

Often I have been asked by some of my friends and peers inquiring if I would compile my Moyes' Memories stories into some form of a book. Shortly before I departed the Wolverine State to become yet another one of those snowbirds that bolted for the warmer climate in Florida, Tom Kendra, the Sports Editor of the Muskegon Chronicle asked if I could write an occasional column reflecting some of my favorite memories from past work in the media, as well as a long-time follower of sports in the Muskegon area. I obliged Tom's request, never giving it a thought that someday I would insert many of these stories into a website.

Before I begin with the first of my Moyes Memories stories I should brief my readers on how I began my most unusual path working in the media.

I first began work in the media as a 'Stringer Reporter' for the Muskegon Chronicle in the Fall of 1956. One must remember there were but only a handful of schools in Greater Muskegon during this era, well before schools such as Mona Shores, Oakridge, Orchard View, and Reeths Puffer came onto the scene. For the football season the Chronicle only had to cover four local schools. Veteran Sports Editor James Henderson covered the Big Reds, Joe Eyler would do the same for the Heights Tigers, leaving Muskegon Catholic and North Muskegon in need of reporters to cover those two schools. Mart Tardani, well before he became a permanent member of the Chronicle's staff, covered the Crusaders, leaving only North Muskegon without a full-time reporter.

In 1955 Tom Kampenga, a 1956 graduate at North Muskegon became the reporter for North Muskegon and covered the Norseman for one year. I had known Tom for many years and despite our age differences, Tom had always treated me as he would one of his classmates. Tom even took me to the basketball state quarterfinals when Muskegon Heights, on the way to their first of back-to-back, defeated Saginaw Arthur Hill in the state quarterfinals. It was just the beginning of attending the state finals with Tom and others for many years. Although I was only beginning my sophomore year at NMHS, Tom recommended me to replace him as a stringer at the Chronicle.

I'm quite certain that Mr. Henderson and Mr. Eyler were skeptical of having a youngster who was still three years away from even attaining his driver's license taking on this role. How I remember my first assignment. The Norse began their 1956 football season with an away game at Coopersville. Only a handful of the bigger schools in the 1950s had a press box to accommodate any members of the press as I followed the action of this game, and many more to follow on the sidelines scribbling down notes.

On my return back home to NM I penned my story using my mother's electric typewriter. In the wee hours the following morning mother drove me to the Chronicle where I proudly delivered my story.

James Henderson and Joe Eyler, along with Edwin Young (my future longtime friend and sidekick in radio, Gene Young's father) were at their desks in the southeast corner of the second floor Chronicle building. For a moment I thought that perhaps there was a fire in their corner before I quickly realized that it was only their own smoke from the three chain-smoking newspaper buffs. How excited I was to see my byline beneath the first story I had ever written in my career. When I eagerly opened the Chronicle when it arrived on my doorstep later in the afternoon, I was stunned. Not only did I not have a byline, but I hardly recognized my own writing. After my initial disappointment I was concerned that I might be relieved of my duties due to poor writing.

Thankfully, it appears they were just playing games with this young reporter, and my byline appeared a couple of weeks later and I would remain as the reporter for North Muskegon athletics until I graduated in 1959.

After attending college at Central Michigan and Michigan State, and serving a couple of years in the Army, it appeared my longing to be a journalist had come to an end, although I was once offered a job as a sportswriter by Tom Fallon shortly after my discharge from the service. Following his many years as working for the Chronicle Tom was promoted to serve as the editor of the Bay City Times. I was humbled by Tom's offer but declined after realizing I could not survive living on my own with Tom's modest dollars offer.

In early 1966 I began working for my stepfather Harold 'Red' Wagoner in Traverse City. Traverse City had two high schools in the 1960s, Traverse City Central and St. Francis. The local newspaper, the Traverse City Record Eagle had but one staff member covering sports. Ken Bell was that one writer and when Traverse City High and St. Francis would play a football game on the same night, Bell would cover the bigger Traverse City School. Mike Kanitz, a former great all-around athlete during his high school days at Muskegon St. Mary, had become a teammate of mine on our local basketball team in TC and remembered my writing days for the Muskegon Chronicle. Mike was the head football coach at TCSF and passed my name to Bell and WHAM, I began writing the game story on those Friday nights for St. Francis in 1967.

