

ONE-PAGE STORIES

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The Surprise Pleasure of Mini-zines

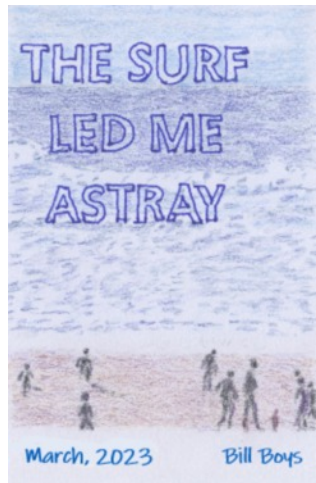
BY BILL BOYS — COLUMBUS, OHIO

I DON'T MUCH FAVOR THE TERM “ZINES” for what I have long called “amateur journals,” but I yield to present-day usage. I first experienced “zines” the day in 2014 when I attended a “Zine Fest” at the main library in Chattanooga, Tenn. I went to show a display of amateur journals in the hope that some zine-makers might like to know the National Amateur Press Association existed. Only one person signed up, and only for a free Trial Membership, and she dropped out when that ran out. So much for that idea. And I was the oldest guy in the room by several decades. At the time, I thought “zine” meant just the small self-made productions printed on one side of a sheet of letter-size paper, then folded and slit in such a way to make an 8-page “booklet” of tiny “pages,” 2¾ by 4¼”.

So, I just printed a mini-zine as a report, and moved on. But it stuck in my mind as a simple way to publish something, especially as a hobby. Our 137-year-old Association would gladly welcome more younger, self-publishing members, so why not mini-zines?

In March I *hand-drew* a zine. Drawing handled the big problem with a mini-zine – half the “pages” (panels) have to print upside down from the other half. Desktop publishing software does that easily; but word processor programs, which almost everybody has, don't. (One person I know plans to use Text Boxes in Microsoft Word. I'm waiting to see how that works out!)

My March mini-zine proved popular, and I made a surprising discovery. This format allows about as many words as this page you're reading does, but also more room for images, too. And it's small enough to put in purse or pocket, or mail in a small standard envelope.



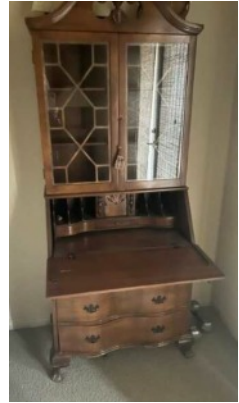
My newest mini-zine is a tongue-in-cheek bit, *I Survived Cardiac Rehab!* It will be in the NAPA “bundle” with this issue of *One-Page Stories*. I've made over a dozen mini-zines this year; even made some as one-off letters. I've reverted to using desktop publishing software because it's so easy. Wonderful, creative and decorative fun!

Secretaries, Desks and Computers

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

WHEN I WAS A KID MY DAD HAD A SECRETARY (furniture, not a person), where he did all his financial stuff, mainly writing checks. It was the kind that had a pull-down cover that made a nice working area.

In addition, it had about a half dozen cubby-holes and three small drawers where my father kept things like stamps, paper clips, envelopes, etc. It was all the space my father needed. Below this were three normal size drawers. My sister and I used to store our clothes in the top two while we both used the bottom one for our toys. Times were hard so we didn't have much.



When I got married, my wife had a very small desk which I used. It proved inadequate and I ended up buying a six-drawer metal desk. I thought this would provide all the space I needed. Then I bought a computer. I had heard that a computer would save paper and space. I discovered just the opposite. I needed more space for disk storage, manuals, a printer and, of course, paper for the printer.

As time passed and we moved to new houses, it seemed that I needed more and more space. I had built-ins installed in my office in my previous house and thought this will take care of all my needs. Once again, I was wrong. It seems there was always more and more things that I had to cram into my small office.

Two years ago, I decided that enough was enough, and bought a larger house which included a very large office. Once again, I had built-ins installed as I had found them excellent in organizing all my things. Hopefully now I can find most anything that I need.

Looking back, it seems funny that computers were not only supposed to save space but also time. So why do I spend most of my day on my computer just trying to keep up? I have three printers, an inkjet for photos, a large printer for photos and printing CDs and a color laser just for my hobby publishing needs.

I wonder what my dad would think seeing all that I have/need, compared to his secretary?

Mystery Water Leak

BY JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

A WEEK AGO THURSDAY MY WIFE SAID that part of our backyard was wet, like if our irrigation was leaking. (Las Vegas being in the desert, everyone has an irrigation system.) When I checked it, I decided to wait until the following Thursday to see if there was any sign of a leak. I was hoping that it had rained during the night, very unlikely, but it's easier than repairing irrigation lines when it's chilly out.

