

My 50th Anniversary Stories about Dartmouth and Marriage

John W. Melski

My wife Linda and I will attend the 50th reunion of Dartmouth 68, which is one year after our 50th wedding anniversary. My stories about Dartmouth and marriage are inseparable. “We are all stories in the end, just make it a good one eh?” (The [Tenth Doctor Who](#), speaking to a sleeping Amy Pond).



Theater: My stories begin with college preparation in New Milford High School in New Jersey. Mr. Joseph J. Miller taught English using dramatic readings of Shakespeare. He wrote in my yearbook “This was a Lear...when comes another.” I dabbled in drama as one of the “Six characters in search of an Author” as a Dartmouth freshman. I discovered the importance of theater in patient care when I became a physician-teacher. Patients often do not remember what they were told or adhere to the advice. The [Fish! Philosophy](#) can help: The principles are: 1) choose your attitude, 2) play, 3) make their day, and 4) be present. Being present can be simply listening to their story or bearing witness to their suffering.

Numbers, Logic, and Probability: Mr. Robert M. Lynch taught advanced mathematics in my high school, but refused to teach calculus because it was “too easy” and could be learned in college. We learned number theory instead, including prime numbers, the basis of encryption. Numbers are my friends. I often factor them into their primes to show my appreciation. When exercising, I count flights of stairs in hexadecimal. I marvel at the Pythagorean theorem, Fibonacci sequence and Golden ratio. But it was [The Logic of Medicine](#) by Edmond Murphy that prepared me to be a physician-teacher. Professor Murphy warned us not to confound correlation and causation, a frequent error in everyday news & advertisements. Murphy aphorisms include:

- “Rhetoric is the art of convincing without appealing to reason.” (pg. 123)
- “Knowledge is either rational or empiric. Rational has been held in higher respect, but when there is a conflict, the empirical has had the last say.” (pg. 162) Note that belief, unlike knowledge, can be based on intuition or revelation.
- “The rules of evidence ... and the laws of probability ... are not repealed for those of senior rank.” (239)
- “A statistician...is a man who can drown in a stream with an average depth of two inches.” (pg. 272) Professor Murphy inspired me to write a satire called “Mathemedicine in the land of Odz” a decision analysis of Stochastacillin versus no treatment.

Kindred Spirits: Jack was a high school classmate and kindred spirit. Jack and I could stare into the abyss and laugh. This was a helpful trait in Nov 2012 when I needed a liver transplant for primary sclerosing cholangitis. Jack became a pulmonologist in Towson, Md. His brother Lenny was a math prodigy. As a high school freshman, Lenny competed with the seniors at an interscholastic math meet and did very well. I decided then not to major in mathematics in college. I spent so much time at Jack and Lenny’s home with their parents, Gabe and Dotty, I thought I was Jewish even though I was baptized Roman Catholic. Lenny became a Professor of Mathematics. We keep in touch.

Soccer, Tonsillectomy, and Phenothiazine: In 1963, I was 17 and did not make the cut for baseball, so I tried soccer. At the only game my mother came to see, a player from Eastern Christian High School kicked and hit my shin with his shin guard. The crack was heard around the field. My mid tibia fracture was casted from toes to mid-thigh. My doctor thought it would be a good time for a tonsillectomy, which was still being done routinely. Phenothiazine was prescribed for post-operative rest. This off-label use of this newly approved anti-psychotic caused restlessness, bizarre involuntary movements and insomnia. My family doctor said “that’s the damnedest thing I’ve ever seen.” After a few days without sleep, I feigned normality, denied all symptoms and was discharged. On the car ride home, I repeatedly asked my sister “Who am I?” After sleeping for 24 hours, my sanity returned.

