



CATHIE ANDERSON

JANUARY 4, 2014

Cathie Anderson: Fair Oaks business consultant treated like royalty in Bahrain

HIGHLIGHTS

Fair Oaks consultant Doug Lipp was welcomed to the Persian Gulf like a long-lost son, including a call notifying him that the crown prince of Bahrain wanted to schedule a meeting. ... The Gatsby craze has run its course, and that's not good news for literature lover Marina Watanabe. ... Jazz & Jokers at Niki C's abruptly shuts down in Rancho Cordova, and it looks as though Tommy T's might return to the spot.

Consultant **Doug Lipp** grew up with Bedouin trunks and Persian rugs in his family home in Carmichael, but until last November, when he was unexpectedly feted like a long-lost son in Bahrain, these family treasures were merely artifacts from a pre-Doug past.

Lipp, the author of "Disney U" (McGraw-Hill, \$27, 256 pages), presents seminars around the world on customer service, leadership, change management and global competitiveness. Knowing that he was scheduled to speak in the Persian Gulf, his father, **Gordon Lipp**, asked him to come by and look at some photos of his grandfather in Bahrain.



"I'm thinking, 'Oh, my God, we've got to get up at 3 in the morning,'" the younger Lipp told me. "It's the night before the trip. He'd laid all these out on the table in the family room."

In one of them, his late grandfather, **Milton Lipp**, laughed and waved as he sat comfortably beside Bahrain's late ruler, **Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa**. Milton Lipp had been the general manager and ultimately the chairman of the predecessor company to BAPCO, a petroleum refining operation now wholly owned by Bahrain.

Lipp and his wife and business partner, **Pam Lipp**, borrowed the photos, took them to their Fair Oaks home, scanned them into the computer and, at one in the morning, emailed them off to the BAPCO people and their local contact. Almost immediately, BAPCO executives asked the Lippes to visit **Dar An-Naft**, the Oil Museum of the Bahrain Petroleum Co.

Lipp and his wife were able to tour the boardroom where a photo of Milton Lipp hung on the wall, along with those of 11 other BAPCO chairmen. Immediately outside the museum was the first oil well drilled by the company, and Lipp bawled as he realized that he was walking the same ground that his grandfather had.

"Until you go to a place, you don't really connect as much," Lipp said. "To see firsthand what they thought of my grandfather, and to have that rub off through my Dad onto Pam and me was such a gift. They literally rolled out the red carpet for us. When I met with the minister of economic development the morning that he was going to introduce me at the seminar ... I mentioned my grandfather's name, and he said, 'Oh, Milton Lipp, he's a household name in Bahrain.'"

At the seminar, officials flashed the photo of Lipp's grandfather sitting with Al Khalifa, and a murmur of astonishment went through the crowd. The chairman of BAPCO adjusted his schedule to listen to Lipp's talk. The crown prince of Bahrain had his people try to set up a meeting, but Lipp was unable to reschedule seminars in Dubai and Kuwait.

After hearing his son's stories, the 85-year-old Gordon Lipp said, he felt that his father's work had been valued and his character respected. Lipp lived in Bahrain as a boy before World War II, and he recalled a prescient decision made by his father. Flares on either side of the refinery burned off gas and waste, he said, but Milton Lipp had the flares moved further away.

"They moved them out 150 yards or 200 yards, something like that," Gordon Lipp said, "and when the Italians came to bomb Bahrain, that's exactly where they bombed, (in the desert) between the flares. ... Bahrain was lit up like a jewel. Every light at the refinery was on, but they flew over it and bombed between the flares."

Doug and Pam Lipp told me they plan to return to Bahrain in May with their son, and they will take photos and other mementos to donate to the Bahrain oil museum.

