

Camp Hill Stories

Start of Summer 2009 Edition

A Fish Tale.....	2
And the Keeley – Nolte Match	4
Elwood Neidig’s Gulf Service.....	5
Fires I Have Witnessed.....	7
Here’s to Socrates, Who Taught Plato, Who Taught Aristotle.....	10
How Slave Day Builds Character.....	12
In the Season’s Final Match	13
Just Hanging Out	14
Me(n)tal Fatigue.....	16
Michael J. Petrillo.....	17
Michelle’s Glasses	18
Mr. Krout	19
Nick Marshall	20
One Fall Evening	21
OPEN CAMPUS	22
Our Fathers Were Friends	23
Plastico® Boots.....	25
Revolution in Camp Hill.....	29
Stump’s Corner	31
The Artist and His Golf Balls	33
The Battle Beyond Oyster Point	34
The Cliffs.....	36
The Jump	39
The Matter—Reese Bout or The Great Herbert Hoover Battle for Souls	41
Top 20 Best Memories of the Class of ’77.....	43
The Toboggan Slide.....	44
Top Ten List of Most Memorable Moments Involving Our Classmates.....	47
Trembling On Stage.....	48
Unexpected House Guests.....	50
Vivid memories of the CH in the 1940’s.....	52
What It Was, Was Baseball	53
Whatever Happened to the Old Cross-Country Team?.....	54
White Stars	56
Win a Medal and Celebrate	58
Now Let’s Celebrate (or Tug Tug Tug)	59
Wind Sprints.....	61

A Fish Tale

Alexander Moyle

To begin with, the bridge rose some fifty feet above the waters. Hauling a fish up to that platform would have required the effort of a god. It's possible in the slow wanderings of a creek that bent back on itself so often that it never went anywhere; it's possible that some prehistoric monster evade common witness. But it is only possible that Spidy C. could find him.

The Wolf boys and I worked our way up a feeder run, turning over rocks and fallen logs, stopping for every crawfish, stonecaddie, waterskipper, minnow, tadpole, and mudpuppie we found. The plan was to follow a small stream that led us to an entrance of the high school's football field. Our hunchedbacked explorations delayed getting us there, till we caught a few notes from the marching band. As we ran to the top of the wood slope leading to the back of the field, I noticed the teams had not yet taken their benches. The crowd was still at the gate, milling about excitedly, awed by something other than football ritual.

Spidy C. commanded the center of the crowd. He was a wiry man of indeterminate age, with a pock-marked face and short mud-red hair. He always sported either a hunting or fishing jacket, lined with licenses and tags. In those days, my hometown was still pocketed with suburban wilds of empty lots and forgotten hollows, spats of tree not yet cleared for lawns. Spidy was its suburban hunter. Along with his customary riffle or fishing rod, Spidy often carried metal jaw traps that clanged as he stalked, paying no mind to backyard borders.

On this day, on the edge of the playing field, Spidy stood like Michelangelo's David. His right arm was bent back over his right shoulder and, in place of a sligshot, his palm was lodged into the gill of an enormous fish. The huge yellow carp slung over his back hung half way down Spidy's thigh. The carp was still gaping for air. It seemed to be speaking into Spidy's ear.

I asked the obvious. "Spidy, did you catch the carp?"

"That's nothing, compared to the whale I caught. Matter of fact last week I caught a dozen eels at the mouth of Bear Run." He nodded in the direction we just ran from. We had seen no eels and I never thought the run had a name.

The eldest Wolf boy asked, suspicious, "Where did you catch the carp, Spidy? Did you find it floatin'?"

"Behind the park, in that slow water under the bridge, down in the shadows. I thought I had a snag. The line just sat there on the bottom. I was just about to cut my line when this mother leaped in the air to see who's f-ing around. It took over an hour to bring it in."

I envisioned the fish rising fifty feet up in the air, turning slowing, brilliant like some watery sun, rising to Spidy's favored perch on the bridge above. I believed him and asked the critical question, "What did you use for bait?"

With a cigarette hanging out the left corner of his mouth, Spidy leaned down close so only I could hear. The fish gasped along his words. "I used a cigarette butt and my secret fish call." He let out a long belch.

Spidy started out normal like the rest of us, until one day Spidy and the neighborhood boys decided to throw sticks and stones at a hornet's nest that hung in an oak tree on a lower branch reaching out in the middle of the street. The hornets became agitated at the attack, but focused their anger more on the collection of rocks under the nest than at the boys. Still, the boys cautiously retreated from the nest, abandoning their weapons. It was Spidy who decided to retrieve some stones from the street, so as to continue the experiment in tormenting the hornets. He had crept underneath the nest to the stone piles, when the nest spun free and fell straight down on his head. The hornets stung him all over his face. They even went into his screaming mouth and stung Spidy in his brain.

And that explains everything, including Spidy and the flying golden carp. Spidy had caught the biggest fish that I had ever seen.

And the Keeley – Nolte Match

Dawn Keeley Gribb

The only story that comes to mind is one from sixth grade. We were camping at Camp Shickalemy? (spelling) and it was the annual sixth grade spring campout at Schaeffer Elementary. The girls were in one campsite and the boys in another. We were in cabins and I remember not having a flashlight but hearing the screams as the boys approached the girls campsite to raid it and try to scare us. We (a few girls) decided to try and tell them who was boss. We started fist fighting with any boy that came near us. I only remember the Spanish teacher pulling me off of Jim Nolte. We (the girls) had conquered, and all went back to normal at school. The story faded away about how Dawn Keeley beat up Jim Nolte at camp, until eleventh grade speech class. Jim was in my class and someone brought it up to use as a subject. I wanted not crawl under my desk after I turned six shades of red. Sorry Jim.

Elwood Neidig's Gulf Service

Andy Hawbecker

Long before the advent of the impersonal cashier in a glass booth at the gas station there was a true auto service center at the corner of 18th and Market Streets in Camp Hill called Neidig's Gulf Service. The station was run by Elwood Neidig and his colorful group of co workers. "Wood's" was not just a place to get gas, it was much more, it was woven into the fabric of Camp Hill. It was a meeting place, a place to exchange stories, a place to get help when in need and you could get quality auto repairs there from people who cared about doing a good job. I had the good fortune of getting a job there in the early seventies. It was somewhat similar to joining the cast of Barney Miller or Cheers.

Elwood was a man's man in every sense of the word. He was no one you would ever mess with but he also had a heart of gold hidden beneath his tough exterior. He was a gnarly looking with salt and pepper hair, grease stained hands that would never again be clean, scarred from burns and hundreds of slipped wrenches. He was ever present with his blue service station pants and his company issue light blue Gulf logo shirt with "Wood" sewn into it. His co workers included Fish, Steve, "Gusty" (Dean Mantis), Injun' Jim Moore, Lil' Wood, Donnie Stewart and future police officer Dave Pepperman to name a few. Elwood was the boss, he enjoyed being the boss and whatever orders he gave, we followed. He loved football and was a huge fan of Johnny Unitas and the Baltimore colts. He could debate football for hours with no less than three or four hundred expletives thrown in for color.

When a cold spell would hit, the phone would start ringing as cars all over Camp Hill would need a jump start. Wood would jump into his truck and drive all over town starting cars for free or for just a cup of coffee. Everyone would remember this and would be sure to get their gas at Elwood's even though it cost a few cents more than the new Hess down in Lemoyne, but at Neidig's we would always wash your windows, check your oil and even put air in your tires if you wished. Elwood would love to return to the station and wow his audience with his trumped up stories of the women he had helped that day answering the door in their nighties or less. No one could spin a fantasy like Elwood. He was full of it as far as we knew but who really knows for sure.

The station was also favorite stop for the Camp Hill police force because Elwood always had a pot of coffee on and there were usually some doughnuts to enjoy with the latest issue of *Guns and Ammo* or....*Playboy*. The station also offered a good vantage point to keep an eye on speeders coming into Camp Hill from Lemoyne. We could always be counted on to put the snow tires on the police cars within in a few minutes notice of an impending storm. The police cars would roll in and we would get the tires on as fast as we could. Wood had great respect and rapport with the police and fire departments, but he would also protect his co-workers from prosecution when needed. The police had a particular disdain for our new found freedom, riding mini bikes. I once witnessed Wood's compassion when I saw Dean Mantis on his mini bike flying down North 17th and across Market Street right into Wood's lot. Elwood was holding the garage door up and Dean flew right into the garage and Wood quickly shut the overhead door. Seconds later the C.H. police car came roaring into the lot looking for Dean only to have Elwood give them the "I didn't see anything shrug" while Dean hid the mini bike in the garage until the cops left. How Wood loved to retell that story.

Neidig's was the place to work on your car and keep them washed and waxed before heading over to cruise "the circuit". Many Friday nights you could drive by and see Dean aka Smoky Burnout, out there waxing his black Camaro, easily the hottest car in town. Palanzo's Cuda, Lipscombs's mustang or my '73 Camaro Rally Sport might be out there. The Martson, Brandt, Sajer, Over gang would drop by from North 17th and the Quinns, Zeiglers, Tammy Nadeau, Chrenciks or Hines' would drop by from South 18th to get a soda from one of the few soda vending machines in the area. The slight incline and smooth surface on Market Street made it the perfect spot for lighting up our tires to show off for our friends but no one could do it like Dean. Dean could smoke them up through first and second gears well up the hill to South 17th and the plume of burning rubber would envelope the parking lot and the cheering fans.

One of my favorite stories had to do with how Elwood would calculate a bill. When a person takes a car to a garage they always expect the worst. Elwood never took advantage of anyone. He would mark his parts up a small percentage and charge a reasonable rate for labor. Nothing even close to the price gouging that goes on now. When a customer would call in to see if his car was done and how much it cost, Elwood had a particular trick he loved to pull. He would lay the phone on the desk with the mouthpiece close to his big old calculator and just crank and crank that calculator like he was figuring out a huge bill. This would go on for a few minutes as the customer listened to the calculator cranking away over the phone. Wood would sit there smiling as he hit random buttons to make as much noise as possible. Then he would pick up the phone and say "Forty Bucks" or some other round number that was usually lower than anything the customer would anticipate.

These are just some of the stories from one small corner in Camp Hill and there are many other corners and memorable spots but I will always remember Elwood Neidig's Gulf Service as the place where friends met in a much simpler and happier time. Elwood is gone now and so is his station but he touched many people and we all remember him fondly.

Editor's note: I have argued with Mr. Hawbecker that the Green Ghost, a '72 Torino, should figure in the list of hottest cars...although it never needed repairing at the Gulf Station.

Check out Andy's other motor madness, The Jump.

Fires I Have Witnessed

Dennis Myers

In the year I was born, my brothers, eight and ten years older, still gathered the discarded trees of Christmas. They scoured our College Park neighborhood and beyond to drag trees, tinsel and all, into a huge pile in our backyard. A Herculean task, it is easier imaged taking place back in those days, when the yards had no fences and the spaces were vast and open without sheds or swimming pools, tall trees or chained dogs. Those days, the Camp Hill borough code and civic sensibility still allowed more of the frivolous and the insane, such as live chickens, helicopters, lions, and the assemblage of a fifteen foot high playground tinderbox. So David and Donald and their friends carried hundreds of scotch pines, white pines, Douglas furs and stocked them five, six, ten high in pillars and walls, arches, tunnels and secret entrances till the whole backyard and more was consumed in a tree fortress.

When the citadel's walls inevitably browned, shed needles, and dried to tinder touch, my father would start the disassembling, removing the driest trees and placing them in a small clearing. It was the start of the Great Annual Christmas Tree burning. The ritual fire lasted days, fueled by hundreds of holiday celebrations just past and tended to by my brothers, my neighbors and mostly by my father. Throughout his lifetime, Pop burned a lot of things: construction scraps, garden debris, and even wood. I remember him on summer afternoons, with the temperatures reaching into the high nineties, and Pop shirtless and contently raking over a smoldering pile of ashes, scanning the yard for something more, something more to burn. So, although I never witnessed the great Christmas inferno, fire formed a basic element of my life.

The Camp Hill school district celebrated all our great athletic moments with massive bonfires in the sloping grass field behind Hoover Elementary. The opening of football season was traditionally marked with the tossing of a torch onto summer remnants and stacks of newsprint, while cheerleaders in those blue and white heavy-wool, pleated skirts danced in front of a deep orange flickering, and with the ironic touch of the Camp Hill Volunteer Fire Department watching flames jump twenty feet or more into the crisp darkness, watching in their equally crisp uniforms, watching with their arms professionally-folded across their medaled chests. The volunteers patiently stood out for their time, while the whole town sang fight songs to familiar college tunes. Someone from the pep club tossed an effigy of our first opponent onto the heat. We all watched the fire fade finally away to the solemn refrains of the Alma Mater, in our hearts will every echo, memories that we share.. Only then out came the hose, the Camp Hill hook and ladder truck #14 extending its platform over the center of the chards, and the water pressed into steam.

High school bonfires were a familiar tradition, but I never thought of them as characteristically Pennsylvanian until driving home one fall weekend from New York. As we swung up Route 22 past the Easton S-turn, Judy pointed out a huge crimson ball on the hill behind a school. She asked if we were witnessing a book burning. This happened still early in our relationship and I didn't want to burst out laughing, so, disarmed, for the briefest moment I entertained that thought. I was gut-swept back to all that grainy, flared footage of Nazis rallies and Beatle albums piled in oily stacks, awaiting matches or Zippo lighters. Could a football rally be equally as sinister? In the passing fleeting seconds from the highway, I thought I could see the pleated skirts of cheerleaders dancing.

I had a brief career in fire myself as a young teen, as an acolyte dressed in red and white at Trinity Lutheran Church, every occasional Sunday. Cued by a nod from the Reverend, we'd move in coordinated pairs, lighting the candles out, then flipping the device over to later snuff out the wicks. I was the acolyte for my brother David's wedding when his bride's veil burst in flames. Now queued by a nod from me, the Rev quickly extinguished that personal inferno with a flicking swipe of his hand. It occurred to me that the whole acolyte ritual seemed as much about putting out fires as creating them.

I knew a lot about making fires. From the quiet shelves of the West Shore Library, I once took out a beautiful book, bound in a brilliant blue rough-grained canvas with its title impressed in soft, silvery letters: The Book of Pyrotechnics. When my brothers alerted mom that it was a cookbook for homemade fireworks, I had to return it to library, but I am sure I must have made a watch list of some sort.

Even without this guidance and scholarship, I came up with my own fire-based recipes. Inspired by the evening war and its televised ingredients of horror, I determined to make my own neighborhood napalm. As kids, we all knew it was jellied gasoline, nasty sticky stuff. So my first attempt involved pouring a discrete amount of gas into a bowl of lime Jello® my mom had made for dessert. The gas broke down the wiggly consistency to a soup that was neither sticky nor flammable. Nor edible.

On my next attempt, Steve Sellers saved my life. I had realized my mistake was in pouring the gas into an already completed mixture. Instead, I would substitute gasoline for the water and otherwise follow the recipe on the back of the carton step-by-step. I got a sauce pan, poured in a cup of gasoline, and was ready to bring it to boil when Steve walked in the side door, cocked his head to the side with a dangerous, puzzled expression and simply suggested that this was not the best of ideas. He turned off the stove and we went out to a discarded stretch below Route 581 and poured the gas onto a puddle of stale waters collected in an industrial drum, just to prove it could float. Then we torched the gas. Almost set the field and highway on fire.

Burn baby burn: a sixties anthem. I never burned anything down, never really set fire to “a thing,” but I understood the pain of fire’s retreat when, one night, we got news that the high school had caught on fire. My mom, a secretary at the school, rushed to survey the damage. It was minor blaze, a few file cabinets in the central office area really, but just the thought of it shook my mom to tears. She never said so much but she must have felt it as an attack on something dear. Later, when the police investigation pointed to arson set by a Camp Hill Eagle Scout, mom cried again, torn for the soul’s torture that felt compelled to set the high school afire.

I have fire most terrifying or weird, like cars deep in fireball, consumed in a rage, and you watch frozen thinking why doesn’t this thing explode like what you see on the movies? And then thinking I don’t want to be here if it does. Even quieter flames can drag out a wolfian wildness, such when the gentle campfires at our sixth grade class trip to Tanalo infused a half-naked Bob Kehew to crazed ranting, over and over, “Arnold Ziffiel lost his pants! Arnold Ziffiel lost his pants!” Otherwise stoic Miss McHale had to pulled Bob aside to restore his sanity. Older and quieter still were the beach fires of Assateague, with the day’s heat and delirium lost to counting shooting stars and drinking cheap MadDog wine with good friends the likes of Steve Urban, Alex Moyle, Gerry Negley, Stu Bailey and even John Judge took a slug or two. Madness, John. Madness.

Other fires, sky fires: those unforgettable, silent pinpoint flames embedded in the pitched blanket overhead the Explorer’s camp. Deep and isolated up along the Susquehanna, this untouchable canvas rendered the Milky Way as complete and as silky wonder as it must have appeared even to the ancient Greeks. The place was other worldly. Whispered stories had it that the Explorer’s leader Karl Heckert could fly through this ink darkness by magic or will, appearing to one group of hiker at to the top of the mountain and then surprise another group of terrified souls seconds later at the base trailhead. I too had shown up here unannounced in a desperate attempt to reclaim a lost heart. But, after a short, fruitless conversation in the cold air, I was left alone there only to stare up at those far suns with the knowledge that deep attachments could surely be lost forever. And the air was cold.

Years later, the sirens broke our laughter over dinner. Chuck Kolonauski had invited a small crew—Dave Dietz, Mike Petrillo, myself and Judy--over for dinner at his new apartment. We were celebrating triumph during what was a transitional time for all of us. Some of us were shortly out of college and some of us already into our first real jobs, still within the thrill of a earning a paycheck and before the drag of careers. And here was Charles, in his own place. Dinner—I don’t remember the exact menu—was simple and excellent and we talked over beers and awed at our collective maturity and Chuck’s complete living room, accomplished without a single cinderblock or torn fabric. Then there were the sirens.

