

VOICES :

creative expressions from
the storytelling project



Spring 2016: Volume 4

ABOUT :

The Storytelling Project is a volunteer collaboration between University of Minnesota Duluth students and adults with disabilities resulting from brain injury. During the spring of 2016, students from the departments of English, Writing Studies, Communication, and Communication Sciences and Disorders met weekly with ten writers from our community. Through extensive one-on-one conversations, the students and their partners have produced the works of memoir, fiction, and poetry assembled here.

Further information: z.umn.edu/storytelling

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P R E F A C E :

Beginning as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota Duluth, I knew I wanted to pursue my interests in the intersection between medicine and writing. After three semesters of reading theory, memoirs, and ethnographies relating to medicine, health, and healing, I got the chance to take part in a program that brought my interests to life by helping people with disabilities put their stories on paper.

It is not every day that students get the opportunity to work with people in their community, and the Storytelling Project is an exceptional way to get involved. I watched friendships form and created some myself, all in a creative environment that broke the boundaries of age and ability so often set by University walls.

As the Graduate Coordinator, I was lucky enough to learn how empowering it can be to put a story down on paper—and how fun it can be. This project helped me grow as a person, and I can't state enough how proud I am to have had this opportunity.

Julia Brown

May, 2016



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THE DISABLED ARTIST WITH A 10 “GOLF” HANDICAP

By Richard Kraus

In Collaboration with Idun Rasmussen

Hi, I'm Richard Kraus. I once met this disabled potter who grew up in San Bruno, CA, just south of San Francisco. He started pottery in sixth grade, hand-molding pieces. The school would bring them back all fired. Then, in High School, he learned how to throw and fire. He showed me this kick wheel that was homemade with a car tire filled with cement. He also showed me his kiln and his pottery.

Actually, that disabled potter was me. I was not disabled then. But that is where I started.

When I turned eighteen, I joined the Air Force and did four years in Minot, ND. I was a B-52 crew chief and flew on many missions. Some were fun and some, well, they were not. I guess I could say that I was a pilot for about three hours. I sat in the copilot seat and flew while he took a long nap, and when the pilot read the paper.

When I got out of the Air Force I went to Dakota Aero Tech School in Fargo, ND. I got a part-time job in



Executive Aviation. I just pumped gas and towed aircrafts. Once, when I was pumping gas (JP-4) I got to talk with Willie Nelson. The first thing he said to me was, “You just missed a great concert!” and I said: “Oh, you know, I had to stay here and fill up your airplane.” I can still remember the tail number, 100WN.

After school, when I got my airframe and powerplant license, I took a

great job: building the B-1 bomber in Palmdale, CA. I knew that was going to end, and I eventually I got hired at Northwest in 1986 and moved to Cannon Falls, MN.

Around 1988 I started getting back into pottery. I bought a new Brent electric wheel. I call it the cadillac of wheels. When my ex-wife and I moved to Duluth in 1997, I built my own studio and started my own home business. I had 3 kilns and

over 450 plaster molds. I was doing pottery at Lake Superior College. I was very happy to be back working with pottery.

That's when I had my Severe TBI. I had a very bad truck accident. I was a big beer drinker at that time of my life. This new life of mine is better and I am not drinking anymore.

I am still trying to recover from that horrible day when my accident happened. The doctors also call it a "cognitive impairment," or "unable to make a living wage." It's hard for me to describe what it is like. I'll say that mostly my thinking is slower, I

lost some of my spelling and communicating skills. But I have learned how to deal with it.

I can vaguely remember the days after my TBI. "Post TBI," as Mike Strand, a writer for the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance, talks about. He signed his book for me and he wrote down how he loves my pottery. I displayed some of my pottery for their annual 2006 conference meeting.

My recovery psychologist said "Stop. Think. Act." So, if I feel stressed, I just go out and I think of those three words. Lately, in the last few

months, I've been trying to focus on doing something related to pottery every day, or other priorities. I have a nice place to do pottery now at my beautiful girlfriend's house. She once said to me "Do what you can do and that should be good enough for you."

There is so much more to this short story, but I'll finish and say: "The most misunderstood injury is the injury to the brain."



MINIATURE MINNOW UP NORTH

By Kelli Wilson

In Collaboration with Hayley Loney

On a warm July day, up north in Lac des Mille Lac Ontario, Canada Kyleigh and Kelli woke up before sunset to get prepared for a day of fishing with their grandfather. Their cabin is located on a 59584 acre lake; they visit this lake every year for a week in the month of July. The cabin they visit is their grandfather's cabin; they love to have him around and enjoy the gorgeous view of the lake. The scenery is beautiful and serene, quiet and cool, and it never fails to make everyone happy. Kelli and Kyleigh love to have camp fires and s'mores at night. Kyleigh says: "The crackling fire gives me a welcome of warmth."

It was just around noon when the three of them decided to go out on the lake. The sun was gazing on Kelli's wet hair and the lake was beautiful, perfect for fishing. They took Grandpa's 20-foot Lund boat out along with two dogs. Grandpa drove the boat and as he sped up away from shore, Kelli's hair was blowing in the warm wind as though it were a high-speed blow dryer. There was not a cloud in the sky today, although the water was not calm. The water was extremely rough with white caps, but that didn't stop us. As we approached grandpa's secret fishing hole where we slay pickerel, we spotted a mamma moose. This mammal is the largest of all deer species and is per-

sonally my favorite. We immediately recognized her long face and muzzle that dangled over her chin. She had two babies following her, which was amazing; they seemed to be browsing above high grass in the swamp of the lake. We got so excited we went from full tilt 60mph to an instant halt because we could not believe our eyes! All of us got a second shower from the waves flowing over the sides of the boat, which I thought was awesome. Everybody's stuff got soaked. The only item that didn't get soaked was Kelli's camera and she was fortunate enough to capture the beautiful moment! With the moose looking directly at the camera, Kelli caught an amazing snap shot. With Kelli's camera being the only one to capture the unreal moment, she thought to herself: "LET'S MAKE SOME MONKEY!" Having said that, what she did was sell those photos to the rest of her family (her brothers and parents) and in return she got a home-cooked fish fry.

