

ONE-PAGE STORIES

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“Let’s Roll”

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

RECENTLY WE OBSERVED THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY of 9/11. We recalled the tragic events, but also the bravery shown, notably by the people on Flight 93. We heard again Todd Beamer’s, “Let’s roll,” before the passengers executed their plan to ensure their plane did not destroy the Capitol of the United States.

It didn’t take long after the first tower was hit for someone to come to my office and tell me. (I was an office associate at The Ohio State University.) A television was set up in the conference room. Soon the second tower was hit. Words were buzzing that this was not an accident. As rumors flew about other possible targets, my supervisor returned from his class and told me to go home. Shaken, I walked across the bridge to my car to go home, where I watched in horror the unthinkable images on the television.

My younger sister was at a training class and could see the smoke from the Pentagon. My older son called that night to tell me he and his girlfriend were safe in Nevada – they had flown out of Boston a day or two earlier – on one of the same flights used by the hijackers. My older sister, who lived in New York City, did not respond to my frantic e-mail queries but called later. She had been asleep most of the day. When she awoke and heard the news, she walked 20 blocks to a hospital to donate blood. Tragically, she and the rest of the country learned blood would not be necessary: not many survived the collapse of the buildings. Even my brother from Iowa called.

My next-door neighbor told me her youngest son, living in New York hoping to be an actor on Broadway, was on a subway headed to his “day job” as a temp at the World Trade Center when the first plane hit. His oldest brother worked at the Pentagon, but that day was late getting to work so avoided that attack.

On a random day seven years later, returning home from Boston, I stopped at that open field in Pennsylvania. I was far from being the only one who took time to remember our modern-day heroes, so we will “never forget” their sacrifice.



An early memorial on-site (later replaced).

Visiting My Roots (and Branches?)

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

I PLANTED SOME OF THESE TREES on a cold Good Friday afternoon sixty years ago. My sister, a cousin, and I took turns sitting behind a tractor, reaching into a bucket of frigid water, extracting a seedling, and carefully placing it into an open trench. A set of wheels closed the earth around the roots as we were reaching for the next evergreen.

Labor Day Weekend 2021, over 300 former campers and staff members gather at Camp Ewalu to remember and celebrate its accomplishments. The camp, in the northeast corner of Iowa, opened with only one large tent and a repurposed woodshed that served as the kitchen.



The campfire ring in “my” trees.

I served as registrar for one of the two weeks of camp in 1961, attended as a camper that year and the next, then became canteen manager. Yes, I had an “in”: my father, Al Zwanziger, was an early promoter of the camp and served as board president for several of the early years. In time I was also the bookstore manager and finally, after a year of college, a counselor. The camp grew rapidly to ten weeks of summer camping and year-round programming.

There were only a few people at the anniversary that I knew from all those years ago, but I was delighted to meet some “new” people who love Ewalu as much as I do. A highlight of the weekend for me was a wagon ride over the camp, sharing stories of different times and perspectives. The Otter Slide has disappeared, as has the Watermelon Baby Shack. Beaver dams have come and gone. Trees have grown tremendously! Four generations of one family have been involved with Ewalu.

An “open mic” on the final night featured musicians, young people, and lastly Micah sang “Jesus Loves Me” in the poignant voice of a child. This young boy also has roots at Ewalu: his grandfather was a musician I knew from all those years ago and his father served as Associate Director for several years. From generation to generation the legacy of Ewalu continues.

Molfarka

BY ERIN A. BROSEY — SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

WHEN SHE CAME OVER THE RISE, she saw him in the last dregs of sunlight glowing gray through the blanket of clouds. Before she could even sigh, he had seen her too, and was striding across her kempt lawn.

“The tincture worked,” he shouted accusingly as she finally broke free from the fireweed and wild herbs that cascaded across the mountains surrounding her home.

She didn’t respond only shoved past him toward her cottage, the basket from the day’s foraging heavy in her arms.

He followed her across her threshold shouting, “Are you listening? It wasn’t supposed to work!”

She set down the basket on her table and turned on him. “What was it supposed to do if it wasn’t supposed to work?” she snapped.

“It was supposed to be a joke! It was supposed to make a fool out of him!” He was panicked, but he should have known better.

“Do not come to me for jokes,” she hissed. “I only brew truths.”

He took a step back but persisted. “What do I do now? Is there something else you could give me?”

“No,” her tone was flat. “There is only what you can do for yourself.”

Rage bloomed on his face. “There is nothing! Now she’ll marry him and not me!” he shouted.