You couldn’t really see anything out the windows and we kept drinking and there was so much to laugh at and all but soon we could feel the whole buzz growing outside. People rushed out onto the summit lawn and a great crowd had assembled. The apartment complex grouped duplex units into small clusters, four or five down a row, each unit separated by red rust brick walls, each apartment identical, with the same second story set back slightly to create a slanting, tiered effect. It was a giant Aztec village and tonight the apartment across from Chuck’s lit like a Tiki torch. Already flames flowed over both floors and the heat had forced the fire trucks to wetting down the adjacent homes. We wondered how long till

the fire forced outward and we wondered if could it possibly reach Chuck's collection of Ted Nugget albums.

Contained within the walls, however, the fire only spread upward and inward, generating a huge intensity that stripped away the apartment's façade. Suddenly, before us all, through this cutaway, we could see clearly into a stranger's life, all the pieces—a couch, the fridge, a kitchen table with a couple of chairs—all of it illuminated, a glowing lifeline. Looking back, to see our faces, we must have looked like children without tragedy. Judy took my hand and the summer air around us felt warm and comforting. This, I knew, this and Chuck's record collection would be safe for all future.

Here's to Socrates, Who Taught Plato, Who Taught Aristotle...

Michael J. Petrillo

All Tomorrow's Parties I've Been To

Speaking of parties... did I mention that during my high school years, I wasn't much of a party-person. In fact I would probably have been voted "second-to-last person" one would invite to their party (sorry Stu, first at last!). Having said that, there were a few parties that I attended and that I have strong memories of. For instance, the afore-mentioned Lee Fry party – tres unusual...

I remember a sleepover at Elmo's in ninth grade. We did not have any alcohol and pretty much didn't have anything to do. We ended up walking around Camp Hill and not sleeping. Of course, there was the obligatory Negley lighting of a Steve Sellers fart, the blue flame casting an ethereal glow...

Many parties were impromptu and involved champagne. We always bought one relatively good bottle and three or four cheapo bottles. The modus operandi was to find a suitable spot (say, some unsuspecting farmer's field, a campground, or under the highway bridge near Unga-Bunga Land), sit around and pass the bottle, each taking as long a pull as desired, and always prefaced by a toast. But any old toast wouldn't do, each toast had to be a micro-universe, important unto itself, and contain at least a piece of your very soul. I have forgotten all but the most mundane of the toasts, but believe me when I tell you they were very impressive (or the champagne was impressive and we weren't). The toasts were never vulgar (except perhaps for one over and over again to that c—nt in Pine Grove who just wanted to go to sleep). In this way of toasting, we even discovered the wonders of science: ask Frans ("Look! look at these glow rocks! I mean these rocks are glowing"...)

I don't recall the very first marshmallow fight, but it was at an Elmo party. There have been countless fights since. Perhaps that is what happened to our generation – hit in the head by too many marshmallows, the blows unnoticeable, waves of trauma shaking the delicate balance in our young, unsuspecting minds (the horror, the horror). Advice: parents – don't let your children throw marshmallows...

Our Senior class did have a party. I can't remember where it was, but I think it involved beer and Bernie Pennel's house (or maybe I just remember standing next to the keg and chatting with him for a long time?) I do remember the police raiding the party, with all of us running across the back yard to escape. The police weren't interested at all in any of us nor the keg. No, they just wanted someone to move the car parked in front of the neighbor's driveway. (Who knew, the neighbor might want to drive to the Giant at 1 am to buy ice cream?)

I was most surprised when my father asked me if I wanted to have a graduation party. He even volunteered to buy one (ah, and only one) case of beer for us to share. (Doing the math: ok, what if 23 people show up, does that mean we can all only drink 1.04 bottles of beer?). The beer was St. Pauli-Girl, and someone smuggled sloe gin and Wild Turkey in. We played cards out back on the picnic table and invented a game where you got to pick who drinks if you won. Of course everyone picked Zeke. (Even Zeke picked Zeke, but he only won once). Zeke later went behind a bush to speak to the sloe gin Gods; only to crawl back and state he was ready for the next hand. We passed the hat when the Pauli-Girl ran out. Craig and Ned got the honors of buying the next case. There were two other noteworthy events at the party: Bartlett antagonizing my weight-lifting cousin Chuck – so much so that Chuck was chasing Bart all over the yard, trying to dump a cooler of ice on him. Second, Ned had to take a crap, and rather than go in the house, he went to the car wash behind the yard, and sat on a large trash can. It's a good thing there were only two people washing their cars at midnight on a Friday night or someone might have figured out what Ned was doing.

The best of all the parties that I have ever been to would have to be any one of Elmo's Christmas parties. Believe it or not, they started while we were in high school, I think sophomore year, on Christmas night. I can recall Jay Judge running up in his shorts, snow on the ground, hat and mittens in place,

asking anyone if they wanted to run with him. We would later go bumper riding with either Frans or Steve Sellers driving. Those parties continued every year, an unbroken string of Yuletide glory until 1992, when one member of the group had to go and get married two days after Christmas (Ah, the fool, he could have beaten Bob on the Bet, if he'd just have Bob declared common law!). There has not been a party since, and every Christmas celebration pales in comparison to the splendor of genuine friendship.

Just ask Larry Kasper, he's a dip man, and he knows his dip, and this is great dip...

How Slave Day Builds Character

Ken Arnold

Yale Avenue at 24th Street was the scene of a death-defying Slave Day event, as Shea Quinn and I caught high-speed air Starsky-and-Hutch-style in our Chevy station wagons, reveling in the universal feeling of invincibility and lack of judgment that only a senior in high school knows. Unfortunately, the temporary flight also confirmed Newton's Third Law of Motion, that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction: in this case, the skull-versus-roof impact of one of the kids packed into the cargo area of the Quinn-mobile. Or was it Newton's Second Law, an object in motion (skull) will remain in motion unless acted upon by an external and unbalanced force (inside of car roof)? I was awake in Phil Schmelzle's Physics classes, but none of that seemed to matter much when--in the name of creating excitement for our masters by reenacting a TV chase scene from the "Streets of San Francisco"—another Harvard (or Yale) education was stunted by a brief concussion.

Slave Day was that curious Senior fundraising tribal rite passed down from year to year without repercussion or regret. Seniors were auctioned off to underclassmen, who owned them for a day of random silliness. Shea, Dave Hershey and I were a package deal, purchased by a consortium of seventh or eighth graders who had pooled their funds. I must admit that Shea and I looked particularly alluring in our miniskirts and wigs, as ordered up by our masters, although we were actually frightened when we picked up Dave at 7am. He had eerily morphed into his mom Pat.

Slave Day wasn't all bad. One task gave me experience in suppressing fear. Early in the morning, our masters commanded us to walk into the Dunkin' Donuts on the Camp Hill Bypass. I don't remember who went first, but I do remember the visceral fear I felt as I sauntered through the parking lot in my high-heeled sandals, somewhat like the feeling striking your bowel on a long ski resort chair lift when winter diarrhea decides it wants to see the crystal blue sky. So, likewise, I tried to hold in the fear as I pulled open the heavy glass door.

I distinctly remember focusing on the back of a man parked at a stool at the counter. Somebody said something to alert him, and as he rotated his vinyl perch to face me, a half-eaten donut hidden in his great paw, I noted that he didn't seem to miss too many meals. His bemused expression had a sort of rabid tinge, probably because of the "Angel Kreme" foaming from the corner of his mouth. He then started laughing, his belly vibrating like a giant flab piston. I held my hands up, and said the magic words dictated by my masters: "Does anybody want a date?"

My most vivid memory, however, is from the end of the day. That memory was the feeling of freedom. Not just freedom from fear, or freedom from worry about what other people think about you—but the freedom felt upon removing panty hose from hairy teen legs.

In the Season's Final Match

Alexander Moyle

They were the ones we wrestled with. They didn't have uniforms. Our team mates wore sweat pants and tee -shirts. They wrestled before us, before the match began.

This was our final match. The end of the season. All of us focused on one wrestler, a wrestler without a uniform. His match began and we began to shout words of encouragement.

Our wrestler was on his back, straining, resisting the final slap on the mat. A sound he had heard several times before. A team chorus shouted "role over" and he did.

Our wrestler pinned his man. The team was ecstatic, frenzied, buzzed on honey.

Something was uncorked that day, perhaps the bubbling potential of Craig Bartlett.

Just Hanging Out

David Dietz

While pondering my days growing up and going to school in Camp Hill, I realize that I walked to school and walked home when classes were done (no buses). I never participated in any organized school or community sponsored activity. However, as soon as I came home, I went out the door and rode my bike to a local venue to meet with the guys. Normally the troop consisted of Steve Bange, Charles Kolonauski, Dennis Myers (Elmo), Mike Petrillo (Pitt), our siblings and anyone else we could round up. We would play the sports de jour in what seemed to be any time of weather and have a good old time. With no parents in sight, we were able to make rules, get along, and have fun with minimal fighting. On those warm spring and summer days, we would ride our bikes to the creek and go fishing. We'd just wade in the water wearing our beat up sneakers and shorts. Mom's only rule, get home at 6 PM or I'd have to fix my own dinner. You know what? I turned out OK.

This is in contrast to the communities I have lived in since and maybe the changing times. It seems everyone's child is booked up in multiple organized after school activities with mom and dad (mostly mom) having to drive them everywhere. The only place my mom and dad drove me was to church and that was because I really did not want to go there. But think of the freedom I had. I could walk or ride my bike practically anywhere I wanted to go. My parents let me do pretty much what I wanted and I stayed out of trouble for the most part. You know what? I think many of us had the same freedom and we turned out all right.

With all this freedom, I still couldn't wait for my 16th birthday. I just had to get that drivers permit. Mom was very accommodating. My brother dropped mom and me off at the DMV in Harrisburg, I got my permit, and then Mom & I walked home crossing Susquehanna over the Harvey Taylor Bridge and finally reached our house after a three mile walk. Is that love or what! After getting my drivers license on the second try, I was off running around in my cool 50 Plymouth four door sedan. Some other guys had some pretty cool cars too. Corey Gallaher - 50 Dodge, Paul Harvey - 50 Plymouth, Rick Shover - 40 Buick. We all loved these old machines. Dale Radnor had some pretty fine cars. His famous blue fleck charger and T-Bird were the envy of the guys. Dale, do a burn out!

As auto insurance companies know, teenagers and cars are a pretty volatile combination. Tim Gallagher discovered that you can put eight teenagers in a VW Carmen Ghia and still drive it. Elmo discovered the Green Ghost was just as good as any four wheel drive vehicle. Ah, but what follows makes me cringe to this day but at the time was a blast. One snowy winter night when the guys were hanging around Elmo's pad someone had a brilliant idea. What if we attach this garden hose around the bumper of Franz's station wagon and have Franz drive around while we're all holding on to the hose. Wouldn't that be great fun? It was great fun. We probably had 10 guys hanging onto the hose wearing whatever shoes we had on (Elmo probably bear foot) being pulled by Franz through the streets of Camp Hill. If the front guy would slip, he would knock off everyone behind him. Stop and start again. Negotiating turns was nasty. The car would turn, the riders would not heading straight into whatever was in front of them. We riders had no directional control and were at the mercy of Franz. We didn't care and continued this amusement, running into curbs, barely missing parked cars, falling over one another with only Fuzz knowing how fast we were going. Mercifully, all our lives were spared that evening. You know what? We turned out OK.

I do have a couple moments with teachers burned into memory. One day in trigonometry class, I sat at a desk that had a bent leg. The thing teeter tottered and I must have been making noise, complaining or something. Well, Mr. Orris, who has a slight speech impediment, looked directly at me and said, "David, why does your desk wo -wo- wo -wo, rock?" I could see in my periphery my classmates holding in laughter, their bodies in little convulsions. Having direct eye contact with Mr. Orris, I had to keep my composure. I gave the correct answer, "Because 3 points make a plane." Mr. Orris did notice the class had to laugh. So He made some little joke allowing the class break forth into laughter. Thank you Mr. Orris for letting us laugh.

Perhaps my favorite teacher was Mr. Kennedy. I had him for physics and chemistry. He was actually a mysterious kind of spooky guy. I think when he retired, he must have gone into television and movies under the name of Jack Palance. Anyway, one day he pulled a pop quiz. Everyone failed. Next class, he gave the same quiz. I think most of us did poorly again. Out of his mouth came, "Catch you once, shame on me, catch you twice on you." I remember that as a life lesson today. In Chemistry, he got great satisfaction from exothermic reactions or just simply blowing things up. I can still see him with his devilish smile, ringing his hands, telling us all to put on our safety goggles and "take cover!"

Who is this? Mr. Kennedy or Jack Palance?

Camp Hill – What a great place to grow up!

Me(n)tal Fatigue

Anon

Most of what I do is write technical proposals or recap technologies, in other words I am a geek for a living. I have to admit that I have trouble remembering the stories that would be about good things. I mean I don't think we want a store about M. pushing people around until one day Ken snaps and clocks him or Duke throwing JC across the locker room at Scotland for disparaging the kids that attend, or C throwing TW across the gym for being a dick after wrestling practice or may people pick on Mark F until the kid snapped. I have been racking my brain and if I can come up with something you will be the first to know. Although a thought just came to mind about the time in physics class when we took Mr. Smelzlys spring into the hall and stretched it from one end of the hall to the other and got some good wave motion out of it while taking it past the point of returning to its original size.

Michael J. Petrillo

Robert Kehew

(A Splinter of the True Cross)

Pitt painted golf balls. He dipped the cheap paint brush and worked up Raiders' helmets and Snoopies in bright acrylic. He daubed Planet Earth and the yin-yang. (I have one in a drawer.)

He once set out to commemorate the knights – all of the knights – from Arthur's Camelot on separate spheres. "After all," he explained, "the Table sat one hundred – we know ten."

Perhaps the Pittster saw himself as one of the unknown ones, not saga-ready, avoiding the Siege Perilous, poking fun at Gawain with his mouth full of mutton.

And since the suburban plan did not allow for gentillesse or jousts or linked armor, he settled for shorter quests to the golf green for those white spheres on which he could expend

his talent, reach for merit and glory... impress a fair maiden? Why did Pitt paint golf balls? He did it because he couldn't carve King Arthur's table out of Brittany oak.

Michelle's Glasses

Della Hoke-Uvick

The company that Theo Tomczak's mom worked for had a beach house, and they invited me, Chris Columbus, Kris Diener and Michelle Miller along with them when they went for a week. We girls got the floor above the family and had a great time.

Now, we had often told Michelle that it was a good thing that her head was attached, because she was forever forgetting things. One of the things that she forgot was that she was wearing her glasses when she went into the ocean.

Needless to say, a wave knocked her over and her glasses came off. We looked and looked, but never found them. Luckily, Michelle and I had similar prescriptions, so we shared my glasses until we got home.

Unfortunately, she didn't get new glasses in time for picture day – she used some sunglasses from home, popped out the dark lenses, and wore those instead. Go ahead ... look at her senior yearbook photo. That's the only time she ever wore those things!

Mr. Krout

Della Hoke-Uvick

Sometime during our senior year, Chris Columbus and I got into a habit of hanging at the intersection of the downstairs hallways after we'd eaten lunch. That's where Mr. Krout stationed himself – we had free rein of outside but not inside the school at lunchtime.

Mr. Krout wasn't such a meanie or grouch – I don't know if any of the other kids ever knew that. I couldn't tell you what Chris and I talked about with him, but I do have fond memories, if vague. Anyway, Mr. Krout was forever sucking on hard candy, wrapped in a clear wrap. He must have had quite a stash somewhere!

Later in the year, I cleaned out my purse and found tight little balls of that clear candy wrap. That darn Mr. Krout had been sneaking them into my purse for months! Well, I couldn't just let that go without doing something. I waited for my chance ...

So, there we were, graduating seniors in the auditorium – pomp and circumstance, ritual and serious business. I was called to the stage to receive the French award. Mr. Krout was reading the names of the language award recipients from behind the podium. As I walked past him to receive my certificate, I unobtrusively popped one of those little candy wrapper balls onto the podium.

Hee hee!

Later on, after I was in my seat and someone else was at the podium, I looked up at Mr. Krout, who was seated with several other adults on stage. He saw me looking and wagged one finger at me and smiled.

Nick Marshall

Maura Cowan

I'd see him out running, at first just down 17th street or around the neighborhood. Later I'd see him from the car; out past the mall, down along the Yellow Breeches, way out in the country, farther and farther away. Impossible to run that far.

Nick Marshall, our local celebrity in the very limited world of long-distance running. He ran ultra-marathons of 50 miles, 100k, even 100 mile races, and sometimes won. A proponent of "streak running," he ran every day for 2,080 days straight until a hip injury took him off the road. After a brief recuperation period, he continued to run, off and on, for over 25 years.

I knew Nick as my best friend's older brother. He was shy and quiet and unpretentiously brilliant. He never drank or partied, or did anything that would call attention to himself. I remember his perfect SAT scores, his graduation from college, and his homecoming. He was drafted a few months later.

He was a conscientious objector, claiming a moral and ethical aversion to violence. The judge didn't want to send this gifted and gentle soul to prison, so he sentenced Nick to civic duty. Nick didn't accept the easy out. He insisted on being released as a free man or be sent to jail like so many others. He spent 18 months in solitary confinement.

I'm not sure exactly when Nick started running, or why he ran so far. He ran alone at first, then with a few neighborhood running friends. After awhile I noticed large groups of people running with him, the fans and admirers in that world. There were more and more, and then less and less.

Nick still lives in Camp Hill. For years, he took care of his mother, who was dying of emphysema. He owned the Winsor Park Bookstore, but is now semi-retired, buying and selling books through the Internet. He hasn't been running, since the injuries have mounted up, but he still walks great distances every day. He tells me he still dreams of running again.

One Fall Evening

Lisa Gantt-Kennedy

One fall evening, back in 1972, Kathy Zimmerman, Kelly Wynn, and I were doing our usual perusal of cheap cosmetics and miniature turtles at Woolworths at "the Plaza" when, who did we see, but Mr. Lewellen, the band director at Camp Hill High. Of course, Mr. Lewellen was larger than life, and commanded the utmost respect from all who at the opportunity to take in his rather daunting frame and demeanor. And, since we were all twirlers (or maybe just Kelly and Kathy were at that point, I'm not sure if I "made it" that year or the next) we felt we had a special connection to Mr. Lewellen.

