

# The Well-Built Life of Russ Morash

## PBS PIONEER CELEBRATES A HALF CENTURY OF GROUND-BREAKING TELEVISION



Russell Morash in The New Yankee Workshop

By Laurie Atwater and Jim Shaw

An aspiring actor and director, Russell Morash was headed for the bright lights of Broadway after he graduated from Boston University in the late fifties when a call came in from a little-known television station in Boston. For this Lexington man, the choice proved to be life altering.

"I keep thinking of my life as a series of intersections where I was at the right place at the right time," Morash states.

There have been so many intersections in Morash's life that we might question serendipity and think perhaps that it was the convergence of temperament, talent and moxie that placed Morash in the "right place" and set him on the path that would become his highly successful career. Morash would dismiss this idea out of hand, no doubt, but his heightened ability to take notice of the moment, his intellectual curiosity, work ethic and great instincts converged with his ability to execute, and that combination has consistently characterized his rise and lead him to make a profound impact on television.

Take for instance the unique marriage of theatricality and Yankee practicality—these qualities so paired in young Russell Morash made him uniquely suited to survive the rough and tumble world of early television and to recognize the enormous opportunity that it offered. Who better to lead the way through this great adventure than a guy whose ingenuity and creative vision allowed him to overcome the enormous financial and technical barriers that were always part of the mix to "get it done."

Still, it's difficult to get this modest gentleman to take any credit for his personal contribution to television. With over forty years at WGBH and nine directing Emmys to his credit, he's still just a thrifty Lexingtonian with a great story to tell. Recently he and his wife and sometime business partner Marian welcomed us into his home to talk about his long career.

### Lexington Roots

Morash was a 1953 graduate of Lexington High School.

He and his twin brother both attended Junior and Senior High School at Muzzey on Mass. Avenue. "We graduated in 1953 having been involved in glee club, drama club, football, cross-country—anything but academics. In those days they cared more about the non-academics than they did about the academics," he says. He spent a year at Tufts and then transferred over to Boston University where he settled into the theater program and studied hard for what he thought would be a career on Broadway.

At BU, Morash was mentored by noted Broadway theater director Alan Schneider. "I graduated with a major in directing and acting," Morash says. "Alan was a presence on Broadway and he'd offered me a job as an assistant stage manager on a Beckett production that he was working on. The pay was \$35.00 per week."

### Serendipity

Out of the blue, and on the very same day, Morash received that call that would change the course of his life. "I had written WGBH a letter saying that I was now ready

to join the world of television," Morash explains with a laugh. "I had no business writing that letter. I knew nothing about TV!" Someone at WGBH received the letter and offered him a job. "TV stations don't respond to aspirants," Morash says, "it never happens!"

But it did happen and Morash was subsequently offered a job in the relatively new field of public television. "The guy who hired me was infatuated with the theater," Morash says. At the time GBH was loaded down with people who had graduated from more technical communications programs according to Morash. "They knew nothing about, dealing with actors, talent, speech and movement—any of the things I thought I knew something about."

Morash was hired as a cameraman which he considers a lucky break. "As a budding television director—to learn through the lens was great." Morash recalls buying himself a Leica camera and he began experimenting with composition. "My first practice was taking pictures with that camera. I really became excited about the technical side of the business."

Truth be told, Morash had more than a casual relationship with television! His hands-on relationship with the box that transformed America began as a young man in Lexington where he spent years lugging the heavy sets for Peter's Music (which was on Mass. Ave. where Not Your Average Joe's is located today). Peter's was a record shop, but they were also doing a brisk business in TV sets and television repairs. Young Morash drove the truck out to the homes of Lexingtonians to pick up broken sets in need of repair. "TV was a very big deal in those days," he says. He recalls the first television he ever saw was being awarded as a prize at a fourth of July celebration in Lexington. "I so well remember—it was right at the center

playground—the door prize was a brand new television! It was the first TV I think I had ever seen and that was about 1949, 1950. So, I was in on the dawn of television!"

Little did he know that just thirteen years later he would be directing one of the most popular shows for WGBH—*The French Chef*, hosted by cookbook author Julia Child.

