

## 29th Storyworth: How Did You Celebrate your 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday?

My 30<sup>th</sup> birthday would have been celebrated late in the year but early in the '80's. I'll refrain from specifics for personal ID security purposes – those who already know my birthday can readily do the math, and it is meaningless to the rest of those who might read this. But it would have been a weekday during the year following my starting my first real Manager job, in Ogdensburg NY, while my then wife Lynne continued to work in Central New York from our Liverpool home, about 2.5 hours south.

While I do not recall the particulars, since that was over forty years ago, I can tell a lot about the probabilities, since I also completed my MBA the prior year, and statistics was the most valuable course I took from that experience, which I continue to use to this day. In fact, it was my obtaining my MBA, and the failure by Rollway Bearing who paid for it to recognize my need for self actualization, which led to my becoming the Engineering Manager at Shade Roller in “the Burg” along the Saint Lawrence River. Which by that time of year would have been starting to freeze ;-)

That fact, combined with the long distance to home, and the reality that I would have to drive through the Tug Hill Plateau snow bands off the east end of Lake Ontario, which meant that many winter weekends I would not be able to safely return home, staying instead in my rented trailer on a rural property in the outskirts of Ogdensburg, as I did through the work week. My commute and daily drive would be via my delicious 1978 Datsun 810 wagon, which was especially unusual in that it had an inline six of 2.4 liters driving a manual 5 speed, despite its simulated wood siding, which was a perfect vehicle for my lifestyle then. We had bought it new in Fulton, and only subsequently (and too late for warranty coverage, of course ;-)) learned that it had a manufacturing defect which would eventually ruin the engine. But that was still a few years away ;-)

As the Engineering Manager at Shade Roller, I was something of a “big wheel” in town, at least according to the realtors with whom I spoke, who felt that meant I had to want something upscale and along the river. Mind you, for those who don't know, the prevailing winds would have been directly across and along the river, and bitterly cold, so the LAST place I would have wanted any property on the US side (the opposite being in Canada ;-)) would have been directly on THAT river. But I allowed those realtors to continue their delusions because it was an ego stroke ;-)

Anyway, with my birthday being a weekday, I probably went to dinner and drinks with a person I have remained friends with ever since. She was the Data Manager at Shade Roller, and although she was married at the time, their relationship was strained to say the least. So we spent many evenings socializing because there was little else to do there, at a small pub in a strip mall. We enjoyed each other's company, but that was as far as it ever went, because both of us had other commitments.

The birth of my own daughter was a couple years away still, and my wife had been asked to setup a new program for the Visiting Nurses in CNY literally the WEEK before we had planned to start up in Ogdensburg. At that time it was still most prevalent for a wife to go where the husband's career took him. I honestly do not know how couples today deal with those kinds of issues, but that was really the second “separation” of our marriage/careers, the first having been my initial start in CNY when I lost my job with Fafnir, in New Britain, CT and found the role at Rollway in 1976. So my subsequent “roadie” career was not a huge leap, except that it deprived me of some times with Jess. Lynne continued at the New Britain Visiting Nurses for some months before moving to Syracuse to live in an apartment with me while we dealt through the real estate issues of our Condo in Wispering Woods, in Collinsville, which is outside Avon, CT.

The condo had been our first home purchase, but it occurred only about 10 months prior my losing my job through downsizing, and with bank financing with which we could not compete to try to resell it, because they had seized the property from the builder, so could offer better rates, etc. to new purchasers for the still vacant units. We eventually wound up borrowing from Lynne's Grandmother to cover the down payment for the home in Liverpool we actually picked before I had even accepted the Rollway job eight months before we actually moved in, so we rented the condo out as absentee landlords.

That proved to be both a blessing in some respects and a curse, as the first tenant was a shyster. But when she simply disappeared, we wound up seizing her furniture (which we suspect actually belonged to some rental company, but we never found out ;-)) and that became our furniture to start in Liverpool. Thankfully, she was replaced by a gay couple, who were perfect for our needs – they needed no hassles from authorities and had impeccable taste, so they decorated including rice wallpaper which helped increase the salability of our condo once they decided to leave some years later. And as I have often said, and even commented to Dawn when she asked, what happens in MY bedroom is nobody else's business, so I don't care about anyone else's either.

Anyway, we were the original buyers from the builder of our house in Liverpool, and the last original owners in the Irongate tract, having placed a deposit as noted above, but not actually closing for almost eight more months, during which time we lived from a dive in Syracuse. Lynne followed "tradition" since our marriage by first coming to live with me, and then seeking her professional role, since we felt it should be easier for a Nurse to be so mobile. We were generally correct about job availability, although my compensation almost always was half again hers, at least while I HAD compensation. I think today most Nurses would describe similarly prepared academics to be pretty close with most engineers, except in specific high-tech roles. But that career mobility might have been adversely affected accordingly. And Ogdensburg represented a change in our career paths as well because that established me as a "road warrior", while Lynne pretty much remained in location. Jess came along two years after I was 30, which we decided both because Lynne felt her "biological clock" ticking, and because the Regnery family's destruction of Shade Roller meant the elimination of my role there, so I was back working in Liverpool at Fastek, where I could be an available parent as well ;-)

As an aside, however, Shade Roller had enabled me to fulfill a lifelong dream of acquiring my Porsche 911 Targa, the car Jess came home in from the hospital the day after her birth. She still has it. So while it was not part of my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, per se, it was obtained only four months later, and that was an indicator to me that I was ready to become a Dad, among a host of other "maturing" steps. Yes, some of which meant simply becoming another year older ;-)

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