

ONE-PAGE STORIES

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Errol Weiss Schlabach – Musician

BY TOM DUFFEY — REYNOLDSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

IF YOU CALLED HIM EARL, HE WOULD BE QUICK to correct you – his name was E-r-r-o-l as in Errol Flynn and not as in the Duke of Earl.

I lived across the street from Errol from 2nd grade through 8th. He was a grade ahead of me but we were still best friends. He would not ride his bicycle beyond his yard which made it hard to ride together. There was a path around his house. The bicycle was a yellow Donald Duck bike. It had the duck head under the handle bars and streamers from the grip.

He got his first clarinet in the third grade and I was in second. He formed his own band in sixth grade and played gigs at the local Moose lodge and private parties. The band's name was The Four Sharps. They played a TV talent show in Cleveland and won. In seventh grade he was chosen to play in the Tournament of Roses in California.

Following high school, he did four years of college with a music major. He then attended a music conservatory for two more years. His next move was to join the Navy Band in Washington, D.C. Following his four-year Navy term, he was asked to be the principal arranger and composer for “The President's Own,” the United States Marine Band and Orchestra. He then also became part of the White House Orchestra and String Quartet, Brass Ensemble, and played all dance and entertainment functions at the White House during Presidents Nixon and Ford's era.

He decided to take a discharge and give civilian life a try. He found an opening at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, as part of their house band. He would tell me about backing up Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr. He said when Sammy was pleased with the band, he would give each and every member a fifth of Chivas Regal, a premium scotch.

We kept in touch by phone during all these years. He would call me late at night or early in the morning to talk about old times.

Errol passed away in 2018. RIP dear friend. Play on.

Mistakes in Flying

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

I MADE A NUMBER OF MISTAKES during my relatively short flying career. I'm sure every pilot has. Fortunately, I, along with most pilots, lived to benefit from these shortcomings.

I enjoy watching “Air Disasters” on the Smithsonian Channel, where they highlight the details of plane crashes. One that sticks in my mind was the case of a commuter flight that took place in Illinois, just a short thirty-minutes flight at the end of a long day.



Shortly after takeoff, one of the two generators went off line (electricity wasn't getting to the battery). The first officer disconnected it from the circuit but discovered that he disconnected the wrong one. This small airline only had one of this model plane so this crew was very familiar with it and its problems. One of the problems was with the left generator and he disconnected that one from habit. When he realized his mistake, he tried to connect it again but it wouldn't. The captain decided that they would just fly on battery power since the flight was so short. Since aircraft engines use a magneto to supply electricity to the engine, they would continue to operate until fuel starvation. Some of the 1930/40 single engine aircraft didn't even have a battery. You just spun the prop by hand until the engine caught.

The problem was that it was not only nighttime but there were thunderstorms in the area. In order to conserve the remaining electric power, the crew turned off nonessential items like cabin lighting, running lights, etc. The first officer continued to monitor the battery voltage and informed the captain that he thought it would all work out. However, since the aircraft was equipped with lithium batteries, the crew wasn't aware that when they reached a certain point of discharge, the voltage dropped drastically. When that happened, all the lighting, radios, both for communication and navigation, and most instruments stopped working.

They arrived in the area of their intended landing but because of the weather they couldn't see the airport. They entered a left turn, trying to follow their instruments not realizing that the instruments weren't working. They crashed in a direction heading away from the airport. Everyone died.

“What If . . .”

SUE WATSON — COLUMBUS, OHIO

WHAT-IFS POP INTO MY HEAD AT WEIRD TIMES, such as when my mind is bleary in the mornings.

1. Who decided on the names of colors, for example, Or who said humans were the only 'sentient beings'?

2. What if the light you're supposed to go toward when you die is the light from the hospital's birthing room and you're being born all over again. That would explain why we start crying immediately. We miss our old life and its memories. But soon the new life we have takes over the space from the old memories, at least for the most part. Ever have a moment of *deja vu*? Maybe that's an old memory from a prior life that wasn't fully erased. What if?

3. What if God has different species on each and every planet out there? They say it's kind of arrogant to think that we, here, now, are the best He could do, frankly. What if we're just one of many attempts God made to create the perfect world? And what is it that He would consider perfect?

4. What if we weren't given free will? What would be different? Better or worse? If we had no choices whatsoever to make, what would happen? There would be no arguments, no discussions, no reason to be thoughtful. There would, of course, be complete peace, since nobody has any opinions.

5. Are we really better off now than we were back before we had instant access to everything? When we had to wait for the six o'clock national news to know what was happening? Before Facebook and the others were there to tell us what to think and all that? Before being anonymous meant being able to cuss out anybody because *you* were having a bad day. Is this really what we want?