The fishing began instantly after they spotted the moose. Ky began by baiting her hook with a huge minnow. She squeezed the minnow so hard that its eyes POPPED out--she always does that to see if it's a juicy little guy. Ky proceeded to cast her fishing line into the water and all of a sudden there was a BIG yank on Ky's line and grandpa said, OH THAT'S

A SNAG Ky!! They get the net, go over the side of the boat where the snag is moving wildly, and Ky says, "Coconut head, let me net it! You're too old!!" Ky tries to net the huge northern, but she ends up falling into the net with the fish and realizes her leg is in its mouth up to the knee. She screams, "GRANDPA, HELP, HELP!" He says, "What's wrong, you one legged pirate?" She gets her leg out, and has a nice scar to prove that she is the real fisherman in the Wilson family.

Grandpa proceeds to tell us that we are leaving the spot where we caught the huge northern; he says that it's his turn to catch a bigger fish than Ky to fry up for the family. Ky says, "Fine, but it's my turn to drive to the next secret spot because I caught the big fish," and she got her way: they drove to the spot named "Old Man Bay." As she drove, grandpa was horrified; they were definitely living on a prayer. As they approached the second spot, Ky was cruising at about 30mph and all of a sudden there was a huge "THUMP" underneath the boat. She hit a huge rock and grandpa shook his head and said "female drivers, starting young." Thank goodness the boat was okay, otherwise they would have been on the bottom of the lake.

They finally arrived at the second spot on the lake grandpa wanted

to go to. Grandpa casted out and was the first one to set his line. He sat for about ten minutes and got a bite, then yelled, "GIRLS THAT'S NO SNAG!" He reels and reels, the drag on the line is rolling like crazy. As he reels, he says to himself: "This is a good size northern, I can feel it." As they net it Ky taps grandpa on the shoulder and says "nope, it's too small." Grandpa holds the fish up for a photo and as the waves are crashing against the boat, he loses his

he got into the boat he said, "Girls, lets call it a day."

They started up the motor and continued their way back to the cabin. The ride home was calm, the sun was just about to set, and all you could hear was the boat hitting the waves and the five northern hitting the walls of the live well. Kelli and Ky were talking to each other. "I can just taste the flakey white juicy fish batter in my mouth, Ky! It is going to be amazing and even better knowing

the sides of the fish to hold it down, and grandpa handed the sharpened knife to her to start cleaning. Since she was just a little tyke, Grandpa was always teaching Kelli tricks to clean the fish herself, and now that she is older it is really nice for her dad to be able to watch her do it on her own. When Kelli finished, she took out the eyeballs and cheeks and put the eyeballs into pickle juice. She opened the Northern's stomach and found a baby walleye. She noticed grandpa was not looking. He hates walleye so she sneakily threw the walleye meat into the fillet pile they would be eating for dinner.

After this long eventful day, Kelli, grandpa and Kyleigh fried up the fish they caught in a nice light flakey batter for the rest of the lazy crew that sat around all day. Dinner was served at 6 pm sharp and everyone in the family was very pleased with how amazing the fish tasted.

We have a joke to tell you to complete our story today: What do you call a fish without the eye? A FSH!!!



balance from the dogs running back and fourth and continuously bumping into him. With that happening, he falls in the water with the fish. Ky and Kelli thought it was hysterical. They said, "Hey grandpa, bout time you took a bath!" He was always known for being a really good swimmer; he laughed just as much as the girls did. Grandpa proceeded to pull himself into the boat with the help of his daughter and granddaughter. As

that I caught it!" As we arrived back at camp, we docked the boat in front of the fish cleaning house and took the fish out of the live well, put them in a bucket and walked them up to the fishing house to clean. We dumped all five northern onto the counter top. They were all flopping and to prevent this Kyleigh hit them on the head with a bat to make them stop and prepare to be filleted. Kelli began by putting her long sharp fake nails into

THE LUCKY GUY

By Alec Gerber

In Collaboration with Nick Vang

1.)
My mom meant a lot to me. After all, she did what no one else could do, and brought me into this world. She's the only person in this world that I would ever listen to. No one is more important to me than her.

Even though I love her a lot, I don't have many memories with my mom. I was five when the state came to take me away from her, and it wasn't until they took me away that I realized just how much someone could miss their mom. It really hurt my feelings; words couldn't describe the anger and sadness that I felt when I was taken away. Fortunately, I was still able to see my mom whenever she wanted to visit me, and she visited me a lot! Those visits with my mom were the memories that I cherished the most.

The most distinct memories I have of my mother are listening to music with her. We always used to listen to country and old school hip-hop together! I can still hear the Johnny Cash and Toby Keith, and I can still hear Kid Rock and Lil' Bow Wow. Every time I hear an old song like that, I am always drawn back to a time when my cousin and I would be coming home from school. We would walk into my mom's house, turn on MTV, and start watching music videos. My mom would join us, and we would sing together or re-enact music videos.

We would also listen music when we were driving in the car. My mother would light a cigarette while I pushed play on the radio dash. After that, Tim McGraw was singing Don't Take the Girl, and my mom and I were singing along with him. She loved that song, and naturally, I loved that song too.

But now, those are just memories. After they took me away, things changed, especially when I became an adult. When I was kid, I could still see my mom, but now, I can't ever see her. They say it's because she's a bad influence on me, but what do they know? I mean, I'm an adult. I know the difference between right and wrong; I can make my own decisions! It just hurts. It's not easy being away from her, or from the rest of my family. It really hurts, and I get mad. And I can't put everything into words. I'm angry; I'm sad; I'm . . . I'm at a loss for words.

2.)

Kerry. We're twins . . . well, not twins, but we're like twins. We're basically identical, but not. Let me explain: if I'm sad, then she's sad. If she's mad, then I'm mad. If I'm happy, she's happy. Do you see what I mean? We're like twins, but we're not, and that's because she's older than me.

Just like my mom, Kerry and I have the same taste in music. We love R&B, and we love hip-hop. She and I would listen to Eminem a lot when

we were younger. Our favorites were Cleaning Out My Closet and Mockingbird.

The most profound memory I have of Kerry was the first time that we smoked cigarettes together. I don't remember how old we were, but I was definitely not old enough. I just remember her taking a puff of something out in the backyard, and I came out to see what she was doing. I don't know where the hell she found it, but I do remember asking her for a puff. I wanted to see what it tasted like. She let me, and it was DISGUSTING. For some reason, that moment sticks out to me the most. That's the memory that I remember best. It's not like I remember it like it was yesterday, but I remember it best.