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Foundation: A local alumnus recruited me for early admission to Dartmouth. My parents had different reactions. My mom lived in Poland as a child and never finished high school. She was Catholic and discovered mysticism after reading “Seven Story Mountain,” the autobiography of Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk who died in 1968. She thought Dartmouth was too big a step for one generation. She feared I would grow away from our family. She was right. My father was a machinist and man of few words. He worked 6 days a week for Western Electric and on the seventh day, he labored on upkeep of our home. He eschewed religion. I abandoned my faith on June 18th 1960 after reading Walden Pond by Thoreau. My dad wanted me to apply to Dartmouth, but I would need financial aid. My application was accepted, I got financial aid and worked in Thayer Dining Hall to help pay the bills.



Dave & Diane: My first dormitory room was 407 New Hampshire Hall. It opened to a stairwell. Fire doors isolated me from the corridors on either side. I was “The Phantom of New Hampshire Hall” until I made friends beyond those doors, including Dave and later his wife Diane, shown here at the christening of our first son. Dave became an architect and Diane a midwife. We are forever friends.



Richard: Another forever friend is Richard, Dartmouth 69. Richard had reservations about Dartmouth but none about befriending Linda and me. I was pleased to write a letter of support for Richard’s application as a conscientious objector to military service. Richard later became a lawyer defending inmates on death row. While unattached, he honed his Spanish in Peru and traveled from village to village in South America. He was recruited as a soccer goalie in one village despite his unproven skills. The match came down to Richard’s defense of a goal kick. The ball bounced off the cross bar. Richard was regaled as a hero. He later learned some Swahili and travelled to East Africa.

Meeting Linda: Linda and I met after my freshman year at Dartmouth and her freshman year at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. We had summer jobs at Bergen Pines County Hospital, New Jersey. She was a nurse’s aide and I was an orderly. We met in the linen closet...for linen. We kept meeting in the break room for lunch. The romance began with whimsy when I made a paper ring for her from the wrapper of a straw. After our junior years, she moved to Hanover for training as medical technologist in Mary Hitchcock Hospital. We were married on June 18th 1967 and moved to Lebanon Street, Hanover, NH.

The 60’s: The feeling tone was folk, pop and rock music. It was not our parents’ music. The zeitgeist was the Vietnam War. At Dartmouth, the college car would have been the 1964 Mustang, had there been a place to park and a way to pay for it. Robert Frost may have gone to Dartmouth in 1892, but Dylan Thomas spoke to us in [Fern Hill](#):

Oh, as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

In 1966, Masters and Johnson published the “Human Sexual Response.” The AIDS/HIV epidemic was evolving. In 1967, George Wallace visited Dartmouth on May 3rd. “1968 was the year Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. The Beatles released the [White Album](#). North Vietnam launched the Tet offensive.” (Peggy Orenstein, [New York Times Feb 6th 2018](#)).

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Professors: My professors at Dartmouth were exceptional. Professor Peter Bien had me drink from the firehose of English Literature. “Zorba the Greek” had the most lasting effect. Basil, the narrator, asks Zorba “Are you married?” Zorba replies “Am I not a man? And is a man not stupid? I'm a man, so I married. Wife, children, house, everything. The full catastrophe.” Zorba’s response inspired “Full Catastrophe Living” by Jon Kabat-Zinn, a book that restored my mental and spiritual health years later.

Tibetan Monks: Although “Zorba the Greek” is not explicitly Buddhist, the preface was written by Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Master. Although Linda & I are not Buddhist, we hosted three of nine Tibetan Monks in our home from October 14th to 19th in 2002. The Monks were on tour in the US after the 9/11 Twin Tower Attack in New York City in 2001. They joyfully greeted our Wheaton Terriers and Wheaton friend on their arrival. They did triphonic chanting before meals. Unlike most Buddhists, they ate meat, a source of protein in Tibet.



Dartmouth: “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” (Plutarch) The time-sharing computer in College Hall ignited my passion for computing, which eventually led to my career in Medical Informatics. To balance my education, I majored in psychology. I assisted Professor Gulick in his study of stereoscopic vision. Perceptual psychology is a subfield of cognitive psychology and the antithesis of “nuts and sluts” psychology as it was called in the undergraduate vernacular. Cognition and computing were my twin stars of inspiration. The psych syllabus included [Escape from Freedom](#) by [Eric Fromm](#), which explores our transcendent need to belong to something larger than ourselves. My transcendent need turned out to be the practice of medicine.

