



# Stories

2020 | Fulton County, Indiana

FULTON COUNTY

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“Come. Sit. Listen.”

-Bagalamukhi

# Stories

Submitted 2020 FCPL Summer Library Program

Theme: “Imagine Your Story”

Translated by Timothy Roe, Director of Project Learn



*“Your life is your story. Write well. Edit often.”*

*-Susan Statham*

## ~ Stories ~

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# Preface

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If there is one thing that a father can teach you, and I can say with certainty it is the one thing I remember about my dad, it is that stories are what we all have in common, despite all of our differences. We all have the story of our lives; somewhere between tragedy, comedy, drama, horror, and science fiction. I do not think I could find anyone who would disagree with me about my dad... he loves to tell stories. On his desk where he keeps his ragtag collection of medicines, bills, night-time poetic inspirations, and folk artifacts (a strange collection of talisman he collects while walking around towns he and my mother travel), he has a plaque that he got for Christmas one year from my mother that says, “Fish Stories Told Here,” iconographic and based on one of his favorite movies “Big Fish,” by Tim Burton.

Working in literacy, I contemplate much of what it means to read, write, quantify, and qualify. In the years I have sat in this role, I published a journal that I called *Athenaeum*, in which I explored various etymology, pedagogic theories, academics, holy fools, riddlers, fiddlers, mathematicians, books, and even some theories I proposed for meditation. Each month I would delve deeply into my own studies and gaze into the complexities of the students who would come to me for assistance, and in that space, I would compile the content for the newsletter. After re-visiting over three years of content, I can see that it was “story” that was the cornerstone of how I

came to define literacy. In October of 2018, I published Volume 2, Issue 11 of *Athenaeum* with the title “Learning How to Listen.” I theorized, intrigued by my own incessant reading, that if I had to break down the one thing that reading has taught me, it is that reading taught me how to listen. I stated that when one reads, there is no other option but to listen, otherwise you simply aren’t reading. “We should all read more intimately. We should all listen, and maybe that is what reading has taught me the most, how to listen. The art of reading is occultically rewarded with a Ph.D. in listening; hearing another individuals understanding of the world we all share. Attempting to understand their symbols, words, and stories as a multiversic hymn.” I finish by saying that, “The more we read, the more omnipresent we become, the more omnipresent we become, the more compassionate; walking a mile in another’s shoes, seeing the world for a moment through their eyes, and then mysteriously, if out of nowhere, some unifying force descends, to bind us in compassionate relation to one another.”

Collected here are stories of individuals who live in Fulton County. I asked for individuals to submit stories, memories, that they have told a hundred times, but this time to put them on paper. My hope is that it would help us all remember who we really are, what truly matters in life, and learn to listen. For when all of the disputes are settled, the laws carefully crafted, and truth becomes a distant echo, we are left with our stories. It is these stories that I have compiled as part of our shared experience as humans.



# Summertime by Joan Graham

As a child growing up in the big city, I would spend the dreary days of fall and winter daydreaming of our yearly vacation every summer at a nice summer cottage at a beautiful lake in Northern Indiana.

We would spend our days at the sand beach swimming, or out on the lake exploring the small islands, or fishing.

One day we loaded a rowboat with our bamboo fishing poles and bait and set out to find a good fishing spot. We pulled in a good size catch of bluegill fish. We placed them in a cloth net that was attached to the boat and hung over into the water.

We were looking forward to a great fried fish dinner that evening but to our dismay, when we pulled up the net, all of the fish were gone. A turtle, or larger fish had chewed a hole in the net and let them all out— or ate them.

Luckily, my dad, who was a good fisherman, came home with a good, large catch so we had our delicious fish dinner that evening anyway.





## *A Gift by Joan Graham*

After I graduated from college with a major in foreign languages, I took a job in a really nice Southwest suburb of Chicago. I taught spoken French to lower elementary students.

One day, one of my little boys came to class and handed me a beautiful bouquet of flowers. I asked him, “Where did you find these beautiful flowers?” He said, “I cut through the cemetery on the way here.”



# *The Day I Saw Courage by Kay Horn*

This story takes place in the mid-eighties. My teaching of Physical Education classes was in full swing and took place in the Rochester Middle School swimming pool during an eighth grade Phys. Ed. Class. This story involves a girl named Sharon.

Sharon had spina bifida and wore leg braces on her legs and walked using crutches. She came to swimming class and the first day she announced to everyone that she was going to go off the diving board. Well, I thought to myself, there is no way. First off, we did not allow students to use the diving board as a beginning swimmer, and considering Sharon's supposed limitations, we knew this wouldn't be happening.

Well, as you might guess, we assumed wrong. Sharon was a very strong swimmer, probably due to having to haul her body around with crutches all the time. As the class progressed with the usual skills being taught, it was coming to an end.

Usually at the end of each class there was a brief period of free time and Sharon would always swim into the deepest part of the pool. Her legs were not much use, but her arm strength was extraordinary, and she seemed happy and her face radiated with pure joy. She seemed so free without her leg braces or crutches holding her back.

The last day of class came and Sharon was eyeing the diving board almost from the beginning of the class. We gave the class a lot of free time hoping they would use some of the skills they had been taught. Sharon went to the deep end right away and I could tell today was THE DAY!

She hauled herself up onto the edge of the pool nearest the diving board. She used her arms and dragged her body to the

end of the diving board, pulled herself up the three steps of the ladder, and then dragged herself, still dragging her useless legs down the length of the board. The diving board was very rough, almost like sandpaper. Sharon positioned herself at the very end, legs over the edge, put her head down and attempted her dive. SMACK! The biggest belly smack you could imagine. Sharon surfaced the water and determinedly swam to the edge of the pool.

Well, by this time, the rest of her classmates had noticed something going on and stopped whatever they were doing and began to watch. Again, Sharon pulled herself up near the diving board. Again, pulled herself to the end of the board, up the ladder, and pulled herself the length of it. Got to the end, again positioned herself, parted her knees, lowered her head, extended her arms, and made a clean dive with hardly a splash. She came up with the biggest smile on her face. Her whole class cheered and clapped for her. She had done it!