“Why, because he healed her father? You could have healed her father with the tincture, but you gave it to him instead. You thought my potion would either do nothing or it would kill him, didn’t you?”

He paled at the accusation.

“Out,” she commanded, “or I will tell her myself.”

“You’ll regret this!” he warned as he snatched open the door.

“Not before you will, I’m sure,” she said simply.

He slammed the door and was gone.

She barely spared a glance for his departure before she pulled an old book off the shelf and set it in front of her basket of herbs. She cracked it open slightly right of center and slipped her fingers gently between the pages until she came to the right recipe.

When the tea was completed, she took a sip and felt the ward take hold. Somewhere far down the mountain, in the village a constable was knocking on her visitor’s door. His employer’s miraculous recovery had led him to review his books and several discrepancies had been found.

She sighed contentedly and took another sip.

Why Dogs Should Not Go into Restaurants

BY "CHASE" / PEGGY ZORTMAN — REYNOLDSVILLE, PA.

CHASE HERE, FORMER SHELTER DOG, REPORTING.

Mister and Missus took me to town the other morning. We wandered into the hardware where I asked, "Arf." The girl behind the counter gave me a treat. In the library I requested, "Woof." The lady behind the counter gave me a treat.

Next stop was the post office. I stayed outside with Mister, who was talking to a friend. Mister talks with his hands a lot and didn't realize he had dropped my leash.

A few doors down is a restaurant. Every time the door opened I could – s-n-n-n-n-niff – bacon! I decided to walk myself down there to investigate. When the door opened I confidently scooted right up to the counter and ask for a treat, please . . . "Ruff, roof!"

All of a sudden I heard a high-pitched scream, "There's a dog in here!" I turned to see a woman pointing at me, and there were two wild-eyed kids headed in my direction.

"Don't go near it!" a man shouted from the back. "Strange dogs bite; and it might have rabies," another woman loudly declared as she held two disappointed children away. From the other side of the room someone shrieked, "We should call the cops or something!"

I was frozen in place with my mouth still hanging open; but almost immediately a lady wearing an apron came from behind the counter. In one graceful move she picked up my leash, handed me a chunk of bacon, and whispered, "Let's get out of here, little dog." I swallowed the bacon whole and never looked back. As we reached the sidewalk Mister had just finished his conversation and turned in time to see us. "How did you get down there, Chase?" he asked.

As I licked the smell of bacon from her hand, the Bacon Lady answered with a wink at me, "He just stopped by for a visit." Mister then took my leash, thanking her for catching me. She didn't catch me — she saved me.

CONCLUSION: Don't go into restaurants alone. There may be un-socialized people in there. This is Chase signing out.

Halloween Stupid

By TOM DUFFEY — REYNOLDSVILLE, PA.

I HESITATED TO COMMIT THIS STORY to paper. It is not something I am proud of, to say the least. The time was 1957 and I was just a dumb knucklehead kid part of a neighborhood group of guys always trying to figure out how we could do guy things. And ... get away with said tricks.

One popular caper involved filling a vast quantity of balloons with water to about the size of a softball. These were good for pitching at cars from a hiding spot on a hill across from Jack Tucker's house. We could see our prey coming up the street and we waited 'till the last minute to let loose a barrage of balloons to the side of the car. Then, in cases when the car would stop and the driver would come out and look to see where the water came from, usually they would get back in the car and move on.

There was one notable exception. The driver was a coach of the little league team and was also an ex-college standout football player. He took after us up the hill and we ran down the other side to Jack's house. Through the attached garage and into the kitchen. Nah – he would never follow us into the house. But he did! Jack's Mom was cooking dinner and in he came – through the house and into Jack's bedroom. That was our last day of pitching balloons.

Then came Halloween. We got together about 100 yards of good rope and built a life-sized dummy. We found a suitable tree about half-way down a hill and rigged up the dummy into the leaves and over a branch. Then at night, we could see headlights coming and waited 'till the car was almost under the branch and then let down the dummy in full view of the windshield. Then, we would pull him up again into the tree. Tires would screech but the car would then go on. This whole thing sounds like something out of Stephen King.

I started having second thoughts about our little scene and drew a conclusion. What if the driver was an elderly lady or gentleman and they would suffer some kind of heart attack or the like? Then, how would one feel? I quickly put a stop to our set-up with the full realization that I was the dummy.

Palm-Wine Welcome Party

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

WE WERE YOUNG, ONLY ONE YEAR INTO OUR mission tour in 1967 when we moved into the Nigerian village of Ikot Use Ekong. My job was to analyze the speech of that area – would it need its own literacy materials, or might it make do with resources of the Ibibio area, to which it was linguistically related?

