

# 2007 Liars Contest

First place — Karen McKay of Ripley

Second place — Rich Knoblich of Wheeling

Third place — Jerry Cooperman of Martinsburg

Youth Award: Noah Lepp of Charleston

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**"I Never Looked Back"**

**First Place**

**Karen McKay**

**Ripley**

Karen McKay, first-place winner. At left is emcee and contest founder Ken Sullivan. Photograph by Michael Keller.

I'm wanting to talk mostly to the young people, especially the young girls. You fellas can just nod off at this time. I want to tell you, first of all, that my daddy's daddy was 65 years old when my daddy was born. Now this is an important fact. First, it tells you something about West Virginians, and it tells you something about my daddy. My daddy being raised by two generations before, he was very hard to catch up-to-date.

In 1966, I wanted nothing more than to be like the rest of the girls in Jackson County. I was 13 years old, and I wanted with all my heart to be like the other kids.

The WPA — I have to thank all those departed souls who worked on the municipal swimming pool in Ravenswood, because that swimming pool was just about all there was to do on Memorial Day. All West Virginians know that there's no better word than "free." Cheap is good, but free is better. On Memorial Day, you could go to the swimming pool, constructed by the WPA, and you could get in free.

Of course, all the kids was going to be there. And I wanted to be there, just like all the other girls, in a two-piece bathing suit. In 1966, if you had a two-piece bathing suit and you was 13 years old, you was going to be a popular kid.

I lived way out in the country, and I wanted to be like the town girls. I started working on my daddy early, saying "I've got to have a two-piece bathing suit."

"Ahhh, no," he said. And I commenced to think, what was the problem with showing two inches of midriff? And I understood, though it came from an old way of thinking, that women really ought not to be wearing even pants.

My daddy would not relent, and I begged and I begged, and I whined and I whined, as only young girls know how to do with their daddies. Finally, he relented.

I went down to Almeda's in Ravenswood, and I got me one of the prettiest two-piece bathing suits you'd ever want to see. It was plaid. Back then they only had one height for the hip, and that was as low as possible. I got me my suit, and I was standing in front of the mirror at home in Silverton, just admiring myself in the full-length mirror with the two-piece bathing suit on. I think I was just looking like I was going to win Miss Teenage America. I just knew it.

There was only one trouble, and I hadn't quite realized it yet. You know those bathing suit tops, they would have a little bra built in. And, of course, that was for people that needed them. I didn't need it. My greatest fear was that people would discover, especially the other girls in town, that I was not developing properly. Back then, I was very tall, skinny, and flat-chested, to tell you the truth. I know you don't believe it right now.

Just in case I hadn't developed in time for Memorial Day, I got to thinking about what I could do. You know them socks that go in together and come back alone? I got to thinking about this. I got me some of those socks, the nylon kind that you could wad up real good, and stretch out, and poke your fingers in them. You could kind of make you a little falsie. So I took those socks, and I eased them into that top of my two-piece bathing suit. I mean to tell you, I was hot.

When I was looking so good, I thought this would be a good time to confront my fear of heights. They had them a high-diving board I had never dared to go off. I figured since I was looking so good, I might as well walk the gang plank and get it done with, all in one fell swoop, looking as good as I did.

Now, you look up at those high-diving boards, and you think that they're about this wide. And you climb the ladder up to the high-diving board, and you get up there, and they're only about like this. Now, I can't see very good, not without my glasses. I was born cross-eyed. I had to look down at the diving board so I wouldn't fall off, walking out there real slow-like till I got to the end of the diving board. It commenced to occur to me that I was going to have to either jump or back down.

That's another thing about West Virginians. They don't back down. Somehow or another, they're going to do it. Now, I believe in prayer. So I paused for a moment and put my back back, so everybody could see my current development, properly. I prayed to God, "Give me the courage to take this leap of life off of the high-diving board down into the pool."

And do you know what? It's a lot farther down than you think. But I was a person of faith and commitment, back then even. I believed in myself, and, more than anything, I believed in not backing down.

So, I held my breath. Everybody go through this with me, just so you can imagine it with me. Take a deep breath, a real deep breath. And I held my nose, and I prayed, and I jumped off as if I was diving off of the Niagara Falls.

I didn't dive — no. I was going to jump feet first. I figured that'd break my fall, because I wear size 12's. So, on the way down, me looking as beautiful as [I] could [while] holding my nose, looking up at God, and taking that last final step off of the great unknown into flight.