Anyway, being the type of individual who finds it hard to pass up a dare, I took Kelly and Kathy up on it when they "dared" me to yell "Hey Reese!!!" at the top of my lungs, across the plaza parking lot, at the maestro as he strode in giant steps to his car. As soon as the words left my lips I regretted my decision. He turned on his heel like a well-trained soldier, and in giant leaps that seemed to shake the parking lot, ran right up to me. As I tried to flee, he grabbed me by the shoulder and spun me around. He then proceeded to scream at me about the audacity I had, and, as he marched me to the pay phone on the sidewalk of the plaza, he ordered me to call my mother and tell her what I had done. Needless to say, I did just that, explaining to my Mom how rude I had been, between gasps and tears.

When he was satisfied with my confession, he excused me. As I remember it, at that point Kelly and Kathy, who had been taking in the whole scene from a short distance away came running up to me laughing hysterically. Of course I was able to eventually laugh about it, too, but not for quite a while!

OPEN CAMPUS

Collen Kramer

When my sister started High School at CHHS, kids were being suspended for wearing clothes that resembled the American flag and there were still four elementary schools: Lincoln, Schaffer, Hoover, and Eisenhower. By the time I got to High School there had been many changes, one of which was open campus. It was a policy that was established to allow students that had good grades to leave campus during study hall. And everyone could leave at lunch, if they so wished. Of course, prior to be able to drive, leaving campus was usually limited to going to Cavenies getting junk—usually soda and sunflower seeds—and hanging out across the street from the school.

Once I had my driver's license things changed. Most of my friends--and the guy I dated--went to nearby Cedar Cliff High School. Now the nice thing was that at CHHS was we had six periods a day, whereas Cedar Cliff had eight. This difference meant that our classes and lunch were longer, which made it perfect for going to lunch with my friends. So, I would drive over to Cedar Cliff, which was a closed campus, park in their parking lot, and meet my friends at the side door to the cafeteria. My girlfriends and I would stand in line and we would get our food and go meet the guys. We always had the same table and it was Sharon, Lori, Kathy, and me on one side and Chuck, Mark, Rich, and Scott on the other.

Now at Cedar Cliff, like Camp Hill, teachers were assigned to monitor the cafeteria and there was one teacher that always walked up and down the lunch line making sure no one gave cuts or horsed around. He was a very tall, very large man with dark hair. I came to know him from conversations while waiting in line to get my lunch. His name was Mr. Kambic. Mr. Kambic, I found out, was also the track coach. I found this interesting, as the man was easily 280 lbs. I probably talked to Mr. Kambic at least twice a week for two years.

A couple of years after graduating, I started dating John. He was a few years older than I was and came from a large family, of which he was the eldest child. John and his siblings had all graduated from Cedar Cliff, and John had just finished a tour in the Coast Guard. After we had dated awhile, he took me home to meet his family. It was quite a group because in addition to his parents, five brothers, and one sister there were various girlfriends of his brothers there too. All through dinner, his dad kept asking me questions.

Eventually he asked what year I graduated from Cedar Cliff. I told him I had actually graduated from Camp Hill, not Cedar Cliff. He said he was sure he remembered me from Cedar Cliff. He remembered me hanging out with Sharon Rundle and he remembered me from the cafeteria. He even thought he had had me in a class.

In the end, I had to come clean. So I told John's dad--Mr. Kambic--that he was right. I was a friend of Sharon Rundle's and I did eat lunch in the Cedar Cliff cafeteria, after driving over from Camp Hill and sneaking into Cedar Cliff several times a week for two years. He was actually impressed with my daring and he got a good laugh out of it.

John and I eventually broke up and I started dating Dave. I eventually I married Dave, another Cedar Cliff graduate whose mother, believe it or not, actually worked in the cafeteria at Cedar Cliff High School.

Our Fathers Were Friends

Alex Moyle

Our fathers were friends. They were reporters and drinking buddies. They were men who revelled in the end of each day. There was no defining moment for the end of the day. For our fathers the day might have ended when their stories went to press, or when they sat side by side at the bar of the Little Ritz

Our fathers were men of words. They were also wolves. Aggressive in acquiring the story, asking the tough questions, getting to the point. Day in and day out writing the news was their life. They never stopped being newspaper men, even at home.

The Little Ritz was a place where the stresses of the day could be released. The jovial atmosphere of this dimly lit bar was kindled by a full time prankster, my Uncle Nick, the bartender. A joke and a drink were served to our fathers. After an hour or two Mike Moyle and Rusty Cowen reporters for the Patriot News were ready to go home.

In grade school I never had the opportunity to go drinking with Mike and Rusty. I was familiar with the smells of alcohol and smoke he brought home. As a child these were acceptable odours of adulthood for I loved my father.

In grade school I did attend several grown up parties. Rusty and his wife hosted a party of smoking, boozing and sexual flirting, which I didn't really understand but our parents seem to like it. At that time I didn't play with girls, so I first met Maura from across the room, which was a safe distance to consider my options for escape. Our mothers attempted a brief introduction between us. This introduction resulted in a stare down and then an immediate dispersal as if we had collided. For the duration of the party I stayed in the basement where Maura's brother kept snakes and turtles.

In high school I met Maura again. Approaching Maura was never intentional I tried to keep my distance. Even though I was a few inches taller than she, I seemed to shrink as I approached her. On many occasions my shrinking was unavoidable because we shared the same home room.

Maura was smart, attractive and cool. To be cool was to be understated and indifferent, but surprisingly adept at responding at the right moment in a remarkable way. Maura emanated coolness from her pores. She projected a sense of confidence that appeared unwavering. These traits that Maura had were unusual for any 14 year old to possess, and she had command of them.

Confidence wasn't something I could rely on. It would crack in a moments notice. Faking confidence only amplified the awkwardness that seemed to never go away. I found Maura intimidating and nearly unapproachable as a result of my own insecurities. The intimidation factor was very high, compounded by the simple fact that I liked her.

Every morning in home room we stood up to say the Pledge of Allegiance, except for Maura who continued to stay seated. She must of felt pressure from our home room teacher ,who asked Maura to stand. She responded in a cool controlled manner, not what I would call defiant, and she stayed (remained) seated for the rest of the year.

Why she wasn't standing I found perplexing. Even though I wanted to ask her, why she preferred to sit, I wasn't going to get caught, not knowing. It was embarrassing to be caught, not knowing something in school. I am surprised any student could muster up enough courage to ask a question in the class room. The safest solution despite my curiosity was not to ask.

In the early years of high school, dinnertime with my family was a time to have a conversation. I never challenged my parents in their views and they in return had the patience to answer my questions no matter how naive. I mentioned to my parents that Maura didn't stand for the pledge of allegiance. My father told me, "Maura's a non-conformist" I asked what that meant, which my father made clear to me, I was a conformist. This was true, I yearned to fit it and wanted to stay that way.

The beginning of the following school year I had made a plan to speak to her. Plan A was the first plan there never was a plan B or C . There were no amendments or room for improvisation. Just stick to the plan, which was to ask her a question. "Hey Maura what section are you?" I said as confident as I could. She coolly responded, " That's for me to know and for you to find out." I wasn't prepared. What could I say? Plan A was a complete failure. I responded in startled silence. I wasn't going to try that again.

After college and several more years of living I met Maura again. Our mothers didn't introduce us this time. Instead it was a simple phone call that bridged the gap between us. I made a brief introduction:

"May I speak to Maura Cowen,"

Maura: "Speaking"

Alex: "This is Alex Moyle, I was with Dennis when we ran into you at the pizzeria."

Maura: "I remember, it has been many moons since the last time I've seen you."

This is typical Maura language, with metaphors thrown in there to make you stop for a moment and listen to what was actually said. We spoke for a few more minutes, leaving the details of our lives out of the conversation. It was a hot muggy day and Maura suggested to go swimming. Maura picked me up and we headed out the borough.

As a passenger in Maura's car one quickly realises that she travels at her own speed. Maura is not an anxious, or an aggressive driver. Maura's pace implies we are going to get there when we get there. This simple fact should be obvious but it wasn't to me. I still think I can coax, encourage, or even will the pace of my destinations. As she slowly drove through the borough I forgot about the destination, and if there was an agenda I had forgotten that too.

Our conversation was interrupted by the car making a slow but gradual stop. We had arrived upon a meadow near the Yellow Breeches. Maura got out of the car and I followed her as she swaggered towards the stream. Immersed, we continued our conversation as her pregnant belly bobbed up and down in the currents. This day with Maura had an ease to it. I had an adult moment. There wasn't any smoking or drinking just Maura's company, and perhaps a little flirting.

I don't know what happened to the intimidation, most of it, must have floated away.

Plastico[®] Boots

Larry Kaspar

A large sign next to a small, temporary office building festooned with colorful flags promised that row after row of mighty condos would spring up from the leveled soil in the Spring of 2007. Looking at the barren landscape surrounding this outpost of real estate sales, it was hard to recognize any potential. Cheerful, optimistic flags flapping in the breeze, worthy of a fine used car lot, seemed to be overwhelmed by their surroundings. But I remember what it used to look like. And the now-sanitized-for-your-consumption overhaul of this site meant only one thing. And it came to me with a gasp. "They're out there. They've been dug up. Some bulldozer driver has unearthed 'em." I fantasized about marching into the condo office, giving some poor real estate guy some hope, then dashing it to pieces with a bizarre inquiry: "Do you have my Plastico Boots?"

That's what we 13-year-olds in Camp Hill called them. The term was derisive and yet a simple acknowledgment of their utility. You might even say we were ambivalent about them. They were high. They rose to a point just a couple of inches below the knee. There was a nice satisfying hardness to the inch-high heels. The toe was squared-off. When I looked down at that straight, uncompromising toe, it gave me a feeling of invincibility. Like if I gave anybody a good kick, they would fall down dead. Plastico Boots boosted a young teen's confidence in such an endeavor. They added steam to my stride. Sure, they were made of plastic. Not leather, or even rubber. Actual plastic. And that material, somewhat pliable but still rigid and unyielding at the ankle, could change the character of your stride for the better. Since the ankle hardly flexed, you came down hard on the back of your heel. That was your full weight hitting that spot, which made your robotically approaching figure all the more imposing. Who wouldn't look formidable with each leg like a steel tube slamming its heel into the pavement?

But the aesthetic undermined you. Each one had a molded, non-functional buckle. It protruded an eighth of an inch or so from the surface of the boot. It was apparent at ten paces that the buckle was phony. This flaw would be a magnet for ridicule. But they increased in numbers at Camp Hill High School, probably because some savvy parents couldn't resist their unbeatable combination of economy and utility. (In those days, everybody from the 7th grade all the way through 12th matriculated in harmony in the same building. Most of the time.)

OK, so the phony buckle feature made them stupid. Colossally stupid. But the acceptance of the masses blunted the effect. One kid in Plastico Boots is an individual. Two are a movement. If you showed up wearing Plastico Boots one day, and took your usual position in the bull session waiting for the bell to ring, as if nothing were out of the ordinary, you might see the top of a lowered head taking them in. "Plastico Boots," came the observation. Not disrespectfully. But certainly not singing your praises, either. I'm not sure who the poet was who coined the term. It stated the obvious, irrefutable, truth. They were plastic. They were boots. But the grafting-on of the "O" was the stroke of genius. It elevated the whole concept to flat-out absurdity.

But like I said - you couldn't help but automatically cut an impressive profile when you put them in motion. I'll bet they even improved my posture. Their almost unforgivable transgression of style was outweighed by the practical value for young, growing, adventurous feet. And the perfect place for putting my Plastico Boots to the test was Windy Hill on 17th Street in Camp Hill near the Bypass.

Not far from my house - as a kid it might as well have been in another galaxy - was Windy Hill. It represented spookiness, instability, transition, and the certain unknown of the future. It was a big fat question mark in the middle of the early 1970s, with suburbs sprawling and threatening to engulf it. Windy Hill was that parcel of land that Man hadn't figured out what to do with yet. A natural oasis that men set their eyes on, imagining their future as only they can, wanting to tame it, bend it to their will with bulldozers, two-by-fours, and cement. And they had already given that a whirl. Windy Hill was mutilated and existed only as a hill due to unnatural influences. It was an aborted land development project. Bulldozers had moved some earth around in what looked like a haphazard fashion. Windy Hill was simply the consolidation of all the loose dirt that had been churned up.

I was the kid who gave it its moniker. I took it straight off the cover of a book I had to read in 4th grade at Lincoln Elementary. I'm pretty sure it showed a silhouette of a hill, with a jagged lightning bolt tearing the night sky above it. At the top of the cover, was the title: "The Ghost of Windy Hill."

I followed the space program as a kid. When I discovered the newly formed hill, I felt like Neil Armstrong in the Sea of Tranquility on the moon. Like any explorer, I was inspired to give it a name. And I was further inspired by its resemblance to the hill depicted on the book. I know, a hill's a hill. But how many hills had I seen in my twelve years of life?

The open area surrounding Windy Hill even resembled the surface of the moon. The dirt, if deprived of rainfall long enough, would be ground up into a fine powder under our shoes and mini-bikes. Even Neil himself would have to admit that the imprints in OUR moon dust would compare favorably with those left behind by him and the yet-to-be-deployed lunar rover.

Windy Hill even had what was a barn at one time. It suited us better to think of it as a vacant house, and, therefore, a haunted house. The torn-up ground around our house made it hard to imagine it in any context that made sense. As if a giant hand had plucked it from some mysterious place and arbitrarily set it down in the middle of desolation. It faced, with sagging roof, certain demolition. But who could say when, as weeds and grass took root on what should have been a short-lived Windy Hill only a few yards away from it.

The hill was viewed as Mt. Everest by mini-bikers. It was there, so it had to be climbed. It wasn't long before the less timid among us cut a path up the hill on its steepest face. Andy Hawbecker regularly enthralled us with his skills and daring. Some who weren't lucky enough to own a mini-bike had to be satisfied with dreaming. Or maybe some kids found it a relief NOT to own one, thereby avoiding having their prowess and nerve called into question. Me, I eventually got one. But I was too conservative a rider to be a crowd-pleaser like Andy.

At the bottom of Windy Hill one day, we found a rare and exotic treasure. They were curious delicate glass tubes that we were convinced held deadly gas. We salvaged them and took them into our haunted house and stored them carefully in a closet lest some imprudent kid find them and break them. No kidding, I think we believed we were safeguarding the public. They were just florescent light bulbs that somebody dumped there, for cryin' out loud.

Outside the house one day, I heard the sound of laughter echoing within the empty interior. And THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. With a pause of several pregnant seconds between each THUNK. We came back later that day with the courage to go in. We found evidence of the trespass. I stared at it thinking, "This is too good to be true." I savored the tingle that ran down my spine.

Embedded in the floor was a hatchet.

No doubt it once belonged to some unhinged individual who had not been welcome in decent places. A conclusion arrived at so swiftly it couldn't be wrong.

Days later I came back and found the house in flames. I couldn't get over the incongruity of Camp Hill firemen standing by nonchalantly while their sworn enemy claimed another victim. If the firemen torched it on purpose, it seemed an extravagant way to rid the property of an unwanted structure. I mean, why not bring in a bulldozer that could level the joint with a few taps?

I knew the truth could be more sinister. Maybe the madman with the hatchet had really gone off his rocker and put a match to it. I tried to scare myself into thinking that some evil spirit had spontaneously combusted with the fires of Hell itself. And maybe the hatchet-wielding maniac's tortured spirit was somehow being exorcised with the towering flames shooting through the sagging roof. And maybe if I looked closely enough into the inferno, I could see it.

The fire didn't deter us. With some surviving timber from the ruins, we built a ramp that launched many a lucky bicyclist into the air. But soon that was too tame. We collected all the dried-out weeds we could find, piled them up by the ramp, and ignited the fuel with a match. Into the evening hours, long after we could see nothing but fire, you could hear off in the darkness some kid really laying into his pedals, the bottom of each power stroke kicking up cinders as he approached the ramp at what was hoped to be

optimal speed. The possible result of injury brought to our minds the exploits of Evel Knievel, famous for his motorcycle jumps over a row of automobiles. Didn't he break every bone in his body?

During one nighttime fire-jump session, a large plane came over head and turned its searchlights on. They even scanned back and forth! I had never seen anything like that. Maybe the pilot figured our fire was a distress signal. It was pretty cool, but it rattled us too. We didn't need somebody calling the cops.

Windy Hill was a place for exploration. Maybe the heavy machinery that had turned over the dirt there had summoned to the surface, for the first time in millions of years, a prehistoric bone or two. When I came across half of a rib cage, dry and white in the sun, I examined it and hoped I had a specimen suitable for display in the one of the world's great dinosaur collections. But it was a small dinosaur, no larger than a deer. Okay, it WAS a deer. It took me several days to accept that disappointing fact.

After days of rain, possibly around the time of Hurricane Agnes (1972), I went to Windy Hill alone with my Plastico Boots on. If I had chosen less potent footwear that day, an error in judgment wouldn't have occurred. A part of the hill had collapsed. It was about the size of a sub-compact car, all gloppy and glistening. Blob-like, it sat there. It was fascinating. So that's what a mudslide looks like!

I plunged BOTH feet into the mudslide. It drew me like steel to a magnet. It was an irresistible compulsion. I told you these boots could jack up your feeling of well-being and confidence. Well, after a couple of long strides, I found myself standing in the middle of the blob. But I had underestimated the depth of the mud and found myself sunken in up to my thighs. I stood there a few seconds, satisfied anyway. Then I tried to pull both legs out of the engulfing mass. Well, it was like standing in hardened cement. This was the first time I had been held against my will in my life. This was serious! I was stuck like a fly on flypaper with about the same prospects for freedom. I took a few seconds to castigate myself.

I easily could have been trapped there for hours, and shouted myself hoarse before I was rescued. The closest house was on the other side of a woods maybe a hundred yards away. Then a strange calm came over me. With that calm came the solution, but it involved sacrifice. The same Plastico Boots that had given me the bravado to venture into the muck in the first place would be my salvation. They were slip-on jobs, with a smooth felt liner. I knew I could easily pull my feet out of 'em. SHOOMP, effortlessly, came the first foot. Right out of the boot. But you better believe that boot didn't budge. There was a tremendous suction holding it in place. That scared me a little, so I hurried on to the second boot. The same result.

