

ONE-PAGE STORIES

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A Shakespeare Garden in Schiller Park 2

BY PAT BOWERS

Source of Anxiety? 3

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

Life Abridged 4

BY TOM DUFFEY

Technology Turmoil 5

BY RICH HOPKINS

Low-Frequency Range 6

BY JACK OLIVER

Milestones of Recovery 7

BY KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER

Back to the Fair 8

BY LINDA L. SHIVVERS

Our Pig Roast 9

BY MARY J. DEMPSEY

Fire 10

BY MARY J. (BUTLER) DEMPSEY

Actions Have Consequences 11

BY JACK OLIVER

Publish your own amateur journal or zine? . 12

LEARN MORE



Edited & Published by Bill Boys, Columbus, Ohio

A Shakespeare Garden in Schiller Park

By PAT BOWERS – COLUMBUS, OHIO

ACTORS THEATRE OF COLUMBUS has been performing open air plays by William Shakespeare and other time-honored authors since 1982. The first year's season was a single production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The acting company is based in the old caretaker's cottage for Schiller Park, and it seemed to The Friends of Schiller Park only appropriate that a Shakespeare-themed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* garden be there.



East face, caretaker's cottage.

Missy O'Malia and I, both Master Gardeners, sat down with Katharine Moore (Friends of Schiller Park) to design a garden to be planted in stages, a big project and not something that could be done all at once with volunteers. In the fall of 2022, we determined to plant the park side (east) of the cottage the spring of 2023. After a lot of research to identify plants that are mentioned in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, we made the plant selection.



A view of some of the initial plantings.

We got a generous grant from the Joseph A. Jeffrey Fund to purchase plants and mulch. We started by cleaning up the area around the cottage, preparing the east beds, and planting boxwood at the cottage entry last fall. With these chores accomplished, we began to think about getting a border in before spring planting. Thanks to the generosity of a German Village neighbor, we obtained bricks to form our initial borders, with enough extra for future expansion around the cottage.

If you are in the area, please stop to enjoy our work-in-progress garden. We have moved roses that have been in place for over 20 years, and they are surviving, new holly hocks are happy and waiting for next year to shoot forth their flowers, and the rosemary, thyme, cowslip, mustard, bachelor buttons, primrose, and pansies are settling in. This project has been fun for all involved and should gradually expand around the cottage. Residents and visitors all seem to enjoy having the magic of a *Midsummer's Night* in Schiller Park.

Source of Anxiety?

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

I WAS DRIVING A BORROWED CAR on a two-way icy road, going probably 30 miles per hour on my way to town. Crossing the railroad tracks, the car suddenly fishtailed, then slid backwards off the opposite side of the road, into a ditch. A passing driver pulled me out. I headed back home then, which I thought was the safest option.

Over the years, I began to wonder if that incident was the reason my younger son was so anxious: I was pregnant at the time.*

My older son was careful with his words, seeming not to talk until he was able to say the words correctly. His younger brother was much more verbose. He could ramble on about anything. Before he was two years old, he would tell me all the things he was afraid of: “I’m afraid of witches, I’m afraid of eyes, I’m afraid of..., I’m afraid of...” Eyes? It took awhile before I figured out what he meant. Visiting a museum in Illinois he willingly petted a snake but refused to enter the room that had a large tree trunk in the corner because it had “eyes.” (All the branches had been cut off.) Evidently it was unwise to leave the light on in his knotty pine closet and the door partially open.

My child was also terrified of storms. I would sometimes find him under a bed in the basement during thunderstorms. His pediatrician simply said, “My grandchildren are afraid of storms.” Then came the night in third grade when I went past his bedroom; he should have been asleep for an hour. Crying, he told me, “Sometimes I wish I weren’t alive, I’m so afraid of storms.” I asked, “Would you like to talk to someone about this?” “Yes. Can it be before the first of March?” (Beginning of tornado season.)

A third-grader’s sessions with a psychologist began. She would spend about 45 minutes with him, then perhaps 8 to 10 minutes with me, sharing what they had discussed. She made a cassette tape for him with “Safe Sounds” that he could play at night when going to bed. On Easter that year, we were driving to church in the rain, when a little voice from the back seat said, “I’m so happy – not because it is raining on Easter but because I am not afraid anymore.” Two problems overcome but struggles with anxiety continue.

