

ONE-PAGE STORIES

No. 28 — October 2022

A Cooperative Journal for the National Amateur Press Association

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Edited, composed (in Serif PagePlus desktop publishing software),
printed (on a color laser printer), and published (all at home) by
Bill Boys, 184 Reinhard Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43206



Keats

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

“GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS” is a touching, sentimental movie about a teacher at an all-boys boarding school set in England in the early 20th century. From 1952 to 1958 I attended a similar all-boys boarding school, albeit in America and a Lutheran ministerial prep school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was called “Concordia College,” actually four years of high school plus two years of college. (The model for it was the German *Gymnasium*, not to be confused with our American use of that word for an athletic facilities building.)



“Keats”

“We will remember him as ‘Keats’, punctual, modest, philosophical. He created in us a sense of duty and responsibility; he inspired a love of music and culture.” (This is from the dedication page of the 1945 *Blue and White* yearbook) The picture on that dedicatory page shows a younger man than when I was a student in his History classes, but clearly recognizable. His name was Edwin O. Hattstaedt, still known as “Keats” in my time. I would add the adjectives dignified, and self-composed. I remember him as a fairly heavy cigarette smoker, but certainly never in the classroom, and I had few interactions with him

otherwise, so I’m not sure where I get that idea from. Maybe just seeing him walking across the campus those years. Maybe it is imagination – or hindsight.

Evidently he did not have a Ph.D., or I think we would have called him “Dr. Hattstaedt.” But his teaching was masterly, refined, a high caliber that I have no recollection whatever of being bored or dissatisfied in his classes. But what I most remember about him is that sometime late during my time he had to take a leave from teaching for several weeks. And when he came back, he had had surgery in which his larynx had been removed. With the aid of a device that he held against his throat, and which generated a vibration approximating that of vocal chords, he could speak well enough that the buzzing effect of it was not too distracting.

He said little about it; just resumed calmly and carried on with his duty and responsibility to teach us History. *That* was teaching, beyond words.

Balinese Hinduism

BY DON LUCK — COLUMBUS, OHIO

EXPERIENCES UNLIKE WHAT MOST TOURISTS SEE was our good luck. Hinduism practiced in Bali got its own shape by Indian traders. It has been mixed with local animism and the worship of both ancestors and Buddhist “saints” [bodisattvas]. And it has had to conform to the Indonesian Constitution that requires subscription to monotheism by all religions. So officially Hindu deities are held to be aspects of one god, but popular practice ignores such nuancing. Balinese observe fourteen ceremonies from birth to death that must be observed for each person. Large families mean that as you travel you are bound to come across processions heading to one of Bali’s 22,000 temples. They usually include persons carrying symbolic umbrellas, long narrow banners and various offerings.

We were fortunate enough to be there at Nyepi, the most solemn day, marking the start of a new year. No one is allowed to travel. No fires or lamps may be lit. But Mrs. Oka, our hostess, arranged for us to have a warm meal and a kerosene lantern that we were told to hide from view. I have no idea what the arrangements were in the many tourist hotels that support Bali’s largest industry but I suspect they suffered no inconvenience. But I appreciated our experiencing the (mostly) real thing. There was a noticeable and lovely stillness that day most evident by the lack of traffic on the road.

Another memorable moment was when we were invited to be honored guests at a special memorial ceremony. The active volcano Mt. Agung is at the east of the island and rises almost 10,000 feet. It lay dormant for 140 years until 1963 and nearly engulfed the village to which we traveled. Balinese people killed in three major eruptions over a year’s time is estimated to be up to 1,900. Out of gratitude for being spared a close call, the people of the village observed an annual ritual of thanksgiving and intercession. They even renamed their village something like “Mercy of Agung.” When we arrived we were escorted to places of honor on a canopied rostrum directly behind a Hindu and a Buddhist priest. Facing the volcano and its brooding presence, they engaged either singularly or in unison in a series of incantations that were accompanied by elaborate hand gestures that sometimes involved the ringing of bells held in their right hands. Neither of the priests spoke English so at the end of the ritual, Mrs. Oka’s driver expressed our thanks to them for their kind invitation and the honor they had shown us.