Johns Hopkins Medical School: My pre-med status shielded me from the draft. It was also an impetus for application to Medical School. I chose Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore, Maryland because Jack, my high school friend, chose it. Jack was Jewish, so Linda and I were unprepared for the 10-and-a-half-foot white marble statue of Jesus extending his welcoming arms in the Administration Lobby. We knew we were not in Hanover. We were just above the Mason-Dixon line. We arrived on campus after the [Baltimore Riot of 1968](#). We lived in “the Compound,” a wall of tenement housing surrounding a courtyard, a metaphorical wagon circle.

At Hopkins, the Dean was not pleased that we were married. He quoted statistics on marriage failures. Linda was hired as a Medical Technologist and became Head of Serology. We did well. Our marriage probably outlived the Dean.

The format of courses at Hopkins was similar to college for the first two years. Exotic labs and dissection of cadavers were signs that we were not in Kansas (or New Hampshire) anymore. Gallows humor kept us sane. My team’s cadaver was the color of bilirubin because of liver failure. We named him “Billi.” It was the lab dog experiments that offended me. I appealed to the Dean, who granted an exemption with a low-bar requirement of alternative study of my choosing. I chose multivariate statistics. “Techie” and “nerd” were not yet common parlance, but I was both.

My last two years at Hopkins were clinical training. Although confident in my book knowledge, I was not prepared for taking personal histories and doing physical exams that required touching, palpating, poking, and prodding the living. I was also not prepared for de facto segregation at Hopkins in 1970’s. The rich and mostly white folks were seen by the faculty in the Marburg Pavilion for an extra charge. It was often the poor folks and veterans who were cared for by medical students under the supervision of a first-year resident. I did blood draws, intravenous lines, spinal taps, and helped deliver around 20 mostly poor inner-city babies.

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At Hopkins, there was a basement below the sub-basement I knew. It housed the Cobalt-60 teletherapy machines for treatment of localized cancers. The Radiation Therapists were a band of friendly trolls who ran the machines. They enlisted me to translate FORTRAN (Formula Translation) programs for radiation doses (dosimetry) into BASIC. I had never coded in FORTRAN but was very good in BASIC. With hubris, I translated the programs that were most likely used to confirm the FORTRAN results.

Mary Hitchcock-Dartmouth: After Hopkins, we moved to Willey Hill Rd, Norwich, Vermont for Residency in Internal Medicine at the Mary Hitchcock-Dartmouth Medical Center, which was still in Hanover, New Hampshire. Our oldest son was born there in the Fall of 1972. That winter, we camped in a nearby cabin where snow covered the chimney top and the wood was frozen. With a propane torch and matches, I lit the fireplace. We huddled near, feet first. Linda melted the soles of her shoes. We returned to the warmth of our home on Willey Hill Road where all the power was electric, including heating, lighting, and pumping water. I went cross-country skiing, leaving my young wife and newborn son. Soon after I left, the power failed and the temperature started to drop. The utility crew that fixed the transformer and restored our power might as well have been angels.

Harvard Medical School: After two years of Residency in Internal Medicine, we left Dartmouth in 1974 and move to Newton, MA (Neshobe Road, Waban). I became the first ever Research Fellow in the Computer Medicine Laboratory at Harvard Medical School. Our daughter was born in the Brigham and Woman's Hospital in the Fall of 1974. My new teachers, colleagues, and friends were Howard Bleich MD and Warner V. Slack MD. Howard was boarded in Internal Medicine. Warner was boarded in Internal Medicine and Psychiatry. Howard wrote a computer program to help diagnose and treat electrolyte and acid-base disorders. Warner pioneered the use of computers to improve communication to empower both patients and doctors for better health care.