Suffice it to say, her teacher was crying when Sharon came out of the pool and again got into her braces. What a courageous lady.



## *Reminiscences by Phil McCarter*

I was born June 10th, 1929. As I look back at my growing years, 1929-1947 in Fulton, I feel very fortunate. In the early thirties (Depression Years), everyone was poor, but we didn't realize it. All people endured the same circumstances. We were happy and well-fed since my dad was in the grocery business. I like to tell the story of walking to school every day and that I was in the Top 10 of my class. That sounds good, but the truth is that I lived across the street from the school, and there were only 17 in my senior class.

I very early got interested in my first love— basketball. From the 4th grade on, I went to every practice, and the coach took me scouting, so I had great advantages in becoming a Fulton Bulldog. Our high school gym was very small with mats at each end of the floor. The stage was on one side and the bleachers on the other (they were out of bounds). The ceiling was low and also out of bounds. Visiting teams had a hard time adjusting, and we rarely lost at home. People often said that if they opened my head, there would be two things: a basketball and a baseball! I enjoyed school, but didn't apply myself as I should have, which made college difficult at the start.

My dad, being in the grocery business, drove a Huckster Wagon from farm to farm six days a week. I hauled groceries, and he would buy eggs and chickens from the farmers. In turn, they could buy the groceries. When I was young, I enjoyed going with my dad, and getting to know the farmers. My dad and mom, who worked in the store, never took vacations, but once in a while he would take me to a Cubs game. I have been a Cubs fan all of my life.

I knew everyone in town, and everyone knew what was going on. We kids were kept in line by not only our parents, but by all in town. We really didn't need a Town Marshall. Mowing lawns and working for farmers kept me busy in the summer. I received 25-35 cents per lawn. I tried to save a dollar a day for my college fund.

I always made time to play some basketball. One of our favorite goals was located at the back of Joe Ditmire's dad's funeral home. Some of the regulars were: Joe, Donnie Williams, Bill Louderback, John Wagoner, Don Masterson, Frank Richter, plus anyone else wanting to play. On rainy days we went to the garage where we had a goal on a casket box.

I also worked evenings at the free outdoor movie. A bonus was that I could pick up Eskimo Pie wrappers after the movie, collect them, and send in for free gifts. Depression glass dishes were welcomed by my mom and grandma.

I could ramble on forever reminiscing of my growing up days in Fulton, and the advantages of living in a small town. My experiences helped me to be able to reach my goals of college, playing sports, teaching, and coaching.

Thank you to all who are still with us and those who are gone for making my "GROWING UP DAYS GREAT!"



# Vivian's Fence by Doris Nerding

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Across a grassy field with a smattering of trees lived Vivian Smith. She had never been married. She was a recluse and her house stood facing a cemetery. Surely, she had been misnamed. Vivian was for movie stars. She was old, although everyone over forty was old to me at a wise age of ten.

Vivian had straight gray hair and wore cotton dresses without flowers, stripes, or polka dots. They sagged to her knees on a frame like the stick figures children draw. Sometimes, she would come visit my mother. She always ate two pieces of coffee cake.

As a child who should be seen and not heard, I listened to Vivian tell of her parents, who had been missionaries in China. My mind conjured up images. Outside Vivian's house was a plain wooden box. Inside there must be gilded lions, ornate vases, crane and waterlily wall hangings.

Now, I knew she had a brother who occasionally came and took her for a weeks visit at his house. After seeing no window lights for three nights, I decided the time had arrived to investigate the Chinese holdings. Cumulus clouds graced a blue morning sky. I wasn't exactly scared of ghosts, but if I had been missed at night, I would have faced my mother's forsythia switch.

I headed across the field. Vivian never had to worry about raccoons in the garden because her entire property was enclosed by a six foot chain-link fence strung with barbed wire across the top. No problem. I was agile and my feet were narrow. For some reason, my heart took up a drummer's beat. It couldn't be fear. I had the adventurous spirit of Lawrence of Arabia.

Reaching the fence top, I swung my right leg over. Could barb-wire come alive? It grabbed me. It held tight. I dared not simply yank or the cloth of my pants would tear. Wiggling only tightened the grip. My position half over, resting like an awkward finial might have amused any birds perching in nearby trees. I felt more like crying. The fingers of the hand not holding on kept working futilely. Nearing exhaustion, I felt desperate. Then a light in my brain turned on. I unbuttoned the pants. By some precarious shifting, maneuvering, and tugging, I extracted the leg from the pants and swung it back over the fence top. Then came the left leg. I was free. The pants, of course, remained attached to the barbs.

Freeing the limp cloth was not especially difficult. I soon dropped the pants to the ground. In my white panties with a little lace, I descended. On went the pants and home I trudged – disappointed, yet somewhat triumphant. I had only intended to look in the windows. I was sure the library had lots of books on China that had pictures. I knew, however, that I didn't want to see any grinning Buddha's like the little wooden statue she had given my mother.





## ***Choose Your Profession Wisely by Anna Roe***

I have been in nursing in one capacity or another since I was 18 years old and have taken care of many people, but one that I recently took care of left an impression on me and how I saw the profession of nursing. Most of the time the tasks that we do for patients we do out of habit, knowing that our actions are based on good science, but we do not often realize that others may see our actions differently.

I admitted a patient to a Home Health Care a few weeks ago on a Tuesday night. A 96-yr-old, Mary, who was obviously frail and had developed a blister on her heel that had opened up and left a large ulcer. Her daughter, Holly, explained to me that Mary had several mini-strokes in the past year, and one as recently as a week ago. Mary was an alert lady who answered my questions hesitantly and quietly. She had a shy smile that came infrequently during the interview. When she did smile it warmed my heart, so I tried to tease her a couple of times, so as to draw out her smile. It was obvious that she had some memory issues. Holly had to jump in several times to help her express her thoughts. I wanted to see if Mary was able to ambulate, so I had her walk across the room with me; which she did slowly using her walker. Although she was able to walk by herself, I had some real concerns with her living by herself. A requirement of medical care these days is to ascertain what the patient's wishes are for end of life care. When I asked Mary if she had a living will, Holly handed me a living will upon which Mary had made clear her wishes: no CPR or artificial feedings, and "Keep me comfortable if my death is near and let me go."