Bali Arts and a 5-Star Hotel

BY DON LUCK — COLUMBUS, OHIO

THE CULTURAL AND ARTS CENTER OF BALI IS Ubud. In the first half of the 20th Century, a handful of European artists encouraged indigenous painters to move there with them and create an artists' colony bent on raising the quality of Balinese art. Now craft persons of all types – potters, weavers, sculptors and the like – have joined the colony. Four museums and numbers of shops displaying and selling their work draw two million visitors each year. I resisted the pitch of the owners of the shop to which our guide took us and ignored both his encouragement to make purchases there and his deprecation of free-lancers. [The kickback was obvious.]

Elsewhere I purchased a deep and exquisitely carved wooden plaque of Hinduism's legendary lovers Rama and Sita – and at a cheaper price. The raw material looks a lot like rosewood. This gifted sculptor attracted my attention by flying a kite just down the beach from Shanti Desa – a clever way to attract potential customers. I have passed the carving on to future generations hoping they will also appreciate its beautiful craftsmanship. But it also has been for me a reminder of so many happy memories.

Tourism was another reason for our visit. When we lived in Fargo-Moorhead, North Dakota-Minnesota sister cities, Sandra served as a public relations agent for the area's largest Savings and Loan. She arranged trips for senior citizens who, she noted, had both the money and desire to travel but gladly welcomed someone else making the arrangements. Now that we lived in Ohio, she attempted to create her own agency that she named High Road Tours. It never took root. But as the name suggests, it was to be focused on high end venues. So, after lodging at Shanti Desa we spent one day and night checking out Bali's only five star hotel. That night we headed to the luxurious dining room to enjoy a marvelous Indonesian buffet the Dutch named *reistafel* [rice table] and, with the sounds of the gamelan in the background, watch beautiful Balinese young women perform traditional dances that feature elaborate stylized arm, leg and head movements. At one point, the maître d' asked how we were experiencing the evening. In the course of the conversation I mentioned Shanti Desa and he immediately flushed and with an embarrassed smile told us he was taught Gandhian values there. "Please don't tell Mrs. Oka where I am working," he asked. I assured him we wouldn't. On leaving, we found out that dinner was on the house.

Revolution

By ANDREW JANTZ — ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

THE REVOLUTION started on April 19th, 1775 in the towns of Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. The heaviest fighting that day occurred in my own town, Arlington (known then as Menotomy), as the Redcoats retreated to Boston. By then, hundreds of Minutemen had converged from nearby towns, and from both sides of the road, behind stone walls and trees, they fired at the British troops. The British then split off soldiers to flank the Minutemen and surprise them from behind. One place they succeeded is where the house and property of Jason Russell, a militia captain, was located. A fierce fire-fight broke out, both around and in the house, where a dozen Minutemen and some Red-



The British Army in Concord, April 19, 1775.

coats were killed. Russell died at his doorstep. The house is still there, as a museum, where bullet holes can still be seen inside. The dead from both sides were buried in mass graves in Arlington's Old Burial Ground near the town center. My family home was built in 1898 close to the Russell house, and the flanking Redcoats would have passed through the land where our house is.

There are monuments around town commemorating incidents from that day, but my favorite one is in the town center, in front of the Starbuck's. In 1775 there was a tavern there, and the monument says that two men were killed inside on April 19th, 1775 by retreating British soldiers. The monument doesn't tell the whole story. The two men were sitting in the tavern drinking flip while a war was passing by. The Redcoats burst in and bayoneted both of them. The two men were both probably too hammered to even feel it. But they died for the the cause of freedom (to drink).

"Flip" was popular in the Colonial years. It was made from dark rum, cream, egg, sugar and nutmeg, sometimes served warm. It sounds really good to me! I'd like to make one, but I'm worried I'll be bayoneted.



