



Sue Staats sits onstage with author Tobias Wolff at a Stories on Stage event in 2015.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STORIES ON STAGE

Curtain call

Here's a mystery for you: Once a month, there's an author reading event where no authors read, but people still hear their stories. That's because actors perform the stories instead. It's Stories on Stage Sacramento, which has been a local staple since 2010. Sue Staats, the outgoing coordinator for Stories on Stage, originally came to Sacramento to work in TV news—which she did for a while, then worked in a slew of public relations jobs. It wasn't until retirement that she began exploring creative writing.

Staats began her Stories on Stage involvement first as a reader and then a volunteer before she was asked by the event's founder, Valerie Fioravanti, to take over operations. That was six years ago, and in the intervening years, Staats has brought esteemed authors and emerging writers to see their work read on stage. Now, Staats is passing the Stories on Stage torch to the team of Shelley Blanton-Stroud and Dorothy Rice. SN&R chatted with Staats about the greatest hits of coordinating Stories on Stage Sacramento, and about its future.

Did you change things along the way?

Only in the sense that I placed it more on a business footing because we'd sort of been operating out of a shoebox on a cash basis. And I, for instance, opened a checking account. (Laughs.) One of the basic tenets of Stories on Stage is that writers and actors should be paid for their work. ... That started to come as a check instead of cash divided up at the end of the event.

... I also started some new partnerships. We now have an annual event where we feature the writing from the four Los Rios community colleges. They all have literary magazines, and they all have very good creative writing departments.

Were you selecting pieces and authors?

Yeah, I was ... I would assemble the volunteers, and we'd come to my house—have dinner, a glass of wine—and people would throw out ideas for their

wish lists. Y'know, who would you like to have, who would you like to have? And that way, I got sort of an idea of what the group would like to see.

Is it a challenge ever for the actors?

I can't say yes. There have been stories where the actors reading have elevated it, and that's wonderful. The actors like it—it's a challenge. It's a really different kind of acting presentation, I've been told, because you can't be too dramatic. You're not moving around, you haven't memorized anything, you're just reading it out loud and trying to bring life to characters on the stage.

How long have you been a writer?

I want to say 15 years, more or less. I'm sort of dawdling along with it. I have a short story collection that's finished, and I'm sort of, in a mild way, trying to get it out to the world. ... I would have to work way harder and devote way more of my time to it to really say that I was a hard-nosed, dedicated person.

In your career, did you have a creative outlet of choice?

Y'know, I didn't do any creative writing at that time. I didn't come to fiction until I started taking classes. But the most creative part was I produced a number of documentaries, and particularly when I was working in TV, I produced a lot of documentaries. But also producing a news story for television, your assignment editor gives you an idea in the morning, and you have to come up with a complete visual piece that is a minute and 15 seconds long with a story arc ... That was, to me, really more fun than anything.

Has your writing changed in any way, being involved in this?

Well, it has opened my eyes and mind to better and better and better writing. And also, it has made me realize the kind of toughness and dedication it takes to be a really fine writer, and how true you have to be to yourself. The best work comes from a strong personal conviction. □

Catch the last production of Stories on Stage Sacramento for the season at the CLARA auditorium, Oct. 25, 7:30 p.m. A \$10 donation is suggested.

Men: It's okay to talk about low testosterone.

Decreased sexual desire?

Feel fatigued? Depressed mood?

What you're feeling could be related to low testosterone (hypogonadism).

Consider joining the TRAVERSE research study for men age 45 – 80 who have symptoms of low testosterone (hypogonadism) and have a history or risk of heart disease or stroke.

If you volunteer and qualify, your participation will last up to approximately 5 years. During that time you'll receive testosterone replacement therapy or placebo in the form of a gel that you'll apply to your skin. Your health is very important to us, and will be monitored throughout the study.

If you qualify, you may potentially receive:

- Testosterone replacement therapy or placebo
- Study-required medical care from a study doctor

You also might be eligible for some compensation for participation.

Jennifer Hurst, CCRC, Site Director
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We're researching an investigational flu medication.



DIAMOND

IRB Approved at the Protocol Level Oct. 1, 2018

The DIAMOND Study is researching an investigation medication for people with influenza A (the flu). Doctors would like to see if adding it to standard care from flu can affect how quickly patients recover. They will also look at the safety of the investigational medication.

Participation in the DIAMOND Study may be open to those who:

- have started to get flu symptoms, such as ccugh, sore throat, stuffy nose, body aches, headache, fever, or tiredness
- are 13-65 years of age and have a long-term health condition (for example, a weakened immune system, lung disease, or a heart condition) or
- are 66-85 of age.

Study participation will last for about 28 days. Study medication will be provided at no cost.

To learn more, please contact Jennifer Hurst, CCRC, Site Director
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