Holly obviously respected and adored her mother. She was

trying very hard to keep her mother out of long-term care and in her adopted home. As I was leaving the residence, I felt obligated to talk to the daughter about my concerns with her mother living by herself, which I did as gently as I knew how.

The weekend came and I was still on call. Holly called me Saturday morning and explained to me that when she came into her mother's home she was afraid that her mother had another stroke, because she couldn't talk or walk. I advised her that a stroke was an emergency and her mom needed to be seen by a physician. I asked her to call me later in the day and let me know the outcome, so I could plan further care for Mary. She called me late in the afternoon and told me that they had refused further care in the ER, and therefore the ER doctor explained that since there was no more that could be done for her, that she would be sent back home. Holly was going to stay with her mother all night and I said that I would visit them in the morning.

Sunday morning, I walked into the apartment to find Holly and her husband Mike at the kitchen table. Mary was in her bedroom with the door closed. Holly told me that it had been quite a night and that Mary was unable to walk to the bathroom or swallow meds now, and she was afraid that Mary was dying. We discussed the fact that from now on Mary would have to have 24-hr care. They talked about the living will and expressed that they wanted her to just be comfortable.

Mary was sleeping soundly as I entered her room to assess her. I took her vital signs, which were surprisingly good. I did worry a little about the respirations being a little rapid and hearing some crackles in her lungs, but overall, she didn't look that bad. As I was assessing her, she opened her eyes sleepily and surprisingly shook her head slightly when I asked her if she was thirsty. I gave her a tiny bit of water on a spoon, as she was unable to suck from

a straw. Hum, I thought, this is not a dying patient, so we pressed on. She was able to sit up on the side of the bed and walk into the bathroom with the assistance of her son-in-law and myself. It was obvious that she had a stroke because her left hand was definitely weaker than her right, but she was able to slowly walk to the bathroom. We finished there and I asked her if she wanted to go back to bed or into her chair. She indicated the chair. To the chair we went. I helped her wash her face and brush her teeth. It was lunchtime. Holly and I had discussed that it was in her best interest to feed her thickened liquids or soft food slowly, and in small amounts, from a spoon. Holly and her husband were going to stay for now and I explained that in the morning another nurse could help them find additional help.

Having done everything that I felt needed done for now, I looked at my watch to write down the time I was leaving. I was surprised that over two hours had passed. I wanted to end the visit gently, so I joked with Mary that she must be tired of having me around. I was delighted when her face lit up with that shy smile. I thought to myself, what a class act she was! Even as her health was being stolen from her, she was still able to smile at a nurse who was helping her. As I left, Holly was feeding her mother noodle soup and while I walked down the hall, I overheard Holly say to her husband, “Anna is a very good nurse.” Wow, I thought, what had I done that impressed her so much? It suddenly occurred to me that what I had done in the last couple hours, was to me simply good nursing care, represented to them something entirely different, and in that moment, I remembered why it was that after 37 years of choosing this profession, that I still loved nursing.



# *The Wind by Timothy Roe*

“In every walk with nature, one receives  
far more than they expect.” -John Muir

Throughout my life, I have come to experience principles that run deeper, untold in academic terms, than laws as we interpret them. These are granted to us through tests, but not the type we take in school. I often attempt to relay these laws with the lexical means I have at my disposal; in the case of this story that I am about to tell, I would refer to it as grace, or magic, depending upon my ability to write and your ability to hear.

In the midst of a very difficult time in my life, I struggled to find an understanding of what I had been through and was going through. Many anxiety devoured me. In an attempt to sort through these thoughts, I would often go to the Judy Burton Trail and walk. Walking was a habit I had learned had a form of magic in it, allowing my mind to process somehow through movement. This time, I walked through an enigma.

I owned two keys to my Honda van, quite expensive keys. At the library, many kids would come to my office after school, exploring their boundaries, and one day one of the girls, wishing to make her friends laugh, took one of my van keys and broke it in two. The key was metal, connected to a plastic casing. The metal of the key had to touch a brass component in the casing to turn the engine, an anti-theft precaution. Nonetheless, the \$350 key was broken. I could rig it to make it work if necessary. I kept it in the glove compartment of my van.

I walked along the trails with my dog Oliver. I began to grow weary and the sun was beginning to darken. I decided to go to

Taco Bell and get a burrito. Getting back to the car, it was unlocked, which didn't surprise me; I wasn't in a healthy frame of mind and had likely forgotten to lock it. Oliver hopped in and got into the passengers seat and... I don't know where my keys are. This was the set of keys that had my library keys, house keys, parent's keys, and others. As you can imagine, already being in an unhealthy space, a mixture of self-pity, self-accusation, and anxiety began to consume me. Remembering the key in the glove compartment, and hoping I could finagle it to work, I got it out, and with a little finesse, I was able to get the van started.

I drove to Taco Bell and got a burrito, intending to head back to search a bit with a headlamp that I had in the van that I would use when camping at night. After eating the burrito and gathering myself a bit, Oliver and I drove back to the Judy Burton Trail, and I attempted to re-trace my steps. Usually I was good at finding lost things, almost had a knack for it. It was getting late and I was exhausted. After searching for an hour or so, I decided that I would let it be, go home and sleep, and arise early in the morning and look.

I got back to the van, and to no avail, I had lost the broken key. In that moment, I had the thought that a spirit was messing with me, attempting to drive me to break, somehow the key a premonition. In a strange twist of circumstance, a guy pulled up in a car and asked me if everything was ok. I said, not exactly, leaving out the details. Seeming to have a keen empathetic awareness and modesty, he asked nothing, pressed me naught, only helped me. He was heading home to Kokomo, he said, and had the thought to pull off of Highway 31 to visit the Judy Burton Trail. With a weary, heartbroken trust, we got into his

car and he drove Oliver and me home. We went inside and went to bed.