*A glass of flip.
— Wikipedia*

2022 in Poland – Ukrainians Come Fleeing

BY TERESA AND STANISŁAW LESZCZYŃSKI — CRACOW, POLAND

THE WORST HAPPENED ON FEBRUARY 24TH. Russian troops invaded Ukraine and began to wreak havoc and death. Terrified Ukrainians, mainly mothers with children, and elderly people, fled their country to the west. Thousands appeared on the border with Poland. The Poles immediately rushed to help – it was winter. Food, hygiene products and clothes were collected and transported to the border. The government provided free rail transport for the newcomers. Many car transport companies and individual Poles transported donations of aid as well as offered accommodation in their apartments, preparing and providing meals, clothes and financial support.

We, our sons Juliusz and Marcin, and their wives joined the action. Juliusz's family made their additional apartment available for a month to a family of three children with their parents. A young mother, Olga, with two small children, her friend (Alona) and two dogs, from Kiev, were admitted to Marcin's house, where there is also a dog, and a cat, within the first days. Marcin offered them not only room but also board. Some meals were prepared by Teresa, my wife. Later Olga and her children went to her brother in Barcelona, while Alona moved somewhere in Switzerland. Then another lady from Kiev stayed with them for several days. She was later replaced by a family of five, two children, one in school age, their mother and grandparents, from Dnipro, south of Kiev. They also received board from Marcin's family. At the end of March, Marcin found a bigger, separate apartment for them. At the same time, Marcin employed the grandfather, Vasil, from that family for cleaning in his small printing company. After some time Vasil found another job, where he still works. Next, Marcin's family took in a lady (Natalya) from Irpien near Kiev. Natalya also arrived with two dogs. They were her daughter Lusya's dogs. Lusya had come to Cracow earlier planning to leave to join her recently married American husband in California. She wanted to take both dogs with her but the plane allowed one dog only, therefore Natalya offered to fly with Lusya. Natalya was to return from the USA to Cracow after a month, take her things and go back home in Irpien. (Their house there was not destroyed, and Natalya's husband was in the war.) After arriving in the USA (April 28th), the ladies informed Marcin about a successful trip, but Natalya has not come back to them yet. We don't know why.

Easter in Poland; Refugees' Stories

BY TERESA AND STANISLAW LESZCZYNSKI — CRACOW, POLAND

EASTER SUNDAY WE INVITED UKRAINIAN refugees Natalya and Lusya, along with our sons' families, for our traditional Easter breakfast, that usually lasts until early afternoon. We wanted to share with them the joy of the holiday.



An example of a table prepared for the Easter breakfast in our family (at our son Marcin's house, for Easter 2021).

Just like some of the Ukrainians who passed through Marcin's house, many others also left to other countries, but most stayed in Poland.

In Cracow we hear the Ukrainian language at every step. Many, especially the young people, have found jobs here and are able to provide themselves with adequate living conditions. It is worse with the elderly. Poland's ability to maintain them is very limited. Some want to return home to Ukraine but unfortunately their houses were destroyed.

One does not want to believe that this bandit policy of Russia is supported by the majority of Russians, including the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. This crime is not condemned in Europe by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, nor by Serbia. Not to mention Belarus, which aggravates the situation, accusing Poland and Lithuania of planning to invade and occupy Belarus. Together with the still dangerous COVID-19, as well as high inflation (15.5% in Poland in June, more than 20% in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), make the situation here very sad.

When and how will all this end ... ?

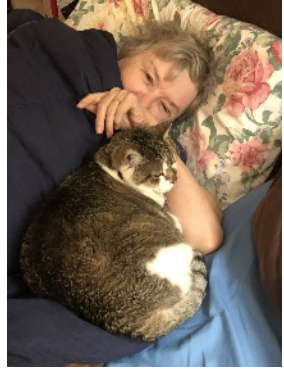
Isabelle

BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

WE SAID GOODBYE TO ISABELLE on September 21. Our old lady was twenty-one. Memories swirl; emptiness steals through home and heart.

Adopted at age 2 (2003) from Agri Feed & Pet Supply, Knoxville, Tennessee, she was the longest-lived of all our fifteen rescued cats.

