

# ONE-PAGE STORIES

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# Two Hundred Evergreeners and Counting

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

**W**E HOSTED OUR 200TH HOUSE GUESTS, members of Evergreen Club, on July 14, 2022. That would be about 400 people in total since each hosting usually is for a couple; sometimes a single, occasionally more when we had a larger home.

You didn't know about Evergreen Club? Their website reads:

"Stay for \$20 a day. Bed and breakfast homestays for people over 50. Adventures in hospitality® since 1982."

(Look it up on the web if you're interested, this story is not to advertise it but to celebrate our little milestone.) We joined in 2003.

We provide overnight accommodation in our spare room and a cooked breakfast the next morning. Usually we have time to get acquainted with our guests and share tips of what to see and do locally if they have the time. Here in our home in the historic German Village neighborhood, I usually make a German Pfannkuchen (pancake) with bratwurst from local Schmidt's Sausage Haus and Restaurant. (No, we don't yodel or play alpenhorn as a side dish.)

The first twelve years, we were in Knoxville, Tennessee, and we definitely had more requests for hosting in the spring and fall migrations of "snow birds" between Florida and the Midwest and Canada. But we had plenty of hostings at other times. We never had less than 5 in a year. One year we had 20.

Things trailed off from 2014 while we were relocating to Columbus, Ohio, and then in 2020 it dropped to zero mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We don't see the "snow bird" surges here. Hostings are spread more evenly through the year, with low-to-zero numbers in winter.

One surprising regret is that we meet so many people it would be fun to hang around with more often, but off they scatter when their stay is over. I can only recall twice when we and our guests didn't click, but it wasn't an unpleasant visit, just cool. In the early years hosts could specify no same-sex guests at their homes, but I'm glad to say that proviso is now gone. I'm hoping someday we will have an opportunity to host guests of color, but I hasten to add that there has never been a Club prohibition against that in any case.

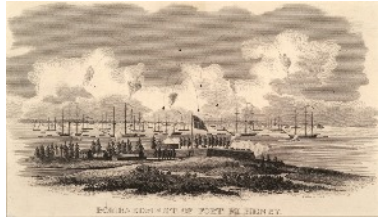
Would we do it again? Definitely!

# Cannonballs Forever

BY ANDREW JANTZ — ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

“THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER” was written, as a poem, on the night and morning of September 14, 1814 to commemorate the courageous stand of U.S. troops at Fort McHenry, in Baltimore harbor during the War of 1812. During the night and early morning, British warships fired roughly 2,000 cannon rounds at the Fort, to no avail. The flag continued to fly, and the British finally sailed away. It was penned by a 35 year old lawyer, Francis Scott Key. The poem was paired with the tune of a popular song, “To Anacreon in Heaven,” and steadily gained in fame throughout the 19th century. In the early 20th century, a movement began to push for the song as our anthem. A Maryland congressman, John Linthicum, introduced a bill to make it so, but it failed to pass. Over the next ten years he introduced the bill 5 more times, to no avail. In the late '20s the Veterans of Foreign Wars started a petition for it, and garnered 5 million votes, which they presented to Congress. Congress finally passed a bill in 1930, and in 1931 it was passed by the Senate and signed into law by President Hoover. [Wikipedia]

At the risk of sounding like an un-patriotic curmudgeon, I would like to go on the record as saying that it was a poor choice for our anthem.



With its 14 semitones and disjointed lyrics, “The Star Spangled Banner” is a notoriously difficult song to sing, as is evidenced by the butchery that even professional singers routinely make. Ever notice that few people in the stands ever sing along with the anthem, unlike the peoples of other countries? I suppose it could be worse, since the anthem is actually and officially 4 stanzas long. Fortunately for all, we only attempt to sing the first stanza.

Our anthem is nothing more than a nice, somewhat stirring military song. It is not a *national* anthem. The only other song that garnered some attention was “America the Beautiful.” That song is both stirring and indeed beautiful. Why on Earth wasn’t that song chosen? Or even “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” “Stars and Stripes Forever,” or “Hail Columbia”? I love the song because I have to love it because it’s our anthem, but just because I love it doesn’t mean I have to like it. Harrumph!