The following Thursday, not only was there water but that area looked and felt like a swamp. I was puzzled because our neighborhood is only supposed to be watering on Mondays and I didn't really have an irrigation line that close to the area.

I decided I would turn my irrigation clock off to see if I still had a swamp. That's when I found that my clock didn't have any power, nor did the rest of the electrical circuits. After spending considerable time, I finally found the culprit, a GFI switch on an outlet in my other garage had popped. I felt much relieved at that point knowing that my yard would be watered on schedule, and not dying for lack of water as I didn't have any idea how long the power had been off.

I was now positive that the water was coming from the neighbor behind me. The problem was that he lived in a gated community and I didn't know the gate code. I met him once and I thought he had given me his phone number but I couldn't find it. So, I decided that I'd wait for a car using the gate and follow it. I stood out in the cool windy weather for awhile and finally decided maybe this was a dumb idea. I no sooner started home then my neighbor came out to walk her dog. I told her about my dilemma, to which she replied, "I have the code," whipped out her phone and gave me the needed numbers.

While I was talking to my neighbor, a car did enter the gated community and I thought that I should have just waited a few more minutes. As it turned out, these were the folks who lived behind me. When I finally got to their house, they informed me that their next-door neighbor had already told them about the leak as he had water in his yard, too. I had a nice visit before walking home.

If it wasn't for their leak, I may have lost all my trees and shrubs but on the other hand I wouldn't want to see their water bill.

A New Adventure

BY MICHELE DISBRO — UPPER ARLINGTON, OHIO

CLICK! UNHOOK THE CLIP. CLICK! HOOK THE CLIP onto the next set of lines. Grab the other clip. Click! Unhook. Move it over but be sure it's facing the other direction. Click! I was repeating the directions in my head and my heart was pounding. I've got this! Now where should I put my foot next? What bar can I grab? Good! You've got this. Keep going. I continued this sequence, creating a rhythm.

I was on the Via Ferrata trail at Quarry Trails Metro Park in Columbus. It was a beautiful, sunny fall afternoon. When I was invited to participate in this adventure with Jon and my daughter, Jill, I was all in. After all, I like to try new things and I didn't have a fear of heights. However, as we approached the start of the trail, with my harness and helmet on, looking up at the first climb, I began to doubt my decision. I took the guide's instructions and cautions very seriously. Would I be able to do this? As I came to a smooth ledge, I was able to pause and enjoy the view. I was super high up on a quarry wall! What a cool adventure! The views of fall colored trees, calm water below, blue skies, puffy clouds, and sunshine were simply breathtaking. Pure joy filled my heart but as soon as I returned my attention to the wall, preparing myself for the ritual of unclicks, clicks, and moving my hands and feet, my heart began to race again. I needed to focus. Eventually, I made it to the end. After a last big climb up and a walk across a 90 ft. suspension bridge, I climbed up a steel staircase. I did it! It was quite an adventure and I was so proud that I conquered my fears and accomplished the Via Ferrata trail.



My daughter, Jill, and I on the Via Ferrata Trail at Quarry Trails Metro Park.

Info on the Via Ferrata: The Quarry Trails Via Ferrata route includes 1,040 feet of cabled climbing using metal rungs, ladders and fixed cables as a means of climbing over intermediate rocky terrain. The route includes a 90-foot treadway suspension bridge situated 105 feet above a scenic pond, two aerial walkways and a 54-foot steel staircase.

The Times They Are A-Changin’

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

BOOM! CRASH! THUD! WHAT WAS ALL THAT NOISE? We bounded out of bed to find the source. Oh, yes: there was a truck outside the house, unloading coal into our southeast cellar window. We would be dependent on that coal to keep our house warm during the approaching winter. Coal would be fed into the furnace in the basement; the heat would rise to the grate in the hallway. Dad would stoke the furnace before 5:30 a.m., when he needed to be at work; we always awoke to a warm house. The heat had functions besides just heating our home. We could set a clothes bar on the grate to dry our socks and underwear. In addition, Mom strung sheets and clothing on lines all down the hallway to dry. It had a personal appeal for me: I had a dress with a full skirt that would billow out in a circle if I stood over the grate — a comical childhood memory.



Me in 3rd grade, wearing the dress that billowed.

New inventions came along. Sometime when I was in late elementary or junior high school, we “graduated” to a gas furnace. My, what a difference! No longer was there coal dust all over the cellar: that area was now actually a basement. The sheets could be hung down there to dry. We could store many items there, such as furniture and personal items from older family members who had died. In later years, Mom set up her quilt frame there so it wouldn’t take up the whole living room — and she could have some quiet time while pursuing her hobby.