But now, I cannot see my sister anymore. I mean, I can, but that's if we are both "good" for a month. I say "good" like that because I'm not told what "good" is. It's almost like they're just telling me something so that I won't do something. It makes no sense to me. Whatever, but keeping me away from her isn't right, because she is the only person in my family that I am actually allowed to see! She's in a group home, and I'm living with TBI because this is my last stop. This is tough for me. I just want to see my sister.

I guess I can't say that it's all that bad. She can write to me; she can

Skype me on occasion; and sometimes, she even sends me little trinkets. That being said, it hurts when she does these things. When she writes to me, I'm reminded that I can't see her face, and I can't hear her speak; when she Skypes, I'm reminded that I can't hug her; and when she sends cards, charms, bracelets, paper mache figures, or pictures of herself and her boyfriend, it reminds me of how much I love, but can't express my love for her. Sometimes she sends me candies or cologne. I try to send her things too, but sometimes, I just can't. I don't have much money to buy her things, and I'm not very good at writing. I just want to see her.

3.)

Scott Frankie was my step-dad. He was one of the nicest people that I ever knew. He did a lot of fun stuff with me, like take me to the swimming pool to swim with me; swinging

on the rope swing with me; and took me to the mall. He bought me cigarettes when I was eighteen, so that I wouldn't smoke behind his back. He also took me out for lunches, took me to school, and was there for me when I needed him.

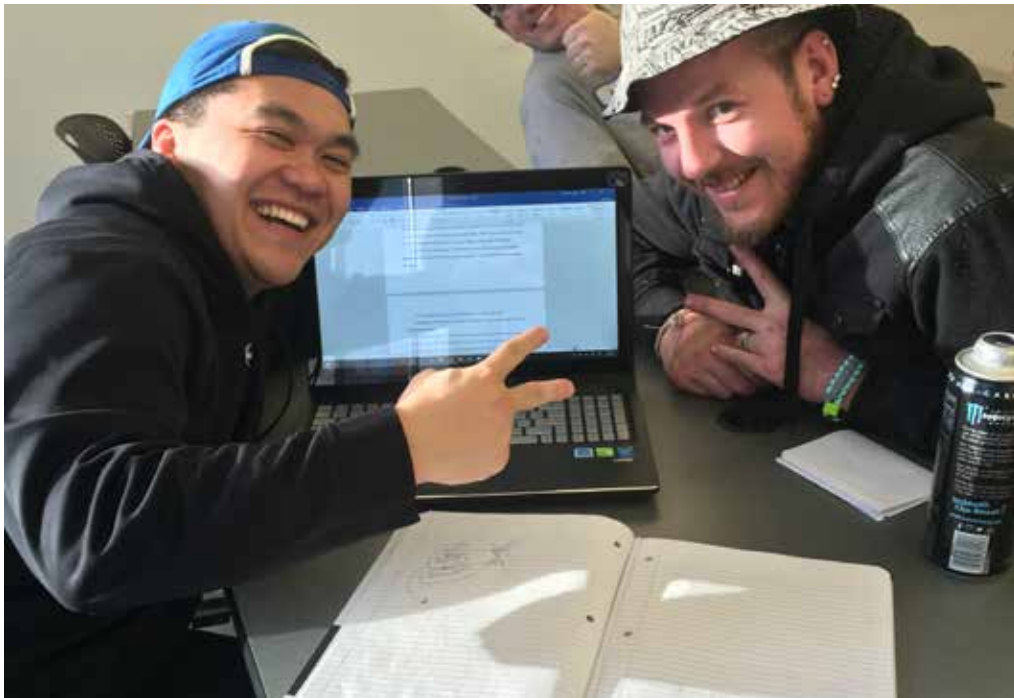
One time, I remember accidentally breaking my fishing pole when we were out fishing. My mom told me to not mess around with it, but being a kid, I messed around with it anyways. In a short amount of time, some of the fiber glass from the fishing pole cut through a portion of my hand. In order to get the fiber glass out, I had to get it surgically removed because it was in fragments and was not a clean piece. My step-dad was the one to help clean out my wound, and take me to the hospital in order to get it fixed. He would do anything to make me happy.

4.)

Brandon Frankie was my little brother's name. Brandon was my half-brother. He passed away when we were younger. I used to take care of him with Kerry. We both watched over him before we were separated from our family. He was a funny baby, but DAMN did he cry a lot! Kerry and I used to take him for walks, and pretend that we were his mom and dad. Mom and dad couldn't do it because they were working, so we decided to do it ourselves! Out of all of them, he was the only brother that I really liked.

Every day after school, I would look forward to ramming through the door and seeing him. I played with him as often as I could. He was so cute and funny.

I remember how he used to play with his neon blue nook, or what you might call a pacifier. He'd always have it in his mouth; it was literally a part



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of him. If you took it out, you were in for one hell of a temper tantrum.

We would also watch a ton of TV together. He would sit in his little walker with all of the toys and rattlers hanging over his head. He loved that walker. I remember he used to be fast asleep, and whenever we would try to take him out of that walker to place him into his crib, he'd start to cry until we put him back.

Whenever we would stay up late, we would watch Rescue 911, which came on right before ER. Brandon would always stare at the TV, and sometimes, when he felt like it, he would play tricks on Kerry and me. The trick that he played on us the most was Possum. What he'd do was, as the TV was playing, he'd pretend to close his eyes to sleep. Whenever Kerry and I saw him, we'd start to move towards him to pick him up and take him to bed. However, when we got to him, he'd JUMP and startle us! And when we were scared, he'd just start laughing. He was a funny baby.

5.)

Now that we've talked about three people that are important to me, it is probably time to start talking about me. My name is Alex Gerber. I'm 28 years old, and am originally from Mankato, Minnesota. When I was around five or six, the state took me away from my family, forcing me to go from foster home to foster home until I was old enough to live on my own. However, as soon as I became an adult, I was put into a group home. When I think about it, I get really angry and sad over what the state did to me and my family. They broke us up,

and took us away from each other.

