



South City Mosaic: Life On Alaska (South City Mosaic Series Book One) by Glenn Sartori

Book Excerpt:

It was 1952, Sunday morning, fifteen minutes before Mass was to begin. Bob Limmer and I had donned our black cassocks and white, stiff-as-a-board surplices—there was no conservation of starch at St. Cecilia’s. In five minutes, I would walk into the sanctuary to light the altar candles; my eyes were glued to the clock. The tick tock of the second hand sounded like a metronome during a piano lesson. With one minute to go, I extended the wick on the candle-lighting tool, and Bob lit it. I was about to leave when the pastor, Father Naes, strode into the sacristy and announced that my surplice was crooked. Father Bruegger was scheduled to say the Sunday Mass, and I wasn’t prepared for Father Naes. I began to sweat; pores perspired that never perspired before. Rivulets emanated from my pits and trickled down my sides as I slowly walked into the sanctuary. This was not good.

I could feel Father Naes staring, burning into my back as I lit the altar candles in the prescribed sequence. First, the six candles on the altar were to be lit from right to left, and then the two candles that were astride the pulpit. (In the 1950s, the priest said Mass with his back to the congregation.) Each altar candle succumbed to the flaming wick. I felt really good, but my pride was extinguished when I saw the two candle holders next to the pulpit. They had new candles, tall candles, never lit candles, and I knew it would be a difficult task to light. I raised the lighting-tool to the unlit candle, stretching, straining and willing the candlewick to light. It refused to obey me. Sweat started up again and began to dampen my neck and forehead. My arms began to ache. I glanced out into the church; people meandered down the aisles and sidled into the pews. Time was running out. I lowered the tool and thought that if I lengthened the wick, maybe that would help. Someone brushed my shoulder, grabbed the candle holder and tilted it to eye level. I looked up at Father Bruegger as he flipped his cigarette lighter open and lit the candle. He did the same to the other one, smiled and walked into the sacristy. I stood there for a moment and wondered if Father Naes had witnessed that event, but I found only Father Bruegger and Bob in the sacristy.

“Let’s go,” Father said with a wave of his hand, and Bob and I led the priest into the sanctuary for Sunday Mass.

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I grew up in the South City on a street called Alaska. The mosaic of my early years is like a collection of tiles in a multicolored mural. The tiles were pieced together by many hands —my loving and stable family, the tightknit neighborhood, my grade school friends, and the compassionate nuns at St. Cecilia’s School. Come back and visit those years with me. Perhaps my grade school adventures will make you smile...and possibly help you recall your own cherished childhood memories.

5 Stars: Whether you are young or old, South City Mosaic: Life On Alaska will capture your heart and mind as endearing, heartfelt boyhood memories from Kindergarten through Eighth Grade are experienced in and around Glenn’s house and loving family home on 5226 Alaska Ave.

Twenty-two life packed chapters that truly begin on April 10, 1940 when Glenn was born. Read the well-placed words of Glenn’s vivid childhood memories that will take you back in time to the sights, sounds, smells and yes, tastes of a simpler, kinder and gentler life.

There are so many examples that I want to share with you, so choosing this one is difficult, but reflective of the mood and character of the stories. I quote: “In the 1940s and 50s, before electronic games and computers, collecting and trading baseball cards was a boyhood passion everywhere, and my grade school was no exception. The chance of getting a Mays, Mantle or Musial was thrilling, and to get the final card that completed your set of any baseball team, especially the St. Louis Cardinals, was a victory. Cards with pictures and stats of baseball players were the only type available, no hockey or football players. I bought mine at my neighborhood grocery store—a nickel for five cards packaged with a sheet of bubblegum. If I think about it, I can still smell the bubblegum aroma that wafted from the open package. Chomping down on the malleable pink sheet of gum filled my mouth with sugary juices. As vivid as the memory of chewing the gum is, I have no recall of blowing bubbles. Maybe I never acquired that skill set.

On many days after school, my friends and I would trade baseball cards, usually on someone’s front porch. It was always fun and a good way to complete a team. Shouts like “I’ll trade you a Duke Snider for an Alvin Dark. Or I’ll trade you a Yogi Berra for a Gil Hodges” were flying around the group. Sometimes we’d trade two for one, and occasionally three for one if someone really needed a particular player. We’d even coordinate trades between three or four kids. I loved those times. (I had a fine collection but not now. After I’d been gone from home for few years, I discovered that my dad had donated, among other things, the baseball cards to the St. Joseph’s Orphan Home for boys. Maybe they enjoyed them, traded them as I had.)”

Look at the 21 photos from those days and let your taste buds recall one or more of the included recipes that will draw you back in time. If you are young, you will learn valuable information about life for one young boy in the 40’s and 50s. If you are older, the memories written in this book will no doubt trigger some pleasant memories of your childhood.

Compare your childhood with Glenn’s, his first cigarette, first kiss and so many more firsts, which you will not want to miss. Like me you will be forced to wait for Glenn’s promised book two and three in his South City Mosaic Series.

I endorse South City Mosaic: Life On Alaska by Glenn Sartori as a childhood memoir worth reading. Read all Author Glenn Sartori’s books found at Amazon. 5 Stars. Review by Theodocia McLean.

Product Details:

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Customer Reviews:

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About The Author: Glenn Sartori is a lifelong resident of St. Louis, Missouri and graduated from St. Louis University with BS and MS in Electrical Engineering. In 1997 he married Rosanne and enjoy condo living in St. Louis County. They have two sons Michael and Jeffrey, both grown, live in different cities and have a family of their own.

Glenn worked in electronic design and engineering management at McDonnell-Douglas/Boeing, and traveled to many countries, his favorite was Japan. He retired in 2002, which is the same year Rosanne retired from teaching in the St. Charles School District.

In late 2002, Glenn started his second career as an author of text books. Along with his college friend, they have co-authored four engineering text books for Pearson Education Publishing Company. Glenn successfully transitioned to writing mystery novels and most recently published the first book of his memoir trilogy.

Amazon Author's Page:

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