The next morning I called my parents and asked if they could drive me out to the van, both to see if it was still there (having to leave it unlocked since I didn't have any keys), and spend time searching for the keys. I spent hours, tracing and re-tracing every step I remembered taking the night before. My mind spiraled unsafely outside of itself. Something within me, maybe nothing mystical, likely just stubbornness, pride, or anger, kept me from calling a tow truck. The whole situation had put me into a state of what felt like hopelessness. I returned home without either key. I obsessed, consuming my own self, accusing my own self. I looked for any sign, any meaning, any thread to follow that would help me. Nothing. Zero. Ouroboros.

The day passed this way. Instead of having someone drive me out to the trail and uncomfortably observe me spiral, I decided upon walking to the trail for one last time. I got to the trail and attempted magic I had learned years earlier, something Mother Mary had taught me... walking in oblivion. "The idea is quite simple. Forget what you are looking for, and when it is forgotten, it will reveal itself." I wrestled with my thoughts walking them through my body, allowing for time to alchemize my obsession into oblivion. At some point my "self" disappeared, all seriousness left me, and I was unaware of my circumstances. The feeling was of me, a child, playing in the woods. In this spirit, I recalled a hawk's feather that I had hung from the rearview mirror in the van. I walked back to the van, intuitively, and got it, for no reason that I was aware of.



I then walked back into the woods, where I felt Oliver and I had spent the most time running around. Once I got there, a gentle breeze awakened in me the instinct we correctly refer to as “Hail Mary!” I threw the hawk’s feather into the breeze and it drifted into a small valley a few yards to the side of me. I went to pick up the feather, and when I picked it up, under the fallen decaying leaves, lie the set of unbroken keys.

**P.S.** If you are wondering if I ever found the broken key. I did. It was in the pocket of a coat that was in the van all along. I wanted to cry, but all I could do was laugh.



## *At Home in Indiana by Judith Hartzell*

We drove into Rochester July 21st, 2016, under a baptism of rain water sluicing from the sky. It had been a very hot day— in the low 100s— the day before, when we left Greenville, South Carolina, for our drive to our new home. We didn't dare stop for a restaurant dinner on the way, because our dog, Fergus, a middle-aged Nova Scotia duck-tolling retriever might have perished from heat prostration if we'd left him in the locked car even thirty minutes. Instead, we bought shakes and burgers at a drive-through restaurant.

Rochester gave us a cool, wet welcome. Our daughter, Laura Ricketts, came dancing out to welcome us in a bathing suit. I was soaked in thirty seconds, running to the house. The first thing I did was shower and wash my hair. Then, we thanked God we were all here safely, the three of us— Fergus, my husband Tom, and me.

It had been an arduous couple of months as we sold our South Carolina house and dispersed all the contents we could, then packed up the rest. Even the decision to move was arduous. Tom, though a mid-western boy from Michigan, liked living in the beautiful upcountry of Greenville. He liked the small city; he liked hiking in the mountains, and he liked the winters. It took three years to persuade him that living close to family was more important than everything else.

But as we drove north, just after we entered Indiana, Tom saw a neat white farmhouse on a large, green, flourishing farm. "Oh," he said, "I feel I'm back home. I love Indiana farmhouses." When we first arrived I felt disoriented. We didn't know anyone except our family. But one night I picked up the Bible and received these instructions from Psalm 37:3: "Dwell in the land

and enjoy safe pasture.” Probably nobody but me would see those words as a benediction. We had bought our house partly because Tom was so pleased with its situation: we have a drainage field (empty lot) on the southeast side and a large area like a meadow behind us. He likes the open feeling these spaces give us. I saw the grassy areas as pasture. We were, in the words of one of Jan Karon’s novels, “Somewhere safe with somebody good.”

Now, four years later we are satisfied that moving to Rochester was the right choice. We have found interesting friends, agreeable activities, and a good church. We especially like the variety of outdoor places here, now that the world is coping with COVID-19. A small town with a lovely, well-tended golf course, an almost forty mile-long hiking trail, and several restaurants with delicious food and outdoor seating seems a place designed to give its residents pleasure and good health, even when the virus is still causing trouble in closed-in spaces.



# Living in Leiters Ford, on the Beautiful Tippecanoe River by Ralph Stayton



Leiters Ford was a bustling village in 1932. There were tree lined streets and houses that provided warmth and security amidst the Great Depression.

I was born that year when my parents resided on Storm Street. This street was also known as “Kid’s Street” because of the many families who lived there.

There were three grocery stores, a blacksmith shop, bank, post office, hardware, grain elevator, sorghum mill, Erie Railroad Depot, as well as other businesses. Leiters Ford School was located on Main Street where the community building now stands.

My parents started a fur buying business. Residents in the township set traps for mink, muskrats, and raccoons. They brought the fur to our business where it was sorted and resold. It was necessary to keep cash on hand. As a young lad, I remember thinking it would be a good idea to get some candy at the grocery store. I proudly walked to the store carrying the money bag. The clerk decided to call my parents and soon my father came into the store and took the money and me back home.

In the spring and summer, we had a boat rental business and sold bait. My brother, Guy, was industrious and caught crawfish and minnows to sell. Mother allowed him to keep crawfish in the refrigerator so they would remain dormant. Customers purchased the crawfish for fifty cents a dozen. Guy shared damaged bait with me and I used to catch fish to sell to customers who had been unsuccessful in their attempts at fishing.

In 1962, when I married my wife, Linda, I chose to continue the legacy of raising a family along the beautiful river. We built a home near the site of the sorghum mill. It was a good decision as our four children have happy memories of playing in the river, going to school across the playground, and living in a small town.

It was a highlight of my life when I was given the opportunity to serve as Clerk of the Fulton County Circuit Court from 1963-1971. Today, I am the oldest life resident of Leiters Ford. I still reside within a block of the home on Storm Street where my life story began. I am thankful for early settlers who came and started schools and churches. My family has erected historical markers on the property to honor them. There have been many changes, but one thing is constant. Leiters Ford is home.



# ***Hijacker to Hitchhiker by Charles Yocum***

I was stationed at Grissom Air Force Base in the early summer of 1972. I left Grissom to go to a small town northwest of Grissom on June 23rd of that year. My plan was to meet with my girlfriend and go to the drive-in theatre at Logansport. After a brief chat with her parents and a short basketball game with her brothers, we left for the movies. Joe Kidd and The Godfather were the two movies being featured that night.

