

The Boys Were Changing (more than their underwear) Lynn V. Robb

Let's look at the boys who played along the banks of the Monongahela River before they changed. Flash back to a summer day in the early '60's. The river was the main source of our entertainment. My friend Becky and I were just minding our own business as we floated in our semi-truck inner tubes. We were pretty far off shore, thinking "life is good". This peaceful scenario came to an abrupt end when Andy and a couple of his thug friends started throwing seaweed mud balls at us. It was kind of fun for a moment or two, that is until their aim got better and the mud balls more dense with pasty mud. We had had enough and started to arm paddle our way back to shore. As we got closer the bombing intensified! At this point Becky yelled to them that she had to go to the bathroom. Andy's reply was "You are swimming in a sewage dump so what's the problem?" This was unfortunately true. By summer's end we had developed a lovely tan or stain. We were not sure which. Brown is brown!

They eventually backed off and we came out of the water like dirty mummies emerging from the black lagoon . As we confronted them at the river bank I recall saying to them "I hate your guts. Why don't you grow up?" On that two block walk home, my anger and frustration caused me to mumble the worst word I could think of (at the time). "Shit, shit, shit!" I said with each crusty step.

Fast forward, less than a decade later. We are in high school. Our basketball team has just won the championship. We are in the gym having an assembly to cheer on our team. Andy happened to be the star player. I was not surprised being that I was a victim of his target practice years ago. He looks so darn cute standing up there to get his award. The band is playing "California Here We Come" and I am part of the dance team

doing our regular routine to the music. No, we are not headed to California. We attend California High School in California, Pennsylvania. We are in suspense having been told that we were in for a really big surprise. That surprise was the Harlem Globe Trotters! They were coming to our school to play our team! That was a fantastic day followed by a victory dance. I was Andy's date!

Andy ended up getting a full scholarship to Penn State. I watched him play on television a couple of times. He returned to California and became a Physical Education teacher at the high school. I have not seen him in a few years but on those rare occasions when we bump into each other we always have a big hug and a great laugh!