* My son read this story and okayed my telling of it.

Life Abridged

By TOM DUFFY — REYNOLDSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

“**A**BRIDGED” – “TO SHORTEN BY OMISSION of words without sacrifice of sense. Condense. Synonym, see Shorten.” *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* – Eleventh Edition. This pithy definition puts me in mind of *Reader’s Digest* and their condensed stories. I used to enjoy this publication, especially in high school and now that I just turned 80 I will try their “Large Print Edition.”

I once saw a jar filled with old-fashioned hard candy as a table favor with a label cut with pinking shears from parchment paper reading: “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested – Francis Bacon, 1561 – 1626.” Back then, books were published with hand set type and many sported leather binding. Given the popularity of laptops these days, there is something missing by not experiencing the tactile feeling of holding an actual book in hand. Also, it is very awkward taking a laptop into your private reading room known as a WC.

I was so very pleased to see ONE-PAGE STORIES make its entry into the monthly bundles. Plus, and I mean a very helpful plus, the editor includes on the back cover with hints and sources for constructing a one-pager, especially YouTube tips on writing a personal essay. There is a wealth of information to be mined here. Thank you, Rebecca Balcarcel.

My work was included in many of the issues, and I am pleased that I have found a niche. It puts me in mind of a drag race. Full power is applied to take off towards finishing the quarter mile (page). Then you have to start thinking of slowing down before the finish. Zero to 100, then back to zero and a safe sound stop.

It is also helpful to be schooled by Dr. Bill Boys and his excellent editing and writing hints. One that readily comes to mind, is the advice to “show and not tell.” This will help engage the reader early on dealing with the one-pager.

One book that I would give a shout-out to would be *Nine Stories*, by J.D. Salinger. This guy used to be the master of the short story. He had a very unique way with his writing and his books still sail off the shelf in these modern times. It is like deep sea fishing.

Technology Turmoil

By RICH HOPKINS — TERRA ALTA, WEST VIRGINIA

THE PHONE WAS RINGING AND IT WAS ONLY 7 A.M. Who would call this early? The caller ID said “Laurie,” my daughter. I answered and she burst out with “Dad, are you all right?” I assured her all was OK. She said I’d been sending her crazy text messages and asked if my cell phone was in my pocket. Yes, it was, and it was on, and somehow it was sending text messages to her that made no sense. The cell phone has a mind of its own. I didn’t turn it on but yet there it was sending “pocket messages” to my daughter.

I ponder how vulnerable we are today with technology. The battery goes bad in my mouse so I can’t use my computer. The power goes off and I can’t open the garage door. Worse, the alarm clock goes off and I can’t figure how to turn it off. We are strangely tied to our computer devices and as artificial intelligence (AI) comes on board, it’ll get worse. Yes, computers are wonderful for what they do, but since other parties also are in the game, your computer will become downright intrusive. The other day I called up a file I’d been working on and splash on the screen comes: “The file you’re accessing was prepared using obsolete software. Click here to upgrade and access your the file.” No longer am I in control of my computer. Upgrades come over the Internet whether I want them or not. The trend is toward “renting” software instead of buying it, so now you’re at their mercy because often they “upgrade” your computer while you’re asleep, suddenly you gotta play their game and “reboot” and that usually also means they’re in your wallet once again. How about vulnerability? I’m lazy. I rely on my email in-box to be my filing cabinet. I rely on it to cough up what someone told me a week ago in an email message. Somehow a message got moved to the “trash” directory and I wasted half a day trying to find it.

I found a box of backup disks written 15 years ago. Luckily they are DVDs so I still can read them. But what was in those backups? When were they written? Yep. There’s a good chance they were written using old software and you can’t open the files. The best “backup” still is that piece of paper you have in your hands right now. Many times I wasted a lot of time searching for the file I wrote only hours ago. I can’t remember what I called it and can’t remember where I put it. Luckily newer software generally remembers what you have done recently, so one click and you’re back in business. But not that idea you had for a story two months ago. So where is it now?