When I start to get overly emotional, I like to start listening to music. Bumping reggae is something that has always helped me to calm down. I also like a lot of other kinds of music, like rap, rock, country, and even Christian rock and gospel music. MTV, VH1, all of those were my favorite TV channels to watch because I could just binge on music videos all day long.

I also like tattoos and piercings. I actually have a tattoo dedicated to my late-brother Brandon. It's RIP spelled backwards to make it significant. I can guarantee that no one else has this tattoo.

Art is also something that I am passionate about. It's like second-nature for me, and I love to do it. It helps me to cope with my anger. When I'm painting, it's like walking into another world that's inside of me. When I pick up a paint brush to draw, it's soothing. It helps me to pass the time.

In addition to these interests, I also love to shoot guns, 4-wheel, dirt bike, and of course, my friends and family.

Of course, now that I'm with TBI, I can't do many of these things like I could in high school. I have been with TBI for about four years now. This is the longest that I have ever been in a specific group home. Part of the reason for that is because this was really the last place that I could go, as long as I didn't want to go to jail. The reason for why I switched group homes so much is because I would always blow up and do something that would force them to move me away. This would happen almost every two weeks. This is because I really don't know how to

control or express my emotions. I was never taught how, and people interpret that as me misbehaving, which only frustrates me even more. Other times, I would just run away and eventually get caught. If I'm good for a long enough period of time, I will be able to move out on my own and get a job. All I really want is to see my family, and to be able to live on my own and create a family.

6.)

On Friday, April 22nd, 2016, Larry, the group home leader, told me that I could finally see my sister Kerry. He took me out to breakfast and notified me that very soon I'll get the opportunity to finally see her again! Although no date has been set yet, we're starting to go through the process of visitation. It's been about . . . I actually don't even know how many years it's been since I've last seen her, but the time has finally come! I finally get to see my sister, and I'm so happy and thankful. I just hope that she is as excited to see me, as I am to see her!

To Nate:

Nate, Alec wanted me to write you a quick shout out in his piece. He says that he's truly thankful to have you as a staff, and that he appreciates you always being there for him when he needs you the most. You've been an important person in his life, and you've really made a difference, especially because of all that he's gone through. I, myself, am super happy to see that someone is taking care of him, and that you both are getting along well together. Keep doing what you're doing Nate, and from Alec and me, thank you!

A SONG FOR STEPHANIE

By Roxanne Nelson

In Collaboration with Matt Baumgartner and Crystal Smith

-Like a Prayer-

(:08)

A great friend I had, a
teacher talented

A fond friend to have, He
was Sterling

(:48)

You know I met him-
upon the stage

Firefighter Sterling con-
tained the rage

It was he himself that
seemed ablaze

Dancing all across the
hot lit stage

(1:06)

Glowing more gold
than silver, I was amazed!
And still admire him to
this day.

Glowing more gold
Wish you decided to stay
To bad there was no bet-
ter way

Live everyday like it's
your last,

Don't be stuck looking at
the past.

On Sterling tears, don't
waste no time

Life's a gift and the sun still shines.
Go outside
Go outside
Open your door and heart up wide
Find that one where love coincides
Or that friend to laugh til you cry.
Go outside
Go outside

You were good on the dance floor,
You made a party out of life.
Too bad we can't see you more
Still surprised you let me play the
wife.



Sad memories could go inside
Maybe on the bookshelf of time
Another life, another sunshine.

I wish I could have helped you,
But you were hiding behind that smile.
You mom is coming back too,
Because we miss you, and it's been a while.

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Live everyday like it's your last,
Don't be stuck looking at the past.
On Sterling tears, don't waste no time
Life's a gift and the sun still shines.
Go outside
Go outside
Open your door and heart up wide
Find that one where love coincides
Sad memories could go inside
Maybe on the bookshelf of time
Another life, another sunshine.

I wish I could have helped you,
But you were hiding behind that
smile.
You mom is coming back too,
Because we miss you, and it's been a
while.

You were good on the dance floor,
You made a party out of life.
Too bad we can't see you more
Still surprised you let me play the
wife.

Live everyday like it's your last,
Don't be stuck looking at the past.
On Sterling tears, don't waste no time
Life's a gift and the sun still shines.
Go outside
Go outside
Go outside
Open your door and heart up wide
Find that one where love coincides
Or that friend to laugh all night.
Go outside
Go outside
Sad memories find a shelf inside
To gather dust. in the meantime
Another life, another sunshine
Together again at the end of time.



DUE NORTH: ONE FAMILY'S ANNUAL CAMPING TRIP

By Timothy Raun

In Collaboration with Anna Friedrichsen and Emily Kliever

It was a warm Friday night in June. Packing and sleeping were the only things left to be done before leaving for a camping trip the next morning.

Six-year-old Tim was sitting in the kitchen as his mom got together a milk crate that had a small metal latch on the front. Just beyond the keyhole were plastic plates, metal plates,

a coffee pot, silverware, plastic cups, a coleman lantern, a coleman stove, a hatchet, napkins, a large metal pot for making soup, a metal coffee pot that held six cups, plastic tarp, and the other miscellaneous essentials for camping. The canvas Coleman tent sat waiting to be used again. It was the same color as it smelled: mossy, earthy, and like mildew. It was weathered and

well-used from years of camping.

Snoopy, the family dog, added his own scent to the tent. The dog was small, a runt of the litter. He was black and white in different patches. Tim and Snoopy were best friends.

All the necessary clothing items for the trip were being stuffed into a couple of Duluth Packs. Underwear, undershirts, socks, long johns, pon-





chos—all of it purposefully placed. There was no room to pack frivolous items, and those things weren't needed anyway. Camping was about getting away with the family for a good time and nothing but that.

This was not their first camping trip—they already knew what to bring. Tim's parents had been camping for years. They always knew what was mandatory to bring, but made a list just in case.

Seven fishing licenses were at the ready, anticipating successful fishing on Crane Lake. There was a license for each person on the trip: dad, mom, oldest brother Rick, older brother Jeff, oldest sister Beryl, older sister Cheryl, and Tim, the youngest.

After getting everything together,

the family rustled in bed, struggling to sleep because they were just too excited to get on the road and start their camping trip.