A point I have to make: We *do* have free will ... and we do have instant news. But “news” ought to be actual *facts*, right? Not innuendo, not opinion, just the simple facts (insert *Dragnet* theme here). Here's a quote: “Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.” Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius said that ... about 60 years after St. Paul's time.

The Night He Came Back Alive

BY TOM DUFFEY — REYNOLDSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

WE WERE CALLED “COUNTRY PRIDE,” A COUNTRY band. Our primary gig was the Jefferson County Fair every summer but we mostly played personal care homes and nursing homes.

Our first performance at a large nursing home was in their huge dining room that seated over a hundred and also served as their activity room. I was a little nervous because we had held many practices for this initial show. As we were setting up I noticed that about half of those who were seated to watch the show were in wheelchairs.

There was one gentleman who caught my attention during our first number. He was slumped in his wheelchair, eyes closed, chin resting down on his chest. His hair was mussed up. Our band was well amplified so I knew he could not be sleeping. I was on drums and I had a heavy foot on the base.

Getting towards the middle of our hour-long show, some of the nurses and attendants decided to push some of the wheelchair folks around the room to the rhythm of the music. This was the first time I had seen this type of thing and found it be oh-so-touching. Even to the point of tears.

Then came a time that one of the nurses pulled out the gentleman slumped in his chair and started him around the room. He began to stir and look around. Our band leader was Don Marchoni and his family was from Rome. He was very proud of this fact. In his young days, his father taught him to play an Italian waltz on his mouth organ. It is a hauntingly beautiful melody.

As Don was well into the song, the slumpy guy raised his head with a look of recognition and a huge smile crossed his face. He was in another place so beautiful we could not even imagine. Every time he came in front of my drums, he would raise his hand into a salute to show his pleasure. This really got to me, knowing that I had a little bit to do with his moment of joy.

This happened twenty years ago but I can still see his transformation like it was yesterday.

Christmas in April

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

“NUMBER 82! C’MON DOWN,” the lab technician playfully called out. “Me! It’s me!” I replied and headed into the lab. Looking carefully at my name on the labels, he asked me to say my name. “Frank,” I said playfully. His head jerked up and he looked at me quizzically. I gave him my correct name. “How are you doing today?” he asked. My reply: “I wanted to be in the hospital.” Again, he looked at me quizzically.

Today, April 25, 2023, was supposed to be my “Christmas in April,” the day I was to receive the gift of a kidney from a living donor. Months of planning and tests – both for me and for the donor – were to culminate today. Instead, I was having blood drawn to try to figure out why I started having chills yesterday. Everything had been going so well: I adjusted to the dialysis process. I had gotten into the “groove” and was able to set up the machine quickly each night.*

What a blessing to have Wendy Stoica, a friend in my congregation, see the need and make the decision to undergo the tests to see if we were a match. How exciting when we found out it was “yes” – both to blood and tissue type. The date was set, our transportation (Sue Yehling) and backup (Kathy Mimlitch) to the hospital arranged.

The members of the congregation have been supportive of both of us throughout the process. Our pastor asked if we would explain the situation to the youth. On Sunday, I showed them a simple diagram of a pair of kidneys. They were asked to apply stickers to the diagram, to simulate polycystic kidneys. Wendy explained why she was so excited to donate one of her kidneys to me. People can easily live with one functioning kidney, hence the motto, “Share the spare.” The children were then asked to surround us and put one hand on us. The rest of the congregation also participated in this fantastic sendoff. It was obviously a disappointment when the transplant had to be postponed because of chills and a slight fever. Hopefully this is just a minor speed bump along the road.



*See the April ONE-PAGE STORIES, p. 3.

Strike One!

BY WENDY STOICA — GROVEPORT, OHIO

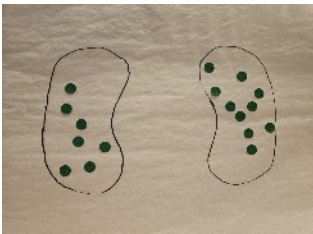
I LAY IN BED WATCHING THE CUBS GAME last night. I *should* be listening to the game in the hospital after donating my kidney to Kathy Zwanziger. It was a strange feeling to be where I have lived for twenty years and yet not feel at home. Lambeau, the dog, was fast asleep and snoring. Her 50-pound body was sprawled across the bottom of the bed. How could she sleep so soundly while my mind would not stop spinning?