# Death As Punishment

BY KEN FAIG, JR. — GLENVIEW, ILLINOIS

WHEN I TAKE ACCOUNT of my diminishing physical powers and increasing ailments as I near the mid-point of my eighth decade, I find it difficult to perceive death as a punishment for those who experience it. In fact, death is mostly a punishment (i.e., a sorrow) for loved ones who survive the decedent. For society as a whole, the death of an elderly person frees up resources for the rest of humanity. It allows younger persons to rise to positions of leadership in a world in severe need of wise guidance.

In fact, most of the fear of death results from systems of belief which define post-mortem continuations of existence. Punishments in hell or purgatory loom large for Christian believers. Even believers who have led largely blameless lives face the prospect of infinite boredom in heaven. They can only hope that the divine presence will enable a state of infinite ecstasy.

All we ordinarily experience of the remains of the dead appears to indicate that they suffer no grief in this world. One may ask what dread an atheist might experience concerning a transition from being to nothingness. For those being buried according to traditional customs, embalming insures that premature burial is impossible.

During the Spanish Civil War, the republicans exhumed the remains of priests and religious to try to shake the faith of believers. Even believers concede their bodies will gradually return to dust. But sometimes the transition is gradual. Witness the corpse of Blessed Pius IX which was exhumed in 1956 (seventy-eight years after his death in 1878) as part of the *recognitio* of his cause for sainthood.



Today, the Pope's face is covered by a silver mask in his glass casket at St. Lawrence Outside the Walls in Rome. But I for one don't think he looks so bad in the photo from his *recognitio*. He still exhibits some dentition and may even be smiling.

Death was gentle with Pius. May death be gentle with you and your loved ones as well. I don't think death is always as fearsome as he is often portrayed. Despite the controversies concerning him, I hope Pius will eventually be declared a saint. I think his body as it was in 1956 provides a teaching moment.

# Trid Skid? – I’m an Optimist

BY KEN FAIG, JR. — GLENVIEW, ILLINOIS

**L**ATIN WAS MY FAVORITE SUBJECT in high school. So when I married a Catholic girl, I took naturally to the traditional (Tridentine) mass. We used to drive down to the near west side of Chicago to attend St. John Cantius. When that trip got to be too much, we attended Fr. Simon’s fourth Sunday traditional mass at St. Lambert in Skokie. But then Fr. Simon retired and Pope Francis published his *motu proprio Traditionis custodes* (2021) asserting abrogation of the old mass.

To a layperson, it sounded like John Paul II’s *Ecclesia dei* (1988) and Benedict XVI’s *Summorum pontificum* (2007) were being unwound in one fell swoop. However, a recent survey indicates that a solid majority of U.S. bishops have allowed existing concessions in favor of the traditional mass to continue. A minority have restricted or eliminated the traditional mass.

What of the over six hundred priests within the post-conciliar church dedicated to exclusive celebration of the traditional mass — mainly belonging to the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, the Institute of Christ the King, and the Institute of the Good Shepherd? These organizations are to be the subject of ecclesiastical visitations to discern their conformity with Vatican II decrees. The visitations, of course, will proceed in secrecy and the results may only be disclosed unofficially. I suspect traditional order priests will in the future be required to be trained to celebrate the *novus ordo* mass and to celebrate it on (perhaps) a monthly or at least an annual basis. How many of the traditional orders will accept such restrictions remains to be seen. Those orders and priests who do not accept the new restrictions will perhaps be reduced to saying mass in rented meeting rooms until their congregations can afford to begin building churches.

Of course, traditional orders and priests outside the church (e.g., the Societies of St. Pius X and of St. Pius V) will continue with the traditional mass. When he promulgated his new mass back in 1570, Pius V allowed the continuation of prior customs which had been established for at least two centuries. Hopefully, the post-conciliar church of 2070 will still find some room for priests and laypersons attached to a custom with five hundred years of precedence.

