

## **That's Our Story and We're Sticking To It**

By Jim and Audora Burg

Birthday week arrived for the Burg family, as two of our three young'uns marked the passage of another year of life on planet earth.

The celebration was wrapped up in the usual trappings – cake, presents, and family stories, ranging from funny to poignant.

Anniversaries of major life events somehow seem incomplete for us without a re-telling of the whys and wherefores of their history.

Maybe that's just in this family. If so, the origin is easily traced: Audora's mother is a gifted storyteller on par with the best oral historian who preserves and hands down a community's history. In this case, it's a family's history.

Our children beg Grandma to tell them stories of when Mommy was a little girl. Depending on the story, Mommy (Audora) sometimes begs Grandma not to.

Growing up with that story-telling tradition, it's natural that Audora continues it, though her tales are not told half-so-well.

So every year, daughter No. 1 asks to hear again the events of her birth (53 hours of labor, dear child) and the amazingly large feet on that newborn ("puppy feet," she called them).

Our son is not as familiar with his story because he's been too young for us to tell him we nearly lost him, that he was born without heartbeat or respiration, with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck three times.

But he's been exposed to the storytelling culture around him, so it's hardly surprising (although still amazing to us) how he described his first memories: "I was 3 when I got my brain. I couldn't remember yesterday, then flash! A story began," he said.

How curious that he used the word "story." But that's the perfect metaphor for how families not only understand but are formed by their history, how couples



put their relationship in a context.

At a time when the “talking heads” fill the airwaves with persistent commentary and analysis, we who tell our own stories take on the same role: developing our own framework for understanding life and events.

We remind and define ourselves by story, by setting plot points into a narrative, so that a straight-forward catalog of events becomes a living, evolving history.

This weekend, the story of our relationship enters its 13th chapter (year) as we celebrate the 12th anniversary of our re-meeting. We will recall yet again, and with joy, that unofficial first date and the feelings of hope, excitement, and anticipation it unleashed.

That’s our story, and we’re sticking to it.