As Research Fellow in Computer Medicine, I was tasked with studying the use of Howard's acid-base program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. I travelled frequently to UMass with my assistant Ivan, the son of a Unitarian Universalist minister. We discussed many things, including religion. Ivan told me that I was a Unitarian Universalist, but did not know it yet.

Unitarian Universalism (UU): Linda (a lapsed Protestant) and I (a lapsed Roman Catholic) went to a UU service by Clark Dewey Wells in April of 1977. The service was held in the cottage-Gothic church of the [First Unitarian Society of Newton](#) (FUSN) Massachusetts. The opening reading was how to prepare soup for 2,000 Boston Marathoners. We knew immediately that we had found our spiritual home. A place where people could laugh while earnestly trying to run the good race ... while being watched by stone angels in a Gothic church. "The Laughing Christ" poster hung in my Dermatology Office in Marshfield for 33 years. "Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused." (Unknown).



PUVA: As Research Fellow in Computer Medicine, I oversaw data collection and analysis for the 16-center cooperative trial of treatment of psoriasis with a drug called psoralen, which is activated in the skin by long-wave ultraviolet light called UVA. The treatment is called PUVA. Our youngest son was born in the Spring of 1977 in the Beth Israel Hospital. Linda did data entry using our home phone receiver cradled in a modem. This was cutting edge technology at that time. Linda nursed our newborn son with one arm and did data entry with the other. Years later we read about the "novelty" of "telecommuting." Between Feb 5th to 7th 1978 a blizzard dumped almost 4 feet of snow on us. When a path was cleared, we first met our mysterious neighbor who lived alone. He knew we had young children and came to check on us with a bottle of milk. Kindness of a stranger next door.

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PUVA was the first treatment submitted to the FDA involving both a drug and a device. I was a fly on the wall at meetings of the drug representative, physicist who developed the UVA bulbs, and business man who needed to close the deal. I was also a fly on the wall for the discussions by Academic Dermatologists who came to present to the FDA Advisory Committee. I learned about the subcultures involved with drug and device approval. Internists are contemplative. Surgeons are captains of their ship. Dermatologists are happy, like Pediatricians. Academic Dermatologists are skilled in grantsmanship and presentations to the FDA. I lost my innocence when I saw Academic Dermatologists omit key pieces in their presentation to allow specific members of the Advisory Committee to demonstrate their expertise by pointing out the deficiency. The presenters then thanked the Committee member for the insight and addressed the concern in detail. Unfortunately, the chairman of this FDA Advisory Committee had not been invited to participate in the PUVA trials. Approval was denied. Eventually, a new FDA Advisory Committee was appointed with a more congenial chairman. PUVA was approved at their first meeting with the new chairman. Today a presenter, tomorrow a reviewer.

Dermatology Residency: In 1976, I became a Resident in Dermatology in Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA. In 1977, along with five co-authors, including Dr. Bleich, I published the PUVA trial in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* [1977 Jun;68\(6\):328-35](#). It is the most frequently cited reference for the treatment of psoriasis in the archives of the [National Library of Medicine](#).

I was trained as a Medical Dermatologist. Dermatologic Surgery and Cosmetic Dermatology were not yet subspecialties. The Dermatology Service and the Surgery Service alternated admissions for advanced melanoma. I did paracenteses to remove fluid so a young mother could breath and visit with her children. I did end-of-life counselling for the family of a man whose brain had been invaded by ocular melanoma. I discussed withholding antibiotics for pneumonia (“the old man’s friend”). The family still asked “What can be done?” I hung blood for a man with chronic gastrointestinal bleeding hospitalized for treatment of psoriasis with [Goeckerman Therapy](#). It was not until 2006 that Hospice and Palliative Care were officially acknowledge.

I also managed patients hospitalized for [acne conglobata](#), a painful and disfiguring form of acne. Effective treatment called isotretinoin was not yet approved. Acne conglobata scared the face of Clark Dewey Wells, a Unitarian Universalist Minister. Rev. Wells later confided that facial disfigurement from this disease probably led to his ministry.