# Subjective Lullabies

BY KORELOY WILDREKINDE~MCWHIRTER — SOUTH TOE RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA

**O**UR MOTHER FOLLOWED OUR TRUE-BELIEVER father to the jungle-island, in the campo of northern Paraguay, at the edge of the Chaco. We were three and a half years old. Our baby brother nearly wasted away on the journey. In the cloistered village we found ourselves surrounded by other followers of the servants-of-the-word, from the sermon on the mount, by people from Germany and Britain. Our father was such a believer, as well; devotion by daily practice of his fervent faith.

We lived in long-houses made from tamped-mud floors, palm-log walls, and thatched-grass rooves, built by the people of the village. Here, everything was handmade and grown. The village had its own school, laundry, hospital, and bakery. Everything was spared-out in-common, share and share-alike. Nothing was private. There was no money, nor any other means of “the English” exchange. All was communal; especially the children. Self-sacrifice, by those less-equal-than-thou, was the watch-word.

Every night, while the adults were in meeting and prayer, the night-watchman walked from house to house, through the village, looking in on the sleeping children. We, being wakeful and full of songs, sang many lullabies to all the children who could hear us through the open wooden shutters which let in the cool night aer. There were many layers of jungle night-sounds.

One night, soon after our settling into the village, just after bedtime, we heard a sound under the small wooden-slatted bed with its wood-shavings mattress. In the dark, there was nothing to be seen. We climbed out of bed, found and lit the waiting candle-stub. We set it on the floor beside the bed. Then we got back onto the bed and turned ourselves upside-down, to find the source of that soft, rasping sound. Under the bed, in the shadow cast by the candle through our hanging-down hair, sat a toad. She was larger than our head. She was trying to swallow a spider nearly as big as herself. The spider’s fur-covered legs dangled and waved-about from the toad’s smiling mouth; a most interesting sight to behold.

We were glad that the mother was not there to see, as she would have been most perturbed and unruly, as well as upsetting to the toad and the spider in their in-common struggle to survive one another. We sang them a lullaby.

# Lipstick on a Bison

BY LOGAN K. YOUNG — CENTREVILLE, VIRGINIA

**T**HE FIRST PIECE OF ART I PURCHASED purely for art's sake was a facsimile (edition of 45) of John Lurie's magnificently stroked *Bison*. A 21 x 30" inkjet print on archival rag paper, it's signed by John, too. As a longtime fan of the onscreen Lurie and his musical output with the Lounge Lizards and, of course, "The Legendary Marvin Pontiac," I had been eyeing one of his paintings for a while – really, ever since I picked up his book *Learn to Draw* from Cologne's Buchhandlung Walther König.



*Bison*

John Lurie

"In the objects about us that we think of as beautiful, it isn't always their color that attracts our attention; it is what they look like," Lurie writes in the intro.

That bit of idiosyncratic wisdom stayed with me, as I squirreled away the necessary \$500 to purchase *Bison*. With that magic number reached, I transferred it from Wells Fargo to PayPal, clicked on over to JohnLuriePrints.com, added *Bison* to my cart, and it was all mine.

Finally!

I still feel like I have the prettiest even-toed ungulate in the West hanging right there in my study. (As it turns out, you really can put lipstick on a bison ... well, at least John Lurie can.) Moreover, when I saw *Bison* hanging in Lurie's aptly titled "Strange and Beautiful" exhibit at the downstairs bar of (le) Poisson Rouge in early October 2014, it only confirmed I'd made the perfect choice. Now, I just have to decide which Lurie look will go best in the living room.

Right now? I'm thinking *Elephant*.

# The Joy of Pinochle

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

I FIRST LEARNED TO PLAY THIS CARD GAME at my first permanent base while in the Air Force. After normal duty hours I was surprised to see how unmilitary the barracks became, more like a frat house I would suppose. I saw these four guys playing the game and was curious about it. I was a youngster, watching older men playing it. It only took a few minutes for me to understand the details of the game and with the assistance of another airman, I played a few hands – and I was hooked. It's been my game of choice ever since.