When I began this journey in October 2022 to determine if I was a match for Kathy everything seemed smooth and easy. My maternal grandmother was born in 1910 with one kidney. She lived a very full life and even birthed my mother against her doctor's advice in 1939. I had so many tests and so many doctor's appointments. So many discussions with the donor advocate about how I could change my mind at any time. A stern encounter with the kidney doctor reminded me that I could be as committed as I wanted to be; but the transplant surgery was his decision - not mine. It startled me but also reinforced my commitment. If I was a match, I was going to donate. Kathy and I would talk at least twice each week and share what we learned from our respective transplant teams in hopes that the positive call was coming soon.

On March 30 (at 8:13 a.m.) I received the call that I was approved to donate. The first available surgery date was Tuesday April 25. But as you know from Kathy's story on page 6, the transplant was delayed.

So this morning on Wednesday April 26, I woke up in my own bed and moved through the day in a fog. Tonight, I will meet my running group in Pickerington to run half-mile hill repeats. Then I'll clean up and get into my bed to watch the Cubs game.

And I know that someday soon I'll be listening to a Cubs game in the hospital.



This is the polycystic kidney diagram Kathy used in the Children's Time presentation mentioned in her story on page 6.

Why I'm Banned for Life from Jury Duty

BY JACK OLIVER – LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

A SUMMONS FOR JURY DUTY CAME A FEW MONTHS ago. Unexpected, since I thought that after reaching age 65 one no longer had to serve.

I responded to an on-line questionnaire and when asked if there was any reason that I couldn't serve, I said I was 86 years of age. That didn't deter them, for I received an additional notice about a month ago stating that it would be a five-month trial, with further instructions like parking, etc.

So bright and early yesterday, I proceeded to the courthouse in rush hour traffic, allowing myself plenty of time. I arrived at the handicap garage (I can't walk very far anymore), across the street from the courthouse about twenty minutes early. I got to the jury area with ten minutes to spare but I was out of breath from the block and a half walk. The fellow on the escalator behind me said that he was following me since I seemed to know where I was going. I replied that although I'd never served on a jury, I had been here on a manslaughter charge but beat it when I proved it was really murder. I made a new friend, along with a guy standing in front of us, both laughing.

I related a couple of more funny stories, as I keep a stock of them, some true, some lies. They were having a good time because they thought I was funny, while I was enjoying my audience. Then along came an employee who asked if I would like to go in and sit down as I was using a cane and still breathing hard. I replied that I would and that the escalator really takes it out of me.

They checked me in and I was seated in a very large room by myself. When I next saw the employee, I asked if there wasn't a rule that old people didn't have to serve. She said that that was true and asked "How old are you?" "Eighty-six," I replied. To which she said that I didn't have to serve. I got up, happily, and walked out passing the unlucky potential jurors standing in line and said, "Age discrimination!"

When I got to my two new friends, I said that the trial has been canceled and that I was going home. I guess the powers that be didn't like that and banned me for life from ever serving again.

Telemarketers – Fair Game

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

I THINK OF TELEMARKETERS AS FAIR GAME because they annoy us all. I figure the longer I can keep them on the line, the less others will be bothered by them. With this in mind, I say whatever I can to accomplish my goal.

An example happened earlier today when I received a call that supposedly was from my internet service. When I answered, it was a guy with the usual accent asking me something about my computer (I really wasn't sure what he was saying). After asking him who I was talking with, and not receiving an answer other than to continue about my computer, I asked, "Is this Harry?" (just a name out of the air). Surprisingly he said it was. So, I got into asking about himself, i.e., how have you been and we'll have to get together soon, etc. He played along, perhaps because I tend to be hoarse and I try to sound old. When I had enough, I hung up on him and blocked the number.

I'm finding it more difficult to "play" with these guys as most of the time the initial "person" that I talk with is a recording. If I ask, "Is this a recording?" they usually disconnect.

A while ago, I played along with one of these telemarketers and when we got down to the nitty-gritty, where he asked for my Social Security number, I gave him my dead cousin's number. I had recorded his SS number after discovering it on the Social Security Death Index, just for this purpose. By the way, the SS Death Index is available free online. I'm into genealogy so I always record anything I find about my relatives.

After a moment, the fellow says that the number that I gave him was registered to my cousin, (using his name), and that he died fifteen years ago. I acknowledged that yes, it belongs to another person but that I had stolen his identity. I further said, "You're not going to turn me in to the authorities, are you?"

I think I caught him off guard because there was a pause before he mumbled something and hung up.

I guess he was disappointed as he thought he had a "live one," when I went along with everything he was asking.

Us older people get our fun in different ways.

Three Panhandlers at Two Krogers

BY BILL BOYS – COLUMBUS, OHIO

I FLIP-FLOP ON BEING APPROACHED IN PERSON by panhandlers. Recently it happened that three different people, all Black men this time, of widely differing ages, approached me at the two Kroger stores where I often shop and/or get gasoline.