As I sat watching the movie, little did I know at the time that a real movie was being shot near Tulsa, Oklahoma that same night. I would become remotely intertwined with that movie before dawn on the 24th of June, 1972. Little did I know that Martin J. McNally was hijacking a plane near Tulsa. It was an American Airlines 727. Martin had never flown before. He snuck on board with a submachine gun tucked in a trombone case. He gave a ransom note to a flight attendant and the drama began.

Under Martin's instructions, the FBI gathered \$502,000 and place it in an American Airline bag. Martin planned to intercept the money when the plane landed in St. Louis. He did and tied the four pound bag to his left belt buckle. After letting some passengers get off the plane in St. Louis, the FBI gave Martin some brief instructions on how to use a parachute.

A man sitting in a bar heard about the hijacking and tried to stop Martin. He drove his new Cadillac through a fence and raced the airplane down the runway at speeds of more than a hundred miles per hour. He spun the Cadillac around and raced head on toward the plane disabling the wheel on the aircraft.

Martin called for another plane and the FBI delivered. He

ordered the plane to Canada. Somewhere over Peru, Indiana, Martin jumped. He had never flown or jumped before that night. However, Martin had studied terminal velocity and knew what it would take to survive a monumental dive like this.

Everyone thought he perished in the jump. Martin lost the money in the jump. Lowell Elliot found the money while plowing in his soybean field near Peru, Indiana. Another man found the machine gun.

There was a man standing on the side of the road hitchhiking near Mexico, Indiana on Old U.S. 31 that night. He flagged me down and said he was heading to Memphis, Tennessee. I remember he had two streaks of dried blood running from his nose to his upper lip. His hair looked like it was brushed upward.

I invited him to stay at Grissom for the night. He was adamant that he didn't. I left him at the front gate. I went to my barracks and quickly fell asleep. The next day everyone was looking high and low for Martin and the money. I interviewed with the FBI that morning.

My questions will always resonate in my mind. Did I pick up the FBI's Most Wanted that night? Why didn't he better secure the money? The big question is that he may have been D.B. Cooper trying to top his first feat in the State of Washington. After all, Martin has a brother in Seattle.



**Martin J McNally**

**June 23, 1972**

**Hijacks American Airline  
Flight 119  
Saint Louis Missouri  
Demands \$502,500 cash.**





## *Sheena's Island by Maria T. Kelsay*

Take a blisteringly hot day in summer, 1958. It's a day when the heat comes at you from two directions, the sun above and the sidewalk below; a day a few weeks into summer vacation when all the summer games are getting old. A day for...  
Sheena's Island.

It begins when a quiet girl in braids whispers the words. Then a boy on a stoop, slapping a ball into a mitt, repeats it. Almost automatically, they take it up, everyone, girls and boys seven to eleven, and the word passes along the street. Sheena's Island.

Casually, in twos and threes, the neighborhood gang makes its way south, to the ten foot wall holding up the Long Island Railroad Yard. They turn east, speed up, and join up; in two blocks, they can see it in the distance. In five blocks, there it is, isolated from mothers, from safety, from home: Sheena's Island.

Instinctively, the ragamuffin troupe of adventurers stops to admire this perfect place, this island of adventure in the midst of working class Queens' domesticity. They gaze with joy at their isle of escape, imagination, and magic. Sheena's Island is a vast mountain, covered by dense, green jungle, dripping with vines and snakes, climbing to the massive, ancient tree at its top. The island is protected on the south by a sheer cliff, one hundred feet high, protecting the island from the roaring ocean. On the east and north, it's isolated by a lagoon, a morass of flotsam and jetsam, a source of swords and swings, ropes and lumber, washed up from ships crushed on the brutal rocks that protect the island.

With a collective breath of anticipation, the gang bursts across the street, shouting with joy and rushing through the

jungle, struggling upward, fighting off lions and giant gorillas and immense snakes, to the mighty tree. There they climb, up vines and rope ladders, up the massive tree until, from that great height, they can see— everything: The pirate ship in the distance, coming their way! The natives from another island, paddling in their direction to the tune of their frightening war cries! Sea monsters, submarines, aliens!

On Sheena's Island, hours turn into weeks, while pirates are vanquished, aliens destroyed, and natives befriended, until unavoidably, the orange orb of the sun begins to sink into the west. And then, from the crow's nest high in the tree comes a warning cry: "Ahoy!! Intruder ho!!!" The gang hides and waits, until they relax, recognizing an older brother.

He stops across the street and yells, "You're late, you morons. Mom's pretty mad." As he turns to leave, he stops and glares at the filthy lot, covered with thorny briars and dusty weeds; the dump for everything from broken chairs and mattress springs, to empty paint cans, dead car tires, and torn garden hoses; a vacant lot topped by a miserable half-dead tree, festooned with tattered ropes, tire swings, and the lopsided pieces of broken lumber,- the crow's nest, he guesses. But as he waits for his younger sisters, and as the gang begins to emerge, grinning out of their filthy, scratched faces, for a brief flash, he sees it as he used to: lush, green, beautiful. He shakes his head, and as he walks away he laughs, and mutters, "Huh, Sheena's Island."

But the children also look back and smile with joy as their gazes graze over it all, the lagoon, the jungle, and the tree, huge green, bright and mysterious. As they troop home, tired and hungry, they sigh with satisfaction: Sheena's Island is heaven.

*Oh! The Things You'll Forget*  
*by Maria T. Kelsay*



## *A Memory Book for Older Seuss Fans*

~

Remember that woman?  
You know who I mean.  
She had bright red hair  
And a purse that was green.

~

What was that place?  
It was on that long street,  
We laughed and we laughed  
When we went there to meet.

~

Now wait. There was someone  
Who sneezed when she laughed.  
She borrowed your scissors.  
She was into some craft.

~

You'll forget your first boyfriend  
When you were fourteen.  
You'll forget where your phone is  
And why you bought cream.