### Julia, Julia



The Julia years. Clockwise from top: The popularity of *The French Chef* with Julia Child, directed by Russell Morash, made Child an instant celebrity. 1. She graces the cover of *Time* magazine in 1966. 2. Julia in the kitchen. 3. Julia with her director Russell Morash. 4. Julia showing her characteristic humor with her fabulous pegboard of culinary tools in the background. 5. Julia, photographed by her husband Paul Child showing her love, respect and joy for food!

In the early hours of 1961 a fire swept through the old WGBH studios in Cambridge and completely destroyed the facility. "You could say we had burned down our station," Morash says. "We all smoked in those days and the top floor of that building was an old oak-floored roller skating rink. It was good for rolling cameras around, but it burned."

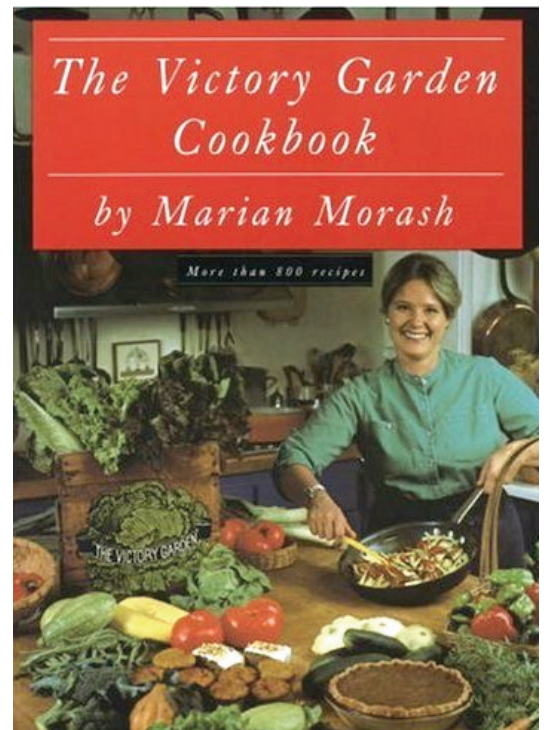
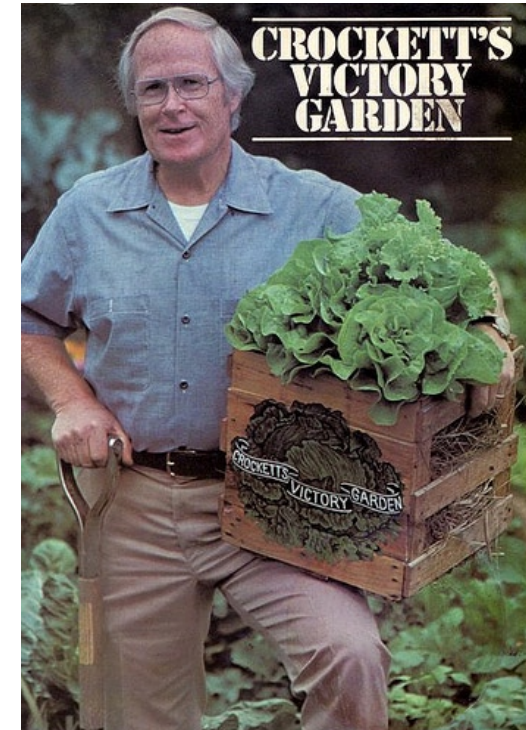
With the studios destroyed, the station relocated to the Catholic Television Center and other locations scattered around the city. Morash became a specialist in setting up at remote locations and working out of their huge remote unit which was a 1958 Trailways bus that had been outfitted as a control center and had "seven million miles on it when we got it," Morash says wryly.

"At the time someone was working on a show called *I've Been Reading*," Morash explains. The show was a book review show that was hosted by Boston College professor P. Albert Duhamel. Ms. Child was scheduled to appear on the show to talk about her new book *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.

