

The S T O R Y

Behind the Story

notes from
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Fall 2005

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A Farewell Concert

For twenty-five years, Doug Lipman and I have been storytelling companions, leading workshops together, coaching each other and enjoying a rare artistic relationship. Since Doug was leaving Boston to join his wife in Tulsa, Oklahoma, we decided to schedule a farewell concert at famed Club Passim Coffee House in Harvard Square to celebrate our storytelling friendship.

The evening began with our brilliant and longtime colleague, Judith Black, roasting Doug and leaving the audience cheering. From there we wove a tapestry of stories reflecting our friendship. In a departure from storytelling convention, Doug told his narrative of the 1930s movie, "Nous La Liberte" whose final image has haunted him since college days. In addition, Doug told a brand new story called "The Sapphire Girl." Doug also delighted us with his songs, two of which were made up for my birthdays.

I told a new Pill Hill story called "Books," and a long story called "Duffle Bag Tim" about my son and I hiking the Appalachian Trail. It's a

story dear to my heart that I've long wanted to tell.

It was a rare and wonderful night. The sold out audience was electric. The evening brought back so many memories.

Memories of rising at five in the morning, leaving my house under the bright stars and driving up to Doug's office in Medford. Doug and I would then walk down the railroad tracks to Sound Bites, a lively breakfast spot with a terrific Greek omelet. Over a leisurely breakfast, we'd talk about everything: performances — good and bad — books, movies and plays we'd seen, struggles, hopes and visions for the future, and politics.

After breakfast we'd head back and work in Doug's



Doug's last walk to Sound Bites on the railroad tracks

office, which looked like a Paris bookstore after a mild earthquake. We'd each take one hour to work. Doug is both a great listener and a great coach, so I got the better of it. The friendship allowed both of us to take risks, to grow and create work we never would have done alone.

Now, here comes the best part. Doug recorded the concert! There are some minor sound glitches but they're part of the spirit of a once in a lifetime event. I loved listening to the CD,

"Storytelling Companions, The Farewell Concert," and hope you will too. Bon Voyage to Doug, The Earl of Tulsa.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 A FAREWELL CONCERT
- 2 BOSTON MARATHON
- 3 IT'S ALL ABOUT STORIES

The Boston Marathon

My daughter, Laura, loves the mystery of a challenge. When she finished college she decided to bike across the country. She hadn't biked before but that was no obstacle. She did it twice. One Christmas holiday our son, Ted, suggested Laura join him climbing the Himalayas, and she did. So it wasn't a total surprise when last winter she said she'd like to run the Boston Marathon. She's not a runner but got a book and began to train. She would call in the middle of a snowstorm saying, "The hardest thing is getting off your duff and getting out there."

Laura spent the night before the Marathon at our house in Marshfield, Massachusetts and in the morning we put her on a bus filled with runners who were headed to Hopkinton for the beginning of the race.

My wife, Linda, and a friend, Deena Beals, and I waited in Natick about ten miles from the start of the race and were excited to see Laura. She wore a pink shirt and baseball cap and ran by us smiling. She looked as if she'd run a half a block. We got in the car and hurried to a spot near Heartbreak Hill and again Laura passed us smiling and looking fresh.



Finished with a smile

The next thing was to see Laura cross the finish line but Boston was absolutely packed. As we started up the subway stairs hundreds of people were coming down the stairs so we didn't make it to the finish line in time. But my son, Ted, and his sweetheart, Molly Graham, had arrived unexpectedly from Patagonia hours before and saw Laura cross the finish line.

We had a great gathering of friends and family at Laura's apartment and I remain amazed that Laura can say, "I'm going to bike across the country, climb the Himalayas, run the Boston Marathon." And she does!

Engaged!

My son, Ted, and his sweetheart, Molly Graham, are engaged! They spent most of last year leading NOELS (National Outdoor Leadership) expeditions in Patagonia; now they're in New York City. Molly is working at the Council on Foreign Relations and Ted is looking to write features for newspapers. Ted's email address is: tocallahan@gmail.com

Laura, Ted and Molly after the marathon.



Workshop with British Petroleum

Last spring I did a Creativity and Storytelling Workshop with twenty people British Petroleum had gathered from around the world. One of the participants had flown directly in from China, others had come from Egypt, London and France. The organizer felt that if you find your voice you're a better leader. Storytelling is the way to find your voice. My job was

to elicit stories. They had wonderful, clear and sharp memories. One participant told of being ten years old and going to Oklahoma. For the first time in his life he walked down a long, red, dirt road. The memory was so vivid he could still hear the locusts, feel the breeze and see the red dust in the air. Another member told a story of dancing with her father on her eighth grade graduation night. Then she

told the group how she would use that memory in a business situation. I was delighted with their imaginations. They were playful and willing to get up and act out scenes. At the end a man from Egypt said, "I never thought stories could be useful in business. I've completely changed my mind." It was a delight to meet them all.

Storytelling Tour China!

Eth-Noh-Tec, Linda Fang and the Washington Storytellers Theatre invite you to a story tour of China in the first two weeks of September 2006. I plan to go. We'll visit the Yunnan Province, known as "South of the Clouds," home to many of China's Ethnic Minorities and also visit Beijing: the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace. Now this is an adventure! For more information please contact Eth-Noh-Tec at www.ethnohtec.org, 415-282-8705 or Lindafang@earthlink.net, or 301-838-9612.



Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo & Nancy Wang of Eth-Noh-Tec

It's All About Stories

By Cathryn Wellner

(I asked my friend Cathryn to tell you of her mysterious path.)

The storytelling path I started on was a common one. Librarian discovers storytelling, jumps in with both feet, meets people who encourage her (Jay O'Callahan in particular), dreams of devoting her life to the art. It was a grand run. I reveled in the performances, the workshops, and the places the art took me.

Then came a series of Major Life Transitions. I found myself on a ranch in the middle of British Columbia - me, a city woman. I had to reinvent myself if I wanted to make a living. I became a consultant, which meant I was desperate enough to apply for a contract with few qualifications so I could pay the bills.

During the three months of that contract, I was sure I'd be found out. Instead, they hired me for another contract, this time running a regional economic development organization.

I had even fewer qualifications for that one until I realized the secret. It was all about stories. I was in a rural community that needed to be able to tell compelling stories to urban bureaucrats, politicians, project funders, and its own citizens. My job was to help them identify, hone, and tell those stories.

Once I knew the secret, my consulting career took off. I took a break from it last year, to be Storytelling Director for Stagebridge, America's oldest senior theatre. Now I'm back in British Columbia in a newly created position as Food and Health Project Manager for Interior Health. Once again it's all about stories. The demand for my organizational storytelling services keeps growing. I'm planning a book. I'm happy. And I'm still telling stories. E-mail: cwellner@telus.net



Cathryn Wellner

Firebreathing Kudos

Dear Mr. O'Callahan,

Twenty-some years ago, my parents gave one of your tapes to our son. We enjoyed it so much as did our friends and their children. My son is now 27 years old, but we still talk about this tape and just how much we all loved it. It was lost somewhere .

The other day, I googled "hurry, hurry little dragon" and found the title and you the author!

Today I found your web site and ordered 15 of "The Little Dragon and Orange Cheeks". I am so happy to have found it and plan on giving it to my son and many of our friends and grandchildren.

I thought you might want to know just how much you are enjoyed and remembered for more than 20 years.

*Best regards,
Marti Carroll*

Dear Jay,

Many years ago, I checked a tape of "The Little Dragon" out of the Palo Alto Children's Library for our oldest 4 children. As years rolled on, all 5 Osborn children committed that and so many other Artana stories to memory ...to this day, when one of us has achieved a hard-won accomplishment, the hue and cry is, "Did it, Oh I did it, Oh I did it ...". Nathan, our eldest at 31 now, is studying to be a doctor. He has said that, if he chooses pediatrics, he hopes I will make him a Monsieur LeFlute cape with a lining filled with pockets, "and within each pocket, a tiny book."

Please tell Jay that we thank him again and again.

*Gratefully,
Candace Osborn*

AWA's Great Writing Workshops

For the last six years I've led a writing workshop at my house. Every session I'm amazed at the quality of the writing. We've grown close and it's been a wonderful experience. This never would have happened had I not taken weekend and weeklong workshops with Pat Schneider of the Amherst

Writers & Artists (AWA). Pat is one of the great writing teachers.

If you want to improve your writing or lead writing workshops, get in touch with AWA. They have many superb workshop writing leaders. Email: dslocombe@earthlink.net or visit www.amherstwriters.com



Pat Schneider's book



DON'T LET LIFE GET BLAND
This is a photo of the "Creativity Monsters," a wonderful storytelling workshop group Doug Lipman and I have led for years. Here we are in our most conservative dress.

Harry's Our Man

I spent the summer working on a novel *Harry's Our Man*. It's set on Pill Hill and is centered on a character you have never met before. Harry Hutchinson, assistant professor of American History feels he is in a rut. He admires his Aunt Harriet who felt she needed a breath of air, so when she was

18 she packed her bag, left her dormitory and took a train to Wyoming. "How did you break away?" he once asked her. "Oh I had to," she said. Then she laughed, saying "Sometimes you have to leave to arrive." How he admired Aunt Harriet, who died breaking in a horse at 70 years old.

The novel is set in 1951 and Harry feels confined. He thinks both the Cold War and the atomic bomb have made people much too cautious and fearful. What will he do about it? How will Harry break free?

IN BRIEF

Dolores Hydock's CD, *Footprints in the Sky*, is like a quilt, the patches of which bring you into Alabama mountain country in the 1970s. You meet characters cooking, quilting, picking tomatoes, singing and talking about remedies like putting buttermilk on poison ivy. When the CD is over you've met people so real, you want to thank them for their hospitality. The Appalachian music by Flying Jenny is superb. Dolores' email: dolores@storypower.org



Kirk Avery, writer and storyteller, recently told his Korea story at East Bridgewater High. Storyteller, Andrea Lovett, said, "He touched their soul." Kirk is also a member of ScreenActors Guild. When a movie like "Mystic River" is made in Boston, Kirk is often in it as a background player or character. Kirk's email: wkirka@msn.com



Angela Lloyd's CD, *Dreams and Other Realities*, makes you want to leap! Angela is a troubadour who sings, tells stories and plays her washboard with such style and fun you've got to dance. Angela's email: Storyboat@aol.com



Bill Harley's CD, *Down in the Backpack*, is bright, funny and wildly wonderful. If you don't laugh when you listen to the King of Calibar, call me and I'll send you a cigar. Bill's website: www.billharley.com.