~

And where are your glasses  
Or your dress with the pleats?  
And why is the lemon pie  
On the shelf with the sheets?

~

Or remember that time  
When we went to the beach?  
We got lost and confused  
And... wait, what was I saying?

~

Oh, the things you'll forget,  
From your keys to your list.  
You'll forget to meet Lucy,  
And the birthdays you missed.

~

You'll forget where you parked.  
You'll forget your brown shoes,  
And to set the VCR  
To record the news.

~

Did you hear that thing?  
It was on NPR.  
About that musician.  
Who played the guitar?

~

You remember the one  
About women's successes  
When they changed their lives  
And shed all their stresses?

~

You'll forget to remember  
You'll forget you forgot  
It's funny and annoying  
And it scares me a lot.

# On Mother Nature by Timothy Roe

Our Eukaryotic friend.

A hiking companion.

She sees awe in fungi.

The Appalachian Trail is awe-full. Every day you pack up your house, sore from ten miles of hiking the day before, and sleeping on your \$100 sleeping pad from Patagonia. Eyes wide shut from living in nature and all that “could” or “may” happen and the overall sense that if something does go awry, there isn’t much that anyone can do for you, being many miles into a dense forest. The fear instinct manifests in some hikers as false courage, yet slowly settles into a form of submission to the goodness of our Mother, nature, alongside every painful step taken.

There are those hikers, who I have had the pleasure of experiencing, that have become, through years of hiking or have always been by their very nature, motherly. I am not a superhero, nor am I as courageous, or strong, as my sinewy form would suggest... ha-ha. There are times on the Appalachian Trail when I have experienced a sense of fear, insecurity, and the realization of a total lack of self-efficacy. It is during these times a mother appears... seemingly out of nowhere.

Little did they likely know I needed them. Sometimes through the soma of humor and sometimes through their awareness that I needed, or desired, to be left alone, or at other times just to be reminded of some strength within myself that

the pain had erased. As they walked the same path as I, they would sometimes walk alongside me, sometimes leave me be. In truth, I needed both. Their stride maintaining the pace of a sloth, but all the better for keeping the ego in check. The lessons they teach on the trail are of velocity and friendship.

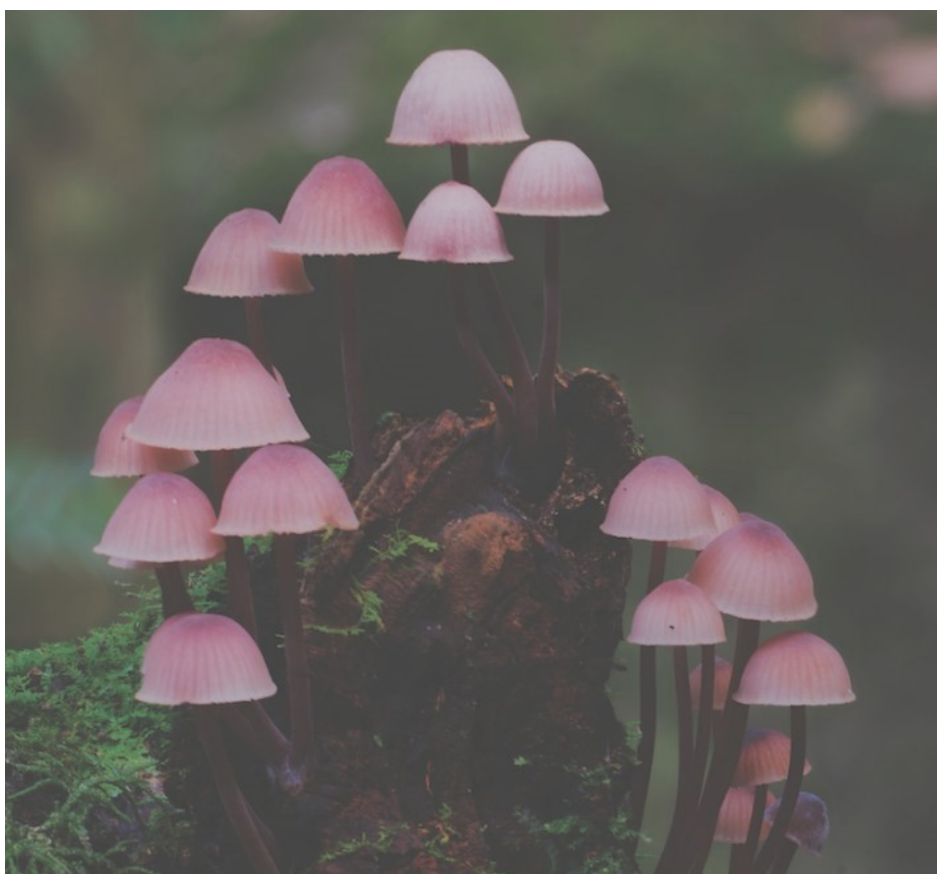
This past July 2020, I took another hike on the Appalachian Trail. After one long day of hiking and being bird-dogged by my ego, I arrived at one of the shelters. Having hiked over nearly half a dozen rattlesnakes (which I missed, but later saw the pics they took), I was experiencing some sense of agitation and lack of strength. In this dance that we call hiking, everyone plays a role. I hiked with four elders. If you are reading, forgive me the language, don't worry there is more. In age there is some form of strength and perseverance. Confession friends, there were times I stole some of your hidden shakti. One day I will return the favor.

There is a tradition, likely a psychological pause in identity, which is experienced by all hikers. This is the part that is contemplative in allowing for your person to live in an avataric form... one's trail name. While on the trail everyone goes by their trail name, which they find along the way, or somehow manifests to their consciousness as their self. We have met 5-O, a cop who came on hard times, many gods and goddesses from our collective myths, Boy Scout because there isn't anything he can't figure out, Sarge because in a previous incarnation he was a Sargent in the Marines, Rattlesnake (my old trail name because I once had an eye for snakes and kept others safe, that was before this year), now Nepenthe because I think it's a magical name, Tumbleweed, and Fungus. The former due to her habit of falling with her 30 lb. pack on the



slightest breeze of unawareness and circumstance, and the latter because in her heart she has developed eyes of wonder. In nature she sees this awe in fungus. The former offering me sincerity in all of her forms, the latter offering me a Kind bar and a hermeneutic on the mantric nature of the word kind. Both I was thankful for and both I have memories of.