"So a call came in to the office and I picked it up," Morash begins his story. "It sounded like someone who was a two-pack-a-day smoker filtered through Tallulah Bankhead," he laughs and continues, "This was no mere mortal." He describes the conversation with this very patrician sounding cook who made a strange request for her segment on the book show. "She said, 'I will require a hot plate,'" Morash says with a hint of Julia's signature trill. "So I told her that I would pass her request along to the producer." Morash obviously remembers the call with fondness and says that Julia "got her hot plate and brought her own omelet pan and eggs and she made the guy an omelet on the air." The book review show got such a positive response that the station decided to fund a three-show pilot featuring Julia and her French cooking. Morash was chosen to direct—not because of his great knowledge of food, or his understanding of French, but because he was one of the few that could operate the mobile unit!

"The rest is history," Morash says. And fifty years later *The French Chef*, now considered a classic in the genre, is revered and continues to be watched by many. "It's really a miracle that any of that is considered good enough to watch," he says—a miracle because the process that created *The French Chef* was a product of Morash's "make-do TV." They had no studio so they found a temporary kitchen in the Boston Gas Company auditorium. It had been set up to promote the use of gas cooking. "We used it for two days to make the pilots." The show later moved to the Cambridge Electric Company which also had a kitchen set-up designed to create demonstrations to promote electric cooking.

"They [Cambridge Electric & Boston Gas]



*Crockett's Victory Garden* was the second wildly successful Morash show. Top photo, the Victory Garden with its "Main Street" paved path used to roll the large cameras used to film the show. Above left, the original host of the show, James Underwood Crockett shown on the cover of his successful gardening book. Right, Chef Marian's Marian Morash) well-loved vegetable cookbook.

were wonderful guest hosts for the show," Morash says. "What's funny is their kitchen was set up to do electric cooking which Julia came to hate as most serious cooks do, but she soldiered on."

In fact Julia endured long hours and even electrical shocks while they were making the show. "The mobile unit was hooked up to one kind of power and the stove was hooked up to another

kind of power and it was called ground mismatch," Morash says. "Every time you touched the stove you would get a nasty little tingle, but that's how the show was made! We had to tough it out. "Morash lights up when he talks about Julia. "She was so great. Everything was loaded against her, bad

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The current crew of *This Old House*, The WGBH series created by Russell Morash and directed By Morash for many years. Top left, Tom Silva, General Contractor, Norm Abrams, Master Carpenter, Roger Cook, Landscape Contractor, Richard Trethewey, Plumbing and Heating Expert and new series Host, Kevin O'Connor. Photo courtesy of WGBH.

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images, the audio and video wasn't as good as it should have been, we had to keep her on camera too long...but the material was good enough to survive the hideous technical process."

Morash shot the show with huge stationary cameras and a secondary camera that was used for "in-the-pot" shots relied on an overhead mirror. Each time they switched to that view the image would be reversed! This was one of the many less than perfect, but endearing qualities of the early shows along with Julia's laughter, breathlessness, obvious joy and down to earth delivery that Morash captured on film in one take—no edits.

"We're talking about the golden age of television," Morash says. Edits were almost impossible with the old tape. Morash describes the painstaking process of locating edit pulse points on the 2" wide tape and then placing the tape under a microscope to view the image before actually splicing the tape. (It's fun to visit this site to get a sense of the process and get a sense of the equipment used at this time: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YtmwB9Ds5Y>)

"Does this sound primitive?" Morash asks. "Because it was. We had a microscope that Louis Pasteur could only dream about!" He laughs. He has a wonderfully dry sense humor and great delivery.

Morash treated each show as if it were a live broadcast—like a baseball game. "When you can't predict what is going to happen," he says, "you have to be prepared for anything." He jumps up to illustrate and points quickly from left to right while narrating: "She's going to the sink...no, she's going to the stove, to the stove!" He points at his temple and says, "It's all in here. It's all hand-eye and constantly watching the monitors being prepared for anything."

Morash reflects, "Today a team of 5 or 6 people would be formed with a \$1000 per minute budget and you'd be grateful if you could get one a week. We were doing *four* a day! Four a day—and they were pretty good shows! No edits. They had to be the right length with no excuses. That's how I earned my money and it wasn't very much—about \$85 a week."