The next morning the family packed into their vehicle and took off from Virginia, Minn. and headed to Orr, Minn., which was about 45 miles north.

Pattenn's Cafe would be the first stop of trip, for breakfast. The small building barely fit a couple of tables. Tim chuckles at the memory of his family packing into the diner. With such a big family, it was always a treat when they got to go out.

At the diner orders of eggs, sausage, pancakes, and bacon were in abundance. The aroma of the breakfast

food followed the family into their vehicle and kept them satisfied. Snoopy would wait outside, hoping his family would give him scraps when they were done. He wasn't the most elegant dog, but he was cute and funny.

Once they were done it was back in the car. The family might stop at a store in Crane Lake for licorice or something to chew on while they were in the boat. Tim and his siblings played car-games, looking out the window at the scenery. Trees lined the road and led the way north. Cribbage and euchre were favorites of the family, card games they played to pass the time.

There were 34 miles left to get to Crane Lake, where the family would

take their camping trip. Approaching the destination always happened too slowly—it wasn't soon enough when the family finally arrived. The man who owned the lodge and landing at Crane Lake gave Tim and his family a 16-foot Lund boat with a small engine and a 18-horse Johnson motor. He saw the boat the family brought and thought it couldn't hold seven people, so he'd lend his bigger for their trip.

Getting the boat and supplies to the campsite was quite the struggle, Tim recalls. It was a challenge for them. Sometimes it was a thrill to watch, but sometimes it was scary for all seven of the family members.

At the campsite there was a flurry of things to do the first evening. They had to set up the campsite in the woods, which was already a hefty task just to get there. Just in the woods was where the old tent would be pinned down with stakes, far enough from the water to avoid the majority of the bugs. Snoopy was a curious dog and would run around, exploring the campsite while the family worked.



Tim's siblings were in charge of starting the fire with their dad, so Tim was in charge of getting twigs and



kindling. Sometimes they'd make a grilled cheese over the fire with a sandwich maker and add a meat.

The next morning, Tim and his family would wake up early to fresh air and wilderness. Each morning was a little different, but there were always birds and chipmunks that could be heard. The sounds of the water lapping each morning and through the evening filled their ears.

The family ate breakfast and got on the boat with sandwiches packed for lunch. It was time to fish. Tim and his family would make their way out

onto the still lake. Their lifejackets would be on, puffing up their chests. Dad and Tim didn't swim, so jackets were a must.

Tim recalls seeing about 10 boats a day on the lake, but never many more than that. It was a quiet lake and people were there to fish.

Dad would steer the boat to a fishing hole or sometimes he would go to the edge of the lake by the rocks. It didn't matter where the boat

was; they had fun casting their fishing lines and catching fish. Tim says Dad liked walleyes and northern—he even knew the tugs they would make on the line. Snoopy would join the action and sit in the bow of the boat. His ears would flap in the wind. Tim always enjoyed watching his dog.

Going a quarter of a mile outside the bay where they were fishing would lead them to white caps. When the lake wasn't so rough, the crystal clear water would reflect the trees and sky. All throughout the day loons, ducks, and herons could be seen and heard. Tim recalls the beautiful and wonderful sounds that the loons would make.

The family would make their way back to shore when the fish stopped biting, a sign to try again later. In-

stead of fishing, the family would visit Painted Rock to see Indian Pictographs. It was a real treat for Tim and his siblings. The rock face was as big as a climbing wall and was nearly 300 years old. The family would watch and observe the pictographs for 30 to 40 minutes, in awe of the different pictures before them.

The family would head back to the lake to fish, only to go back to their campsite when the sky was turning dark, the sun going down behind clouds, and there was a chill in the air. It was just crisp enough that a jacket was required.

Snoopy would find fish guts and roll in it, making the family smell his rotten scent. To get rid of the smell and gunk, they'd put the dog in the lake to wash himself.

Each day of the camping trip would

be doing much of the same things, fishing and sightseeing. Tim remembers being outside, getting some sun, and getting a suntan.

By the end of the trip everyone was exhausted. After packing their campsite and getting on the road, a stop for ice cream off of highway 53 between Orr and International Falls was a much needed treat. Tim's favorite was mint chocolate chip ice cream in a cone. Always. On warm days he'd wear it on his clothes if it melted before he could eat it.

The rest of the car ride was quiet. Everyone was thinking of the things that had to be done when they got back. At about 3 p.m. the family would arrive home; it was a scramble to unload everything from the vehicle and boat. The tent, Duluth packs, and

coolers with meat had to be taken out of the boat and put away. As the family owned a laundry, there were always clothes that needed to be washed and taken care of, especially after a camping trip. For dinner it was stew using meat, celery, potatoes, and carrots. Everyone would need a vacation from the vacation they just took. There was a lot of work in preparing and taking care of the family on a trip. Tim said he wouldn't miss it for the world—these were special times. They'd go to bed suntanned, exhausted, and closer as a family.

One camping trip a year. That's all it took for Tim and his family to create lasting memories. Years later, Tim looks back on camping trips like these and thinks of how they brought his family together.



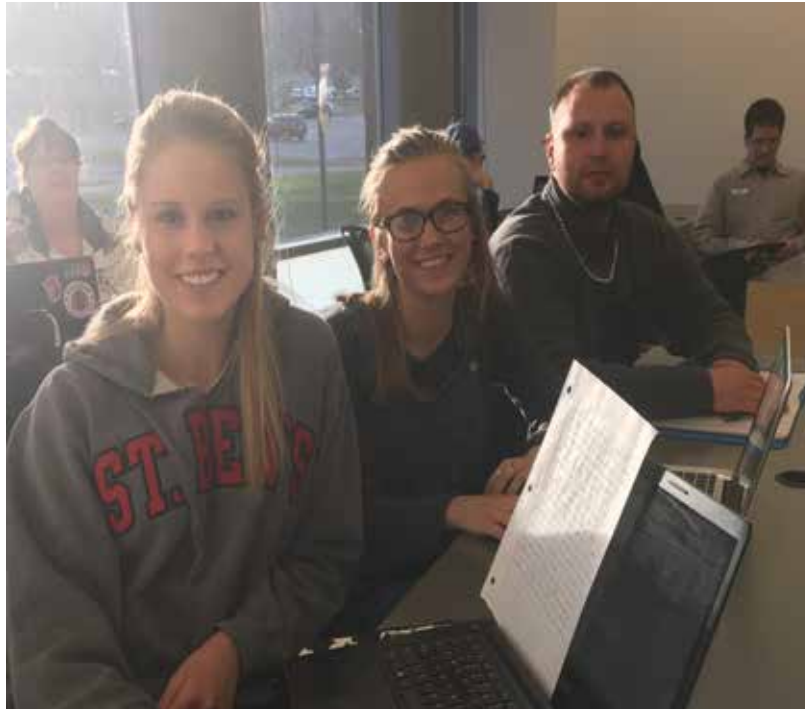
BOOK OF PAUL

By Paul Yankowiak Jr.