Clear of the brown slop and in stocking feet, I stood and looked back at the mound. There was no evidence that my boots had ever existed at all. There was no trace of where I had punctured the the mass with the reckless Plastico Boots. The mud had reshaped itself like a giant amoeba, even with the capacity to heal itself. It was a living organism that consumed, and it had consumed my Plásticos. I went home and didn't fess up that I had lost my boots due to misadventure. I managed to keep the whole thing quiet. Then I realized my feet were almost numb from the cold. I went straight to the bathtub for hot water, which of course sent my feet into waves of agony.

Today, the snapping of those flags in a persistent wind was irritating enough to snap me out of my reverie. From the lofty plain of 2007, a year sounding impossible to anyone born in the middle of the 20th century, I surveyed what used to be my kingdom. Even though wilderness had reclaimed it after work was aborted in the '70s, the property developers proved persistent and were back with a vengeance. The place had been cleared of all bushes and trees and leveled. Leveled like a pool table. All recognizable features that gave it depth and character were gone. As if a giant eraser had descended and rubbed out all identifying marks. Windy Hill itself had been dispersed and its divided mighty soil stood ready to be reincarnated as concealment for concrete foundations of condos to come. I tried to reconstruct in my mind all the elements of Windy Hill, but the power of the present was almost overwhelming. Was this the place where I once spent hours a day so many years ago? It seemed impossible. Ah, but the Plastico Boots! They would endure! They would stand as my testament that I had been there!

There's a pair of boots on the floor of the North Atlantic that have survived for almost a century, two-and-a-half miles down, in darkness. They are side by side, about a foot apart, toes pointing in opposite directions. They were worn by a passenger who went down with the greatest shipwreck of all time, the Titanic. Their intact condition has been attributed to some process used to treat leather back then. The

body didn't fare as well. Soon after the sinking, a fish, grown transparent never having seen the light of day, had a feast on the soft tissue of the body. But the boots defied nature and lived on.

Maybe my Plastico Boots were spared nature's harshness. Maybe they were liberated from the mud days or weeks before I returned to Windy Hill. But, if somehow they got pressed even farther into the earth than my initial plunge took them over 35 years ago, perhaps under the track of a ten-ton bulldozer, maybe that's better. Maybe hundreds or hundreds of thousands of years from now an archeologist will pull them from a deep stratum amongst great fanfare. And he'll be confused by those phony buckles.

Revolution in Camp Hill

Maura Cowan

I grew up in a time of rebellion, on the tail end of the 60's cultural revolution, and I wanted to be a part of that. I wanted to be a long-haired, peace-loving, free-thinking hippie, but it wasn't easy in the heart of the Establishment, Camp Hill, PA. Oh we had a few hippies, smoking pot across from the high school, wearing patched jeans and listening to loud music, but not what you'd call a real movement. When it came right down to it most of them just wanted to get into a good college like everyone else.

I wanted to transcend the stagnant middleclass values, pointless conventions, and wanton materialism I read about in *The Village Voice*. I wanted to be a true revolutionary, and grow up to have an exiting, unstructured life. I tried to be rebellious.

In elementary school I tried to stir things up with seditious talk of counter culture ideas and massive protests. Far from restraining this however, my fifth grade teacher, Mr. Purcell, actually encouraged it. He would have current events discussion in the afternoon, when James Cameron and I would argue, with Theo Tomchak sometimes taking the middle road position. James liked to call me "Commie Cowan," but it never really caught on. The rest of the class enjoyed the free time to goof off, taking little or no interest in my lengthy opinions.

Not having much success in rabble-raising, my rebellion later took the form of non-cooperation, mostly non-cooperation with going to school every day. My main objection was the mandatory aspect of the whole thing. How could I have any freedom, or develop any creative spirit, if the bulk of my time had to be spent with everyone else, learning the same propaganda, and doing the same repetitive and tiresome tasks?

I missed huge amounts of school, wandering around Camp Hill and beyond. Going almost anywhere would be better than going to a soul-crushing school, and I was willing to sacrifice for my principles. A lot of my time was spent lying out on sunny rocks by the creek, or smoking pot with my friends in their basements. We walked, and hitchhiked and savored every minute of our freedom. No one ever reported us and the school never called our parents.

A true rebel would have openly disobeyed, but my practical side caused me to faithfully turn in the required "absence excuse" every time. I was a practiced forger of my mother's signature, so cavalier about the whole thing that I would normally write the excuse during home room in the morning, and turn it in to the home room teacher as I walked out. One time I absent-mindedly signed my own name on the excuse, instead of my mother's. My home room teacher (a somewhat hostile Latin teacher) seemed quite pleased by my mistake, saying something along the lines of "I've caught you at last". (Really, it's not like I was difficult to catch.) With a victorious smile, she sent me to the vice principal's office, certain that I would be taught a lesson by the intimidating Mr. Krout.

Mr. Krout had a reputation for strictness and liberal use of corporal punishment. He should have been the perfect foil for me, the cruel and fascist vice principal to bravely resist, along with the suffocating regulations of high school. When I went into the office on that day, I reported to the school secretary, who had come to know me well. Mrs. Myers had a good sense of humor, and would often let me off for tardiness if I could think of an entertaining enough (and at least remotely believable) story. When I explained my latest transgression, she and the rest of the staff laughed until purple in the face. Mr. Dougherty, my English teacher, happened in and joined in the fun. We were all still laughing when Mr. Krout opened his door.

He came out looking stern. I couldn't stop laughing and was barely able to get an explanation out. When I finally explained that I had signed my own excuse, with my own name no less, Mr. Krout couldn't keep himself from laughing either. In the end, everyone was so entertained that I didn't get any punishment at all.

The truth was, Mr. Krout was pretty much always tolerant and agreeable towards me. An hour of detention was the worst I would get for offences that might get a kid expelled from school today. During my frequent trips to his office he would often tell me long golf stories or talk about his family. Sometimes he would even talk about how difficult it was to be the hated disciplinarian. I think after awhile he came to think of me as an old friend.

I met with the same kind of benevolent tolerance from just about all of my teachers. They would give me abbreviated lists of make-up homework, and sometimes let me make up tests without any supervision at all. I remember one time handing in a blank make-up test with a note saying the temptation to cheat was too great, so I had chosen not to fill in the test at all. (A blatant lie, I was just too lazy to do the test). Mr. Dickey told me he admired my principles, and I could just write a short paper on *The Brave New World*. I felt bad about not writing that, especially when he eventually allowed me to just give an oral report instead.

Mrs. Harrison, an English teacher, once told me that the School Board had taken her and some other teachers to task for continuing to pass me (and a few other students) when I was absent so often from school. She said she told them I did all the work, and did it well, despite my sparse attendance. I was surprised and a little guilty that she would stick up for me that way. I think she understood that I actually did enjoy her class, and I really was interested in learning what she had to teach. I wasn't motivated by grades or any kind of pressure to achieve. I would rather have been there on my own volition, but she was a good teacher, as were almost all my teachers at Camp Hill High School, and I learned from them in spite of myself.

It's hard to be a revolutionary when you're not given much to rebel against. Yes, the school was full of pointless rules and regulations, and maybe it was an instrument of the establishment. But it was an establishment that made allowances for individuality. A kind and tolerant establishment. I don't know if Camp Hill High School is still like that, in these times of zero tolerance, but I hope so.

Stump's Corner

Michael Petrillo

Why Teenagers Should Not Drive

This story happened a long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. It is important for the reader to recognize that, at that time (long, long ago), driving around was a recreational activity, not a means to transport from one point to another. Many nights we would go out and drive around in search of some diversion, even if driving was the diversion. How we managed to stay alive through some of these antics, I will never know.

On this particular night we decided to go out like any other night and the normal protocol was for everyone to pile into one car, regardless of how many were in the group. This night was to be different. It was different in two aspects: we had six participants and we had one new driver. Nothing special with the six—hey we piled more than six into the Green Torino many times with no problem. For some odd reason, that night the six decided we needed to be in two cars. (I blame Barends; it had to be his idea.) And of course six divides perfectly into two cars: four in the lead car, two in the chase car.

The most odd and different thing about this night was not six, nor was it two cars. It was that one of the two cars was not the Torino. So, we had a new driver and new car. Now normally the driving for us fell to the older people in our class—Frans, Elmo, and Steve Bange. Younger drivers like Stump and myself had neither the experience nor the car. But tonight, wouldn't you know it, Stump had the car. The experience would decide itself. On such a rare occasion, we probably decided to let Stump take the wheel, since he rarely had the car. Little did we know that fateful decision would lead to a night of abject horror, comedy, and possibly a Pulitzer Prize, if Elmo submits this story.

What happened is history. The night was cloudy and it had just rained. The streets were filled with puddles, making it a perfect night to race at high speeds through the narrow streets of Camp Hill. Stumpy drove his Dad's car. With him were Elmo and two others. (I suspect Kehew was one, only because I always suspect Kehew. Even though it couldn't have been Kehew cause that's where we were headed.) The others may have been any one of a number of likely suspects. One thing about our group of friends, anyone and everyone was welcome to join, why yes even Dale Radnor. The possibilities of who the last two were endless: Zeke, Dave D, Kolonauski, Jay Judge, Kathy DeGrandi, Steve Bange, or Billy Snyth. (Isn't it amazing, dear reader, how I remembered all these names without looking them up in the yearbook?). I am certain that one of the lead car riders was not Dale Radnor. Dale drove a blue flake Charger with a thunder sound and I don't think he ever rode in a car he wasn't driving.

Anyway, Stump and his three in the lead car, Barends and I in the chase car, that white and wood panel station wagon. With two cars, we'd play a cat-and-mouse game of chase. Tonight in the light rain was no different. (Well, no exception except for the two differences already painstakingly detailed above). As we whipped down Chestnut Street, Frans passed the lead car, and became the leader. (Who was it that said Frans was a born leader?). We zagged from Chestnut to Yale at our usual high rate of speed.

Stump, not wanting to be outdone, stayed with the Barendsmobile. I could see his headlights swing behind us, the car drifting slightly. As you passed in front of Judy McBride's house, Frans punched the turn down the far side of Deanhurst Avenue. Deanhurst was split, one way on the far side, and one way going back on the near side. We traveled about half a block with Frans looking at the headlights in his rearview mirror all the time. Stump was trying to close the distance on the turn, drive it hard like Frans had.

Frans matter of factly noted, "He's not going to make it." I looked through the way back window. Sure enough, Stump fishtailed the turn, first far to the right, back and then over compensating again to the right, slamming into a car parked quietly at the curb. It seemed an inevitable conclusion, ah, collision.

Within seconds, Stump stopped, hopped out and surveyed the damage. Frans had pulled off slightly ahead and threw the wagon into park. He jumped out and ran back to see if everyone was ok. (Did he not

know that we were unbreakable?) Stumpy then calmly walked to the house, calmly rang the doorbell, and calmly asking the people in the house, if that was their car, at the curb there, and if it was theirs, then that his car, actually his dad's car, had hit their car and he, Stump, was sorry. Several hours later (more likely ten minutes) Stump had calmly exchanged insurance information and we were back on our way.

I recall the parked car survived with not even a scratch on it, but Stump's car now sported a large dent in the rear panel, just past the door. Two things strike me in remembering this story: The experienced driver flew around the curve, hydroplaned, and still missed every obstacle, but the inexperienced driver kept everyone safe and the damage to a minimum. It was Stump's maturity, how he calmly and responsibly handled things that was most impressive. I'm not so sure I would have fared as well, had I been driving. And yet, the ironic and unfortunate end of this story is that, although Stump never got to drive the car again, the place had earned a name and to this day that turn is known as "Stumps Corner." Try it in the rain.

The Artist and His Golf Balls

Alexander Moyle

A Mockumentary

EXT. City Island Mini-Golf – DAY

A family of four is playing Put Put. One of the children tries to guild the ball into a gorilla's mouth. The ball escapes the playing boundary and a stranger stuffs the ball in his pockets and briskly walks away. The family in shock is seen complaining to the manager.

INT. Winslow Art Gallery – NIGHT

A crowd of people fill an upstairs hallway. They are talking about the artist, his insight, his breath of expression, his mastery of the medium. The curator stands at a closed door, the entrance to a gallery. She whispers in the ear of the first person in line "Kurt Douglas's chin" and allows only that person to enter. The curator waits 21/2minutes, whispers in the ear of the next person "pool balls and baboons" allowing another person to enter. Slowly the crowd recedes into the a large white walled gallery shaped like an L. In the main room a series of small spherical artifacts are suspended on little white cylindrical bases. The multicoloured artifacts stand vivid in a sterile space. Closer inspections reveal they are painted golf balls on tees. The crowd becomes momentarily silent upon the artists arrival, then they break out in ruckus praise.

The Battle Beyond Oyster Point

Dennis Myers

All that remains is a plaque, one of those blue and gold Pennsylvanian historical plaques with the date and a couple facts and everything. The plaque and the knowledge that every Camp Hill school boy's knows that the true high water mark of the Civil War took place at Oyster Point, up on Market Street right behind the Giant supermarket. The plaque is still there, but the Giant moved long ago, now across the 32nd Street bypass and safely out of high school lunchtime walking distance. But, back in my tenth grade, the Giant still sat squarely between Market and Chestnut, with watermelons piled up across the storefront windows in the summer and, in the autumn of that year, Giant was selling big square grey cardboard cartons of eggs, three dozen eggs, at the kid-affordable price of ninety-nine cents. Small eggs, palm-sized. The closing weeks before Halloween, the intention of the mark-down seemed obvious: stock up children, stock up. In those two weeks, Giant must have unloaded more eggs than a dozen Easters, despite the store's paperthin promise limiting you to a three carton maximum. 108 eggs. 324 eggs a trip.

Halloween accumulated a number of traditions in Camp Hill. Our town's tall oaks provided mounds of leaves, piled on lawns for jumping, or racked just over the street's curb tempting cars to drive on in. Come on, push on, whispered the leaves. Pile after pile, higher up, mounting leaves over the windshield. And the Saturday before Halloween each year the senior class sponsored a haunted house. They piled cardboard and facepaint into the gym and forced paying underclassmen to lay hands on squishy, bloody things and thrash in strobe lights and the pseudo-torture pressed into the clammy confines of the wrestling room. This tenth grade, Rick Graul and I washed away the horror of it all with unfiltered, homemade Welch's wine, drunk from papercups in the alley behind his house. It was nastier than anything found in the high school gym.

Halloween night itself was filled with pleasant, innocent traditions, repetitions that built anticipations in young minds. Ruth Wrye, our mayor, gave out orange juice in boxes and mom, for a long time, gave out homemade popcorn balls. The Myers Funeral Home folk, however, could be trusted (to those brave enough for the trek) to handle out cold coin. If you were really lucky, Charlie Myers would take his glass eye out for you too.

Back in four grade, someone had discovered the hobo's code from the thirties for marking houses. For next couple of years you could read the caulk marks on the sidewalks indicating who was a prize mark and who was pretending not to be home. In Camp Hill, though, you didn't need a code though to fill a Giant shopping bag within a steady hour or so running house to house in the husky twilight. And despite the annual swirl of rumors of razorbladed apples and LSD-spike candy corn, I know of no dark incidents.

Not that there was no darkside to the season. That's why the tradition held the night before the 31st and, in tenth grade, that night was on a Wednesday, Hell Night, Prank Night. Unfortunately, that year Hell Night was also the night of the annual Camp Hill Cross Country team dinner, held solemnly at Reverend Hoyt's, the father of running stars Larry and Dave. Cross Country was more modest than other high school sports and we learned to thrive off invisibility and small favors, such as the annual dinner. That night, we recounted our mix of bitterness and pride from the day the pep club ate the bakegoods initially intended for our post-meet celebration. Seems it had rained that day and our peppy supporters simply thought that no one in their right mind runs in the rain. So they ate the cupcakes themselves. So it was that our annual dinner was our one chance to celebrate with respect, but this night, this was Hell Night and I had a 324 eggs waiting for me. I was fidgety, could hardly sit pleasantly through the pre-dinner blessing, and I callously reminded people in the post-dinner prayer that things had to speed up. This was Hell Night, Prank Night.

For many, Prank Night tradition meant TPing trees, soaping windows, and egging houses. Ah, some students would go to great lengths—even using the phonebook—to locate their favorite teachers' houses and target them specifically. But I wasn't out for revenge and I wasn't in a gang. I was driven by a sale on eggs on a Giant scale. The promotion had built a fever for weeks now and the general unvoiced sense was that kids would be roaming the dark streets of the town looking for surprise skirmishes with other kids

who too had loaded up on cheap, palm-sized projectiles. I wandered alleys and the sides of yards, springing a couple of attacks, retreating in shadows. In short order I fell in with Gary Swanger. He was old enough to drive and crazy enough to haul around an oddball collection of similar egg-carting youths. Mobility brought more and quicker battles and the evening now seemed to be rolling towards the climax glimpsed weeks ago standing in line at the checkout counter with only eggs in your shopping cart.

We turned off Market onto 25th Street, up past the historical marker citing the Cumberland Riflemen, proceeded up along Willow Park. Lurking in the trees along the stream, there, the glimmer of white eggshell. There was a crowd of kids, a grade or two younger, with eggs. We drove past them and pulled over just above the northern end of the park, in the darkness where the waters originate in someone's backyard.

In the history of conflict and adventure, there were greater battles fought at Gettysburg than Oyster Point, greater tales of bravery, glory, and confusion. It was on the frozen fields of Gettysburg, somewhere just west of Devils' Den, the story goes, that Frans Barends inexplicably drove the station wagon after a family of deer caught briefly in his headlights. We had to dig out in axle-deep mud, thick and it would ice on your hands and Mark Thompson smeared it like war paint on his face and danced off invisible into the frosted mist. We had to sacrifice the C C signs (for Cross Country) stolen earlier that morning from Gettysburg College stadium. We wedged them under the rear wheels to get traction, flinging ourselves from the mud only minutes before the park ranger quietly drove past. (Ah, but we still left the cow parked in that person's front yard.)

Sure, greater battles. I have seen the Civil War displays of bullets found in the field, two bullets as one, welded together in mid-air. "The air was so thick with bullets," the display tag read, "many collided and fused together." Greater battles. I believe it for I have seen it.