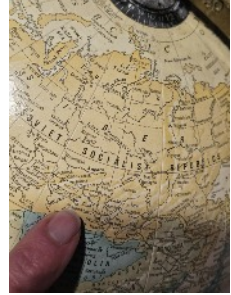
My (much newer) home came with a gas furnace — no coal dust to cover all the things I store in the basement! Again, new inventions were made: a thermostat could tell me the temperature of the house. After some years, there were programmable thermostats: I could set the temperature I wanted for the day and the night! What luxury! There is one problem: I need to relearn how to switch between heating and cooling every time the seasons change. All was going well this fall — until I needed a new modem and router for my computer. For the thermostat to work, it needs wi-fi to be connected to my computer. I struggled to figure out the intricacies of that problem. Finally, success!

Spin the Globe!

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

I LOVE TO TRAVEL! However, since the pandemic, dialysis, and then a kidney transplant, I have not had an opportunity to travel. A globe might give me an opportunity to do some “armchair traveling.”

Pulling out the most up-to-date globe I have, I was not too surprised to find it is outdated: there is still a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Full of optimism, I spun the globe, hoping for a tropical paradise or at least a place like Midway or Wake Island (I am currently reading *Unbroken*, a World War II biography that is set largely in the Pacific Ocean). Was I successful? Absolutely not! My finger landed on the Sayan Mountains.



My first step was to learn a bit about the location. These mountains served as the border between southern Siberia and northern Mongolia for centuries – not exactly the tropical paradise I was hoping for. (Please note this is *not* the same as Sayan in Bali.) Pictures of the area showed jagged mountain peaks (up to 11,457 feet), with peaceful-looking lakes in the valleys.

I learned that the Evenki people who live in the region keep herds of reindeer; 20-30 per family is ideal. The reindeer are used as riding animals (saddled!), as well as pack animals, thus making it easier when hunting other animals for food. The females are accustomed to being milked. There is intensive and intimate contact between humans and deer, causing them to be tamer. The humans provide smudge pots to keep midges and other biting insects at bay; the deer in return tend to keep close to “home.” However, since 1975 and the modernization of the world, large amounts of grazing grounds have been destroyed, as has the traditional Evenki culture, including a decline in the use of its language. These factors have led to pessimism and depression among the people.

Pictures of the people dressed in warm fur coats, decorated with fringes or embroidery, encouraged me to consider a trip to the Sayan Mountains. However, according to Wikipedia, it is a “protected and isolated area, having been kept closed by the Soviet Union since 1944.” So much for that adventure. At least I learned something.

Fireworks at Greenlawn Park

By MARY J. DEMPSEY — COLUMBUS, OHIO

MY MIND GOES BACK TO BEING FOUR YEARS OLD, and the Fourth of July fireworks they used to have in Greenlawn Park. We lived close by, and mom would pull us in the wagon straight up Hanford Street to High Street. We followed the crowds, taking the main streets. The crowds were huge; everybody would go to the fireworks at Greenlawn Park.

We would always get there early, taking spots right down front. We had to stay on the blanket; no wandering off. We waited patiently for the sun to go down, so it was dark enough to see the fireworks explode.

After each one we'd exclaim, "Oh, that's my favorite!" – only to wait for the next one and then saying, "No, that's my favorite! I changed my mind!" We'd ooh and aah with each burst. "I like that one best of all! No, that's my favorite!"

How did they do that? It was all so special, so magical!

Then it would come to the end. We would all gather together, pick up and fold the blanket, and join the crowd following the way home. The police would stop traffic to let us all pass.

I would probably be asleep in the wagon by this time, trundling along homeward back to Hanford and Jaeger Streets.

We passed by Schiller Park on the way. My older sister used to tease me and say it was *her* park! I would get mad and say, "No! It's *my* park!" We would argue about this for several years.

We lived at 1264 Hanford Street to be exact. Our house had a potbelly coal-burning stove in the middle of the front room. I'm sure this is probably long gone. I remember truckloads of coal being delivered to our house, and my father telling my brothers that it was their job to get that coal in the basement. I'm sure they grumbled, but they moved the coal into the basement.

My mind goes back to those far-off years. I love to recall those old family times.

The Will to Live

By KATHLEEN J. ZWANZIGER — COLUMBUS, OHIO

EVERY SUNDAY ON MY WALK TO CHURCH I am surprised by the number of plants growing in the crack between the gutter and the street. Yes, most of them are weeds but a couple years ago, there was a tomato plant. Surely no one had planted it there. Was someone eating a sandwich that had a tomato slice on it and one of the seeds “got away”? I’m guessing it was dropped by a bird. Then again, I haven’t seen birds eating my tomatoes. However, I have seen squirrels pick a tomato, taking one or two bites, then leave the rest of the tomato on the lawn. If I were a betting woman, I would place my money on a squirrel.