Julia's show was an unlikely success, but her personality and love of the French methods which she had learned at the Cordon Bleu late in life inspired people. The real-time quality of the shows made the shows so full of life and allowed the food and Julia's personality to shine through. The shows stand in sharp contrast to the celebrity-driven, hyped food shows of today.

"It was the 60's," Morash says. "No one had seen anything like it. Food was in cans. No one used spices, or garlic! Or wine! The Morashes were eating beans and franks back then!"

Actually, it was more like tuna casserole according to Morash's wife Marian who also has fond memories of the "Julia years" having worked on later shows herself as a chef. "When we were first married and Russ was making \$85 per week, we were eating lots of tuna fish casseroles," she laughs. "Julia was wonderful in those days. Because they were doing live television she would have chicken in various stages and she would send it home with Russell with instructions for how to finish it off."

Marian says she'll never forget the time Julia sent Russell home with a whole goose. "The goose was stuffed with prunes and the prunes were stuffed with foie gras! I can remember calling my friends and saying 'would you like to come over for stuffed duck with foie gras!'"

Many will remember some of the early and most memorable *French Chef* episodes like Child's famous "chicken sisters" episode where she lined the counter with "seated" birds, pointing to them each with a butcher knife (as if she were knighting them individually) and says in her ebullient, breathy way:

"Julia Child presents the Chicken Sisters! Miss Broiler, Miss Fryer, Miss Roaster, Miss Caponette, Miss Stewer and Old Madame Hen. But we're spotlighting Miss Roaster of the year! Measuring in at 14-15-14! We're roasting Miss Chicken! Today! On *The French Chef!*" (You too can watch it on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8prY-yHYoE>)

### A Passion for Learning; Crockett's Victory Garden

"For reasons that I can only assume are in our genes, I really wanted to grow vegetables," Morash says as we begin to talk about his second hit program *Crockett's Victory Garden* which he began shooting in 1975.

"Just to be able to grow some tomatoes would have been nice. I was living in Lexington at the time I started in to try to improve the soil and create a garden on my

property, but I had very mixed results," he laughs.

With gas rationing and stagflation the realities of that time, Morash's instincts told him that Americans might spark to the idea of growing their own food and



Above, Norm Abram, Master Carpenter and host of *The New Yankee Workshop* in front of the shop that is the envy of every woodworker in the country! Below Norm Abram (foreground) and Russell Morash (background) discuss a kitchen project. Photo courtesy of WGBH.

rediscovering the old Yankee practice of being self-sustaining. Morash explains that he got the idea for the name from the "Victory Gardens" that were planted during the wars to ease food shortages. "My children and everybody else's children thought that milk came from a box and eggs came from a store and beets and carrots and beans came from a case," he says. He thought the time may be right for people to reconnect with the earth.

However, he himself was frustrated with gardening. "I was a failure and yet I was still so optimistic—I thought, 'there's got to be a pony in there somewhere,'" Morash laughs. His buddy Mark



*"It's important to understand that all of the programming that Russ has been associated with has been motivated by passion. Whether it's cooking, gardening, construction or woodworking, Russ is a passionate advocate for being self-reliant. If you look back to previous generations, you can see that people used to do all of this themselves. These programs help people get back to basics."*

*-Norm Abram*



*The New Yankee Workshop* interior. Photo courtesy of WGBH.

(who was the program manager at GBH at the time) was also interested in gardening. "One day we were talking and we said, 'It's a shame that we can't get someone to teach us how to garden.'"

Morash had translated Julia Child's desire to teach the French methods into a form of instructional broadcasting that had resonated with the public. He was convinced that he could transfer that process to gardening.

Morash went to the library. "I found a Time/Life Series of gardening books entitled *The Time/ Life Encyclopedia of Gardening*." Inside the book Morash noticed that a fellow from Waltham had contributed to the volume authored by James Underwood Crockett. He decided to pay him a visit and pitch him the idea he had for the gardening show.