Low-Frequency Range

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

WHEN I WAS IN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER TRAINING, the VOR system (Visual Omni Range) for navigating was in full swing but there were still some low-frequency ranges operating. This is somewhat like today where satellite navigation is replacing the VOR system.

There are a number of ways that pilots navigate. The earliest one is pilotage where the pilot navigates following the ground and a map and dead reckoning which involves determining a course and flying via a compass. Following railroad tracks or highways was also quite common. At night bonfires lit a path but this system was not dependable and there was a need to help pilots in the clouds. The low-frequency range was developed.

As the name implies, it used a low frequency to transmit a signal that a pilot could use to navigate by sending out in morse code the letters A and N. A is dot dash while N is dash dot. When a pilot was flying along the centerline of the signal, (using an instrument on his panel), he received a steady signal. If he was left of course the signal was a dot dash, right of course, dash dot. This is where the phrase, “Flying on the beam,” came from.

There were a couple of downsides to this system. The most serious one was that because it was using a low-frequency signal, it was prone to static particularly in bad weather, just like an AM radio, when it was needed the most. The other problem was that it could only generate four beams which limited its use.

The replacement, the VOR, (Visual Omni Range), as the name implies, produced signals around the compass and was in a higher frequency band eliminating the static problem. Airways, like highways in the sky, were flown by flying from one VOR to another. Satellite navigation enables pilots to fly more direct routes.

As a pilot, I never used a low-frequency range but I did practice ADF (automatic direction finder) approaches while training for my instrument rating. The ADF would point to where any low frequency signal was coming from. The Japanese used a Hawaii radio station to navigate to Pearl Harbor at the start of our involvement in WWII. I mainly used pilotage and used the VOR for backup while on cross country flights.

🔥 Milestones of Recovery

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

HOW MANY MONTHS (YEARS?) WAS IT before I noticed my cheeks were no longer pink? One of the first things commented on following my new implanted kidney was 🔥 there was color in my face! Evidently other people had noticed, too!

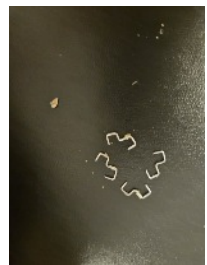
The first couple days following surgery, I was served “food” (mostly liquid) while I was still in my bed. The first time I was served “real food,” there were two strips of bacon. Told long ago to cut down on protein, particularly meats like bacon, I just looked at those strips until a doctor came in and I asked about it. He said my 🔥 kidney function was now normal and yes, 🔥 I could eat bacon occasionally.

Nurses encouraged me to 🔥 walk the halls and even up two steps, since I would need to negotiate steps to get into my home. When the 🔥 Foley catheter was removed, and I could decide when I needed to use the bathroom, nurses helped me a couple times, then 🔥 I got to walk on my own and 🔥 lift my feet onto the bed! Soon a 🔥 cough or sneeze no longer caused excruciating pain. However, I was cautioned: No BLTs: bending, lifting, or twisting.

On the fifth day after the transplant, my friend Sue drove me 🔥 home, with a pillow between the seat belt and my staples. My insurance provided me with seven days of meals, then friends from church supplied meals for an additional two weeks. By that time, my appetite was also recovering and 🔥 I could enjoy the meals.

Sister Chris came from North Carolina, bringing with her a rollator – and the encouragement 🔥 to walk up and down the street. She also brought a shower chair: I was now able to 🔥 wash my hair and take a shower.

Chris, and then Diane, drove me for blood draws twice a week. Sue accompanied me when 🔥 the stent was removed as well as when all 🔥 37 staples were removed! Now I was “free”: I could 🔥 drive myself to lab appointments! One doesn’t go into a kidney transplant alone: besides needing a compatible donor, one needs a “village” to help with the many details on the road to recovery.



Some of the staples.

Back to the Fair

BY LINDA L. SHIVERS — DES MOINES, IOWA

LET'S GO BACK TO THE IOWA STATE FAIR. The time is coming up. It's one of the main events of the year for us. The big thing used to be the trip to the Blenko Glass factory in Milton West Virginia. Can't make that long trip anymore. Besides, the fair has been part of our lives for fifty-plus years.