Even in cracks in my driveway, I have seen tiny fennel plants growing. I pull them out because I have seen how large their “mother” grows. No mystery here: there is a huge fennel plant close to the front of my garage. (Its growth is a mystery: how can the plant get so tall, growing in clay and gravel? I don’t even water it!)



The “miracle of the black raspberries” is intriguing. For years I had black raspberry bushes growing right beneath my kitchen window. After our pet (outdoor) rabbits died and there was no longer a ready source of fertilizer, the bushes gradually became less and less prolific. One summer I only got about 8 berries from the patch — but a cupful from the berries growing on the fence between my driveway and that of my neighbor. If that’s where they want to grow, fine. I dug out the few remaining plants in the garden area and depended on the berries from the fence for an occasional cobbler. How did the berries change location? I thought perhaps the runners grew under the driveway — but for twenty feet? This time I think it must have been birds, enjoying the berries, then leaving their droppings. A few seeds took hold in the dirt collected around the fence poles. It’s not where I would have chosen, but it certainly solves the problem of supporting the bushes. I simply guide the tender shoots in and out of the chain link fence. Most of the berries grow at a height where I don’t have to bend too far to reach them. They, like the other examples, certainly have a will to live.

First Day of School

By JACK OLIVER — LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. For Ms. Wagner, this was just her second year teaching, both times with a kindergarten class. As she had done the previous year, she asked each of her students to stand up, give their name and a little about themselves.

Just as the first time she had asked the question, the students pretty much responded the same way in their typical timid voices. Agnes said that she had a cat named Posie and a baby brother, and quickly sat down, anxious to be out of the limelight. It was little Billie's turn next. He said that he had gotten a toy gun for his birthday, which was the previous day, and wanted to play with it when he got home.

Then it was Jimmy's turn. He stood up and said, "Hi, my name is James Madison, no connection with the president with the same name. My friends call me Jimmy."

Then, unlike any child before him, he continued. "We're now starting our lives. Everything before has been fun and games but now this is real. What we learn in the next twelve years or hopefully more, will affect our lives directly. Those of us who are fortunate to continue on to college, will probably have a better life than those who don't but probably especially better than those who may quit before graduating high school. This may be our only chance to learn so don't give any of our teachers a difficult time.

"You may have experienced bullies, if not, you probably will. This is unacceptable, as no one is better than anyone else. If you ever have a problem in this area, please see me and I will take care of it. This goes for problems at home too. If a sibling, or even a parent, is being abusive to you, I will take care of it too, perhaps even ordering a hit on the person if it comes to that."

The class was very quiet after Jimmy's speech. Ms. Wagner, who had been standing by the chalkboard, slowly sat down and didn't say anything for what seemed like several minutes. Finally, in a quiet, meek voice, she thanked Jimmy and called on Mary to introduce herself, all the time wondering what this this year will be like.

A New Treat – Jello Cheesecake, Plus

By MARY J. DEMPSEY — COLUMBUS, OHIO

A NEW TREAT STARTED WITH A BOX OF JELLO cheesecake mix that I found in the “donate or pick up” spot in the kitchen of our senior living facility. I’ve never had Jello cheesecake so thought I’d give it a try.

Seemed easy enough – add 2 cups milk, beat 2 minutes with a whisk. That’s all, done deal!

I brought it home, made it, and put it in the refrigerator. Thought it would be good with fruit. Strawberries came on sale, so why not?



Then I went to the church pantry. Oh, they have ginger snaps, which I love! Brought them home and filled my cookie jar. Well, anyone who goes to a pantry for food knows there will be several broken cookies in the box; not bad, just broken.

So now I’m ready for my evening snack. I start with the Jello pudding and now add a few of my strawberries. I look at my cookie jar with its several broken ginger snaps, and my creative juices started flowing.

I have a house rule that I can’t make more cookies until my cookie jar is empty, and I have a new recipe from a friend who showed me how to make cream puffs, but my cookie jar is full of ginger snaps right now. So, I take out all the ginger snaps, put them back in their bag, and mash them in their bag with my rolling pin into crumbs and small pieces to make “sprinkles.” I sprinkle these over the strawberries and Jello cheesecake. It made quite a special treat.

I slept real good that night.

I also found out that the ginger-snap sprinkles are also good on bananas. I had them the next morning with the end of the pudding.

So I just wanted to pass along my story of “discovering” this easy recipe for a new treat.



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.

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

What to Write About?

Looking for ideas about writing a one-page story? Search on YouTube for "writing prompts" as one source. Books from your library are another resource; ask your reference librarian. Not all suggestions will vibe with you, but there will be plenty that will.