With the high ground but the disadvantage of no cover, we hopped out of Swanger's bigass car, maybe eight of us, each armed with at least one personal carton of three dozen eggs. The opposing gang had foolishly moved out from the trees and we had maneuvered past them to outflank their left. We unleashed the first barrage and turned their lines in surprise and they reeled in momentary confusion. But their numbers were far more than we had initially scouted, with maybe ten on the field but another ten or so still coming out the trees. There was a fierce return volley and eggs were landed everywhere. We were temporarily overwhelm, pushed back to Gary's car, when the reserves, drawn by the sounds of battle, came running down Willow Avenue to join us. Not that we had teams like some pick-up game in the gym; teams that night were constructed by accident and geography. But now we had the reserves and the supplies and the sky was littered with flying eggs.

Stationed near a street light, in the pure clarity of the battle, I paused to look up at the beautiful spectacle of it all. Now, the egg at rest is a beautiful thing, an aesthetics of pure orthodoxy. But in flight, moving in a graceful arc, the temporary glow, the egg transcends this world's beauty and becomes a thing unto itself. Of course, it then collides in mid-air with another egg that, moments ago, was another thing unto itself. I saw dozens of eggs that night burst against another egg, both shattering in midair, their yokes flying free.

We all scattered in about a thousand directions when a patrol car turned up the now slick street. The battlefield immediately emptied, leaving a slim coating across the grass, the litter of 324 thousand eggshells everywhere. Now all that remains is a historical plaque, one of those blue and egg-yolk gold Pennsylvanian historical plaques that still commemorates the wrong event.

The Cliffs

Dennis Myers

Learning to Fly

Any number of great swimming holes line the Yellow Breeches, wet, silt-drawn, cool lowdown in the summer heat, from the long, looping Lisburn swing behind the firehall, past the sundrenched fields at Spangler's Mill, to the cooler treelined rushes below the green iron bridge of Green Lane Farms. None challenged bravado like the rust shale cliffs jutting upstream from the quiet stone serenity of the Mechanicsburg Waterworks dam. The waterworks themselves patch mysterious and tranquil, a small concrete dam stretching across a wide rush of the waters that led to two limestone houses and large oaks, and slightly downstream a matching stone arch bridge, and none of it seeming to function anymore for any commercial purpose. (I am convinced I do not play Monopoly in the same spirit as my children, since, when I land on space with the water spigot, I see only that rustic dam.) All that idyllicness—sparrows dipping for insects in the twilight, the melodic drumming of a short, strong waterfall—belied a more dangerous location laying just up the dirt road, up to the right.

On any given day, anyone could be at the Cliffs, anyone from Camp Hill or Cedar Cliff or Lisburn or New Cumberland or from any of the small towns that lay along the creek's path, from anyone old enough to drive--or anyone old enough to simply get into a car--to those who seemed to be lingering before leaving college or any other year doing nothing. Park your car along the roadside at the top of the hill, weave back through undergrowth towards the tall oaks. It was no one's clear property, even much less the case from a teenager's perspective, rolled up in cutoffs, wide-eyed and pumped free like a Woody Guthrie-laced Robert Plant with hormones. This was our jump, our waters. In later days, timed with the rise of the insurance industry no doubt, you also needed to scale a precautionary ring of barbed wire. It was a small rite of passage to stand in a ring of the brave, shoulder to shoulder with those who had come to fly.

Cliff-diving. We all grew up inspired by the ABC Saturday afternoons of Acapulco cliff divers. Those kids really, those kids plotted their soaring, studying the waters below, timing their lift to eventually safely break the perfect arc. But unlike for our southern counterparts, our Breeches waters ran deep and steady, secured by the waterworks' dam downstream. Atop the hill, the cliffs offered several diving platforms, the first cutting along a lower ledge that jugged out slightly with a direct pass to the water maybe thirty feet below. Here was pretty much a straight fall. Higher above, you needed to push out far enough to avoid the lower juts. Push out and fly.

Still, flying into the Beeches was never without risk. In the years past high school, stories swirled of various diving tragedies. How, when the sprawling mansions above Green Lane Farms overtook the rocks and trees there, the developers simply dumped the boulders into the waters below. A young Breeches jumper, unaware of the sub-aquatic change, became paralyzed on impact. Ah, the stories that every mother repeats as you run out the door, those stories that Mr. Judge would give too in Red Cross lifeguard training at the deep end of the pool--back when the insurance companies said it was still safe to have a diving board there—all these stories to warn you off swimming at night or diving head first—all those stories of dangerous waters, damn if it aint that all those stories are true.

Hell, even getting to the Cliffs could be life-threatening. During the Hurricane Gloria, Jim Nolte, Frans Barends and I were performing our civic duty checking out the extent of the flood damage along the local water ways. Night time at the waterworks brings no light and we were headed on that bridge over the Breeches, its stone arches, thick, heavy, immobile, an indestructible stone arch cathedral over troubled waters. We could hear the heavy swell of those waters surge below us, the creek's day-to-day gentleness now running hard past its banks. The approach onto the bridge lifts your car's headlights high off the road surface, points the beams uselessly at the far shoreline treetops. But something in the rushing roar that night recommended to Frans that he stop short, midway on the bridge. He pulled that giant station wagon

to a stop and only a few feet in front of where the flood waters had torn out an eight foot section of stone arc. Fuzz backed the station wagon carefully off the bridge.

Gloria's flood waters left the cliff's calm waters unaltered and safe and ever the challenge. Back in high school, Phil Schmelzle taught us how to calculate distances by timing the rate of falling body and plugging the value into a simple equation of gravitational acceleration: $d=1/2Ag*t^2$. While this scientific trivia continues to be the single most important thing I remember from physics class to this day, it's hard to time the distance down when the falling body is yours. We safely assumed the lower platform hovered out there at thirty feet and the upper ones at forty, probably more. You would lose count in the fall.

You'd approach the takeoff point, waiting your turn, silent as the person in front of you launched outward, timing seconds away, a splash, and wait again to see them emerge from the depths, bubble up and wave, taking a few strokes to clear the landing area, and then it was your turn. The trick, of course, was in how you held your flight, because the wrong twist or a spasmodic jerk meant pain upon entry. Clawing the air, as if you realized your mistake in mid-flight and desperately needed to correct it, ensured a smack-down landing, raw skin, and slow floating away downstream. Hit it right and you went sailing through cool, dark waters, then rose reborn to the summer's surface light. Cool. The really cool kids had mastered a head-first dive, but to jump, toes pointed to crack the water, to jump was enough to fly.

The path back up from the creek lead along a trail of rocks that became slick on an steady afternoon diet of divers. You pulled yourself up, clinging to exposed roots. The last few feet of path through the woods grew greener and muddier with the day, till the footing on the cliff face wore soft and just to stand long enough to breath before jumping became a challenge. Avoiding a few of the kids in their middle twenties taking a break, sitting on a log and smoking, you joined the line, waiting one by one, and inched forward in your turn, maybe descending backwards, leaning against the hill, if the rocks punched real slick, till you stood where you need to, pulled in one last breath, and flew. Flew, if you left from higher ledge, because to leap from the higher ledge was to master flying. Jump from the lower ledge and you simply fell. But surely the upper ledge, because once you mastered the fear of the upper cliff, and the simple technique to leap far enough out to clear the rocks, then and then you'd never fall from the lower platform ever again. But on this day, Jim Nolte hadn't yet made that transition to the heights.

This day was filled with warm blue skies, the very definition of why we were alive and there. The very reason for being born. From our arrival, Jim had announced his intention that this would be the day he would jump from the top of the cliffs. We all celebrated by encouraging him, talked him through how it was done, focus his attention as we demonstrated jumping out. Ned Hoffmeister and Frans rehearsed it with him several times...the only thing he needed to do was step out, step out with a small enough jump to clear the belly of rocks below. As the day slipped on, and Jim had not yet taken that big plunge, we edge him on and Jim took it in stride, starting out each time at the top.

Pushed by his own desire to really do this thing, Jim would stand on the heights, holding his breath, looking down, till he felt the anxiousness of the line pressing behind him. Then he'd crawl down to the lower rocks ten or more feet below, those jutting slightly out, more directly over the waters and he would fall. When he finished the slick climb up, Jim kept summing the courage--under our watchful attention and prodding--to try again and then he kept sliding down to jump lower. With each succession, the encouragement diminished.

The day settled on and everyone to their paces, to the rhythms of their own flights. I didn't notice that there was anything to notice as I crawled back up and saw Jim, high above and to the side, working his way in reverse, up maybe too tired to make the jump and the climb from the waters. Maybe, but then he turned at the top jump and froze on the platform's edge, just staring straight ahead. Jim stood there long enough that he transformed into some Inca stone faced god, a sun god, showing no fear now.

The path up the cliff created an excellent vantage point to watch the divers and Ned and I stopped to watch Nolte just standing there on the high platform. He waited so long that world spun to silence and everyone, even the stoners at the top, stared at the Jim to jump, to fly. Only he didn't jump. Jim took the smallest step off the rocks and plummeted as if pulled by something other than the rigid laws of physics, wrenched straight down, his body completely stiff, head upright, thrust in that straight line that passed barely a breath from the outcropping of rocks. Nolte grazed within a quarter of an inch of slamming the back of his head against the side of the cliff. From our vantage point, Ned and I saw the exact narrow

gap, thinner than a knife's blade. It was the closest any of us that day had ever come to seeing someone kill themselves.

Jim resurfaced from the mucked waters all smiles, screaming, pumping a fist. When he looked back up at the cliff face gallery, everyone one of us stared down in pale white, horror-struck dumbness, stared silently at the ecstatic figure bobbing in the Yellow Breeches: He saw us all awed at the terrifying glimpse of our own mortality. All of us witnesses, we would never live our lives the same way again.

The Jump

Andy Hawbecker

I'll never know what made me do it but it was just one of those things you feel you have to do.

Back in the mid seventies we used to spend a lot of time riding our mini bikes and motorcycles in the woods between 12th and 17th streets just north of the West Shore Plaza. It has since mostly been taken over by development but there is still a little left. There were trails all through the woods on both sides of 12th street and it made for a fantastic dirt bike playground. You could ride from the North 15th to the bypass on a spider web of trails. By we I mean Brian Butt, Dean Mantis, Frank Shimer, Larry Kaspar and Dale Radnor to name a few. We would spend endless summer days doing time trials and jumps. We were the X-games before anybody ever thought of it. "The Dips" were in the woods, so named because they were a series of indentations created by several dried up streams. We used to love motoring down the trails and flying through the dips and getting some air. Being a fan of Evel Knievel, I used to try to emulate his jumping talents.

Right by the water tower, if you were coming up the hill from the West Shore Plaza to the top of the hill on 12th, there was a gorge created by a never-finished road that could have connected High Street with Indiana Avenue, but no one ever decided to build it. The gorge was an awesome place to get air because you could fly down through it from 12th towards 17th street and launch your bike up the bowl end and land before you ever got to high street. I had moth balled my Honda trail 70 and bought a Yamaha 175 Enduro. We could fly our bikes 20 to 30 feet on a good jump.

The gorge was about 12 feet deep and 28 feet from side to side. I got the bright idea to jump over it from the water tower side to the north side. Over the next few weeks I got busy building a ramp and a trail to be used as a runway. This was ambitious in itself because it had to be long enough to get up to 30-40 mph and the ramp had to be built at the correct angle or you would surely hit the wall on the other side. I had to cut down a number of trees to get the trail long enough so I could achieve the proper speed and still have room to stop before going into the gorge. To build the ramp I piled dirt up against an old door I found in the woods and used some trees as stakes to hold it in place. It took a lot of time and effort to get it right. I even checked with some of CHHS' best and brightest science teachers to calculate the proper speed and trajectory for the combined weight of rider and bike. When it was all completed it was pretty awesome to stand on the ramp on one side and look across to where the landing area was. The only problem with the idea was that there was no way to test it to see if it would work, you only got one shot, do or die and I wasn't 100% sure I could make it. One slip of the clutch, loss of traction, the ramp collapses, bad angle and you are on your way to Holy Spirit.

"The jump" took on a life of its own and I was questioned daily, "When are you going to do the jump", "When are you going to do the jump"? I had no idea when I was going to do it or why I was going to try it. A few weeks passed and I was either working or hanging out at Neidig's Gulf Service with my brother, Steve, and my friend Dean Mantis and the time just seemed right. I said, "Let's go get this over with". I really didn't want an audience, I just wanted to do it to see if it could be done, I guess.

Steve pulled his Volkswagen Beetle in to the gorge just below the ramp. His theory was that if I didn't make it and hit the wall on the other side, I would end up somewhere near the car for easy transport to the hospital. Dean waited on the landing side. No one thought to bring a camera to record the event.

I drove down to the end of the runway trail then slowly back towards the ramp and pulled up the ramp stopping just by the end as I had seen Evel do many times before his jumps. Ok, all systems are go. I drove back to the beginning of the trail and hammered the throttle. First gear, second gear, trees whizzing past, third gear, check the speed, 35 mph, good to go. As I passed the tree that became my point of no return marker, I thought, "This is it!" if I tried to stop now I would end up right in the gorge, nothing to do now but go for it. I emerged from the trees, hit the ramp and pulled back on the handle bars. I was airborne and here comes the other side. It only took a second and I felt my back tire hit the ground, front tire down, it was a shaky landing but I didn't dump it. The next thing I felt was Dean pounding on my helmet. I rode back to the edge and took off my helmet. Dean was pointing to my back

tire mark right on the edge of the wall. I had made it by an inch. Literally where vertical met horizontal, my back tire flattened that right angle. Quest complete.

Well that's my story, it was over now and I was glad it was over. I felt kind of bad for some of the kids on 17th that really wanted to see me do it. This thing had become a much bigger deal than I ever wanted it to. About thirty years later my daughter was playing in a basketball game and I was one of the assistant coaches. Before the game we went out on the floor to shake hands with the other coaches and introduce ourselves. After I introduced myself, one coach gave me a funny look and said, "Andy, it's me, Scott Sajer". So we talked about our kids and how long it had been, etc. Later, Scott came up to me and said, out of the blue, "Andy, did you really make that jump?"

It's funny what we remember about people over long periods of time. Wish you were there.

For more on Andy's take on motors and morality, read Elwood Neidig's Gulf Service.

The Matter—Reese Bout or The Great Herbert Hoover Battle for Souls

Dennis Myers

And the two, being equal and different, shall fight out their days

This was in the age when the elders decided to create the sexes. Not sex or sexuality, no no no, but the sexes, boy and girl, and with the creation of the sexes as came the great division of the world. Prior to this illumination, we, boy and girl, romped in a collective innocence, and, although girls had cooties, we could all co-exist as friends. And, as friends, we could promote our own articulation of what our own elders struggled with in a greater context, wired topics such as the women's liberation movement. As far back in fourth grade, Beth Masters attacked the pedagogical foundation of second status by re-structuring its ontological formation: she asked that girls not be lumped under the seeming generic term of "guys." It was Beth and the other liberated thinkers of our class who forced the elders to change the dress code, allowing everyone to wear pants equally.

By 1973, the elders battled sexes in the legal court and the tennis court. The Billy Jean King – Bobby Riggs Battle of the Sexes was mostly show and held none of vigor and joy of the later bouts when Inter-Gender World Champion Wrestler Andy Kaufman took the ring against any female challenger. (Was it all real, Andy?) In the days when we were kings, a newly minted Ali would take on (it was real) all heavyweight challenges. Back then, you could see a fight on free TV and know the champ of the world if you stayed awake long enough. On the next morning of the Ali – Frazier fight, I remember playing out the description of the fight, blow-by-blow in the tan bark-circle playground in Hoover's backyard.

Sure, there were real battles, but preceding these all in time and temper was the great Matter-Reese (or Reese-Matter) Bout that took place in sixth grade. Herbert Hoover Elementary School—a reborn educational institution in our second grade--still bore the rough hewn scars of its construction four years later. The building's slick early-sixties industrial educational façade had thrown off, but still not hidden, the terror of its birth. Concrete slabs, shrubs, tree stumps and other debris lay along a row of trees that divided the softball fields from the upper grades' playground. In the recess and after school wars of turf here, the battles and command structure was completely integrated across boys and girls. In fact, for the longest time, Judy McBride was the strong leader of a fortress complex lined with limbs of trees.

Underneath Hoover's raw hew lay an even more wild wilderness, the subterranean waters that ran dark, seemingly for miles, and emptied themselves into the western expanse of Unga Bunga. That invisible river—the buried discharge of Willow Run—ran from up past Jackie Miller's house of rolling floors and opened to a scrap of unusable industrial zoning. For me, it was a psychological salvation, an escape from any perceived torment from the elders, riverrun deep and dark, if confined in cement pre-fab. Follow me. Like many of my colleagues, I had been ripped from the friendly confines of Lincoln Elementary, a place whose quaintness reflected my sense of the community at large, to the industrial-sized bulk of Hoover, with its double classes at each grade and its oversized windows that mixed both the joys of educational distraction and the fears of impalement. "Quick class, under your desk. Face away from the windows. Flying glass! Remember!" Hoover's windows provoked both awe and fear. High enough to capture the clouds from the viewpoint of our tiny desks, long enough to run along a whole row of young scholars, these single sheets of glass rattled with every sonic boom.

Was this modernized elementary school just some government laboratory, filled with naïve guinea pigs? There is evidence of experiments. Oh, how the elders played with our eggshell psyches in these great Hoover experiments. One rainy afternoon in the auditorium they reduced me to a shower of tears by showing the Disney film *The Three Lives of Thomasina*, the happy tale of the death of a runaway cat. An elder wrapped arms around me, assured me "it was only a movie." Yeah, of course it was (only) a movie, but did that mean that that the emotions weren't real? They toyed with our perceptions. How else to explain that strange Paleolithic drawing painted on the towering wall near the back entrance? The true meaning of those swirl of curves and circles proved elusive until long after the elders' creation of the sexes four years later. I believe my suspicions about the NSA's long secret psychological laboratory

located on the confines of the Hoover campus are confirmed by how long it took to remove that illustration.

The Matter-Reese Bout, however, was no game, no experiment. No authority had a hand its creation. Perhaps the event resulted from all this direct and indirect manipulation of young minds, but the big fight was uniquely our own class' response to all the current culture's maelstrom of the sexes. The struggle was all promotion and propaganda; no real riff existed between the unlikely combatants of Craig and Kim. The fight promoters simply choose the two from some flimsy excuse, choose the date, and published the posters in the sacred halls of Hoover. (In truth, a core challenge to Craig's machismo may have pre-selected him as the male representative, but Kim was Kim, French-horn playing like the sorrowful triumph of the overture to Tommy.)