It's all about the challenge of seeing what cards are dealt and how to play them. One of the guys I used to play with would treat each of the 20 cards like they were Christmas presents. Eager to see the next one but didn't want to give up the excitement of the full hand. A couple of things that I find very fulfilling is when my partner names trump and I have a lot of them. The other is when the opponent takes the bid, names trump, and once again I have a lot of them.

I didn't play again after leaving the base until I moved to Waldorf, Maryland, and discovered that the three neighbors around me were players. We'd get together on Friday nights, when I wasn't working, and enjoy an evening of cards.

Once again I stopped playing for want of a game until I moved to Las Vegas, some 25 years ago. I saw an ad in our newspaper for players for a pinochle tournament. I joined them, playing with the group for some years and making lots of friends. This made it easier to meet people as we didn't know a soul when we moved here.

When that group broke up, I was asked to join another, where we played six-handed for years. Once again, I joined another group when this one broke up. This time it was COVID that terminated our game. Now I just play on-line at a site called Playok.com. I play with real people and we're rated using our win/loss status. The site has many games but I rarely play anything else. The best part is that it's all free and there's no travel. I believe the website provides information on how to play for those interested in learning the game.

Maybe we can play together some time. I use the name Jako1100. Look for me.



# The Military Ribbon I Took Off

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

THE MARINE “GUNNY” (GUNNERY SERGEANT) was a good instructor at the free, after-hours .45 pistol training being offered at the Naval Training Center, Orlando, Florida. I pulled an annual two-week stint of Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) at the Recruit Training Command that was located there at that time. (The whole base was closed in the late 1990s.)

I didn’t have much to do after hours during that ACDUTRA, and being a Reservist who had not been called up for full-time active duty, my uniform had few decorations. This class would be an interesting evening diversion, a chance to learn to handle and fire the .45 pistol and maybe an opportunity to earn a ribbon.

The firing range was just like you see in the movies: a long cement-walled space divided into several individual firing lanes, with a bulls-eye target located at the far end of each lane. The gunny showed me how to position my feet and my body for firing, how to line up the target in the sight, how to gently squeeze off each round, and how to accept the recoil without letting it interfere with my concentration on the proper procedure for firing. Pulleys and ropes brought up the target for him to examine after I fired.

After the several evenings of training I fired for an official test and was delighted to learn that I shot well enough to score “Expert.” I earned the accompanying ribbon and proudly added it to my one or two ribbons at the time.



*Navy Pistol Marksmanship  
Ribbon with “E” for  
Expert.*

My commission in the Naval Reserve was as a chaplain, of course, and I suppose everyone knows that chaplains are non-combatants. Well, I wasn’t planning to go out and buy a .45 to strap to my hip or any such ostentatious display, but I didn’t anticipate it when once at a chaplains’ conference at which the Navy Chief of Chaplains, John J. O’Connor, was in attendance, he glanced at my ribbons, addressed me quietly and explained that that ribbon on my uniform was not appropriate for a non-combatant.

The ribbon rested in my dresser drawer for years thereafter. Now I can’t even seem to find it.

# Dating

By JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

**A**LTHOUGH I'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR 58 YEARS, I recently got to thinking about a couple of dating instances that still puzzle me.

Before entering the service, I was employed by a company that manufactured communications equipment for the Navy. I was involved in quality control and shipping which required me to go to the front office several times a week. Working there was an attractive young lady, Barbara, who I estimated to be several years older than I. I figured she wouldn't consider me and confined my contact with her to just hello and that sort of thing.

On my first leave home I went back to see my fellow employees and was surprised Barbara asked if I'd like to join her in a drink at a local bar the next day. I didn't hesitate to reply in the affirmative. I arrived at the bar but she never showed up. Next time I went back to work there, which was after my discharge, she was gone. Perhaps something came up and she didn't know how to contact me? I never found out.