On the trail, when the world as we know it is but a distant play of shadows, sorrowing us, angering us, Mother Nature whispers our names, shows us our faces before we were born to this world. She helps us remember who we are outside of the negative catalysts we experience in our daily lives. The Appalachian Trail, one of our Mother's most beautiful forms, offers us eyes to see and ears to hear our selves.



## *Stealing Daffodils by Sara Cumberland*

My maternal grandfather's name was Allan Edgar Zeyen. His mother had a great appreciation for Edgar Allan Poe, which is where his name came from. Papaw was a huge part of my life. The first year after I was born, everyday on his way home from work, he would require "Sara time." I was a spoiled first grandchild. Alas, I do not remember those early years.

As I got a little older, Papaw started a yearly tradition with me during spring when the first flowers were opening up. We would go for a drive in his classic cars and "steal" daffodils from abandoned properties or where there were houses in the country that had burned and been left to nature. As a little girl, I thought this was good fun. I would giggle and run around as quickly as possible to gather daffodils and be ready to jump into the car and on the way to the next place. I was always convinced that cops would show up any minute and ruin our fun with at least a proper scolding. Now, years after my grandfather passed away, I still think of him when the daffodils bloom and I smell the first signs of new life and green things each spring.

Giving everyone in the family nicknames was something Papaw was famous for. I was always "Papaw's Love," hence his nickname was "Pawpaw" to me. It was most amusing all the crazy names he gave us. He also came up with grandpa-isms. If something like a house or a tree had a particular off-centeredness to it, it had what he called "lean-o-sis." He was known for a great many things: fixing up classic cars, never knowing a stranger, collector of old gas pumps, traveling and camping with his motorcycle or pop-up camper— often times at the Smoky Mountains, the list goes on.

Papaw Al always had something to teach me and various activities that he included me in. He was artistically talented with stained glass projects and he and I completed one together when I was in high school. He also took me and one of my close friends out on a least traveled country road to learn how to drive stick shift after we'd received our driver's licenses (he was unsuccessful with that lesson). Papaw took me along with him on motorcycle rides to car shows where he'd win prizes for his cars.

I was always grateful for the time that I had with my amazing Pawpaw. He passed away July 14th, 2016, but there were so many lessons and hours upon hours of quality time... I will miss him always, but he lives on in my memory and countless others' memories. He was so special to everyone. The world is a little less colorful without him.



## *My First Saturday in Rochester by Barry Hazel*

My family moved to Rochester in May of 1994 from South Bend, IN. During the early '90s in South Bend, hearing gunshots all hours of the day was not unusual as the city seemed to be in contention with Gary, IN for murder capital of Indiana. I was working in the backyard on my first Saturday in Rochester when I heard the sound of gunfire. My first thought was: We just moved here to get away from that stupidity. After the shooting seemed to have subsided, I peeked over the hill to the east to discover that the American Legion Honor Guard was performing at a funeral in Citizens Cemetery. I was very relieved to know that the people firing the shots knew what they were doing.



# *My Life by Shirley Willard*

I was born at Morocco, Indiana. The town name Morocco was chosen because of seeing a stranger ride through wearing red boots of Morocco leather.

We moved to Williamsport which has the highest waterfall in Indiana. We lived upstream from the waterfall and our backyard bordered on the creek where my three brothers played. When I was four years old, the swift water took me off my feet, sweeping me toward the falls a couple of blocks away. My big brothers caught me and saved me. I had three brothers: John "Sonny" born in 1927, Paul born in 1929, Richard "Dick" born in 1934. I was born in 1936.

We moved to Rochester in 1941 and lived on 18<sup>th</sup> Street at the edge of town. We had a Guernsey cow, Nellie, that my brothers milked. I remember one time when she stepped on my oldest brother's foot. We had some sheep too. I raised a little lamb whose mother had twins but she did not accept the smaller one. So I raised the little lamb on a bottle and named her April. She would chew on my sleeves and my mother told me not to allow April to chew on my dress sleeves any more. Mom cut off the sleeves and made my dresses sleeveless. Dad put up an electric fence but when the electric charger went bad, he hooked the fence directly to electric. When it rained, one of our cattle died on the fence. I fell on the fence once and got shocked. I was about four years old.

We had a black and white spotted bird dog named Bird. We also had a black cat. The dog and cat would sun themselves on our back steps. They would lie quietly together but then Bird would nip the cat. The cat would slap the dog with its paw. Then they would lie back down and sleep again. Our dog would go

across the street unto a vacant lot to sniff around for birds. The owner of the vacant lot, named Lowman, came out of his house one day with a rifle and shot our dog. It broke our hearts. I think after dark my brothers snuck across the road and brought our dog home to bury him. For weeks afterward my brothers plotted how they would get even, but they did not do anything but talk.

In 1946 my parents bought a 100 acre farm south of Rochester near Mt Zion. That's where I grew up, helped milk cows and rode the school bus to attend Woodrow Grade School. I graduated from Rochester High School in 1955 and Manchester College in 1959.

For 14 years I taught high school English, Spanish, history and journalism at Kewanna 1960-67 and again 1977-78 and North Miami 1968-73. Bill and I took Kewanna students on their senior trip in 1966 and other years we took students to Mexico.

My first husband was a "skirt-chaser" so I divorced him in 1962. Bill Willard and I were married in 1964. We have three sons: Tom, Allen, and Billy. I have three grandchildren: Meaghan Carter, Dasha Vanata, and Josh Willard, and a great-grandson, Camden Vanata.

I was lucky to get to buy a 20 acre farm in 1960 for \$11,000. I have lived there ever since. Bill added two rooms to the house because we had three sons. One of the bedrooms is now my computer room, where I spend many hours writing my history columns and books. We lived off Bill's salary working for Rochester Telephone Company and put my whole school-teaching paycheck toward paying for the farm, which was paid off in 1973.