Settling into the village called for getting acquainted, and an important and traditional way to do that was to host a gathering of the men at our house and yard. Serving palm wine was practically obligatory in the culture, and I surely wanted to get off on the right foot by honoring and observing the tradition. Fortunately some of the men, such as our duplex family's husband and Sergeant B. J. Akpanumoh of the Salvation Army congregation, spoke English enough that I arranged through one of them for someone to obtain the necessary supply.

Palm wine comes from the sap of palm trees, which are everywhere in the tropical coastal belt of all of West Africa. Palm sap ferments very quickly, producing a whitish, fizzy, slightly sweet concoction that can reach 9% alcohol concentration in just twenty-four hours. Different from grape wines, but quite tasty. It also attracts insects, of which there are also plenty there, so usually you have to pick out or slosh out those little intruders from time to time.



Palm wine, served in a traditional calabash cup. Image: BoudaOnline

The party went well. Within a few days or so I had even arranged for the services of a young man who had been in Lagos for awhile, learned enough English that he could be my language informant. We got started on recording vocabulary, sentence structure and phonological analysis. Sergeant Akpanumoh told me one day that the young man was not telling me the right words. But I never got to explore whether that was so, or whether it might have been a feature of young men's speech versus old-timers' speech, for at that point, so early on, the Biafran secession occurred, the civil war began, and we evacuated from Nigeria – unfortunately, never to return. I remember that taste of palm wine – and the good people.

Thank You, Jim & Grace Carnes

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

GRACE WAS MY MOTHER'S MATRON OF HONOR at her wedding; a very good friend. Jim was an independent bookkeeper. Even before my family moved from Cincinnati out to rural Brown County, Ohio, from time to time we visited them and their two daughters, Carolyn and Prudy, who were about the same ages as my brothers and myself. The girls became the closest thing we had to sisters. Sometime in my high school years was when our family moved to within a couple of miles of the Carneses, so relationships grew even more in the years after that.

We were more often visitors at their home than they at ours, and we were always welcome, often sharing a meal. Jim had an organ at home and a large library of books. On some occasions he would let me ride with him to his office in New Richmond. I remember learning to like iced coffee through Jim's example when we'd stop at a diner or restaurant for a cup on the way. I don't remember ever paying for my own cup.

Jim was also somewhat a fancier of unusual cars. The most striking example was when he had a Citroën DS sometime in the 1950's or early '60's – a French automobile that was far ahead of its time in some aspects of automotive engineering, and *way* ahead in styling. He took me for a ride or two in it so I could experience its incredibly soft seating and its unique fluid-damped suspension. Even today I sometimes look up Citroën videos on YouTube just to remember those cloud-like rides and that futuristic look.

I was only home for school holidays after my family moved closer to the Carneses, yet it was still a familiar tie. Then, with my marriage and career and its moves, those relationships trailed off into the past. Jim eventually retired as macular degeneration left him almost totally blind. Carolyn and Prudy went off to college, married, and began their own lives. Widowed, Grace lived on for awhile in the old Victorian-style family home, but as it fell into decrepitude, she moved into a mobile home brought onto the property, where she spent her last years. Only this year, after my younger brother, Eric, visited them have I been nostalgically moved to rekindle those ties. I am grateful to Jim and Grace, though they are now gone, and to their daughters for being an auxiliary family in those far days.

My Kelsey 5" x 8" Tabletop Letterpress

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

I HAVE A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT to a little cast-iron machine. I got it through a friend of my favorite aunt, Edith Dornbirer – another mark in its favor. This was in the summer of 1967, right after Ruth and I arrived in Columbus so I could study Linguistics at Ohio State University while we were evacuated from Nigeria because the Biafran civil war erupted (see p. 7).

It is a tabletop printing press, made by the now-defunct Kelsey Company of Meriden, Connecticut. If you crammed hand-set type into its chase, completely full, you could only print a 5" x 8" maximum area with each depression of its handle. But it was a little workhorse. I painted the cast-iron gray body blue, and highlighted the letters raised on the body with silver.

Over the ensuing years I printed editions of our small booklet newsletter, *The Ship's Log*, an occasional journal titled *Boys's Berries*, and various ephemera such as stationery and envelopes, business cards, note pads and the like.

On occasion it was the press of choice to use in teaching interested persons about letterpress printing because almost anyone could press the handle and see their own hand-set type appear on a blank sheet of paper – always exciting and fulfilling! The accompanying photo was one such event; another was for the members of the Knoxville [Tennessee] Book Arts Group.