This may sound hard to believe, but NEVER in my lifetime, until I got the job, did I even remotely consider a job as a play-by-play announcer. While working for Wagoner Transportation Company up in Traverse City, one of the major sponsors for the football radio broadcasts was Rennie Oil Co. Our

very small terminal headquarters was located at Rennie Oil Co and their office manager was Bob Murchie. Bob was a great booster of Traverse City athletics but was not at all happy with the current announcer covering high school football. One morning Murchie, knowing that I was a sports buff currently covering St. Francis in football, asked me if I ever had any experience in broadcasting. I thought Murchie, who was always quick with a quip, was joking so I replied jestingly that I had 'lots of experience in broadcasting.'

A couple of weeks passed by and I had long forgotten what I was led to believe was just a jovial conversation with Bob. My jaw dropped when Murchie informed me that I had an audition to try out for the job as the new play-by-play broadcaster for Traverse City's radio station WTCM. My initial reaction was what kind of trouble did my big mouth put me in? I was to audition for this job by broadcasting into a tape recorder at a planned pre-season scrimmage with three other gentlemen who were also applying for the job. I thought I had a brilliant plan when I volunteered to work the second quarter of the game so I could memorize the players as I was unfamiliar with most of the hoopsters on the floor. Much to my shock, coach Wayne Hintz, inserted 10 new players beginning the second quarter.

I can truthfully say that over the many years as a broadcaster, this moment was far and away my most nervous moment in broadcasting. Somehow or another I did get the job and it was the beginning of many wonderful years that have produced so many great Moyes' Memories.

Below is an introductory story from Tom Kendra, the Sports Editor of the Muskegon Chronicle, that announces my return to writing back in 2009.

Tuesdays with Tom ...

Jim Moyes is coming back for his second tour of duty as a sportswriter for The Muskegon Chronicle.

Moyes, the legendary and truly one-of-a-kind high school sports radio announcer for the past 42 years, starting on Friday will be writing a column every other month or so called "Moyes' Memories" -- looking back on his favorite stories, games and players from a lifetime of living, loving and working with high school sports. He started off as a cub reporter for the Chronicle in 1956, when the sophomore at North Muskegon High School would hitchhike to The Chronicle and turn in his type-written accounts of North Muskegon football and basketball games to Sports Editor Jim Henderson.

"Usually, a North Muskegon cop would pick me up and bring me down there," recalled Moyes, 67, the former owner of the Bear Lake Tavern in North Muskegon.

"I got paid \$15 per story and that was big money back then. I felt guilty

for making that much money for something that was more fun than work, so I'd take my teammates out for pizza at Sorrento's once a week."

The decision to bring back Moyes was an easy one for me.

Moyes not only has an amazing memory of specific games and dates, but he is willing to do hours and hours of research to make sure the details are correct.

But a bunch of old facts alone are boring. What sets Moyes apart from other historians is his wonderful gift for storytelling. Anyone who has attended an event where Moyes was the emcee will attest to his ability to weave a tale, pick out the most interesting aspects of each story and set up the audience for either a dramatic or hilarious conclusion.

OK, so his writing might be a little rusty, but I'm going to work with him.

His first offering on Friday is a profile of the great Paul Bard, a three-sport star at Muskegon High School who went on to become a war hero and later a well-respected teacher and coach at Mona Shores High School.

I had to take out my shears and do some trimming to that story, as Moyes' version came in about twice as long as the space allotted, but that's a much better problem for an editor than working with someone who doesn't give you enough facts or enough stories. That won't be a problem with Moyes.

The nice part about this new era of newspapering is that the full version of his stories will run on The Chronicle's Web site. Look for the extended Paul Bard feature starting Thursday night at www.mlive.com/muskegon. And the next time you see the old announcer, congratulate him on finally hitting the big time.

It was an easy call to write my first Moyes' Memories story on Paul Bard.

I was deeply moved while attending his funeral after he passed away from cancer in 2003. I had met Paul on numerous occasions as he was a first cousin to my wife Mary. Paul was so gracious to show me his enormous baseball card collection that he had accrued over the years. Bard was a very humble man and when I mentioned he should be in the Muskegon Area Hall of Fame he was vehement in stating that he was not remotely qualified to earn a berth in the hall. I, of course, disagreed and I have hopes long after his passing that the board of the MAHOF will seriously consider his induction.