This "grandfatherly looking" fellow, Bob Young, was perfect for the job Morash says, but he was not too sure about being on TV. "He looks at me and says 'Why don't you get Crockett?'" Morash explained that he didn't have much of a budget couldn't afford to be flying people in to Boston to make a local show. "Well he says to me, 'He lives in Concord,'" Morash laughs and indicates that perhaps luck had stepped in to take control once again.

At the time Jim Crockett was selling what Morash described as "flowery cards" to florists. The cards had the genus and species of the plant on one side and a cute poem on

the other. Selling these cards kept Crockett on the road most all of the time. Once again, Morash explains that luck or stepped in. He called Crockett and got him on the phone the very first try. "Remember, this was before answering machines or voice mail," he says. Sure enough Crockett had decided to take a short trip home to Concord in-between sales calls and was departing the next day. "Call me when I get back," he said and at that moment Jim Crockett's life changed forever although he didn't know it yet.

"When I found this wonderful gentleman in Concord, Jim Crockett, who was willing to join us to see if we could demonstrate how to garden," Morash says, "I knew we had a show."

Morash had to figure out where they could locate the garden. It had to be close enough to the control room so they could reach it with the huge television equipment and cables that would be used to shoot the program. That took them out to this strip of ground outside the Allston studio and overlooking Harvard Stadium. "It was actually in the parking lot," Morash says. To design the studio garden they built raised beds with a "Main Street" of concrete running down the center that accommodated a rolling studio camera. They used a "portable" camera for the second shots, but even that required a long cord back to the studio. Morash secured a donated greenhouse

from Lord & Burnham for the show and they were in business.

As always, Morash directed the show on the fly with little or no scripting and few frills or distracting devices. The garden had its own rhythm and Morash respected cadence of nature as well as the pace necessary for proper instruction.

Soon viewers began writing in to the show. "Russell said to me that they were getting a lot of letters in to the station," Marian Morash says. They wanted to know how to prepare the vegetables that they were growing. "We were showing vegetables on *Victory Garden* that people didn't know how to deal with like beets and things like that that were a bit unusual in those days."

Marian had eventually become the Executive Chef for Julia Child's various shows, so she was a natural to step in on the new project. "Russell decided that we should start doing little cooking segments at the end of each show. He drafted me—I was cheap and I was right here in the kitchen!" Soon the *Chef Marian* segments became so popular that Marian Morash published her own vegetable cookbook.

Marian was also the owner and Head Chef of the Straight Wharf Restaurant on Nantucket where the Morashes have a summer residence. Ironically the daughter of former WGBH and WBUR host Christopher Leydon, Amanda Leydon, is now the co-Executive Chef at the Straight Wharf. "When Amanda was a little girl she would come to the back door of the restaurant with blueberries and she'd say, 'I picked these blueberries, would you like to buy them?'" Today she is running the restaurant!" Marian takes pleasure in the complete circle of the story.

*Crockett's Victory Garden* lost Jim Crockett too soon, but not before he made the show hugely popular and became a household name.

With the success of *Victory Garden*, Morash was moving toward what would become the pinnacle of his television career, *This Old House*.

### **This Old House**

Based on the popularity of *Victory Garden*, GBH came to Morash and asked him if he had any other good ideas for shows. It just so happened that he'd been rolling an idea around in his head for some time—the kernel of the idea for *This Old House*.

"We take a house, we fix it up and then we sell it," say Morash. "This was the idea. They gave me a niggling amount of money—fifty grand for fifteen programs—and they said 'go to it.'"

As with the *Victory Garden*, the idea evolved from his personal experience and passion. He and Marian had remodeled several houses and had become very involved in the process. Morash also reflected back on his father's experience as a carpenter. "When he [his father] stopped jobbing he began working

as an onsite carpenter at a high tech company off 128," Morash says. At lunchtime employees at this high tech company would find their way to Mr. Morash's workshop to ask for assistance on projects around their own homes. "I always remembered that," he says.

"We all need mentors. We don't have that in our society," Morash says. "You combine the fascination that people have with old houses and the business and mechanics of fixing them up, and you combine it with introducing people to local craftsmen and celebrating these craftsman and you have the basis for a show!"