Computer Medicine Career: In 1979 I became an Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School Computer Medicine Laboratory, Beth Israel Hospital, Boston, MA. This was my first real job. Linda told me that if I wanted another training program I needed another wife. I needed no persuasion. I was ready to focus on our home and our three amazing children, all destined for amazing careers:

Our Kids: Our oldest son is Vice President of Research at [GrammaTech](#). He was leader of Team TECHx with their robot Xandra in [DARPA's Cyber Grand Challenge](#) held in Las Vegas NV on August 4th 2016. His team won 2nd prize. Our daughter is the Front-End Web Developer for the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#). Our youngest son is part of the team that founded [Electric Cloud](#) where he is now Chief Architect. They all said that they followed me into informatics because I worked too hard as a doctor. Ha! They work as hard as I ever did.



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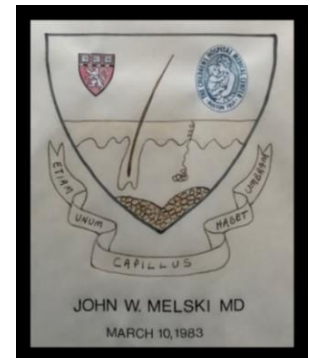
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About Your Sexuality: In the early 1980's, Linda and I volunteered to teach [About Your Sexuality](#) (AYS) at the First Unitarian Society of Newton, MA. AYS was a sex education course published by the UUA's [Beacon Press](#) for youth ages 12–14 in mixed-gender groups. The curriculum was comprehensive with explicit film strips and rubber models of genitalia, both female and male, both flaccid and erect for demonstrating condoms. I picked up the rubber genitalia from a windowless factory with a triple-lock door. After knock-knock-knock and click-click-click there was a friendly welcome. I was taken to a large, well-lit room filled with rubber genitalia in various states of manufacture suspended from the ceiling. I took a set of models without pubic hair. A lesson in surrealism.



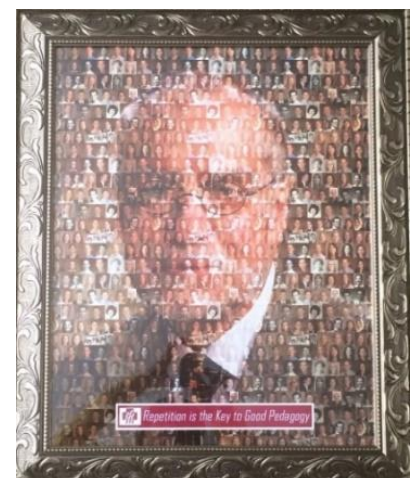
Parents were required to review the AYS material before giving consent. They endorsed AYS in concept, but struggled with the details and who should teach the course. Linda and I became the teachers when no other couple was both willing and more acceptable. Parents learned more than they expected, especially about their neighbor's attitudes. The softly-spoken gratitude of young graduates was our reward. (AYS was controversial and was replaced in the mid-90s by [Our Whole Lives](#).)

Marshfield, Wisconsin: In 1983 we left Boston and moved to Marshfield WI. Before leaving, Arthur Rhodes MD, Chief of Dermatology at Harvard gave me the certificate shown here. The banner reads: ETIAM UNUM CAPILLUS HABET UMBRAM (Even one hair has a shadow). His letter on the back reads: "Dear John, This certificate symbolizes my appreciation for your work at Children's Hospital, particularly your high standards and devotion to patient care. I, for one, will miss your research collaboration, but even more, your humanity and personal friendship."



Dermatology Practice: I was hired by Marshfield Clinic as a Dermatologist. Marshfield Clinic has a Mission of Patient Care, Education, and Research. In my first week, my new partners had taken much-needed time off. One of my first consults was a patient with an advanced stage of lymphoma called Sezary's Syndrome, which involved his blood, lymph nodes, and all of his skin. He was admitted for palliative care. He had a widespread skin infection due to the cold sore virus (HSV). Effective treatments for Sezary's and HSV did not yet exist. The patient was adamant that he wanted an end to his intractable suffering. I managed his skin care while the oncologist managed his morphine drip. Compassion is a team effort.