"Camp Jo Marie" – an aunt and one of her nephews learning to print letterpress on my Kelsey 5 x 8" press.

Since moving to Columbus, I've sold all the rest of my printing equipment by now, part of the downsizing that goes with aging. But I just couldn't part with this reminder of earlier and more active days in letterpress printing, and the creative enjoyment the hobby has provided as well as the many personal friendships formed over the sixty years I've had various presses and other printing machines.

I'm Doing Well for a 120-Year-Old Male!

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

MY WRIST BAND IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center clearly stated I was 120 years old! I was very glad for the Trauma Team's optimism considering I was their unexpected guest after the wee hours this recent morning when I passed out and fell after getting out of bed to use the bathroom.

I must admit I didn't remember a single detail of those thirty-some extra years on my scorecard, but then I had that swelling bump on the back of my head so maybe I had amnesia? Closer examination of the wrist band revealed, however, that instead of my real name, it was something hokey, like "Admission Alpha," birthdate 1-1-1900. Ah, so it was just a temporary stand-in wristband, nothing more.

Hopefully, the lump on the back of my head would prove to be temporary, too, but it was (ouch!) definitely real. So were the 24 lab tests and 6 imaging tests that followed in the day and a half I was in the E.R. and its Observation Unit. Happily, they revealed no concussion, no broken bones, no stroke, no bruised or severed vertebrae or nerves. Just my old-time heart murmur (with accumulating mileage), slight potassium insufficiency, and an aging chassis. Over the course of the 34 hours I was in the unit, I experienced what it must be like to be interrogated by multiple detectives for a crime: "Tell us again how this happened, Bill. What did you do?" But these were all good cops, very good cops, I hasten to add.

After carefully ruling out the more fearsome possible causes, the resulting consensus was that I had most likely gotten up from sleep and from the bed to a standing position too quickly, outpacing my heart's ability to rev up quickly enough on demand. P f f f t – I passed out less than five feet along on my trip. The thick carpet and padding along that way probably cushioned my head bump to some degree.

One bit of knowledge I got from the physical therapist, two of the nurses, and the supervising cardiologist, was this: it's a good idea when getting up after hours of lying prone asleep, to sit on the edge of the bed for two or three minutes, wiggling toes and ankles, before attempting the stand-up routine. Especially if, like pseudo-me, you're 120 years old?

Taking Pen in Hand . . .

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

DID YOU LEARN CURSIVE WRITING IN SCHOOL? Many kids did, but then it fell out of favor for awhile. Now, some schools are going back to it, such as our public schools here in Columbus, since recent studies indicate the hand-eye coordination of handwriting stimulates our brains better than keyboard typing.

And there's been a rebirth of interest in fountain pens and other handwriting tools among grown-ups, too. For example, the Central Ohio Pen Club, right here in this part of Ohio. They've resumed their monthly meetings; twenty or more attend. The annual Ohio Pen Show here hasn't started back up yet because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but I warrant it will ere long.

Sending someone a handwritten letter or note – well, there's no comparison with a computer-typed one, is there? Or an email (though those all surely have their important uses).

Handwriting is so very, very personal. And it can be uniquely decorative even in a page of just plain handwriting, not to mention that you can dress it up for a further personalized look with a care toward legibility, line control, and even fanciful flourishes. And that's not even mentioning fine calligraphy!

I'm going to invite members of the Central Ohio Pen Club to write up stories, narratives or poetry fitted to this size of page. Those that come in will make up a separate publication devoted to showing what they've got. I'll print it in a booklet the same size as ONE-PAGE STORIES, and distribute copies in the NAPA bundle as well as make copies for the pen club members.

Why do I mention this here? I'm wondering if any members of the National Amateur Press Association might like to pen a page for it as well. Feel free to write a story up in what ever size fits your "hand" and observe roughly half an inch margin on all sides.

I think it will be interesting to see the results!

A handwritten page is a unique, personal labor. "Your results may differ," as they say. Oh, yes, for sure! Give it a try?



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 comments on any of the stories so I can pass them on to the writers. They appreciate it.

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

I hope my writing will benefit from knowing more about the difference between *telling* my reader something and *showing*. (I don't mean using pictures, though they certainly have a place.)

“How to Show, Not Tell: The Complete Writing Guide” is a YouTube video that pulls together examples of that difference. At 27 minutes it's five times as long as the ones I usually commend, but maybe you will not mind the investment. And, throughout, it peppers other resources you might want to look into.

Use the concrete, not the abstract; specific, not vague. But the video also mentions times when telling *would* be appropriate!