In Collaboration with Courtney Salmela and Maddy Keskitalo

My name
is Paul

George Yankowiak Jr., born on March 7, 1988 at the Womack Army Hospital on Fort Bragg Army Base in Fayetteville, North Carolina. My family and I moved to Northfield, Minnesota when I was about two years old. After living there for a year we moved to Faribault, MN, which is where I grew up. I have one older sister, Correen, and a younger step-brother, Jacob. In my teenage years I got into street drugs; this addiction slowly transitioned into my adulthood. I am now twenty-seven years old and still battling with dependence. Somehow I found a stepping stone to move forward; I found a relationship with Jesus Christ that has the potential to change my life forever. I hope to accurately illustrate my experiences so I can have a record of who I have been and how far I have come. This text will depict the appalling accounts of excessive drug and alcohol use and how a relationship with the Lord released me from the



obligation I had to feeding my addiction.

When I graduated from Faribault Senior High School in the year 2006, I was not allowed to live in my mother and stepfather's house any longer because of a few heedless screaming fights. There was an event called "The Day in the Dirt" which is a BMX show. Before I went to this event I couldn't find my bike and I accused my uncle of taking it. I was hungover from drinking the night before, and I guess it was the last straw. I was kicked out. I started to get into trouble as soon as I left my house; at the age of 19 years old I got into my first

serious fist fight with an older gentleman. I initiated the fight because of various reasons against his occupation. I struck him in the face. After a few moments, he recovered from my punches. As we moved towards each other with both of our fists raised, it was clear that he had the obvious reach advantage. He caught me across my right eyebrow with a straight right with fists closed. My eye was cut wide open from the force of the punch.

A substantial amount of thick blood began to drip from my brow onto each article of my clothing: shirt, pants and shoes. My sister and her boyfriend placed me inside the back-seat of her white Saturn. I managed to catch some of my blood by cupping it with my hand. Soon, I was asked to get out of the car. I exited the vehicle with fury and began throwing blood onto bystanders. Today, I consider this to be a cry for help. I left a bloody handprint on the rear right side of Correen's car. I walked back and forth in the snow screaming, "You're dead!" with fear of what was to come next. I was soon

transported by an ambulance to District One Hospital in Faribault. The next morning I was transported by ambulance to Alexandria, Minnesota where I stayed for several weeks.

In Alexandria, I would try to enter the United States Air Force. At the time, the United States Air Force would not accept me because I had drug crimes on my record. Eventually, after a general signed a waiver dismissing my drug crimes, I would be accepted into the United States Marine Corps. When I was accepted into the Marine Corps I thought that my life would start turning around. I found a new faith and relationship with Jesus Christ; I truly believed that I would not perish, but have everlasting life in Heaven. I had a higher power to follow, and I was able to let go of the past and focus on the future. To this day, I seek knowledge about Christianity and I seek what it means to be a Christian who practices the will of God.

Christianity was not the cure all for everything that ailed me. Despite my new found faith, I got involved with other drugs while in the Marines. I was in Japan when I was first introduced to spice, a synthetic marijuana, that I used for the following two or three years. When I was overseas I was legally allowed to drink; at times I took advantage of this privilege. At one point, I caused an international incident by throwing a chair at two locals. I was intoxicated, using spice, and feeling mentally unstable at the time, which led me to commit this act of violence for no apparent reason. I ended up having to pay \$5,500 in order to make amends.

I was in the military for three years and nine months; during this time I worked in field mess as food service specialist, M.O.S #3381. While I was overseas my staff sent me to a new branch and addressed my chemical dependency. The advisors had us learn about addiction and tried to help us gain a new perspective on the causes and effects of drinking and using. I was in this program for about two to three months.

Japan was much warmer than what I was previously acclimated to, but I really enjoyed it. Where I was situated, Camp Kinser, was the southernmost base in all of Japan. Much of my time there was spent moving sandbags, scrubbing equipment, and organizing food service units and marine rapid deployment kitchens. As a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), I tried to fulfill my duties with kindness. This, at times, was a hindrance to my position of authority. Getting together with my fellow service members and talking about our positions and what we were going through at the time helped us bond and learn about each other. On one night in particular, I remember being able to see a solar eclipse for the first time in my life, which was definitely a memorable moment of my time spent in Japan.

When my service was over in Japan and South Korea I came back to North Carolina, Camp Lejeune, where I was stationed in the states. While I was in North Carolina I relapsed with my addiction and chemical dependency. My service was ended (EOS) with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) charge. I was

planning to return back to Faribault and stay with my sister. I had to take a bus from North Carolina back to Minnesota. I was brought to a homeless shelter in Owatonna, MN after I was charged with three accounts of assault. I lived at the homeless shelter for about 90 days. I met a man, Arlen, at the homeless shelter; when our time was up we moved out of the homeless shelter together and lived in Faribault for a while.

Some time passed and I was now living in Faribault alone. I was drinking and stole a gun to trade for more drugs. I had to flee the scene where I was at because of the cops. The next day I came back to collect the gun where I had stashed it. When I left the scene, I saw a cop doing his rounds. Soon after, a detective approached me on the street; he knew my name and asked what was happening. I told him the truth and confessed what had happened over the past couple days. I was handcuffed and brought to the police station. I stayed in jail for about 100 days in Rice County. I lived at the Nova House for 90 days in New Ulm, MN for chemical dependency. In the Nova House I would stay in my bedroom and write for hours; it was a safe and quiet place where I could connect with God and be at peace. Whenever I feel alone I am able to find comfort in knowing that God is with me. Sometimes I ask myself, "If God is with me, then who can be against me?"