Towards the end of my enlistment, I used to get up late and just go to the NCO Club for an egg sandwich and read the newspaper. The usual waitress was a pretty teenage blond named Patty. It was common for airmen to hit on her. I didn't bother as I thought she was too young for me as I was 23 at the time. Fast forward; about a year after getting out of the service, I went back to visit the area and surprisingly ran into her. Actually I was surprised that she remembered me as there were so many other guys frequenting the club. One thing led to another and she suggested that we go out on a date. As she was now older and still pretty I agreed. I was to pick her up at her house a few days later at seven P.M.

I arrived at the appointed time and was a little surprised to see all the cars around and in her driveway. When the door was opened in answer to the doorbell, I was equally surprised to see what looked like a party going on. I told the person who answered the door that I was there for the date but was told that she had just gotten married and this was the reception.

I learned to be leery of girls asking me out. (But as it turned out that never happened again anyway.)

# A Candle in the Ice Storm

BY SANDRA MARTIN — MOUNT ORAB, OHIO

**W**E KNEW THE FEB. 3 ICE STORM WAS COMING. Not good when you live in the country. I moved our old generator from the barn to the back porch, but couldn't start it even with fresh gasoline. It hadn't been started for about nine years.

My daughter researched how to stay warm with no electricity, and bought two sets of terra cotta flower pots and the necessary hardware to make radiant heaters that heated the large pots to 160°, one set for me and another for herself. (You can watch YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vekNuFjbweM> to see how people put it all together.) We had no electric for 50 hours. I closed off my bedrooms. This little heater kept my living area at 60° degrees for 50 hours. Of course, that was still chilly and I am on baby aspirin daily, so my blood is thinned down but with extra clothing and two pairs of socks it was tolerable. I lost food in the refrigerator. My granddaughter went to a store and found a red Christmas candle, 7" round, with three wicks in it for \$5. I placed that on the stove with a cookie sheet on three bricks, and I could heat up water for instant coffee or heat up a can of soup.

On Saturday morning my daughter left for work at 6 a.m. She called to say the electric company was on our road. Later I left to go buy fresh milk and saw four of their vehicles at work. After picking up my milk, I ran to Dunkin Doughnuts, picked up 8 cups of coffee, 8 croissant rolls with bacon, egg and cheese, and 1 dozen doughnuts. When I got back to my road, of course they had the road blocked. When I pulled up, one man got out of the truck to tell me I could not get through. I said, "I know, but I brought you guys something." When I gave him the bags, he asked, "Why would you do this?" I said I was grateful they were here, and when they get a couple of doors down, one lady will be out to curse you out for being late, as she called the electric three times a day. I was just trying to make up for her rude behavior. When the job was done, I had three boom trucks and one pickup truck come up my driveway, 875 feet long, and they all honked their horns as a thank you.

I'm grateful to my daughter. I have since bought two more sets of pots. If one kept my living area at 60°, maybe two will keep it warmer. Another set is for my solarium, as I lost 7 orchids, 31 starts of citronella plants, 1 palm tree, philodendrons, and spider plants.

You can read and download back issues (PDF format). Use the QR code or go to [www.AmateurPress.org/the-monthly-bundles](http://www.AmateurPress.org/the-monthly-bundles).



## Write for One-Page Stories?

You needn't even be a member of NAPA to submit pieces, though members are definitely invited, too.

**HOW MANY WORDS?** About 375 - 400 words. (Less if you have an image to go with your story.)



**WHAT KIND OF CONTENT?** Original prose – fiction or non-fiction – previously unpublished. Personal narratives, anecdotes and memoirs especially welcome, but other genres welcome, too.

**DEADLINE:** End of the month, for the next month's issue.

**CAN I GET 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** – Please send me comments on any of the stories so I can pass them on to the writers. We all like that.

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

## “Why Write?” (Penmanship)

Writing “provides a link to our past, a link to lifelong learning, the conduit through which self-expression might flourish” – Jake Weidman. This TEDx talk is longer than I normally cite but I found it so stimulating I thought you might, too. (For one-page stories?)

“Why write? Penmanship for the 21st Century,” by Jake Weidmann. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85bqT904VWA>, TEDxMileHigh, YouTube, July 14, 2014. (16 min., 20 sec.)