Charlie Ogle, my Dad, was a farmer and drove a school bus to Woodrow School and Rochester High School for 19 ½ years. He died in 1982 and Mom then moved to a house trailer next to my house on my farm a mile away from the farm where I grew up.

She fell and broke her hip and went into a nursing home in 1990. She died in Rochester Nursing Home in 1993. The day she died, I was on the Trail of Death Commemorative Caravan from Indiana to Kansas. I was rushed to the telephone in Osawatomie, Kansas, and my niece Doris told me Mom had died. It was the last day of the caravan so Bill and I stayed the night with the group, then headed back home to Indiana. 1993 was the year of 100- year- high floods making the Mississippi River bridge not accessible at Quincy, Illinois, so we had to detour to the next bridge further south at Hannibal, Missouri, to get home.

In 1988 I partnered with George Godfrey to commemorate the Potawatomi Trail of Death. We organized a Trail of Death Commemorative Caravan every five years: 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, and 2018. I called every town on the Trail of Death route in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas, and asked for the name of the Boy Scout leader. I then called him and asked if he had a Scout who was interested in erecting a historical marker for the Trail of Death. That is how we got over 80 historical markers and 150 historic highway signs placed. Markers or signs now exist every 15 to 20 miles at campsites and places mentioned in the 1838 diary by Jesse C. Douglas, official scribe (secretary) to William Polke, the federal conductor hired to remove the Potawatomi from Indiana to Kansas. Many of the markers are metal plaques were attached to huge boulders. All were paid for with donations, at no expense to taxpayers.

I wrote five books: *Fulton County Folks Vol. 1* in 1974, *Fulton County Folks Vol. 2* in 1981, *Potawatomi Trail of Death 1838 Indiana Removal to Kansas* in 2003 co-authored with Susan Campbell, and a pictorial history of Rochester in 2010. My new history book, soon to come out, is *Fulton County Indiana – The Luckiest County in the World*.

I continue to write a weekly column for the Rochester Sentinel, which I have done for over 10 years.

Now retired at age 83, I am so glad that FCHS continues without me. I am too tired and scarcely able to walk anymore. It is so gratifying to see it go on and succeed without me. I thank God for sending volunteers and Melinda Clinger, museum director, and Freddy Oden, FCHS president, to carry on. They were kids when I got them involved in the museum.

The Fulton County Museum is still dependent on many volunteers. If you would like to help one day or half a day a week, call Melinda at 223-4436 and find out when you can get your very own volunteer job. Volunteers are needed to host the front desk, give tours, answer genealogy queries, fold and staple newsletters, sweep the floor, clean the kitchen, bake cornbread muffins for Trail of Courage, etc. Never a dull moment!

We have always lived frugally and stayed home a lot, recycled newspapers, cans and glass, and did our best to save the environment. But we have traveled quite a bit too. After retiring from Rochester Telephone Company, Bill delivered trucks and campers for Quality Drive-Away, Goshen, and has been in all 50 states. We visited Hawaii, drove the 660 miles of the Potawatomi Trail of Death caravan 8 times from Indiana to Kansas, and have taken several trips.

For our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary we planned a railroad trip to Chicago, Montana, Seattle, San Francisco, Texas and back home. But I fell and hurt my back the day before the trip. The jiggling of the train hurt me so much, I could not stand it. So we flew home from Whitefish, Montana.





Shirley Willard wearing blue Potawatomi dress patterned after that worn by Mas-saw, Potawatomi chieftess at Lake Bruce, sketched by George Winter, frontier artist, in 1837. The dress was made for Shirley by Elsie Turner, excellent seamstress, Kewanna, in 1993. Shirley wears this dress every year at the annual Trail of Courage Living History Festival at Fulton County Historical Society.

# *The Magician by Andrea Stineback*

Imagine you were born a slave in Virginia in 1815. When you get to be a teenager, you're sent to work at a tobacco factory in Richmond, Virginia. You meet Nancy, a fellow slave. You fall in love, marry, and have children. Without warning, Nancy's slave owner sells her and your children to another slave owner. You know you will never see them again, and will never meet the child she was currently pregnant with.

What would you do? You're heartbroken. You have nothing left to lose. Slavery has taken away your family and your freedom, a freedom you have never experienced. You know no other way. But, wait. Is there another way? It would be difficult, and it would never work...but what if it did?

With the help of a free black man and a white shoemaker, you devise an unconventional plan to escape slavery—you will mail yourself to freedom. You will mail yourself to a Quaker merchant in Pennsylvania, a free state. The cost is \$86, which is almost half of your savings.

In order to get out of work, you must do something drastic and painful. Sulfuric acid burns your hand to the bone, but freedom is worth the sacrifice.

The box is small, 3 feet by 2.67 feet by 2 feet. "Dry Goods" is written on the box. The only thing you carry with you is a little bit of water and a few biscuits. There is one hole for air. Instructions on the box say "Handle with care" and "This side up." The box is not always handled with care nor always right side up. You remain silent in the box for the entire 27-hour journey despite all the jostling.

No one ever discovers you in the box. Somehow, it worked. You make it to Philadelphia. "How do you do, gentlemen?" are

your first words once out of the box. You made it to freedom. Henry “Box” Brown, you are a free man.

~

This unbelievable story is Henry “Box” Brown’s true story. Henry said his journey was worth all the risks he took. “If you have never been deprived of your liberty, as I was, you cannot realize the power of that hope of freedom, which was to me indeed, an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.”

I stumbled upon this story while I was doing research for a grant application. I had never heard this story before, and no one I mentioned Henry “Box” Brown to had heard it either. This story struck me the moment I read it and I couldn’t stop thinking about it. The least I could do was share the story with you.

~

*P.S. Years after Henry’s death-defying journey, he became a performing magician who traveled the U.K., the U.S., and Canada.*



THE RESURRECTION OF HENRY BOX BROWN AT PHILADELPHIA.  
Who escaped from Richmond Va. in a Box 3 feet long 2 1/2 ft. deep and 2 ft. wide.

*“Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess  
and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower,  
and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people.  
But stories can also repair that broken dignity.”*

*-Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*

