

MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

Stormy Crossing: Sally Bennett retired to Martha's Vineyard to start a new life. Instead, she found her forgotten childhood on the other side of the sea. Also, a conversation with The World's technology reporter Clark Boyd.

Tony Kahn:

Hi everybody. This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston. Have you ever had an "iceberg moment?" I don't mean the lettuce, and I don't mean the ice cream. I mean one of those experiences where a little something in your life or in your world suddenly chills you, bothers you, and it seems to be out of all proportion to what's showing. The deeper you look into it, the more you realize it is huge and vast, and it probably goes deep into your life and deep into your past. Well, Sally Bennett had one of those "iceberg moments" recently in of all places, Martha's Vineyard, a place that, to all intents and purposes, is like paradise for most people. It wasn't for Sally. She explains why in *Stormy Crossing*.

Sally Bennett:

It takes a long time to make friends, perhaps longer in New England. People are careful with their friendship. They know it is a valuable commodity and not to be dispensed carelessly. [Sounds of waves and seabirds] I understand this. I thought I was prepared. Having never had time during my years of raising kids, teaching, and writing, to join anything, I decided to give it a try. How weird it was to remember what it felt like to be eleven years old, the new kid in class, looking out over a sea of unfamiliar faces. [Sounds of waves breaking on the beach] The heaving winter sea invokes a stormy wartime crossing on a small freighter, the crash of breaking crockery, the smell of seasickness.

[Portuguese Music]

When I was thirteen, my mother, sister, and I were alone in Estoril outside Lisbon, against the background of World War II. From the upstairs balcony, you could see the same Atlantic Ocean. [Music] Our friends had gone; my mother became very ill and believed she was dying. That feeling of being utterly alone has never left me.

I did not remember feeling angry when I was eleven or twelve or thirteen, but that anger was there, waiting. [Bird and wave sounds] Here I was, a retired person in a beautiful new home, feeling I wanted to do nothing but trash the place. I told anyone who would listen how much I hated the empty streets, unlit houses, and closed stores, running beside the same ocean, painful reminders of a childhood spent bumping from place to place. This island is haunted by the empty resorts of my childhood. [Music] I thought I was prepared. My ghosts do not yet trust this place.

Tony Kahn:

That was Sally Bennett with WGBH's *Morning Story* for today, *Stormy Crossing*. We've been going through an incredible passage of our own in podcasting, Gary Mott. As we know, Apple started carrying podcasts in its iTunes store. Well, several weeks before it started doing that, word-of-mouth for podcasting in general was definitely on the rise, and we were getting more and more downloads. But now that they're featuring *Morning Stories*, along with some other shows from Public Radio as Public Radio picks – whoa! The floodgates are starting to open!

Gary Mott:

It's, it's very exciting. The interest in podcast, the phenomenon, just went through the roof.

Tony Kahn:

People who had been into it get a little boost of energy, so that hobbyists may be feeling like they could be a little bit more professional, and professionals can get the, the courage to feel like it's okay to be a hobbyist again, too. So in that sense, walls have been coming down!

[Sounds of wall crashing down]

Gary Mott:

Look out! [crash]

Tony Kahn:

[Laughing] Anything for a cheap sound effect. In fact, the wall that separates our office from *The World* office, which is a broadcast that comes out of WGBH, came down just the other day, and we found Clark Boyd, who is a reporter for the broadcast, working on his weekly tech podcast. So we grabbed Clark, and we dragged him outside to our Studio "O," and we asked him what it was that he was working on, not just as a broadcast story, but as a podcast story.

Clark Boyd:

Recently I did a piece about this guy in Scotland. It's part of a series that I'm doing about bloggers and podcasters worldwide. Then I came across this guy in Scotland who does what's called the "Tartan Podcast." [Tony chuckles] And he's essentially just highlighting Scottish music.

Tony Kahn:

You did the piece for him as a broadcast.

Clark Boyd:

I did the piece for him as a broadcast. A couple of days later I get an email from him saying, "An anonymous donor in Beverly Hills heard your broadcast and sent me an anonymous donation so that I could get a new mic and a new mixer."

Tony Kahn:

Wow.

Clark Boyd:

So, on the broadcast, I'm not gonna get the chance to do the follow up and talk about that, and talk about the effect that that had, but on the podcast, of course, I can come back to that story and keep following it through, and every little new wrinkle, I can share with the podcasting audience.

Tony Kahn:

And it's a new story also, in that it's a story about the relationship between broadcasting and podcasting.

Clark Boyd:

Right. I mean, I, broadcasters realize the value of doing podcasts, and then you have this sort of grassroots effort of podcasting kind of moving up, and very concerned about their standards, and trying to actually become more like broadcasts, if they can. So, it's gonna be really interesting, the meeting in the middle of all that. I think there's room for all of us there. It's the public back in Public Radio. I mean, this is why I got into Public Radio to start with, was because I did feel that it was a little bit more intimate, that you could do storytelling, that you were really, you know, digging deeper into stories than you could, than you could do anywhere else. To me, podcasting is an even better extension of that 'cause you can delve even a little deeper, find something even quirkier, your, your audience is just gonna love.

Tony Kahn:

Isn't it amazing, Gary, that anytime anybody hears about podcasting, as people heard about podcasting through Clark's report, the first thing they want to do, they want to make a personal connection, and they want to support somebody else's work.

Gary Mott:

We have been getting email from Georgia, from China, from Japan. I mean just, people are discovering WGBH *Morning Stories* through whatever means, whether it's word-of-mouth, or, you know, via iTunes. It's, it's been tremendously heartening.

Tony Kahn:

We've got a, just a wonderful letter from Andrew Blank and Judy Landis of The Hague, Netherlands. They write that they are enthusiastic podcast listeners of *Morning Stories*, and Andrew says that, "Now that iTunes has greatly simplified the business of podcast subscription, I'm sure you'll have more and more listeners from well beyond your normal listening area. When we lived in the States we were supporters of public radio and television. It's nice that *Morning Stories* is offered at no cost, but that doesn't feel quite right. In the meantime," they write, "we're supporting your sponsor, Ipswitch,"

well bless your heart, "by using their nifty network monitor tool, What's Up Pro, at work, a great piece of software." Well it's a great company as well - <Ipswitch.com>, a leader in file transfer software, and we thank them now as we do every podcast - I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H dot com.

Gary Mott:

And don't forget the *Morning Stories* website. Bookmark it: <wgbh.org/morningstores>, and please keep on sending us that fantastic email. We love gettin' it - <morningstories@wgbh.org>.

Tony Kahn:

We'll be back with you again next Friday. See you then.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Susan MacLeod