*This Old House* was first released to the local market and then it went out to national audiences. "It was a hit almost from the moment it went on the air," Morash says with satisfaction.

### **We Take You There**

Although technology had improved by 1979 when *This Old House* went on the air, the directing style that Morash has developed out of his need to "make-do", focusing on the process not the host, long uninterrupted shots and limited editing remain his signature style. "Today, sometimes the ability to manipulate images intrudes on the content," he says.

According to Morash, his shooting process is organic. "The eye doesn't cut. The eye moves in and out, it can tilt, it can pan, it can back off, but it doesn't cut. We as humans don't feel that we're missing anything because of that—we've adjusted to it." So to keep things moving in his shows, Morash relies on his old acting and directorial skills. "To keep viewer interest, we either move the camera to follow the action or you move people or things within the scene to create action. A cut is an abstraction. We take you there."

Indeed *This Old House* has taken us to many locations over the years and it has inspired a bonanza of home-improvement programs on multiple networks. Still, the original remains the favorite. The show has had several hosts over the years, but the core crew of experts has remained constant. Norm Abram has been the Master Carpenter for *This Old House* since the series premiered.

Norm Abram is a Master Carpenter who grew up Milford. He attended the University of Massachusetts in the late 60s. Norm arrived at UMass in pursuit of a degree in mechanical engineering. He explained that he didn't see a future for himself in mechanical engineering and soon switched his concentration to business and finance, which he thought would give him a stronger background in accounting and marketing. Ultimately, Norm chose to leave UMass before completing his degree.

Norm explained, "I had worked with my father in building when I was young. From that time, I've always had a love for carpentry. So, after deciding to leave UMass, I took a job with a Cambridge-based construction company and they sent me

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to work in Vermont. Not long after that, the job foreman left and I was asked to step into that position.”

“Norm was building a house on Nantucket for a friend of mine,” Morash relates. “He said, ‘come over and meet this guy—you’ll like him—cheap old Yankee that you are. The guy’s trim pile is smaller than any I’ve ever seen!’” Morash explains that the trim pile is what’s left over when a carpenter finishes a framing job.

“Norm didn’t have enough left to build a fire to keep ants warm for ten minutes. So I liked him immediately,” Morash says with a smile.

“Not long after meeting him in Nantucket, Russ approached me about a project at his home in Lexington. Apparently he liked the work

and no one does it as well as Russ,” Abram says. “We maybe be shooting a program, but we’re always at a real construction site.”

It was the television part that Lexington native Tom Silva had a little difficulty with at first. Tom is the General Contractor on the show and he also runs a successful local

for the program.”

This is a point that Morash takes very seriously. He stresses that these shows are not intended to provide step-by-step instructions for do-it-yourselfers. “We are communicating concepts and introducing great craftsmen.”

Of course, Morash expanded the *This Old*

*“Although he cringes at the thought, I think of Russ as the guru of ‘how to television’. He has great vision for this type of programming his ability to produce and direct is incredible.”*

*Tom Silva*

contracting company. Tom grew up in a 1787 Colonial in Lexington.

“Russ asked me several times about

*House* franchise to include *The New Yankee Workshop* a show which highlights the work of Master Carpenter Norm Abram project by project.

“I did a great deal of research on building furniture, and although I wasn’t formally trained in cabinetry, all of the fine work I had done (on *This Old House*) prepared me for Russ’s next big idea. There are many hobbyist wood workers and at the time there was no programming catering to that genre. So, Russ launched the *New Yankee Workshop* which focuses on fine wood working.”

Finally, Morash introduced *Ask This Old*

*House*. “Russ created *Ask This Old House* as a result of the thousands of letters from people that were asking specific questions about problems they were experiencing while working on their own homes,” Tom Silva says. “He thought it would be great if we could send a member of the crew along with a camera operator to help these people work through some of the roadblocks they were experiencing. The show was a big hit and now, on top of working with the original program, we are traveling all over the country working on small projects with homeowners for *Ask*. I was just in Cincinnati to fix a linoleum floor, and soon I’ll be heading to Florida to help a family with paned windows that are stuck.”