John as Teacher: Teaching is like seeding: "Anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the number of apples in a seed." (Robert H. Schuller). I also taught residents "Man sieht nur, was man weiß" (One sees only what one knows, Goethe). I embellished this lesson with insights from Malcolm Gladwell in "[Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking](#)." Gladwell separates fast and slow thinking. Fast is "seeing" a sabre tooth tiger. Slow is searching for an alternative explanation with more history, examination, and tests as needed. Slow is the antithesis of time-limited multiple-choice tests. When I retired, Dr. Erik Stratman, Department Chairman, made a collage-portrait of me from thumbnail photographs of my Residents over 33 years. The banner reads "Repetition is basis of good pedagogy." Erik is a teacher, artist, friend, and colleague.



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Linda as Librarian: Soon after our arrival in Marshfield, Linda became the first librarian for Our Lady of Peace Grade School. She introduced a process for dealing with requests for censorship, including requiring that the requester read the book in its entirety. The first controversy was “[Are You There God? It's me, Margaret?](#)” by Judy Blume.

Under Linda's guidance, the students made one thousand origami cranes. Linda packed up the cranes and sent them to the Hiroshima International School to be placed on the [Children's Peace Monument](#). Cranes are a symbol of peace, happiness and longevity as told in the story of [Sadako and the Paper Cranes](#).



Linda, Unsung Hero: On June 27th 2003, Linda was given the Church of the Larger Fellowship's Unsung Hero Award at the UUA General Assembly in Boston. Under the tutelage of Marjorie Lorenz (“Lori”) Pederson, Linda became the steward of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Marshfield, which was founded by Lori June 12th 1970. Linda also helps manage the email list for the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the on-line virtual church for UUs around the world. Linda leads UU services in our home. Linda worked with Lori on [The Right To Die With Dignity](#) resolution of the 1988 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly.



Linda, Volunteer: Linda volunteers at the [Chestnut Center for the Arts](#). She facilitated creation of [Friends of the Public Library](#) (FOMPL). She is known for social action. She supports [Soup or Socks](#) (SOS) the local food pantry & clothes closet and [Sheltering Hearts Domestic Abuse Resource Center](#).

Linda and Horses: Linda has a passion for horses. She is shown at Sunny Meadow Farm in Marshfield in July 2010. She is with Orey, a.k.a. Oracle, her now 32-year-old Arabian companion since 1989, and with our granddaughter from our youngest son. Linda rode Orey for as long as she could.



John and Boy Scouts: I volunteered with the Boy Scouts in Marshfield. On a trip to Devil's Lake WI with my sons I saw a star cloud in a black night sky utterly devoid of light pollution. I felt my insignificance in the universe. A lesson in awe. On another camping trip with the whole family, there was a deluge. Linda brought a tent that kept us dry... except for our oldest son, who insisted on sleeping outside in a small one-man tent. Later that night, he moved into the larger, more protective tent. A lesson in hubris. Awe and hubris are two sides of the same coin. The most spectacular excursion was sailing and snorkeling in the Florida Keys with my sons. My youngest son went on one boat with younger boys. My oldest son and I were on another boat with older boys. We had father-son bonding and priceless memories.

Lyme disease: My Dermatology practice was disrupted twice by infectious diseases. The first was Lyme disease in 1993. Dr. Kurt Reed and Dr. Paul Mitchell were colleagues in microbiology at Marshfield Clinic. We collaborated in isolating the germ called *Borrelia burgdorferi* from skin biopsies of patients with erythema migrans, the rash of Lyme disease. The study was published in the American J Clinical Pathology ([1993; 99:104-107](#)). The germ was named in honor of Dr. Wilhelm "Willy"

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Burgdorfer who developed the culture medium we used to isolate the Lyme disease germ. Dr. Burgdorfer developed this medium to isolate the germ of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. His wife thought he should be named Willy Bug-dorfer.