Wednesday. Six o'clock. Hours after school, nothing the authorities could do about it. Back of the school, back by the forts. Sheri McLaughlin volunteered to ref the action. Three rounds, like in Olympic style boxing. Without the distraction of preliminaries, the crowd milled about, gossiping, chanting, anticipating. But, although he lived only about a block away, Craig was a no-show. He was chicken, was he? Nether participant lacked the courage to participate in something that nether of them had created. Kim wasn't born to fight, but she had the courage to sing in the MusicMan. But Craig? There's the apocryphal story of Craig in late years playing pick-up football with Steve Urban and crew over at Good Shepard. Allegedly, some drugged-out woman leapt topless from a car stopped on the Carlisle Pike at the light. She was looking for love, running amok amongst that crowd of athletic early teens, looking for somebody to love. Craig had the courage to give her a friendly hug. So strangely, back at this first sixth grade bout, Craig was a no-show. Perhaps he forgot. Victory was defaulted to Kim.

Not to be pushed from a great idea, the fight promoters published a rematch, more poster's on Hoover's green tile walls. Now, with his reputation clearly at stake, Craig had to appear as advertised. This time, the combatants showed on time, a circle of youthful chants opening them to the center. The grass was slick and the light held a slight twinkling of grey. Sheri quickly went over the rules which we all knew, memorized by movies. We all could have been contenders. But when we got down to it, the fight itself amounted to little more than pushing and shoveling, followed by a couple of shoulder shrugs and a reluctant handshake. Our own battle of the sexes complete, we all headed home, each boy and each girl, friends and equals, home to dinner.

Were it a disappointment? No, we had pulled off something that was entirely our own. Conceived (ah, there's the rub, perhaps) and delivered entirely by sixth graders, the Matter-Reese bouts (or Reese-Matter bouts?) perhaps provoked the response that would drive apart the sexes forever, never again to play (or fight) as equals. Miss McHale, the heart and soul of the Hoover experiment (but never in a white smock), lead the young girls off to some brainwashing tank while the boys flocked innocently in the gym. Whatever education (or debriefing) the female of the species received separately, it was that separation, that sex education that would split us into the sexes and forever cast us from Hoover's Eden of equality and onto high school.

Top 20 Best Memories of the Class of '77

Lee Fry and Sue Cook with Tamie Ryder Hershey

...1. Senior Class Trip to Seven Springs-hot tubs; "a little nip of the yip!"; "skiing...what skiing?"...2. Slave Day-Driving bases at Hoover; PJ's to school; drag queens...3. Field Hockey-"WHEET"; "chicken corn"; bruised shins; orange slices...4. Halloween Carnival-beverage (?) dispensing!!...5. Dances at Presbyterian Church-fun in the parking lot!...6. Explorer Post Camping Trips-Hechert; "warlock"; initiations...7. Camp Hill Pool-"laying out" with baby oil/iodine, lemons and "Sun In" ...8. Favorite Teachers-Lou Dougherty, Rena Rogoff, Bonnie Harrison...9. Milton Hershey Dances-"What's his name?"; "Wanna switch?"...10. Shore Trips-Stone Harbor; Henry's "If you want to crash...go outside!"; spanada scissors; "Easy"; Crego's...11. "Unit" Checking-"Here comes one on your right!".. [Unit Checking: You probably can guess this one!! It is as bad as you are probably thinking it is!!] .12. Senior Class Play-"Oklahoma"; cast parties...13. Chocolate Chip Cookie dough at the movies...14. Tang "O.D."- t-shirts and underwear at 2 am on Carlisle Pike...15. Northern Citation-"How many girls can you fit in a Gremlin?"; "Honest officer...we were just posting signs!!"... [Northern Citation: Refers to the night before our big football game with Northern senior year. A group of girls made signs and decided to post them all over the Northern Football field around midnight. We piled into cars...many were in my Gremlin...and drove to the field. In the middle of our sign posting, the cops spotted us, gave us a major lecture and then a citation for "trespassing." Oh,...we also had to take the signs down.] or [Ah, the road trip to Northern High School to decorate their school with CH colors and signs. This was following the Halloween fund raising event at the school, I think. We ladies were armed with tape, crepe paper, posterboard and markers. We headed south on Route 15 (brings to mind some other tales) and then headed into the Northern High School parking lot. Trees were adorned, signs were hung (no weed killer was sprayed) and as we were completing our mission ready to re-group to the cars we traveled in, who drives by the school but the band director's son. (We learned later on...) Well now the mission had to end and off we went heading north. All was well until we reached the "old" Holiday Inn site. The state police was called in for a man (or lady) hunt. All the cars were pulled-over along route 15 and fines were issued. I dont remember how the charge was worded but we divided the fee. How is that for school spirit and team support? I'm not even certain if the football team was aware until after the game.]16. Open campus and Open lunch-where did we go?...17. Parties at Goodyear's cabin-cornfield ditch...18. Land Parties-hickies; Lambrusco; kegs; "You have to stay overnight"; Baha-ing in the field...19. Park City O.D.-Attending a lecture? Yeah right!!... [Park City O.D.: Refers to the time that Sue Sajer, Tami Minick and I went to Park City Lancaster to hear Dr. Leaky speak...and also to do a little shopping. It was pouring rain...my mom didn't want me to go because I had just gotten my license, but of course I told her nothing could go wrong. Well, we were hit on the driver's side by a guy who ran a stop sign. The car wasn't drivable and I had to call my mom...sheepishly...and ask her to pick us up...and also pay for the car!! I didn't hear the end of that one for a while.] 20. Parties at Cook's with the coolest mom, "Weez"

The Toboggan Slide

Richard A. Stender

Winter, as I remember, seemed to last forever during my childhood and teen-age years in Camp Hill. I clearly recall the excitement of seeing the first snow flurries of the season, usually around the middle of December. I mean it was like an instant seasonal switch that was thrown, shifting my mood from all thoughts of football, scouting or any other pursuit, to the glorious thrill of sledding! When those first downy flakes of snow fell, it didn't seem to matter where I was, be it home, school or wherever – I knew that it was time to start getting the old "Lightning Guider" ready to ride.

It made no difference in which grade I happened to be. That corps of teachers at the venerable N.C. Schaeffer School could all be expected to respond to my – to everyone's fixed gaze on snow that we had not known since the previous March.

"YOU CHILDREN ACT LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN SNOW BEFORE!"

The only variation was in tone and volume. Miss Umberger's reminder was mild compared to that of the bellowing Miss Drake or the razor's edge alto of Miss Colson. In retrospect, I wonder why they never learned something new to chide us and gather our attention to our studies.

You see, it really made no difference to us- spelling, arithmetic, even Pimwe of the Jungle – were all pushed aside by the anticipation of snowmen, snowballs and SLEDDING! Nearly everyone in my class thought exactly the same way, at least among the boys. We watched that hill that led up to the playground, hoping against hope that the snow would soon cover the honeysuckle, which indicated a coverage good enough to free the friction of steel runners – good enough for sledding.

In my mind, I abandoned all thoughts of times tables or social studies and mentally checked off all the preparations I would have to make if I were going to enjoy my favorite winter pastime. My mind raced to anticipate every possible need!

"Where did I put those gloves the last time I wore them?"

"I wonder if my four-buckle galoshes still fit."

"Will Mom be pissed if I cut the clothesline to make a pull rope for my sled?"

The snow continued, as did our gawking, hoping and anticipating, until finally dismissal came and as usual, we were reminded by the teachers that, "Snowballs may not be thrown on the way to or from school," accompanied by their leering expressions of certainty of violation! They just knew that some goody two-shoes would "REPORT" anyone who attempted to make anything that resembled a sphere from snow, usually a girl or some boy who threw like a girl!

The most important news that we awaited as we left the school, was the cry of a brave schoolmate, who upon reaching down and snatching a double handful of snow, would scream out, "It's good packing!" That meant that the snow was right for making snowballs, snowmen and snow forts. It also meant that it would pack down hard enough to support those glistening steel runners.

Living only a block from the school was a big advantage when the snow came. Not only was the walk shorter, but for myself and my friend Max, who lived across the street, it meant that we could throw snowballs at the rest of the kids, doggedly trudging their way to Country Club Hills. There was no danger of the feared cry of "I'll report you!" We were home and no longer under the jurisdiction of the Schaeffer School rules.

Snowballs were usually harmless, unless you got one directly in the face. Then combined with the sensitivity of cold skin, it could hurt like the devil. They were one of the mock childhood weapons that were not covered by silly parental admonitions of, "You'll break your neck!" or, "You'll put you eye out!" But we did have some self-imposed restrictions, like never throwing at Charlie Miller. Charlie, an aspiring

student of Dr. Shope, Camp Hill's band director and uniform fitter extraordinaire, had a trombone embrasure that we knew was inviolate.

Sometimes, we would have such snowball fights, replete with forts of banked snow that my arm would ache for hours. At this late stage of life, I would never let my grandkids know that my stiff shoulder is the result of such mindless pursuits, particularly since we live in the south and to them, snowballs are an unknown.

Snowballs were just a diversion from our main activity – SLEDDING! Everyone would take his or her sled down from the wall of the garage, where it had hung since the last snowfall. A quick brush of sandpaper and the steel runners glistened. Two or three rubs with candle wax, and the new rope from mom's clothesline and that maple and steel rocket was ready to fly!

There weren't a lot of great long hills near my house. At least none that were without the risk of being hit by a car. But in Camp Hill Park, there was the infamous Toboggan Slide! It was a narrow road, actually more like a trail that dropped steeply from just behind one of the park shelters. Why in the world it got its name is beyond me. No sane kid, not even we immortal pre-teens and teenagers would choose to rocket down that hill on a curved board that was impossible to steer. That is not to say that it was never attempted, because the Hoover family had a toboggan and it is possible, given Debbie and Bobby's verve, that there were attempts.

You the reader are wondering why this hill was such a challenge. Well, challenge is really a misnomer for this launch pad to hyper-velocity. It was a genuine risk! And the reason for the risk was the vicious right hand turn at the bottom of a 1/3-mile, 40-degree hill. That turn led to a gentle slope that went on down to the Condogouinet Creek. Missing that turn meant a plummet off the track in into a thicket of winter dried thorn bushes. Even on the supple maple frame of a trusty Lightning Guider, that turn was hell. Very often, some of us kids would trek over to the slide, carrying containers of water, which we would spread over the first hundred or so yards, creating a sheet of ice and thereby increasing our velocity to nearly double.

That in turn, caused us to be cautious and at the killer curve, to turn our bodies on the sled and drag a toe to escape punishment in the thorny thicket. The object, the real brass ring, was to make it all the way down the hill, negotiate the curve and coast all the way down to the road that ran beside the creek. I can attest that many tried and few succeeded. The specter of the killer turn and the briars were the cause of many a worn-out boot toe as discretion won over valor among our reckless rider friends.

Other suicidal activities included the "snake," where we lined up in five or six – sometimes more – sleds, each rider putting his boot toes into the frame of the sled behind him. I know, in spite of never having been much of a physicist, that it had something to do with the overall mass of the moving object, when increased by more sleds and bodies, would absolutely rocket down that hill. The entire train was guided by the rider of the front sled, the only one with any view of the track ahead. The rest were seeing only the black heels of a pair of galoshes, which locked them into the train.

There is also some rule or law of physics that says something about the increase in velocity at the end of a moving rope or cable when it reaches the point where it has turned or changed direction. Remember the term, "Crack the Whip," usually done on ice skates? Those poor riders in the last two sleds almost always never had a chance! At the killer turn, when that last segment of the snake was whipped and because their centrifugal pull would wreck the whole train, they usually got disconnected. It came about when the third or fourth guy would lift his feet, dooming the last two or three sleds, glory bound for briar city. Only the brave and hardy would ride the back – guys like Max, who looked death in the eye and smiled every time. He was the guy who, as I remember, convinced me to go down the big hill at the West Shore Country Club in the detached and waxed hood of a '48 Packard. Talk about suicide! I imagine that tree that we hit is still showing the bruise caused by our collision.

Now it could get even wilder when the girls came out to play. Even at that young age, I knew it was fun to ride double on a sled with a girl. Yeah, even with all those clothes on, the subtle anatomical differences were evident and exciting. On a baby slope, where one or two could sit up on a sled, it was nice to put your arms around the girl sitting in front of you, listening to her screams. Girls always scream when they go sledding!

On the Toboggan Slide, sitting up was out of the question. The equation was simple – raise the center of gravity by sitting up and it was a one-way trip to the thorny wilderness at the turn. The only choice was to lie on the sled and have the girl lie on top of you. In the throes of puberty, it could not have gotten better, snowsuits and all! I can remember several foolish responses to dares or challenges, or perhaps to impress the girls, when we would form a snake, riding co-ed double. The only difference it made was the last two sleds did not land in the briars, but roared right through them and sometimes over them! I know that Enola must have heard the screams of the girls on those occasions.

My brother called me the other day, from Camp Hill, to tell me that they had gotten a huge snowfall. At the time, I was enjoying a nice Georgia day of about seventy degrees. I was torn, as he described the drifts, between wanting to again venture out to the Toboggan Slide, or to keep these old bones warm and safe. Common sense won out and I guess I must be content with my memories of those days. Besides, they probably have all sorts of safety rules and restrictions on the old slide, enforced by some uniformed borough official. It would not surprise me to learn that some lawyer had convinced the authorities to straighten out the killer turn and cut down the briars. And who knows, they may just have done away with the entire hill and made it into a humdrum playground, nature trail or even subdivision! No matter what, when I sit alone, I can still hear the whine of steel runners, the roar of the wind and the sounds of girlish screams and boyish boasts on the Toboggan Slide.

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Writer's Postscript: Last fall, on a visit to Alabama, we stopped at a flea market. In one of the stalls, there stood an old sled, rusting and worn. I walked in, flipped the sled and there were those magic words, "Lightning Guider" scrolled on the boards. All the thoughts of winter in Camp Hill came roaring from the dusty shelves of my memory. The ride home gave me time to delve more deeply into those snowy adventures and this vignette is the result.

Editor's Note: This magical story on the Toboggan Slide (to where I owe an occasional limp) is part of Mr. Stender's soon-to-be-published collection Camp Hill Memories. Thank you for sharing, Mr. Stender and for more on Camp Hill sledding, check out John Slike's addition, Vivid Memories of the CH in the 1940's.

Top Ten List of Most Memorable Moments Involving Our Classmates

David Hershey

(for the class of '77)

I do not have a story, however I've compiled a top ten list of most memorable moments involving our classmates. 10/Learning to play jumpin' jack flash at Shea's house in 8th grade 9/Mr. Lange's science class and his never-ending supply of comfy sweaters 8/watching Joe Gabuzda use trigonometry to check the accuracy of his stereo turntable (7th grade). 7/Any given band practice at Kenny Arnold's house. 6/Mark McCauslin finishing a football game with a broken bone in his back. 5/Junior high make-out party's at Radnor's house. 4/German trip-senior year (with Arnold, Brennan, Freeman, et al). 3/The day Steve Urban was elected Mayor. 2/Near death experiences driving with Mark Jones('76). 1/Teachers' reactions after I finally cut my hair, spring of senior year.

Trembling On Stage

Tammy Minick-Scokalo

Trembling up on stage, I reluctantly go out and have trusty Bob Kehew by my side... Well...it's only 6th grade and Spring Chorus time, but it set my early years in high school (remember when high school started in 7th grade? You passed SENIORS in the hallway...but I digress). Yes, Bob and I sang the duet "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better" from the musical Annie Get Your Gun. In the same concert Kitty Storch sang the solo "Where is Love?" from Oliver. She was terrific and had always been my best friend. We have many memories, including summer Girl Scout camp (Kitty - remember Rainmaker? Was it her that killed the rattlesnake? And Danny the kitchen guy who always gave us extra bags of those doughy white rolls that we slathered with butter, instead of eating good food?)

While nervous at the start, I never really saw anyone behind the lights, so I just had fun. I think Bob thought (and probably still does) that I was a lunatic. Shortly after the concert, I got a call from Meg Brennan. I had never met her – she went to Lincoln (very far away). She called to let me know that Tim Gallagher saw me in the concert and liked me. I had no idea who he was, but found out he was on the same baseball team as Corey Gallaher (the purple team – name?), so I went to see them. Later that summer, I saw him at the swimming pool and took some pictures – one of which I blew up into a poster. He was extremely shy and blushed at everything. Was never quite sure how really interested in me, but it put me in touch with a really terrific and very fun group of girls in junior high that had come from Lincoln. We ran as a pack and had a ton of fun... Meg Brennan, Patty Armstrong, Cathy Croft (remember the time we played hookie and hung at Cathy's house and played pool? Her house had an elevator!!), Maura Cowan (Maura taught me a ton and was one of the smartest people I knew!), Vicki Revene, etc. The dances at the Presbyterian church..."Smoke on the Water" – the clear favourite - and "suicides" – the top ½ inch of every hard liquor bottle in your parents cupboard (and we actually drank the stuff...). I couldn't ever bring any because my parent's bottles had dust on them...

I had amazing teachers...but I had always had amazing teachers (ok...Miss Pheasant, whiskers and all, and Mrs Polk with the dreaded wig – were questionable..."Boo!! Radley – does anyone remember that?). On the whole, my teachers throughout 1-12 were incredible. If I could find a school with teachers like that, I would move there and put my kids in immediately. (Their current school outside of London comes close – 10-14 kids/class, they reinforce values as well as teach the subjects incredibly well, etc, etc) Miss Torres, Miss Witmer, Miss McHale, Mr. Frankfurt, Mr. Walton, Mr. Boyer and Mr. Schmelzle – who was the reason I went into engineering. They taught because they really wanted to teach us something... Ok...then there was Mr. Kimmel who always put the baby chicks in the boa constrictor's cage at the beginning of the class, to gross all the girls out, as the peep, peep, peep's died out to silence, as the class wore on... The Wonder Years – I loved that show, it felt so real.

My later friendship with folks in the "F" and "G" sections started my friendships with Joe Gabuzda and "Winks" Sechrist – many times giving advice on how to win Sue Sajer over best... I don't think she ever realised just how many guys were "pining" over her. Joe also thought I was a lunatic (as I thought he was, especially after he showed me a picture of himself at 6 years old – smiling, while crossing the leads of a voltmeter!). He was a lifelong friend and I miss him very much and think of him often. He was amazing.