Abram especially appreciates the energy and professionalism that Morash puts into his work. “It’s safe to say that if I hadn’t been introduced to Russ, my life would be different. Back in the winter of 1979, Russ came to me and said, ‘I’m going to do a TV program about fixing up an old house’. He asked if I was interested in being part of the project. The economy was in the tank and I didn’t have

much work, so I said what the heck. Little did I know that Russ had planned to put me on television. Furthermore, I wasn’t sure whether people would watch. Well, this year we’re set to launch our 30<sup>th</sup> season with *This Old House*. That speaks volumes about Russ’ vision.”

#### A Self-Made Legacy

Russell Morash isn’t one to look back. When asked about how the explosion in information technology has changed the industry, he is characteristically excited about the opportunity for people to gain new knowledge.

Talking about his grandchildren he says, “They can be whatever they want to be if mere knowledge puts them there. That’s exciting. If I want to know something I just go to my computer. Thank-you Google!”

“When I started in television there were only three television stations in town—today there are fifteen or so along with cable,” he says enthusiastically. “Today I can take pictures with my tiny Flip video camera and send it anywhere. That’s amazing.”

It certainly must be amazing to this Lexingtonian who began his career with cameras “that took two men to carry” out of a bus that doubled as his control room. There was no such thing as editing—no do-overs—just one take and endless hours of thinking on his feet.

“When we were starting with Julia you needed a television entity for the equipment. That’s all out the window now. What has happened in the interim is that television has come down to cameras that you can rent. You can make television shows with very little technical support,” Morash says without nostalgia.

In his career Morash has produced four of the best-known and well-loved programs in the history of public television. He has created a much-imitated concept and signature style that revolutionized television and has brought his love of learning and his appreciation for craftsmanship to all of us who watch. We admire the mentors that he has given us and we admire his vision and his great instincts for understanding our need for knowledgeable mentors with clear, concise instruction.

Morash says with characteristic humility, “I think that the story of my life should be written: He did okay with what he was given.”

We couldn’t agree more.

*We would like to thank Leah Orfanos, Tara Rafieymehr and Dawn Newell from WGBH for help locating photos for this story.*

*For more information on This Old House and Ask This Old House, visit: [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org) and [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com).*

*For more information on The New Yankee Workshop visit: [www.newyankee.com](http://www.newyankee.com).*



Tom Silva



Norm Abram

He mentioned that he was considering a program about working with old houses and thought I might be a good fit for it,” says Norm Abram.

Abram has flourished in this format. “Russ is great at working on the on the fly. He’s very comfortable and familiar with working on a construction site. He has done this before and has both the questions and the answers. He was uniquely qualified for this type of programming. This isn’t fantasy. It’s real life. He has an ability to grasp a concept and translate it through the lens so the audience can better understand what’s happening.”

#### Letting the work happen

“The show is unscripted, so there is a natural flow and a real feel of being present at the site,” Abram says. He praises Morash for being able to work on the fly and adjust to problems that they would run into. “For example, if we hit a certain snag in the construction process like an oversized knot on a floorboard, Russ would sometimes decide to spend more time focusing on how to remedy the situation. Being able to adapt is essential

appearing on the program and I turned him down for about two years. Then, Russ called and asked if he could shoot one of our projects and I agreed. Once he arrived, I remember speaking with him in the kitchen. Then a guy comes out of nowhere and puts a mic on me while I was talking with Russ. Russ then proceeded to ask me a series of questions about the project. He smiled and then said, ‘that was excellent, now just answer the questions exactly the same way when the host of the show steps onto the set.’ The next thing I know, the camera is rolling and I’m on the program. It’s funny, because if Russ had told me that he intended to put me on television, I wouldn’t have shown up. He brings out the best in everyone. He’s a magician that way.”

“There’s a reason why Russ is the director,” Tom Silva says. “He has an incredible ability to see the finished product before it is shot. He knows the best way to get info out so the viewer can more easily understand what’s taking place. All of the work we do is pretty challenging, and often times it can take six to ten hours of work to get five minutes of footage