The first was an elderly man, apologetic and assuring me he wasn't a threat, who said he needed money for gas. I gave him \$7, the amount I had in small bills. I didn't think until later to ask to see his car, and his gas gauge. (He approached me in a Kroger that didn't even have a gas station. I later wondered if that was a scam tip-off.)

The second was a man in his forties or fifties who claimed he had a new job, wasn't on crack, but hadn't got his first check yet and was hungry. I gave him \$8, all that I had in small bills.

The third was a young man who came to me at Kroger gas pumps and said he needed gas. He had a wife and baby daughter, too. I asked which car was his and he pointed it out. I noticed the car had temporary Ohio tags, so I supposed they had moved to Ohio recently. I went over and asked to see the gas gauge and it was indeed on "E." His wife was in the driver's seat and thanked me even before I gave him any money, and a baby was in the back seat. (See, I learned from that first story.) I gave him \$10. As I pulled away from the pumps in my car, I saw he was at the kiosk paying for gas, so at least I knew the money was indeed going for gas.

All three of these could have been scams. All three could have been legitimate on the other hand, I suppose. Knowing that many Blacks (and whites for that matter) in some neighborhoods near ours are on the low end of the economy, either scenario could apply. The agencies that Ruth and I support, and to which I could refer them all to for help, don't hand out cash, and scammers would know that. I *could* have refused to give out cash, as I have before. On the other hand, I could afford small amounts like these. Could a refusal have provoked an angry or even violent response? I didn't think so because all three occasions took place in broad daylight with other people around, and surely there were video cameras recording.

It wasn't a big sacrifice for me, not like the widow's mites in the Bible story. But it wasn't exactly generous either. What do *you* do?

A Gift to Yourself – Writing

BY BILL BOYS – COLUMBUS, OHIO

THE ONLY BOOK BY MARY PIPHER that I had read was *Reviving Ophelia*, but a *New York Times* piece got me to check out her latest, *A Life in Light: Meditations on Impermanence*. Impermanence?! With advancing age, a wife recently away in rehab, the last of our pets gone, evaluating retirement homes and such intimations of impermanence, the subtitle resonated with me.

I enjoyed this autobiography wrapped in the substance and metaphors of light. I warmly recommend it for all its warmth and wisdom, rich in stories and written in very good prose.

What I didn't anticipate was discovering her view on the gifts that came to her from writing. That fits right in for what ONE-PAGE STORIES is about, and could be, for others who have not yet taken up writing in any depth:

The great gift I gave myself was listening to my own voice. For one of the first times in my life, I was able to quiet the voices of others and do what I most wanted to do.

Writing brought a new kind of light into my life. It was the light of living twice, once in real time and once in reflective time. It allowed me to grow into my true self. Writing gave me an intellectually challenging life in which I could still live quietly in my own home.

I'm not writing for permanence, and certainly not for any fantasy of multiple scores on the *New York Times* best-seller lists such as Mary Pipher racked up. But I certainly echo her point that writing is like living twice, once in real time and again when writing about it.

I'll get all the permanence my writing desires or deserves in the copies that are with friends and relatives, the members of the National Amateur Press Association; the archives of the Library of Amateur Journalism, at the University of Wisconsin - Madison; and one or two other libraries that collect our amateur journals – or zines, as they seem to be called by some practitioners today.

Want to “live twice” yourself and still live quietly at home? Check out the submission guidelines on the back cover. Or even better, create your own amateur journal.



What's Your Story?

You can submit a story, too. You don't have to be a member of NAPA, although members are definitely invited. NAPA member Ken Faig said, and I certainly agree — *something worthwhile can be written in a short format like this.* I hope the stories in this issue bear that out. Do you have a short-format story to tell?

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.

HOW MANY WORDS? About 350 to 400 words. (Less if you have an image to go with your story, and I encourage images.)

CAN I GET SOME EXTRA COPIES FOR MYSELF? Certainly. Just let me know how many you would like. (Free.)

WILL I GET FEEDBACK? I'll 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 MY STORY? To Bill Boys, email at williamboys@att.net (preferred, to save retyping) or by postal mail to 184 Reinhard Ave., Columbus OH 43206-2635.

Read PDF back issues freely, conveniently
www.AmateurPress.org/the-monthly-bundles

Free zine & booklet templates for Microsoft Word

I just learned that NAPA member Sinoun Chea has posted free templates for zines and booklets in Microsoft Word on her website at <https://anatomicair.com/book-templates/>. Thank you, Sinoun! Writers who use MS Word regularly should find these easy to use to create their own zines and booklets.