The fun antics that we got into with Sue Cook, Tami Ryder, Sue Sajer, Meg Brennan, Anne Deeter, etc, etc – harmless, fun pranks like our ride to Northern's football field – I don't even remember what we did (TP'd it or something), but I remember our hearts racing, but then the laughter, camaraderie and just plain fun.

And who wouldn't remember Elmo – leader of the pack, an individual to the end...who else would wear a quilt and play the bagpipes in the halls? Who else would wear a Santa hat around to all his classes during the Christmas season? Who else would show us that you could be a leader and cause driven, while still holding onto the child in all of us and able to see things through a child's wondrous eyes at Christmas?

And Frans Barends...I got to know Frans in high school, but much better later. He has endured my mid-night calls (or later). The ups and downs in my life... And he has visited me and later, me and my family, at every place in the world I have ever lived (ok Frans...you did miss Japan!). Ok...I have to promise my Boursin omelettes with asparagus, butter rum cake with toasted pecans and a few other cooking favorites... You're the best Frans!

Unexpected House Guests

Mike Petrillo

The Crashing of Leslie Fry's Party, Literally

In order to appreciate the many subtle undercurrents of this story, one must understand the class distinctions or at least the distinctions in our class. Back in high school, we divided into cliques not based upon economic status, but based upon social and geographical lines. Camp Hill High School was middle class, very middle class, with a few upper middle class and perhaps a few lower middle class families thrown in to round it out. I lived in the Bowery of the town, and hung out with future poets, writers, and artists, oh, and a future East Asian Studies major. He plays the key role in a party we were never invited to. We were not the type that one would invite to a party, at least the Party variety. People had this perception of us that we were unpredictable (which we were) and capable (which we were) of doing something that might embarrass an unsuspecting Host or Hostess.

So, we weren't expected to show up at Lee Fry's house party. I suspect it was Kehew, only because I always suspect Kehew, who suggested crashing the party. We usual suspects piled into the Green Torino and drove over to Lee's, over on the hilly road running aside the country club. It was winter and a thick coating of snow was on the ground. Despite the cold, Stump was dressed in a tee shirt with no sleeves and a straw cowboy hat. Being the perfect party guests, we brought along our own booze and several snacks. We filed politely up to the door and let Kehew do the talking. (It must have been his idea, yes?) Elmo pushed along side in the front, waving the booze high to prove we'd be no burden. Stump and I stood in the back of our crowd of six, partially hidden.

Meg Johnston answered the door, and only opened it a fraction to peek out. Safe. Kehew negotiated with Meg, using his swizzle baritone of voice of distinction. After a short parlay, we were admitted, although Meg was very tentative about letting us pass and her caution was confirmed when Stump tipped his cowboy hat in passing. I don't remember everyone who was there, but I do remember us sitting in a circle around the living room (at least as circular as one could be in a rectangular living room) and quietly talking, drinking, and eating snacks. Our crowd exceeded the traditional seating capacity so things quickly got informal and we sat on the floor. We were just as comfortable on the floor as we would have been sitting on the furniture and everything started out with our group, yes, even Stump, on best behavior. To amaze everyone at the party, we were able to act normal and even conduct intelligent, pleasant conversation.

At some time in all this civility, Stump wandered back a hall that led to the dining room. This wall had quite a few framed pictures and Stump studied each of them very carefully. Leslie's parents came home, and Leslie's dad came down the hall, noticing a young man, holding a straw hat, absorbed in the pictures. I had stopped at the opposite end of hallway and I stood, listening to the longest conversation one of my classmates had ever had with another classmate's parents. Leslie's dad was a retired Army Colonel and Stump was fascinated with anything to do with the military. Impressed by Stump's serious, well thought out questions (was Stump contemplating a military career?), Colonel Fry was very happy to answer and the two struck up a respectful repartee.

With their passageway conversation, the night took on a timeless, almost surreal tone. Sadly for the rest of us, the evening had ended. The crew, perhaps feeling that they had conquered Meg at the front door and were now reaching the limits of their civility and the end of their alcohol, the crew wanted to press on. Stump told us he wanted to stay and talk some more with Colonel Fry. How he'd get back from the Fry's back to his house, across Country Club Hills and the park through all that snow, was unclear. We had witnessed Stump's inner strength ability to withstand cold in near complete bareness; he was known to go for a winter run of five, six, ten miles in only shorts and his sneakers, finishing his cooldown by doing snow-angels in the roadside banks. The rest of us piled into the Torino and went home.

How long Stump stayed talking the military and memories, clutching his cowboy hat and drink, no one kept track. It was much later and he had decided to walk home. The direct path led directly through the

Fry's back yard. Their backyard was built up and rose to about the height of their next roof. The snow on the ground somewhat hid the fact that there was a transition from ground to house. (Also the amount of alcohol Stump drank may have had a small part in it).

Without a moment's notice, Stump was walking across the top the neighbor's snowcapped roof. The house, however, was shaped like an L. With no distinction between ground and sky, Stump simply walked directly off the L. He fell onto the neighbor's patio. A few more feet and he would have landed in their pool. Without missing a step or changing direction, Stump staggered through the hedge in front of him and out to the front of the house. The experience motivated him to flag down a passing car to catch a ride the rest of the way.

It was a luck catch, for this was no ordinary passing car. It was a white and wood panel station wagon with a Confederate flag for the front license plate. The driver kindly offered to take the bloody, wounded Army guy back to his home across town. Here is the driver's trustworthy, eye-witness account:

"I was driving cautiously, as I always do in snow conditions, when this body looming in a bush stood up, a bloody madman in white straw cowboy hat, waving his bloody hands for me to stop. His nose was bleeding and he looked like hell. He told me how he walked onto the roof and walked right off and he asked me if I could drive him home. I told Stump I would as long as he didn't get any blood on the seats."

Invited to the party at Lee Fry's, Frans Barends was only then threading the wagon over slick streets to drop in and say hello. After all, he had been invited. It was a remarkable evening in the whole of it, how a group of misfits found their way into a Party and that the host and guests did not regret letting us in. In fact the party was very nice; and everyone had a good time, particularly Colonel Fry and Stump with their two hour mysterious conversation in the hallway. On the whole, there's nothing truly amazing about Stump's one step too far off a roof; he was always doing things like that. What was remarkable was the FBI doing a background investigation on Frans never discovered the blood.

Vivid memories of the CH in the 1940's

John Slike, Class of 1947

Having lived on North 20th Street during World War II in the 1940's, some of my vivid memories are of the trolley which ran down the center of Market Street that we rode to Harrisburg. The operator sat on a stool at the front of the trolley and would switch to the stool at the back for the trip back. We kids would take turns riding the empty stool.

During the war, small planes would practice bombing by dropping paper bags filled with flour along Market Street... to what purpose I don't know. Taking slivers of ice off the ice truck that delivered blocks of ice to your house for your icebox was a favorite refreshment, as was homemade root beer and ice cream. Another favorite memory was playing "kick the wickie" (a small stick) at the corner of 20th and Walnut on balmy summer evenings.

Sledding down 20th Street in the winter was wonderful. The Borough would barricade 20th at Walnut and a good run from the top of the hill at High Street would take you the whole way to Market Street, if you had a good sled (I didn't but my brother did) and hooking sleds together as trains to go down the hill.

There was no TV, no computers or video games, no cell phones or text messaging or twitter, but what fun we had and freedom to go anywhere at young ages (nine and up) without our parents being concerned for our safety. We were children growing up during a severe depression and a terrible world war, but we didn't really worry. I suppose we were fortunate to have a roof over our heads, heat in the winter, food to eat and our families and friends and that was all that we needed.

What It Was, Was Baseball

Vicki Sardelis Moyle

My family moved from downtown Harrisburg to Camp Hill in the summer of 1944, just in time for me to enter sixth grade. That first day at Schaeffer school is locked in my memory. Culture shock was not a term that a skinny 11-year-old Greek girl would be familiar with, but that's for sure what summed up my first day of school in Camp Hill.

Entering a new school where I knew no one, naturally, I was anxious about how I would fit in. Would I make any friends on the first day? Well, my initial encounter with a new classmate didn't help much to quell my anxiety. I was very small for my age, and I had barely entered the sixth grade classroom when Wally Lester approached me and said, with a kind, helpful tone of voice, "This is SIXTH grade." I assured him I was aware of that fact and promptly commandeered the nearest desk, sitting in the too high desk with my feet dangling, but ready to defend my right to be there. They sent for a desk from the second grade and let me stay.

The rest of the morning went well. I was a good student and the class lessons and activities did not present any problems for me. Later in the afternoon, the bell rang for recess. That's when things became interesting. First of all, the boys and the girls went out to recess...TOGETHER! And the playground was a BIG GRASSY FIELD! Back in my city school, boys went out for boy's recess and girls went out for girls' recess and everyone went out on a macadam playground. The boys ran around playing boy's games and the girls played hopscotch or jumped rope. Boys and girls NEVER played together.

Next, I saw that boys and girls picking sides to play baseball. Well, it was softball, but I didn't know the difference. Although I had never played baseball and had never attended a game, I did have a vague idea of the rules. I watched closely the play while waiting for my turn at bat. *OK, I thought to myself, you hit the ball to get on base and then you run around the bases when the ball is hit until you reach home. Or you can steal a base if you are fast enough when the pitcher throws the ball to the catcher. Well, I knew this, I can do that!* This was my chance to show these Camp Hill kids how good the new little skinny kid could play their game.

My turn to bat. Somehow I managed to hit the ball and made it to first base. I landed there feeling really pleased with myself...and with a plan for even greater glory for me. I would demonstrate what a good baseball player I was...by stealing second base. The pitcher threw the ball. I ran to second base. *Safe!* I thought, with a proud feeling of my speedy feat. But to my dismay and consternation, instead of cheer of approval, everyone was yelling at me and I was quickly called out.

My brief study of the game had not made me aware of a basic rule: you cannot have two runners on the same base. Unfortunately, there was already a runner on second base. No cheers, no impressed classmates. I was sure my team thought the new kid was a real dope and I had to slink back to the sidelines, a sadder, but wiser, baseball player.

Whatever Happened to the Old Cross-Country Team?

Robert Kehew

(Gettysburg Battlefield)

A clipping slid out of the slit envelope:
two bars of words and a smudged photo of
uniformed Franz. It bore the stirring phrase,
“Officer orders fifteen tanks to hold fire.”

That’s my kind of valor – refusing to shoot
at a stray jeep filled with shit-scared newsmen
while oily fires blackened the Kuwait skies.
The action calls for a Kiplingesque treatment...
I’m glad he made it back so we can joke.
I would not have foreseen this, given the time
that we, sans coach, arranged our own practice
at sunrise in the green hills of Gettysburg,
frying up ham and eggs in Devil’s Den,
loping along a long line of cannon.
We’d just crammed back into the wagon when
a young buck shot in front of us! We pursued
until our wheels were whirring in the mud.
When I think back on the split second between
the whitetail sighting and the wheel wrenched left,
I can’t recall the voice of Franz urging
prudent restraint. (He was, in fact, driving.)

But this clipping...I take this change as a sign
that character’s not always destiny –
though sometimes it sure looks like destiny.
Take the way that Dennis started dragging
his sled through slush in second grade, laden with gifts
to share on Christmas Eve (somewhere I have
a dapper man composed of tiny clam-shells).
The red sled soon made way for the Torino...
even today he makes the rounds, Santa’s
beard shot with gray, less need for added paunch.

Some traits endure, but still it behooves us all
not to let our positions as marked out
on the Electric Maps of memory
daunt us. If Miss Purcell, for example,
took you aside, explained that you had no
real aptitude for language and refused
to let you in to sixth grade Spanish, that
should not deter you now from tackling French.
That was not our spirit as we looked out
from that stone tower raised to the fallen brave,

yelling our heads off as the sun came up –
youth and laughter bright on our faces, poised
to clatter down the steps, make Pickett's Charge.

White Stars

Dennis Myers

The Gift of Lights: Who is among us now who can witness the events, who can tell the miracle of the lights?

Mid-December, back when it is used to snow in December, and twilight, when the blueglow ceiling lingered forever. We had piled into the green Torino with a mission. Mike Petrillo—was Steve Bange there too?—and I had convinced Joe Gabuzda to help out. We swung by Bob Kehew's to make a fifth and, while we waited outside on his porch, Mike leaned back into the hedge now trimmed in holiday lights and unscrewed a few bulbs.

We were cruising for Christmas lights, blue ones, the big, even-then, old-fashion kind. The future engineers in the car estimated we'd need at least thirty-six. The Kehew house was only the first victim, since we intended to spread the pain around the community in small doses. We decided to take a maximum of three per house, but our good intentions proved crazed. The latest Christmas fad, strings of blinking minis, forced us into an endless looping of miniature displays blanketing hedges, hanging off porches, occasional canvassing an entire house. Big blue bulbs proved surprising scarce. Lights by the thousands lost the subtly found in a simple string of a candle's glow. Picking off the random house with an outdated display progressed at a very slow pace, and, directing the effort from the backseat, Joe was getting nervous.

As we turned a corner up on Beverly Road, we found our illuminated Mecca, our well-lighted place. She was a beauty. She stood out not only her tenacious grip on Christmas past, but also for a near fanatical aesthetic execution of blue glow. The long front porch and the trim of the house were outlined tastefully in blue, old-fashion blue, big old-fashion blue. In the yard, framing either side of the walkway to the porch, stood two tall pines, decked in big, old-fashion blue. Joe looked through the pickings collected in our paperbag. It was thin, and since the night had dragged on, with still so much more work to do, we throw our thieves honor to the wind and gathered fistfuls of these rare blue gems, the heat mounting up on our unprotected fingertips.

Thirty-three. Joe counted the collection, three shy, and he knew another blue house, old-fashion blue, big blue bulbs, just a couple of blocks away. We followed his direction and stopped at his command. But there was no blue here and Joe simply rolled himself out of the car, trotted safely out a couple of steps, and waved us thanks for the evening. He disappeared through some backyards in a desperate dash home.

(Truth would say it differently, that Joe had eased out of the car, simply smiled and walked the short distance to his house. He was to become our high school class co-valedictorian and, even on a Saturday, there must have been books calling, studying to do. Joe lost his life early, only five years later, commuting to Lehigh to take his last college exam. Up in East Pennsboro, Joe became the victim of a misguided attempt to raise revenues and the wrong end of a trucker's sliding rig. A local cop was manipulating the traffic light to force truckers to run the red light; this truck lost control in a skid, rolling up over Joe's car station at the light across the intersection, all in a fraction of heartbeat. It was a tragedy, where I better remember him on that other twilight, waving, a friendly, if somewhat lost, smile, Joe lost in a circle of lights, none of which were blue.)

Without Joe, the evening was still only half-over. We lucked into a couple of more blues and I pulled the Torino into the back of Trinity's parking lot. Sitting atop one of the highest points in the town, Trinity Lutheran Church was a reknown landmark with its brick and wood and window steeple cutting into the sky. (So high, legend had it, that it gave the Camp Hill Fire Department the excuse for buying a ladder truck.) And there, in the front window, hanging westward, was the large white star, always white.

A thin porch circled the steeple at window level. From there, you could look out for miles. Getting there required a little luck and skill. Not much, because these were still transitional days, where the modernity of the mini lights (bought at a supermarket and not Joe-The-Motorist's-Friend) had already crept across

our town blocks at a time, but the many doors remained unlocked in their traditional ways. Steve Bange, luckily, found the church's open door and I lead the group to the side stairwell that rose up to the balcony. The church was empty, hushed, and filled with a dim purple light, tinted by huge windows that lined the inner walls. At the back of the balcony was a locked door, but, skill, you could open it with a well-manipulated coat hanger from the conveniently placed adjacent coat rack. We had learned that trick as acolytes.

Once inside, we climbed another stairway enclosure in pitch black; no one had thought to bring a flashlight. These stairs opened up to the cavernous vault spanning over the entire church body, where rows of thick wooden peaks lined out a seeming infinite regression over head. Heaven's vault. Here, you would be awed, but you would be no where nearer to the steeple's star. That required scaling a thin metal ladder, its width smaller than the average male, and straight up it went, with no visible means of support and no visible destination in a darkness that wasn't thick enough to relieve a climbing sense of vertigo as you traveled up and up, step to flimsy step. Here, in the vault of heaven, here atop the heights of Camp Hill, here was Jacob's Ladder. And it was even more difficult to climb clutching a paper shopping bag filled with blue Christmas lights.

Reaching the upper landing, you could lift the towering windows and step out on the thin balcony that ran four square around the outside. On a subsequent New Years Eve turn New Year's Day, I stood out there with Frans Barends. We had ended up on that thin porch after wandering a succession of parties, when we decided to detox by watching the snow start up in big white flakes across the town. Frans described it all as simply miraculous.

But this night, our man-made miracle hung directly above our heads. Pitt had guessed correctly... thirty-six old-fashion big-bulbs and we, of course, had a couple to spare. Bob suggested unplugging the star to give us a little more time to do this thing unwitnessed. Besides, this way the new brilliant blue star would have a bigger bang. Steve agreed.

That beautiful Christmas star. Each season Trinity religiously hung it in that front, arched steeple window, every year, and every year the same color, white, always white. We had to work quickly. We worked assembly line fashion, passing warm white bulbs and their cool blue replacements down and up as small step ladder conveniently left there for us. Did no one remember to bring gloves? We collected the whites in our paper bag to prevent any miracle reversals after our departure, worked the ladder more quickly than up, and lingered only seconds in the parking lot, just long enough to admire our work. Besides, I could see that beautiful blue shine true in the rearview mirror as we drove down Chestnut back to the house on Beverly. We dropped the bag of whites on the doorstep of our biggest benefactor.

There was no reversal. All that season, the Trinity star remained burning old-fashion blue, with a twinkle that the hot-burning, pure whites never achieved. We weren't caught, but there were repercussions, of course. Attending a holiday gathering, Bob overheard his parents discussing with neighbors about the theft of several light bulbs from displays throughout the town, right off people's porches. The partygoers wondered aloud what had happened to these modern times.