In the ten years in Knoxville we recall her eager waits for her twice-daily feeding, emphasized by her odd form of meowing: a kind of hoarse meow, which she had all her life. A large screened-in porch attached to the back of the house allowed her to sun, snooze and watch the birds and other critters in convenient safety. (Both for her and for them.)



Isabelle loved to cuddle with Ruth, both in bed and in her recliner.

In 2013 and 2014 we moved back and forth once every month to Columbus, where we had bought a house in historic German Village. Isabelle always made the trip with us, riding regally in the back seat or on top of whatever was piled in the cargo area of our station wagon if the back seat were occupied by two dogs.

Once we fully settled in Columbus in 2015, Isabelle snuggled at times in a cat cushion which I arranged on a table inside the front window, with a view of the sidewalk, the street, and the park. Or she'd lounge in our enclosed back yard on the sunny patio pavers or hidden in the ferns. Sometimes she clambered up on the dining room table when I was using it as the assembly line for some issue of this journal, ONE-PAGE STORIES. If I'd put a soft throw on the table she'd snooze as the work went on. If I didn't, she would likely stroll all over my working area. Whenever we showered she would pace impatiently outside the shower door until she could get in and lick water from the glass walls. But most consistently of all, she'd approach Ruth in her recliner, raise her right front paw to the footrest to "ask" her to lower it as a stepping stone to get onto her lap. She remained in good health right up until August of this year. Even as she declined, she came to Ruth in her recliner and slept or sat in her lap.

Bless her for the long-time, dear companion she was.

Power in the Blue Ridge

BY CHUCK STRAUSS — FABER, VIRGINIA

THE ELECTRICITY WAS PROVIDED by a cooperative, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC), when my wife Jane and I moved to rural Nelson County, Virginia in 1998. This is *not* a for-profit investor-owned company, but rather one owned by the member-users. I thought that was something unique. Turns out it is not only unique, but it is a good deal! Electricity costs at our previous homes were a pretty significant part of the budget! But not this time, as it turns out — we pay much less for good and consistent kilowatt hours. An average month's cost per day is less than \$4.00 recently. Cold winters raise it, but rarely above five bucks a day — and considering all the things done by electricity, this is a modern marvel, in my opinion!

Service has been excellent too — yes, last January's long outage was pretty bad, but it was the nastiest outage experience in the 24 years we have lived here — and it was unique. Mostly, when there's a storm, power will be out for maybe four or five hours — but usually it is a matter of minutes! CVEC has this enviable record because they consistently work on their equipment and the rights-of-way, clearing dangerous tree growth long before it may fall on the lines. In addition, many houses now have their power lines underground.

CVEC also includes its members in “ownership” activities, such as advisory boards and panels, in addition to the annual meeting where the members actually elect CVEC's governance members.

It is progressive too — recently, it created a separate entity to develop infrastructure to bring long-needed high speed internet to this rural area, and 14 adjacent counties in this area of Virginia — including portions of nearby Charlottesville. The subsidiary is called “Firefly”; its work is ahead of schedule and the projection is to have the entire county covered by high-speed fibre-optic internet (and voice-over-internet-phone service) well ahead of the projected finish. To do this it has contracted to work with the commercial investor-owned electric companies, using their infrastructure to bring internet to the entire population.

All in all, to live in a beautiful rural area, on the Sunrise Side of the Blue Ridge Mountains, but to have the same advantage of “city dwellers” is wonderful!

Lava Jato

BY JIM HEDGES — NEEDMORE, PENNSYLVANIA

LAVA JATO, THE BRAZILIAN “CAR WASH” money-laundering political scandal, has replicated itself in my own life in the person of my wife’s daughter’s ex-husband at – where else(?) – a car wash. We’ve kept track of this jerk for some 30 years, because he’s the father of my wife’s grandson, and we’ve laundered thousands of our own dollars by pouring them down this rat-hole, trying to salvage his life.