When I transitioned from the Nova House in New Ulm to TBI in Duluth seemed very promising. I was told I would have a job to supply my personal needs. Before leaving for TBI

in Duluth I was brought to South Central Crisis Center in Mankato for a few weeks by the Nova House staff. The day I left for Duluth I felt at peace. I was under the impression that I would be living in city limits and have plenty of independence. However, when I arrived at TBI, everything was different than I had expected. I was located about a half an hour from the city and was given little independence. I was able to meet everyone at the activity center and vocational center within a few days. I have been at TBI for about seven months now. Since living here I have had little to no problems. I have been going to church every Sunday as well as attend Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

meetings. Eventually, I was able to get a job at Northland Country Club. I have been doing the grounds keeping for about three weeks now. My goal is to live on my own or with a friend. I hope to save up enough money to get my license and a reliable car. If I accomplish all of these goals it will show that I am able to live on my own, hold a job, and make decisions for myself.

I am continuously planning and

preparing for my future. I have many goals to accomplish before my probation is complete in four years. I think about my family a lot; I have two nephews whose lives I want to be a part of. The most difficult part about the waiting time is having an efficient amount of patience. I really want to move forward, but a lot of times the results do not come immediately after you've taken action. Sometimes, only time can heal the pain and difficulties of the past. I have to remember

communicate the word of God. There is a victory that awaits in Jesus Christ. My life becomes less chaotic and confusing when I am following God; having faith in a higher power sheds light, gives me comfort, and lets me rest. I need to reach sobriety and fight against the thoughts and temptations that try to pull me back in.



that each day is a fresh start to create something new and follow my goals and aspirations. Every day I am challenged by the realities of my past; the choices of right and wrong echo in my mind. I am haunted by these dark memories, and I am often discouraged from continuing to fight.

I need to be a better Christian who continuously strives to obtain the means and tools to follow Jesus Christ, practice the will of God, and

THE SCREAMING TOWER OF HELL

By Dan Clark

In Collaboration with Sophie Hillmeyer, Matt Thiry, and Andy Xiong

ONE DARK AND EERIE NIGHT AT THE ARKHAM PRISON WHERE THE WORST OF THE CRIMINALLY INSANE WERE KEPT LOCKED UP LIKE ANIMALS. Patrolling the 2nd floor is Warden McBean. His steps were echoing throughout the halls as he dangled his keys and swung his pocket watch up and down like a yo-yo. He was looking for Bruce McDugin the cell block guard. The moon cascades his shadow onto the walls as he comes up to a desk where he found Bruce sleeping on the job. Anger flashed across the Warden's face, as he slammed his baton on the desk startling Bruce awake.

"I'm not paying you to sleep!" roared McBean.

"It's practically dead around here" shrugged Bruce. "Why not sleep?"

Entering the room from the supply room came Alexis Powers. "The Warden's right, you should not be sleeping on the job. You never know when the superintendent could stop by."

"You're lucky I caught you rather than superintendent Smith or else you'd end up in the seclusion room." warned the Warden.

"Fine, it won't happen again." scoffed Bruce.

"I better not catch you sleeping again." threatened the Warden as

he headed from the lower level cell blocks, up to the tower. Bruce rolled his eyes and watched him leave.

The paid guard opened the cell allowing the Nautilus to be free. "You've got 18 minutes."

The Nautilus rose from his cell. His huge silhouette over shadowed the guard. He nodded and strut towards Lobo's cell. The guard followed after. Lobo was waiting in his cell expecting the Nautilus.

The approaching guard unlocked the cell door and Lobo came out beside the Nautilus.

"Got a proposition for you Mr. McGavin."

"What's the catch?"

"Additional 40 years."

He thought for a moment. "That's a high stake. What's my benefit?"

"Freedom."

"Okay. What'd you want me to do?"

"I need the Olympian Lobo."

"And how are you going to grant me freedom?"

"I control half of Rosedale and have the majority of the guards in my pocket."

Lobo was silent, contemplating his decision.

"Clock's ticking Mr. McGavin."

"Alright, fine." He replied desperately. "Will I have your word?"

The Nautilus smirked. "Guaran-

teed."

"I feel like there is more to this plan. Is there?"

"Now what makes you say that?" he folded his arms.

"If you need my help. You fill me in on this idea."

"As you wish."

The Warden climbed up the haggard stone steps to the tower to check on the tower guards. As he reached the top he addressed the two guards, Elsa and BJ. "What are you doing up here sir?" asked Elsa respectfully. "I'm just doing the nightly patrol" he answered. "How's Inmate 187A?"

"Is there any trouble down on Cell Block A?" asked BJ. "Just a hunch, nothing..." before he could finish, a blaring alarm interrupted him. He looked down and saw a dark figure dart across the yard. "He's heading west!" shouted McBean. BJ shouts, "That's towards Rosedale!"

"Is that Inmate 187A?" demanded the Warden.

"It's Lobo!" McBean picked up the radio, "Release the dogs!"

The escapee, Lobo, with his runner's physique, did the best he could to outrun the dogs, but nothing could escape a radio.

Halfway towards the mire stood a tall steel grid fence. Barbed wires coiled at the top and extended miles along with the fence. There was

a tear at the corner of the fence waiting for Lobo's arrival.

W a r d e n
McBean reached for his radio. "How is prisoner 187A."

There was a long pause. Then came a response. "In his cell."

The Warden was suspicious about the late response. "Hold this position and keep an eye out for the other cell blocks."

"You got it warden." Replied BJ.

McBean speed walked toward the cell block A. There

was something strange as he arrived. The cells were empty except for cell 187A. Cautious he pulled out his radio.

"Elsa do you hear me?"

There was no response. "BJ do you copy?" Still no response. "Does anyone copy?"

"Loud and clear William." A strong familiar voice came from cell 187A.

The Warden approached the cell, revolver to his hand. The Nautilus sat facing him.

"Been awhile William."

"Where's the guards?" he glanced around and pointed the gun at the Nautilus. "The inmates?"

"What guards?" he smiled. "It's just you and me brother. Just like old times right?"

"We were never brothers. Now an-



swer me you scumbag!"