One of the things we do at the fair is work the Art Attack event in the Cultural Center Court Yard. Kids can make pots on the pottery wheel, or make clay sculptures. They can paint, or they can do some of Mel's projects like build a rocket, create a necklace or make sculptures out of a myriad of blocks of wood, cardboard shapes, colored paper, wallpaper pieces and fabrics – you name it, it's all part of the supplies we've collected. All these activities are free.

The other main event is the draft horse shows – Belgians, Shires, Percherons, and Clydesdales. The entries are one-horse carts, unicorn hitches (3 horses), four-horse, and six-horse hitches. The drivers vary in ages. We got a kick out of the announcer when she commented on one of the entries: "This driver isn't old enough to drive a car, but she can sure handle a four-horse hitch." The final judging of the Clydes and Percherons was awesome. Imagine seventeen six-horse hitches in the arena at the same time. Mel and I are honored and thrilled to go into the arena amongst all those beautiful horses to present the 1st-place trophy, a Blenko glass vase designed by Mel.

Now, want something to laugh about? A joke-telling contest held in Pioneer Hall. The age of the contestants was 10 to 12 years old. Rest assured, these jokes were told by kids:

- What did the duck say when biting on a chop stick? Put it on my bill.
- Knock-knock. Who's there? Is the bell working?
- Why does Santa do karate? Because he wears a black belt.
- What do grandpa's teeth and stars have in common? They both come out at night.
- What did one toilet say to the other? You look a little flushed.
- What did the ocean say to the beach? Nothing. Just waved.
- What's the difference between a snowman and a snow woman? Snow balls.
Needed that didn't you!

Our Pig Roast

BY MARY J. DEMPSEY – COLUMBUS, OHIO

I HAVE BEEN TO PIG ROASTS IN THE PAST. They were usually an all-night affair by a small group of usually beer-drinking volunteers willing to do the job of tending a fire under the pig all through the night.



A web image of a pig roast.

This pig roast at our retirement home was not that kind of pig roast. This was more like a “store-bought” pig roast. They had plenty of pork, with or without BBQ sauce, also hamburgers and hot dogs, with or without buns. They cooked them on a grill onsite, for all to see. They had all the sides – cole slaw, potato salad, baked beans, corn. All from store-bought containers. There were accompaniments for your hamburgers and hot dogs – cheese, lettuce, sliced tomatoes. All the fixings you could want.

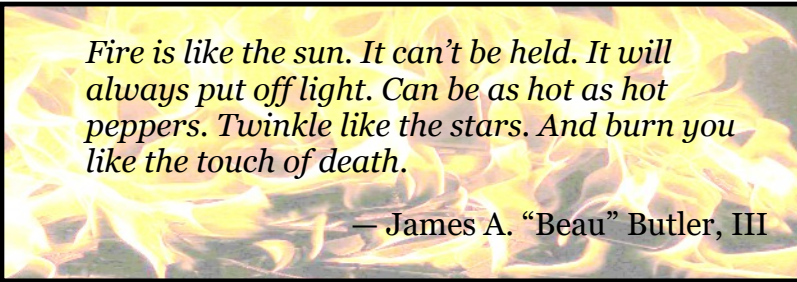
It was hot in the sun but there was a little breeze. The event was to start at noon so I went down about 12:25. Thought I’d let the line work down, not wanting to stand in the sun. The bench I sat on at first proved to be too hot in the sun, but I spied my car, parked in the shade of a beautiful tree, a perfect place to wait for the line to grow short. I opened my car doors, made myself comfortable and watched the line dwindle down.

When I joined the line, I didn’t take much since at my age I can’t eat much, but that is why I took along some small containers in my tag-a-long cart. I filled them with each food on offer and proceeded right back over to the comfort of shade and a nice breeze, right in my car’s back seat. I’m not antisocial – far from it –but maybe I’m a bit of “Covid large crowd shy.” But I really did enjoy the pig roast that day. (And also the *next* day!) I saw a couple of my neighbors, said “Hello, what a beautiful day!” I even see some of them at Bingo.