We attempted to repeat the following year, when the white bulbs had returned, thinking maybe red would be a good choice. I can't remember now if we followed through, or if we realized that there were more variations in the color red—stretching the spectrum from light yellow through a purple crimson—than in blue and that the aesthetics weren't right. But, as we harvested bulbs that year, this time without Joe, we circled round to the house on Beverly, to the house of blues. Slowly rounding the corner, we admired that the house retained its solid blue twilight magnificence, a perfect, beautiful obsession of blue. But this year was different, a miraculous difference, where on the tips of each of the twin pines, sitting up there like distant stars themselves, two Trinity lights burned white.

Win a Medal and Celebrate

Michael Petrillo

Or How I beat the pants off Zachary Jackson

In our Junior year of high school, our track team was average. We would neither dominate an opponent, nor would we be dominated. Such average teams almost never did well in Conference finals, nor in any Invitational Meets. Our Coach rarely brought the team to any of the Invitational meets. This was true of the Penn Relays, a yearly invitational meet that was held at Penn University for any high school to attend. Since the Penn Relays were held after track season ended, and after Conference finals, we never were offered the chance to compete. In our Junior year (is there an echo in here?) Harrisburg High held an invitational meet the same weekend as the Penn Relays. Coach Roland did not want to bring a team to either meet, but gave us the flyers for Harrisburg. If we wanted to, we could enter as individuals. Three of us entered: Frans, Tommy Fager, and me. Frans was the designated driver, and we all piled into the surviving vehicle (from the Stump's corner crash) and drove to Harrisburg High.

Upon arrival and registration, we noticed that no school brought a "team" – all the "teams" went to Penn Relays. What came to Harrisburg on a windy Saturday morning was a collection of individuals, wearing their school track uniforms, each hoping to earn a medal. Frans, Tommy and I all entered the 100 yard dash (yes, in those days we ran good ole English units of measure, not those putrid metric "meters"), 220 yard dash. Tommy entered the pole vault. We were allowed to enter 4 events, but Frans and I were sprinters, and we only had 3 people (not enough to enter a relay team). There were so few runners for each event, that instead of running heats, the meet officials decided to run every event as a final. After hearing that there were only 6 entrants for the 100 yard dash, we all felt pretty good about our chances of pulling at least 1 medal. As we warmed up, we looked over the competition: our 3 heroes from Camp Hill, 2 runners from Cedar Cliff, and Zachary Jackson. Yes, THE Zachary Jackson. As in "State Champion 880 relay team" Zachary Jackson. Harrisburg High's own senior. Now Harrisburg High did not bring its team to the meet (which is odd, they were the host), nor did they send a team to the Penn Relays. Zach was the lone runner, along with 2 guys in the field events. So much for us feeling confident about winning a medal. As far as we were concerned, Zach was going to place first, second and third all by himself.

Zach was a very short person, even shorter than me. I was one of the shortest boys in my class, so being slightly taller than Zach was something. Zach was a soft spoken young man, very pleasant demeanor, very light brown skin, and a full, thick beard. I guessed he was about 25 years old and still a senior in high school. Before the race we talked and Zach was very unpretentious. I guess his maturity impressed me, here was one of the top runners in the State of PA, who definitely had something to boast about, yet he was humble and care free, willing to befriend us (but not the Cedar Cliff guys).

As we lined up for the 100 yard dash (see English units ref.), I was positioned in the outside lane, Zach drew the lane right next to me. As a sprinter, I always liked to be in one of the center lanes, I hated the outside. In the 100 yard dash, lane positioning makes no difference at all – except the psychological effect it has on your own performance. Outside lane means I will not run as fast, and therefore lose. Only that's not what happened. After the gun went off, I exploded out in front and led the race from start to finish. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw this black streak gain on me and pull even. (Harrisburg High's uniform was black shirt with black pants). Zach dipped for the tape at the exact moment I did, a photo finish. The timers wouldn't even tell us who won, they said wait for the announcement over the loudspeaker. Zach asked what time we ran the race in. When the timer said "Eleven flat", Zach went ballistic. Without swearing he managed to convey to the timer that they must have been crazy because he "Ain't run no eleven flat in my life". (meaning the slowest time he ever ran was much faster the eleven seconds). I had to agree that eleven seconds was a slow time, but it was cold, overcast, slightly windy, and a cinder track. Waiting for the official results was torture, did I win? Could I possibly have beaten Zach in the 100 yard dash? When the results were read over the loud speaker, I finished first and Zach was awarded second. I don't remember who placed third, but I really don't think it was the Cedar Cliff

guys. On the way back from the press box with our medals, we came up to Zach's mom in the stands. Zach introduced me to his mom, and she asked to see both our medals. Zach's mom was one of very few fans sitting in the stands, braving the wind to support her son. After I returned to Tommy and Frans, we stood around at the start line of the 100 yard dash, waiting for the next event. Fred Sprunk, sportswriter for the Harrisburg Patriot News came over to interview me. Tommy made a big deal about the race, and answered Fred's questions for me. It was funny to read the article in Sunday's paper, I had made it through the entire interview without saying one word, Tommy was my agent. Before the 220 started, Zach asked me if I was going to coast for this one? I told him I was. I false started the race. This must have enraged Zach; some punk was trying to beat him at HIS race – the 220. When the gun went off, Zach took off so fast you would have thought he was shot from a gun. He finished the race about 50 yards ahead of me, I was dead last. The Cedar Cliff guys got 2 jumpers and formed a relay team. We asked Zach if he wanted to join with us and see if we could beat them. So Frans started, handed off to me then Tommy, and Zach pulled the anchor. We won by about 100 yards, gold medals all around! After the day ended Tommy mentioned that I had beaten the pants off Zach Jackson. I owned a white pair of gym shorts and wrote in black magic marker "Zachary Jackson" along the leg – Just like Zach's Sweat pants (he wrote his name in marker). All three of us were thrilled with our performance, what a successful day! But this day was far from over, see the next story.

Now Let's Celebrate (or Tug Tug Tug)

This happens to be Craig's favorite High School story, not only because it involves my cousin Chuck, but just because of the overall humor it represents.

Of course on the way home from the track meet, Tommy suggested that we celebrate. Such a momentous occasion could not possibly go without some form of merriment. Frans agreed and said he would pick us up at 7:00. Tommy said he would bet some beer to celebrate. All would have been well and good, enough time to shower and dress, eat dinner and go. Ahh, but fate was to play an interesting and silly trick on me. My cousin Chuck from Syracuse and his family were in to visit (unexpectedly). Chuck was exactly one year younger than me, and in our youth we were more like brothers than cousins. After the quick shower and dinner, and a gleeful accounting of the day's victories (proudly displaying medals, yes medals!), I announced that Frans and I wanted to go out and celebrate. Would it be ok for Chuck to come along with us? A quick note on why we would have to ask such a question – most parents would be glad to get rid of two teenage boys for a few hours, especially if one of those teenagers was Chuck. Chuck's mom was somewhat of a worry wart, and had to be coaxed into agreeing. This evening, she was right (the horror! the horror!). Frans was right on time and we drove off in my second most favorite car (first most favorite license plate) to meet Tommy. Tommy delivered on his promise, he had a case of Pabst blue Ribbon beer in 12 oz. bottles with him. You can easily see that 12 divided by 4 equals 6 beers each. I guess Tommy, Frans and I didn't think anything of drinking 6 beers in a night. What I did not know at the time, was that my cousin Chuck never drank. In fact this was his first adventure that involved drinking with friends. The experienced party goers know that it is not wise to drink and drive. We drove to an apartment complex in Highland Gardens, pulled into the parking lot, and parked in the back. We then calmly drank and talked about the day. Chuck fit in well, he knew Frans a little from other meetings, he did not know Tommy at all. By the time we drank 5 beers, it was dark. Chuck tried to keep pace with the experienced drinkers, which may have been his fatal mistake. Tommy collected our empties and deposited them in the dumpster (never litter, its rude). I guess that Chuck had about 4 or 5 beers, which is 4 or 5 beers more than he ever had at one time. Chuck was starting to get "silly". He was giggling and telling jokes that did not make sense. I had never seen him this would up, so I suggested that Frans drop us off at home. He and Tommy could finish the few beers left later. As we pulled up to the house I was confronted with the dilemma – how could I get Chuck into the house, past both sets of parents and down into the basement to my room in the condition he was in (silly, staggering, giggling, talking a mile a minute)? I told Chuck to be cool, don't talk and head directly down the basement. Meanwhile I quickly explained that we were very tired (hey I ran 3 races today didn't I), and that we were going to bed and would see everyone in the morning. To this day I don't know how we made it through the gauntlet and down the steps to my room with out any suspicion. Poor me – I thought we were safe and the night would end with a fond memory. Whenever Chuck came to visit we would set

up a cot in my room next to the bed. The cot was about 2 and ½ feet lower than the bed and was just as long. To be fair, Chuck and I would take turns sleeping on the cot. This visit it was my turn for the bed and Chuck had the cot. I got Chuck settled and relatively hushed and into bed (uh, cot), then turned out the lights. I lay back and congratulated myself on a successful day and equally successful night. Chuck was uncharacteristically quiet; we usually talked for a long time at night. I then felt this:

Tug, Tug, Tug...

Three very sharp tugs on the bed sheet, I reached down to the cot and swatted Chuck's hand and said knock it off go to sleep, or something of the sort.

Tug, Tug, Tug...

Three more hard pulls on the sheet. I may have said come on knock it off or some other words of admonishment.

Tug, Tug, Tug...

This time I ignored Chuck, he was obviously playing some game that I did not get. What followed the third set of tugs was a sound almost exactly like a water fountain in the park turning on for the first time. A loud gurgling rush of liquid was erupting from the cot next to me, following the gurgle was the sound of Chuck retching and I immediately knew what the Tugs were for. Many a time the room was spinning for me; Chuck; however, never had this experience and was unprepared to deal with it. In the 12 seconds it took for 4 or 5 beers to empty out of Chuck, I thought of 3 things:

We were caught; there was no way I could keep this from my parents

I was going to be killed; no way out of this problem

Man Chuck is still throwing up, his stomach could not have possibly held that much liquid

I went upstairs and told my parents that Chuck was throwing up. I then sat on the front couch and cringed. My mom, aunt and uncle went down to check on what was happening; my dad sat on the couch next to me and didn't say anything. That's how I knew I was in big trouble. My uncle brought Chuck upstairs and put him in the shower. My mom went back downstairs and started to clean up the mess. My aunt took charge of the shower, Uncle Chaz came into the living room and paced, every once in a while checking on the progress in the shower. While Uncle Chaz paced, my dad started firing questions at me in a low, flat monotone (this was uncharacteristic also, he usually yelled at me). I think I answered 100 questions, all the time trying to downplay the role the beer played in all of this, and underestimating how many beers each of had. I will go on record as not have lying to any of the questions (all 100 of them). For you attorneys out there, I did say the Frans was not drinking and driving (the car was absolutely stationary when he drank). Now that I reflect on the 100 questions, I wonder if at about question 5 my father may have decided that "boys will be boys" and only continued as a show (to show me how serious he was, to show Uncle Chaz and Aunt Anne he was taking serious measures). When Chuck was cleaned up and dressed, my Uncle brought him to the living room. My mom threw a few blankets and pillows on the floor. They laid Chuck down and he spent the night passed out on the living room floor. I felt really bad for Chuck. That was the moment that I found out Chuck never drank. I was expecting to be grounded for life or some other extreme punishment. My dad never did punish me, nor did he ever say anything about the night.

Wind Sprints

Ken Arnold

I stood before Coach Shover, melting under his uncomprehending glare. It was as if I had just asked him the capitol of the republic of Kyrgyzstan, which of course did not yet exist, this being 1975 and the U.S.S.R. still holding its vice-like grip over central Asia. Kind of like the one-handed claw grip I was expecting around the base of my neck in a few seconds.

“What?” he blurted.

“I can’t come to the game on Saturday,” I repeated. “Our band has a job in Mount Joy, and I can’t change it. We have a contract.”

He pondered my response, looking at the blackboard for guidance, his wiry physique and close-cut brown hair reminiscent of a wrestler or a wrangler. “Well, if you don’t come to the game, you’re off the team. All varsity players have to come to every game.”

“But I don’t start...”

“It doesn’t matter. This is a team, and you’re part of the team. If you’re not there, you’re off the team. That’s it.”

Trying to hide the sudden volcanic churning inside my gut, I replied as flatly as I could muster, “Then I guess I’m off the team.”

I abandoned further rebuttal and wandered lamely to my seat, stunned at the illogic of Coach’s decision. I never started, because the starting catcher, my classmate Mark McCauslin, was by far a better hitter. It’s not like they needed me. I was the back-up catcher, and it would always be that way, since Mark and I were in the same grade. The team would function without my half-inning contribution. And we were playing one of the better teams, like Shippensburg or Biglerville, or Northern, so I was working with a guaranteed bench spot. I don’t exactly remember which teams were good and who we were scheduled to play that particular spring Saturday. Our opponent was irrelevant. I had and would continue to spend most games perfecting my tobacco-spitting skills. Yes, it was a different time, when a 15-year-old could walk into Rea & Derick drug store and buy some Red Man or Mail Pouch, slap a big plug of tobacco in the cheek, and then proceed to get dizzy while running base paths, looking like a pro baseball player crossed with a chipmunk.

“No problem. I understand. It’s only one game.” That’s how I thought Coach Shover would have responded, calmly, rationally. But my request—just one Saturday—slammed those principles of team cohesiveness and singular commitment that ruled in Coach Shover’s mind, as they probably did in every coach’s mind. I don’t know...had not my total dedication to the Camp Hill Lions Varsity Baseball Team been thoroughly demonstrated in my faithful attendance to daily practices and my strong performance in the four and one-half innings spanning my Camp Hill baseball career so far? But this Saturday presented a conflict. My commitment to my bandmates Shea Quinn and Dave Hershey was unbreakable, as sacred as a Marine’s loyalty to his squad.

So, I figured my baseball career was finished. The next few days at practice were gloomy, knowing they were my last on the field. Through the waning week, Coach remained silent.

Yet the God of Tenth Grade Rock Stars, who must look like Bowie on the Aladdin Sane album cover--snow white tan, screwed up eyes and screwed down hairdo--came to my rescue. Or was it St. Woody, patron saint of us benchwarmers? At any rate, that fateful Saturday dawned humid and gray, and by late morning it had started pouring rain. By one o’clock, the game was in serious jeopardy. As we packed up gear in the drizzle before the Mount Joy job, Shea’s brother Shawn, a fellow member of the Tobacco Targetshooters Club, passed the band the word that the game had been postponed. Oddly, it cleared up for our gig. I felt extra hip that night, having repudiated baseball for rock...and forty dollars.

Monday rolled around with the regular routine and a nagging question: was I still a Lion? My varsity baseball limbo permeated the crawl of classes until Shover's Social Studies at 2:05. Coach was stationed at his desk, reading something.

"Coach?"

He looked up at me with a strangely placid gaze.

"I was wondering if I was still on the team, since we didn't play."

His Zen-like expression broke slightly, the trace of a smirk smearing slowly into an illuminated, all-knowing grin. He spoke with deliberate pleasure. "I have decided that, since it took about an hour for us to suit up and just to wait on the bus, that you can stay on the team, but you have to run a wind sprint for every minute late. Fair enough?" He was, after all, only invoking the standard punishment for tardiness to practice.

I thought it through. I calculated needlessly aloud, "That's sixty wind sprints." I spoke not in protest, but in honest relief.

That strange, self-illuminated smile was the only response.

"OK, thanks Coach." But as I turned to my desk, the relief slowly gave way to a growing image of certain pain on the sixtieth wind sprint, and I understood the depth of that grin.

Yale Avenue was the artery leading from school to the practice field. It was the worn route of every fair weather team: baseball, football, field hockey. Many a gym class had also traveled that short, pleasant route to College Park, so named because the streets that dead-end at the field were named for various Ivys...Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Princeton...even Dickenson, the famous Carlisle Ivy. That Monday, the crisp sidewalk crunch of fifteen pairs of metal cleats walking up Yale Avenue echoed off the neat houses lining the street. It was a beautiful spring day, sunny and clear, simply a great day for baseball, but not so great for running a ninety-foot base path sixty times. Really, there is never a good day to do sixty wind sprints. I calculated the distance as we marched along to the field: 5400 feet, a little more than a mile. Who can sprint for a mile?

As the rest of the team warmed up, I loaded up with some Mail Pouch, not a pinch, but a solid chew. I tossed my glove down and strolled to the grassy area along the first base line, trying to look nonchalant. For some reason I don't recall, Chip Hoffmeister had also received the same punishment of sixty wind sprints. And as George Forbes would say, Chip was a "speedster," so our pace would be, well, speedy.

We ran together, in front of the rest of the team, like sinful Pilgrims pilloried in the town square. In spite of the humiliation, our first ten or fifteen sprints were truly Olympic in form and speed, paralleling the first base line with geometric accuracy. Assistant Coach Stoner monitored our progress, but soon lost interest when he started hitting fly balls to the outfielders with his favorite fungo bat. At twenty-five sprints, it struck me that the nausea punctuating my shortness of breath might be due to the toxic effects of swallowed tobacco juice. I jettisoned the plug of tobacco like I was spitting out a monstrous watermelon seed.

But it was too late. By thirty or thirty-five sprints, our form had degenerated to a fast jog of maybe seventy feet. I stopped counting in earnest, distracted by the symptoms of ingested nicotine. Before the fifty level, I was dizzy and loudly humming the Beatle's "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" straight off of the Sgt. Pepper's album--somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly. I think by then I had kaleidoscope eyes, too.

Out of breath, Chip and I walked off the last few rounds. Nobody was paying any attention to us anyway, since practice had started. Sufficiently sweaty to at least evoke the image of sixty wind sprints, we stopped at the mutual estimation that we were at least close to sixty. Our penance done, we rejoined the team to no fanfare. I knew enough not to expect a welcome-back ceremony, but Coach Shover never even acknowledged the completion of the punishment. It was the level of attention a delinquent benchwarmer could expect.

I didn't play for the team for the rest of my high school years, since I could visualize a career doomed to late inning substitutions in games where the Lions were either way ahead, or way behind. If Mark ever moved, I would reconsider. But that season, and through the intervention of the Gods of Rock, the Saints

of Second String Athletes, and the Lords of the Tobacco Targetshooters Club, I learned a lesson that held true for the rest of my life: remain loyal to what you really want, and things will work out. And I was cured of chewing tobacco.