But turning to his latest escapade, we got a call late Thursday afternoon that he was broken down at a car wash near Hagerstown, Maryland. His transmission had leaked dry and would we get him some parts and fluid. We would, although Hagerstown is 40 miles distant. Matthew jacked up the car, crawled underneath, and commenced cussing and hollering. We listened to his performance until 4 a.m., then went home. Snatching a bit of sleep, we gathered up some necessary items and returned to Hagerstown to pursue our usual Friday agenda of errands in the city. At the car wash, we found the Master Mechanic bruised and bloodied, but the car was still winning. Matthew needed more parts and some snack food. We made another reconnaissance of the car wash at the end of the afternoon. Matthew needed more parts and more snacks. The cussing was now more lively, but the car was still immobile. We stayed with him for several hours. Still seeing no progress by 8 p.m., I got behind the wheel and said to the wife, “I’m going home. If you’re going home with me, get in – now!” Saturday morning, Matthew called for more parts and more snacks. We wired him some cash.

And then, *mirabile dictu!* During his hours of making vulgar incantations, Matthew had stumbled upon the magic words, and his car had returned to life. He had finally succeeded in connecting the new parts! He had refilled the transmission with fluid, the car now was running fine, and he was on his way back home to the Pennsylvania halfway house in Coalport.

Bert's "Fried" Green Tomatoes

By L. J. HUTCHINSON — COLUMBUS, OHIO

FOR YEARS WE WERE NOT ABLE TO GROW tomatoes on our small patio in German Village, Columbus, Ohio. It was less expensive to buy tomatoes and much less frustrating. We blamed the fact that we both worked and didn't love the plants and water them enough. If we had a lot of rain, we blamed the rain and thought the plants were drowning. Our herbs and flowers did well. Our grass was often green until mid July when it was colored with patches of brown depending upon the rain and our watering.

Last year, I bought two lovely tomato plants and decided to "play" gardener, again. The plants sat outside my patio door. For the most part, I ignored them except for some off and on watering. They thrived and I had cherry tomatoes daily for weeks. The plants overflowed with little red balls. Enjoying the experience and now retired, I decided to buy a few tomato plants to replicate my last year's experience. Unfortunately, I did not factor in Bert, the squirrel who visits my patio.

Last year, he may have been around but discouraged by Sophie, my Westie, who went to heaven in March. Sophie no longer patrols the patio nor is her scent noted by Bert. Bert now considers my patio free range. He may have thought that I needed a warm body to share my "digs" with but didn't realized that it was to be a dog and not a rodent.

Over time, I continue to see my little green balls disappearing from my plants or rolling around on the hot patio bricks with teeth marks or half eaten. Even when the temperature reaches 95 or 100 degrees Fahrenheit and the balls fry, the little green balls are chewed or disappear. Think Bert is enjoying his "fried" green tomatoes.

Wednesday morning my hunch was confirmed when I saw Bert lurking around my tomato plants which no longer have any green or red balls. I yelled to chase him. While my desire to grow tomatoes has diminished due to frustration, I have to chuckle at how much our lives can be affected by a small brown bushy-tailed rodent.

To stop the pillage, I now cover the plants with burlap in the evenings but next year Bert will have to find another garden as he will be facing a salad of fried tomatoes topped with cayenne pepper.



Write for ONE-PAGE STORIES?

You don't have to be a member of NAPA to contribute, but members are surely invited.

HOW MANY WORDS? 350 to 400 – less if you have a photo or graphic to go with your story.)

WHAT KIND OF CONTENT? Original prose – fiction or non-fiction. (No poetry.) Personal narratives and memoirs would be especially welcome, but other genres would be considered as well, as long as they are 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 – 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 either by email at williamboys@att.net (preferred, to save retyping) or by postal mail to 184 Reinhard Ave., Columbus OH 43206-2635.

“How to Make Your Writing Funnier”

Humorous one-page stories crop up from time to time in our pages, and often they show clearly some of the points that Cheri Steinkellner makes in her YouTube video, “How to make your writing funnier.” And it's only 3 minutes long.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNTxSBgDNp4>

“How To Make Your Writing Funnier,” by Cheri Steinkellner, YouTube. (2 min., 56 sec.) [It is a TED Ed video in the “Lessons Worth Sharing” series.]