The best picture of the day in my mind has to be the one of the grandfather or great-grandfather in his motorized wheelchair, with a child in the basket, holding on with both hands for the ride of his life, laughing for all he’s worth! Just the sight of that from my second-floor window made my day!

Fire

BY MARY J. (BUTLER) DEMPSEY – COLUMBUS, OHIO



Fire is like the sun. It can't be held. It will always put off light. Can be as hot as hot peppers. Twinkle like the stars. And burn you like the touch of death.

— James A. “Beau” Butler, III

HOW CAN A CHILD OF 15½ YEARS WRITE something so vivid for extra credit on an English test on the morning of March 6, 1978, at South High School, only to end up on the East Side of the city after being viciously hit in the head with a baseball bat and left on a cold apartment floor, along with his older cousin, for dead?

Oh, the medics did come and pick them up, taking each one to different hospitals so as to not overwhelm the emergency room personnel. One was transported to Mt. Carmel East Hospital; my son was taken to Grant Hospital, stabilized, and transported to Riverside Hospital for further treatment. He died that day, I am sure, overwhelmed by injuries to his head. I will never understand the anger, the rage.

My son was brought up with love and compassion; he knew empathy. I would worry at time he was *too* quiet. He was not rowdy like his cousins. He was not without faults. He lingered until March 15th, when his soul left his body and his doctors declared him dead.

My son was born at St. Ann's Hospital in 1962, only to be laid to rest in St. Joseph's Cemetery in 1978. We buried him on St. Patrick's Day. Egan-Ryan Funeral Home had never experienced a showing for someone as young, for so many friends.

He was my only son. He was close to his five cousins, my sister's children. Yes, I was young when I gave birth, at age 19, married to my high school sweetheart. And yes, I am getting old. After my death I will go to St. Joseph's section for Saint Ann's, right there beside my son. Hopefully I won't suffer. I have waited to join him since the day we buried him there. I've missed him every day of my life.

Actions Have Consequences

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

RESearching the web recently, I discovered that Walter Lee Coyle passed away about three years ago. Lee, as he preferred to be called, entered the Air Force at age 17. After training, he went to Moody Air Force Base, near Valdosta, Georgia. He came from Staten Island, one of New York City's boroughs.

After training, I too was sent to Moody and met Lee, both reporting in on the same day. Although we became friends, mostly because we were both new kids on the block, Lee started to hang out with a couple of guys who ended up leading him astray. They did the usual things a lot of guys do the first time they're away from home, drinking and such. In Lee's case, he seemed to go overboard and sometimes he couldn't get up for work. The military tends to frown on this. This went on for months and finally he was court-martialed and sent to the stockade (jail) for a month. Just prior to this he met a local gal and fell madly in love. She tried to straighten him and it looked like she was succeeding but it was too late — Lee was discharged with a bad conduct discharge, not a good thing.

Lee went home to New York where his girlfriend joined him and they married. I'm sure this was a big change for her, a Southern Baptist marrying an Irish Catholic and moving to the big city. They had four children in close succession, and then divorced and she returned to southern Georgia.

Lee had wanted to be an air traffic controller but the FAA would never have hired him because of his discharge. He got a job as a custodian in a large office building in Manhattan, went to Columbia University at night, and graduated. He wanted to be a teacher but no school would hire him, again, because of his discharge. He tried to get it upgraded, relying on his life after the military, but was refused. He eventually married another and had a very happy relationship with her but he never accomplished his desire to teach as his father had.

Lee and I got together a few times while in New York and even once when I lived in Maryland. I flew a Cessna to where he was with his family. (Had to take them all up for a ride.) He used to call me out of the blue and he was always obviously drinking. Even so, that was some of the best times. I miss him.



Contributors Welcome

You needn't be a NAPA member, but members are definitely invited. NAPA member Ken Faig said "*something worthwhile can be written in a short format like this.*" I hope the stories in this issue bear that out.

WHAT KIND OF CONTENT? Original prose – fiction or non-fiction. Personal narratives, anecdotes and memoirs especially welcome. Other genres considered except poetry. Must be your own original pieces, unpublished elsewhere.

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.

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