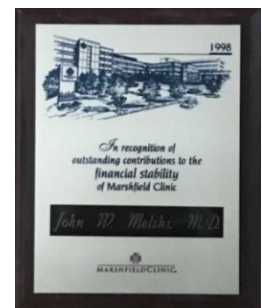
Monkeypox: My practice was disrupted again on May 13th 2003. I was on-call and was paged to see a three-year-old girl in the hospital with widespread blisters and high fevers. This was the start of my “15 minutes of fame” per Andy Warhol. The child had not responded to antibiotics or antivirals. Dr. Kurt Reed, Microbiologist, Dr. Erik Stratman, Dermatology Resident, and Dr. Donald Schreiber, Pathologist all collaborated in the diagnosis and publication of the first cases of monkeypox in the Western Hemisphere. Dr Reed was the director of our Level-3 Biological Safety Laboratory. Dr. Stratman took high-quality photographs. Dr. Schreiber expedited tissue processing. The monkeypox story is well told in the New England Journal of Medicine ([2004; 350:340-8](#)).

As the monkeypox story unfolded, I was contacted by national and international press including Associated Press and Washington Post. My name and picture were in the news. It was an out-of-this-world experience. I was hypervigilant and saw everything as a novelty. I pondered everyday phenomenon like the arborization of trees and convolutions of the human ear. It was as if I was seeing them for the first time and wondered how they could be encoded in the base-pairs of genes. Thankfully, the heightened awareness passed and I returned to a more mundane existence. If you want to stop a conversation, ask how the shape of the human ear is genetically coded. Blank stares and a new topic are sure to follow.



Informatics: Before being named Medical Director of Informatics, I joined the development team in Information Systems for Marshfield Clinic’s billing system. I was not interested in billing per se, but understood that large computers (“Big Iron”), data networks, and data archives could prevent suffering by making medical records available wherever and whenever they were needed. We developed [Marshfield Clinic’s Electronic Medical Record](#), known as [Cattails](#). We pioneered the use of tablet computers and created one of the first Data Warehouses for Medical Records. In 1995, [Edward Belongia MD](#) joined Marshfield Clinic and became the Senior Epidemiologist/ Director, Center for Clinical Epidemiology & Population Health, Marshfield Clinic Research Institute. Ed pioneered population-based research and epidemiology. The Data Warehouse continues to pay dividends.

In 1998, I was awarded a plaque “In recognition of outstanding contributions to the financial stability of Marshfield Clinic.” Bills were being processed more quickly and accounts receivable had plummeted. I made a mock apology because this consequence was unintended. On the bright side, this demonstrated the importance of metrics in healthcare because you cannot manage what you do not measure. On the dark side, emphasis on billable services can transform healthcare providers into “production units,” who know “the price of everything and the value of nothing.” ([Oscar Wilde](#))



Along with a team of colleagues shown here, Linda and I went to Hangzhou China where I gave a presentation about our Electronic Medical Record on Dec. 12th 2009. It was an opportunity of a lifetime. We have many pictures, memories, and stories, including Linda’s shopping trip with Dr Karl Ulrich, President of our Clinic (2nd from right).



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Retirement: My retirement party was on Dec. 8th 2016, two days before my 70th birthday. The theme was bow ties, which I started wearing for pediatric patients, but kept wearing for the joy of it. My favorite was the candybar bow tie. Almost everyone at my party wore a bow tie or gave one as a gift. I went home with bags of bow ties, many in original packages. It was Linda's idea to make a bow tie wreath. It was my idea to make the bow tie wreath a symbol of gratitude and a bookend for my stories.



[Lucky to be here in the first place,](#)
John and Linda (Dartmouth 68)

[Let It Be a Dance](#)

