, they felt kind of useless. When he tried to talk, just a cry-like sound emerged from his throat. As he continued this sound, a woman – he could tell by her scent – picked him up and slowly rocked him. When he continued to make the cry-like sound, the woman placed his face on her breast. This felt very comforting, but not in a sensual way. He started to suckle her breast because it just seemed the thing to do. After feeding, he must have fallen asleep because the room was dark the next time he opened his eyes, which were beginning to focus a little better now.

He thought he was in a hospital because of the aroma. Could he have had a heart attack, he thought? Why else would he be here then?

Gradually as days passed, he could see more clearly. His mind, though, stayed the same. He clearly remembered being a senior but now he realized he was an infant, and not a very old one at that.

A man entered the scene, picking him up and holding him at times. It felt good but not as much as when the woman did that, especially when she fed him. He seemed to be hungry so much of the time but she always responded to his cries. He was accepting his situation and becoming very comfortable with it.

After a few weeks, all memories of his life as Lou disappeared and all he knew was what was taking place at the time.

“Where Was That Control Marker?”

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

THE U.S. MARINE CAPTAIN CAME UP TO ME at the end of the orienteering course I had laid out in Concord Park, Knoxville, Tennessee. He said, “I couldn’t find one of your controls, (checkpoint markers) and other men in the unit couldn’t either. Are you sure about the accuracy of the course map you provided?”

The ridges and valleys of East Tennessee are ideal for orienteering, and Concord Park had both, and a densely wooded portion, too. Well, I *thought* my map was accurate. I laid out the course myself and personally re-ran it before the start. But far be it from me, a civilian amateur at orienteering, to question a Marine officer’s observation on a topic so quintessentially Marine as navigating over rough terrain on foot with a map and compass! Since some of the competitors had reached the finish line after having checked in at the questioned control, the only conclusion we were left with was that it had fallen off its tree branch at some point during the race – accidentally, we presumed, for it would have been very poor sportsmanship for anyone to remove it. We had to leave it at that. But even with that glitch, it was an enjoyable outing.

I got interested in orienteering in 1980 or so. I was self-taught at using a good compass and the fine topographic maps that were available at the Tennessee Valley Authority headquarters downtown. Since my wife and I were living in Knoxville, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and other parks were ideal draws for honing those skills. The availability of Concord Park was a fine incentive to plan an actual orienteering course, and I was so pleased that a Marine Reserve unit from Upper East Tennessee had heard about it and were making the trip to Knoxville to take part!

Those days are long over for me now. They were fun, outdoorsy, and trained me to pay closer attention to compass directions and land navigation. Nowadays there are many organizations not only for foot orienteering, but also for mountain biking, skiing, and trail orienteering. Just never break the Golden Rule of orienteering, as stated by a British website: “You must report to the download tent whether or not you complete your course. If you don’t, the organisers will spend hours out in the forest looking for you after the event has ended.” I’m glad to say we didn’t have to go looking in the woods for any participants – least of all Marine Reservists – that day!

Like to Write a Little?

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

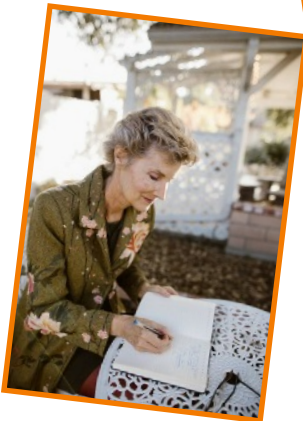
WOULD YOU ENJOY WRITING A ONE-PAGE STORY of your own and sharing it with a wider circle?

A personal narrative – something you've experienced in life?

A memory about someone or something? A fiction story?

The guidelines are on the back cover.

The invitation is there. We'd welcome your one-page story.



(images from Pexels.com free web images)



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 might have a good 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.

REQUEST TO READERS – Would you send me comments on any of the stories so I can pass them on to the writers? I'd appreciate it. Thanks!

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 – If You Want Some

I've found a helpful number of short YouTube videos about writing short stories, personal narratives and personal essays. In most previous issues there are links to them.

To see them, look at the PDF files of prior issues and check the back cover. (Prior issues can be found at either of the locations cited in the box below.)

Back issues of ONE-PAGE STORIES are now available for reading and downloading on the website of the National Amateur Press Association:

www.amateurpress.org/the-monthly-bundles

Neighbors in German Village can also get them via Village Connections at:

<https://villageconnections.clubexpress.com/>