The Nautilus stands up and sauntered towards the Warden. "I missed you too pal. Tell me am I the one in danger or are you?"

The Warden glanced to his left and sees all the inmates blocking the hallway. To his right all the armed guards pointing their weapons at him.

"Bruce what's the meaning of this?" the Warden asked confused.

"Nothing personal Warden. But he pays me more. Now I need you to hand me that gun."

"What will you do with me?"

The Nautilus opened his cell surprising the Warden.

"Stay back!"

He raised both hands up. "I'm trying to help you William. Trying to save you from the inmates and your friends." he held out his hand. "Now

give me the gun or you will never see your son again."

The ringleader of cell block A, the Nautilus, has a personal vendetta with the Warden. Years ago, he fell in love with the Warden's wife, Jeanene however, she ended up with the Warden instead. Heartbroken, the Nautilus sought vengeance, which led to that night.

The warden's eyes glazed over as he remembered that fateful night. The air was so full of water, just a single breath could drown you, drown the soul. It was late, closer to dawn than dusk. The wind was howling in a tempest, trees were uprooted and flying through the air. Branches were missiles. The wind whistled and made an eerie sound, like ghosts from ages past haunting the warden's every step. The warden struggled against the

wind, as it threatened to take him away. He reached the front door to his cabin, lightning lit up the sky in a bright flash, followed by thunder so loud it took his breath away. He reached the door and turned the handle, the door burst open, he struggled to shut it once he was inside, using his entire weight to get it shut. The warden knew something was wrong right away. Something in his head was screaming, screaming so loud it was deafening making his headache, eyes squinting. He turned slowly and saw the lifeless corpse of his wife lying on the ground, blood around her head like a halo, next to her was Darren the newborn son of the warden, he was making no sound, but holding on to the warden's wife, eyes closed and covered in a blanket.

Standing over them both was Nautilus. Smiling. He was holding a bloody knife, he brought the knife up to his lips and licked the blade clean, blood dripping off his mouth. The Warden stood in shock, unable to move, fear coursing through his body.

"Pity" Nautilus smirked "I told you not to be late, so I had to play without you."

His laugh echoed through the tiny cabin, a gross, disgusting sound, that turned the Warden's spine to glass.

"So," he stepped over the body, "I was just showing your son how to skin the cat, sadly I do not think he understood the rules, you knew the rules, you broke the rules."

The warden's legs trembled.

"And now the game is over" He laughed again, "you lost and I won!"

The warden stood still. Frozen.

The warden working up in his mind the courage to take action, the light was growing. Still unable to speak.

"How about a new game?" Nautilus asked. "Winner takes all."

"I am not going to play your games, give me my son!" He shouted.

"Now, now, no need to shout, you do not want the child to wake and see the mess you gotten into."

"You monster."

"The new game is Smite The Devil."

"What!" the warden shouts.

"There is only one rule, stop me and save your son, if you can't stop me, I will take him and you will never see him again."

"Never."

"Giving up so early are we?" He takes a large step towards the child. "No, no that will not do at all."

"Stay back!"

"Last chance, smite me, or say goodbye to your son" Nautilus starts to bend down to pick up the Warden's son, "Tsk, Tsk, what a shame, now he is mine."

The warden reaches towards his back and pulls out a small .45 pistol and with shaky hands points it at Nautilus's head. Nautilus smiles and says "now we are playing" but before the trigger could be pulled, the warden is hit over the head with a baseball bat. The warden falling to the ground see Lobo walk over him to Nautilus and see's Nautilus pick up the newborn child as everything fades to black.

The warden blinks heavily, remembering where he was. In front of the warden stands Nautilus walking slowly back and forth. The warden

remembering the night quickly pulls his sidearm and aims it at the head of Nautilus.

"It's my time to pick the game Nautilus" the warden says, "Russian roulette."

"It's about time."

The warden pulls out 5 of the 6 bullets from the cylinder and spins and slams it back into place "You took my son's future, you killed the woman I loved."

"I LOVED HER TOO!" Nautilus screams.

"You know she never loved you," the warden sneered.

"I have a gift for you," he said dismissing the Warden's comment.

"You still are a monster," the warden says softly.

"Darren, can you please join us?"

"What?!"

"Hey dad, what are you doing?" Darren asks stepping out of the shadows.

"Hello my boy," Nautilus laughs.

"H..he's my son" the warden stammers.

"You think so?" Nautilus asks.

"Who's your real father, Darren?"

"You," pointing to Nautilus.

"See?"

The warden on the spot reacts to the finger being pointed at Nautilus, and points the gun at Darren. "If he is your son, if I shoot him, would you even care?"

Nautilus does not even flinch, and grins, "Do it."

"I will do it, I swear to god, I WILL DO IT!" the warden shouts aiming the shaky revolver at Darren.

"Dad, why? Why tell him to kill me?"

“Don’t you know, I am not your father, your father is standing in front of you.”

“Don’t say that!” Darren shouts.

“Do you hear him, son?” The warden still pointing the gun and Darren. “He admits it.”

“No...No that can’t be true!” Darren falls to his knees.

The warden pulls the trigger at Darren with no remorse: “Click.”

Darren starts sobbing, Nautilus laughs, “You did it, you really did it!”

The warden knowing his weapon pulls the barrel of the gun to his mouth. Nautilus’s laugh echoes through the cell block as he pulls the

trigger: “Click.”

“Welcome to hell, asshole!” The warden points the gun at Nautilus head and pulls the trigger again. “BANG!” The sound was deafening.

Nautilus looks surprised by the bullet ripping through his left eye, blood and grey matter splattering everywhere. Nautilus falls to the ground taking his last rasping breath.

“Darren...Darren?!” The warden shouts, “Are you ok?”

“He, he is not my father?” Looking into the eyes of the warden. “Who are you?”

“I am your father, you were stolen from me as a child by that man, I have

been searching for you for years.”

“Why did you try and shoot me?” his voice trembling.

“You were never in any danger, I saw how many trigger pulls before it would fire, that’s why I had to shoot myself; I knew nothing was going to happen;”

“I know you have a diamond-shaped birthmark.” The warden pointed to the back of his head and the nape of his neck.

“You know of that?”

“Of course. You’re my son!” replied the warden. “Now let’s get the hell out of here.”



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