

METRO



Decades after his abuse by an Indiana priest, Norbert Krapf wrote the poems that became "Catholic Boy Blues." KELLY WILKINSON/THE STAR

Angry but unbroken: a journey of healing

A state poet laureate confronts his childhood abuse by Indiana priest

By Will Higgins
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Norbert Krapf, Indiana's poet laureate from 2008 to 2010, kept a secret for a half-century: As a boy in Jasper, in Southern Indiana, he had been molested by his parish priest, Monsignor Othmar Schroeder.

He told only his wife, Katherine, providing no details, and afterward the couple rarely spoke of it.

Krapf didn't want the abuse to take over his life. "I wanted a career and a family, and for a long time I was able to put the abuse aside and focus on living," he said. Norbert and Katherine Krapf (pronounced Cropf) have been married since 1970 and have two children. They spent their working lives in education in New York. She taught middle school English; he taught English at Long Island University and directed the C.W. Post Poetry Center.

He left teaching in 2004 and with his family moved back to his native Indiana to concentrate on his poetry.

Soon, for multiple reasons, childhood memories came flooding back. Indiana was the scene of the crimes, for one thing; and in 2006, Krapf read an Indianapolis newspaper account of a Catholic priest named Harry Monroe, who had abused boys throughout Indiana before being drummed out of the priesthood. Also, Krapf was aging —

people often get reflective as they age. (Sting, 62, talked about this at the last TED conference; he said he recently overcame writer's block by revisiting his old haunts.)

A READING BY NORBERT KRAPP

When: 7 p.m. Thursday.
Where: Indiana Interchurch Center, 1100 W. 42nd St.
Cost: Free. Register at indianainterchurch.org.

The Evansville bishop, Gerald A. Gettelfinger, in 2007 publicly urged the rescinding of Schroeder's many honors and accolades.

Krapf that same year began writing poems about his abuse. He was by then an experienced poet, had published 10 books of poetry. But they had never flowed out of him as they did now — 325 poems in a year.

He was in no hurry to publish them. He set them aside for three years. As a former poet laureate, Krapf is at least somewhat of a public person. He endures the distinction, does not relish it. He figured a book about priest abuse would attract quite a bit of attention and some derision. He steeled himself for both. He changed his phone number to an unlisted number. He urged that this interview not be published Sunday, which was Easter.

The book, which contains 130 of the poems, was released April 1. It's called "Catholic Boy Blues: A Poet's Journal of Healing."

Krapf's story may give hope to other abuse victims, said David Clohessy, the national director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, because Krapf's life is one of achievement and happiness. "Most clergy sex abuse victims have done destructive or self-destructive things to cope with their pain and depression: substance abuse, crime, eating disorders, etc.," Clohessy said in an email. "Most never will speak publicly, so every time one of us does, it's validating and encouraging to the rest. That's especially true when the survivor has gone on to become a

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Sniffing dogs, Easter funnies

Three Dog Bakery held its annual Easter "Begg" Hunt on Saturday at Hamilton Town Center in Noblesville. Joining the fun were (clockwise from top) Kathleen Jeffers and her golden retriever Cindee Lee; Mocha, an Australian shepherd and Lab mix, who's being cajoled by Shannon Owens and Emberli Stewart to pick up an egg; and Noah McCullum, 6, and Lola, a Bichon/poodle mix.

ALEX FARRIS PHOTOS/FOR THE STAR



For the record, a music-filled day

By David Lindquist
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Music fans kept cash registers ringing on Record Store Day on Saturday, and patrons were rewarded with live sets of rock, pop and hip-hop at four Indianapolis stores.

Acts performed in parking lots behind Luna Music, 5202 N. College Ave., and Indy CD & Vinyl, 806 Broad Ripple Ave., as waves of shoppers occupied all available space inside the stores.

At Vibes Music, 1051 E. 54th St., Kokomo quartet No Coast played indoors and gave its audience reason to buy the band's current 7-inch single released by Indianapolis-based Glory Hole Records.

With vocalist-guitarist Nate Black (a dead ringer for John Mellencamp in the 1970s) leading the way, No Coast slashed through 30 minutes of short, sharp, dance-friendly rock songs. The Farfisa work of keyboard player Neal Cunningham pushed No Coast into the neighborhood of Stiff Records-era Elvis Costello.

The group was back in Indiana after playing an



Indy CD & Vinyl in Broad Ripple was among four Indianapolis stores taking part in the seventh annual Record Store Day on Saturday. ROB GOEBEL/THE STAR

official showcase at last month's South by Southwest festival in Texas.

More notes from Record Store Day 2014:

» Summer in Indianapolis unofficially began when rapper Sirius Blyck performed a no-worries rendition of "Canadian Tuxedo" during a sun-splashed performance at Luna. Elsewhere, his relaxed flow tied together references to "Goonies," "Braveheart" and "The Breakfast Club" in the same song.

» Karma Records East, 21 N. Post Road, hosted buzz act Twenty One Pilots, an Ohio-based duo that performed at the MTV Movie Awards on April 13. Between ukulele versions of "House of Gold" and "Holding On to You," Twenty One Pilots vocalist Tyler Joseph fielded a question from the audience, which filled every aisle of the store. When asked about his tattoos, Joseph said he appreciates tattoos as modern-day conversation

starters, but he declined to share his personal tales in Karma's public setting.

» The largest crowd of the day likely gathered at Luna for a performance by Margot & the Nuclear So and So's, the Indianapolis-based band that will release its "Sling Shot to Heaven" album Tuesday. A stripped-down quartet configuration of vocalist-guitarist Richard Edwards, vocalists Heidi Gluck and Kate Myers

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