

Wishin' and Hopin': A Christmas Story



By Wally Lamb

Reviewed by D. Andrew McChesney

I ended up with a copy of this book as a door prize at a recent meeting of the writers group I belong to. Before ever reading it, a couple of things intrigued me. Here in Spokane, nearly everyone is a fan of, or at least follows Gonzaga University's men's basketball team, which this year made it to the final game of NCAA's March Madness. It was interesting indeed to read that young Felix Funicello attends St. Aloysius Gonzaga Parochial School in the fictional Three Rivers, Connecticut. Then there is that last name. Like most boys of that era, I was infatuated with Annette, and to learn that the central character of this story was her distant cousin...

I figured out that during the time Felix was in fifth grade, I would have been in eighth grade, a bit older than, but still of the same generation. So many of the references to stars, musicians, and other celebrities of the time triggered my nostalgia, and I was transported back to the day when the Beatles ruled the airwaves and Lyndon Johnson resided in the White House. In my youth I attended public school, but there was a familiar feel to the activities so vividly described.

Even though this is labelled as a Christmas Story, I read it in early spring. If you have a copy of it, don't wait until fall or winter to read it. Take it down from the book shelf and read it... now! You'll be glad you did. I was!