The wind was a-whistling, I was holding my nose, and my feet no sooner hit that water, there was a giant pop, and that brassiere top came right up. Them socks flew about 10 foot up in the air. I knew that I was really going to have some trouble owning up to this, so I did the only thing a true West Virginia woman would do. I held my breath and swam to the other end of the pool, and I never looked back.

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**“Poor Judgment”**  
**Third Place**  
**Jerry Cooperman**  
**Martinsburg**

I'd like to thank the railroad for being here today. I didn't work on the railroad, and I didn't come here by railroad. The reason I want to thank the railroad is some history lesson back in 1863, at the foundation of our fine state.

First of all, I need to do a little map for you. Right at my fingertips, I have a map of West Virginia. Excuse me, no I don't. That's a map of Texas. Over here I have a map of West Virginia. And the part I want to talk about is the little part here at the end of my thumb, where Martinsburg, and Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties are located. Because of the Civil War, the reason why those three counties were included in West Virginia was because the railroad would have been running through enemy territory.

Living in Martinsburg, under other circumstances, I might have been living in Virginia had the railroad not passed through that area. In that case, I would have aspired to be part of the Virginia Liars Contest. The Virginia Liars Contest is handled a little differently than here. The entrance fee is much, much higher. It is not done on a yearly basis, but when you win, you get to live in the Governor's Mansion. Until the next contest.

In West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle, we have some important credentials. First of all, it is the source of the barley, the wheat, the corn, and most of the dairy products for the entire state of West Virginia, because it's flat. It has almost all of the animals whose legs are of equal proportions.

There's a special program that's currently going on there. Between the hotel-and-motel industry, the fast-food restaurants, the banks, and the West Virginia Division of Highways, they are intending to eradicate all of the pastures, farmland, and woodlands in the Eastern Panhandle. And they're doing an excellent job of it. In 1954, there were 139,000 acres of farm ground, and in 2002, there were only 54,000. That's approximately one-third left from what there were in 1954. To me, that looks like poor judgment.

Now, you all are probably familiar with poor judgment on a personal basis. Poor judgment would be thinking that the Harlem Globetrotters were bound to lose just anytime now. It would be thinking that Pete Rose was a good bet for the Baseball Hall of Fame. It would be investing in Enron stock now that the price is down.

It would be traveling along the West Virginia Turnpike and refusing to want to pay the \$3.75 and running out of gas. Only when you ran out of gas, you pulled off to the side of the road, you put on your four-way flashers, you went for help, you came back with the gallon of gas, only to find your battery was dead because the four-way flashers had sucked the juice out of it, and now you need a jump.

Another concept of poor judgment would be to think you're going to make big money at farming. Farming has its own elements of poor judgment. One item would be to wait until the cows came home. Another would be wearing your church clothes down into the barnyard.

The animals themselves can have poor judgment, and it can lead to their difficulties. I'd like to describe to you an event [where] an animal had poor judgement, and it led to the animal's demise. And that would be in poetic form:

Once a faulty 'lectric wire  
Caused the corncrib to catch on fire;  
The kernels popped and shot around,  
Like winter snow across the ground;  
The noise awoke the old brown mule,  
Who showed poor judgment, as a rule;  
Despite mild weather, she took ill,  
The sight of snow caused her a chill;  
Safe in her stall, they found old Rose,  
That August morn the mule had froze.

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**"The Dragon's Tale"**

**Youth Award**

**Noah Lepp**

**Charleston**

Once upon a time, there were two knights called Bob and Joe. Bob found an article in the newspaper in the sports section that said, "The guys who slay the dragon may have thine damsels' hands in marriage."

And Bob said to Joe, "Let's go." They walked two miles, had a snack of Oreo cookies and water, walked another mile, and saw the dragon's cave. There was a sign above it that said, "Hello. This is the dragon's cave. I like sandwiches."

The knights walked in on their tiptoes, but the clanking armor unfortunately woke the dragon up. This is also bad news: he was woken up before he wanted to. So he was steamed

The dragon said, "Well, I have fire."

The knights said, "We have swords."

The dragon said, "I have scales."

The knights said, "We have shields and armor."

The dragon said, "Well, I have a long tail. I don't think you have any of those."

And Bob said, "Oh, yes, I do." And he started telling a long and boring story. And it went on and on and on. [The dragon] was bored to death, literally.

[The knights] had the damsels' hands in marriage, and Bob said, "I think we're going to get our pictures in the daily paper."

And Joe said, "No, I think we're going to get our pictures in the nightly paper."

They had the damsels' hands in marriage, and they had children, and when the children were 18, the story started all over again.