

A Journal of the Arts & Aging

Edited by Karen Close & Carolyn Cowan

NUMBER 7, SPRING 2013

SAGE-ING

WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

KNOW YOURSELF. BE YOURSELF. LOVE YOURSELF. SHARE YOURSELF.



A PUBLICATION OF THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE

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A PUBLICATION OF THE
Okanagan Institute

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Cover painting by Pat Higgins.

MISSION STATEMENT

Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transforma-
tional power of creativity. We are a
quarterly journal intended as an initiative
for collaboration and sharing. We present
the opportunity for the free exchange of
wisdom gleaned from creative engage-
ment. We invite all ages to contribute their
discoveries.

Sage-ing is about seeking - satisfying
inner gnawing and transforming it to
knowing and action. Aging can be alchemy
when one allows the realisation that to
Know Thyself and contribute that knowing
to our culture is indeed one of life's highest
purposes. That knowing brings the
gratitude, grace and integrity that a life
deserves. The creative journey into self is a
strong aid to health and well-being for the
individual and to our culture.

This Journal exists for all those serious in
exploring their creativity in a chosen
expression. It is a forum for publication and
exposure to other artists, both novice and
established. The Journal is an easel for any
form of artistry undertaken out of personal
intuition and imagination.

INTRODUCTION

As we prepared this seventh issue of *Sage-
ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and
Gratitude*, we have been filled with
enthusiasm and confidence in our mission.
The Journal has found discerning readers
who have grasped the torch of creative
flame and reached out to make this
publication "... an easel for any artistry
undertaken out of personal intuition and
imagination."

There is a spiritual belief that the number
seven deals with the activation of imagina-

tion that manifests results in our lives
through conscious thought and awareness.
Your response and the articles in this issue
confirm that belief. Sage-ing, or ageing
with wisdom, is timeless and beyond the
boundaries of geography and physical
limitations.

Collaboration is a core strength of sage-
ing. In preparing this issue, we collabora-
ted with two sources. Tommi Hanley,
Lead Instructor of Event & Promotions
Management at the Centre for Arts &
Technology Okanagan (CATO), and Nicki
Kahnamoui, Executive Director, Arts Health
Network Canada-B.C.,
www.artshealthnetwork.ca.

Hanley and her students are part of the
organising team for the Arts Council of the
Central Okanagan's 2013 Okanagan Arts
Awards event. The event is a celebration of
those who make art in the Okanagan, and
how the community is enriched by their
presence. The Sage-ing Journal invited
Hanley's students to write profiles of artists
whose beliefs and works stimulated them
to think about how one grows through
creative spirit. Their choices were made
independently from the jury's selections.
The student's articles are included in a
special section in the middle of this issue.

The goal of Arts Health Network Canada
(AHNC) is to bring arts and health activities
into the mainstream of Canadian life so
that all Canadians are able to engage in art
for the health of it, as well as the joy of it.
The network has developed an online
community to connect with colleagues
across the country involved in the arts and
health field. Participants of the online
association work in community arts,
research, creative arts therapies, health
care, academia and other related fields. The
Sage-ing journal will be posted on the
network's site.

We are delighted to share with the
network those articles sent by contributors
who explored sage-ing from an arts and
health care perspective. We are excited
that, with each new issue, the Journal's
contributors and readership base continues
to expand and surprise us in new and
unexpected ways. Everyone deserves to
fulfill her and his potential. We are inspired
by the relationships the Journal initiates and
encourage you to become part of our
virtual community. Thank you.

– Editors: Karen Close, Carolyn Cowan

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FROM OUR READERS

I just read the wonderful Fall Edition. It is really, really good! The magazine is most informative and enlightening - lots of food for thought! It makes me want to re-visit my inner self, values, strengths, weaknesses, love of self, not so love of self, confidence, lack of confidence, admirations for others and self, laughter, living, etc., etc., etc.

Some of the artists throughout the journal are really interesting. I can hardly wait to visit Kelowna and the Okanagan to see some of their work.

Barb Ford,

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Synchronicity is alive and well, nestled in Google images. While searching for ideas for graphics for a brochure for the Sage-ing Guild, www.sage-ing.org, which parallels your work, I discovered the cover image and was drawn to the title of your journal. As I delved into the full text offering I was touched by the passion and generosity that makes this work available at no charge.

I was surprised to receive a personal response to my request to be added to your subscription list. Karen Close, from B.C., was in Florida where I live and we arranged to meet. No accidents in the universe...a kindred spirit. I look forward to continuing to read your journal and am sharing it with friends and colleagues in my work with the expressive arts and our Sage-ing journey. I am dazzled by your journal and eager to continue to be in touch.

Julia Riley, RN, Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse, Registered Expressive Arts Consultant and Educator, Certified Sage-ing Leader, www.constantsource.com.

I've just finished reading the latest issue of Sage-ing (No. 6, Winter 2013). There was so much that spoke to me – on so many levels – in those pages, and I found myself going back to re-read many articles.

I am a relative newcomer to Kelowna, but have had the pleasure of dealing and engaging with a number of the local business people profiled in this issue. It was very interesting to read their personal journeys and struggles to the places they are now. Their stories remind us that no matter our vocation, doing it with honesty and heart will allow us to find and celebrate our true selves.

Thank you for showing us the creative spirit, indeed *Heart*, that is present in so many diverse parts of our community.

Renata Kerr

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TO OUR ARTIST FRIEND, DAVE GRIFFITHS



Above: Dave in his corner at heART Fit

Journal readers may remember Dave from his article “Three Generations of Shared Passion”. www.sageing.ca/sageing2.html

Dave’s gentlemanly, calm presence, generous support and gifted talent in the art of watercolours will be missed. In our mind’s eye, his creative spirit will remain in ‘his’ corner of the drawing and painting studio at the Rotary Centre.

Born and raised in South Africa, Dave joined heART Fit when he moved to Kelowna three years ago.

HIS SHADOW REMAINS

Carolyn Cowan

He crafted his watercolour paintings
Like a great song
Layer upon layer under the control of a
Master artist.

Watercolours as precise in details
As the engineer he was in a lifetime
In South Africa.

His creativity brought the
Details within his tapestry to life.
Painting a commonplace alley in
Downtown Peachland,
Dave Griffiths taught us to see its beauty
In simplicity.
Its shadows, lines and buildings
Translated into a living space,
Immaculate in its details.

His imagination finessed a
Painting into feelings.
He knew how to capture reality
And control its exposure
Into an art form.

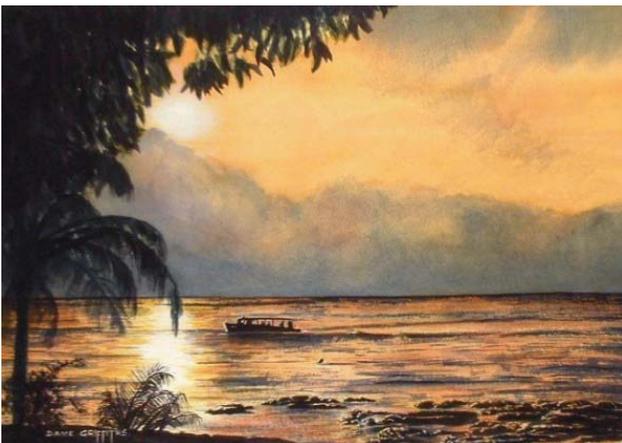
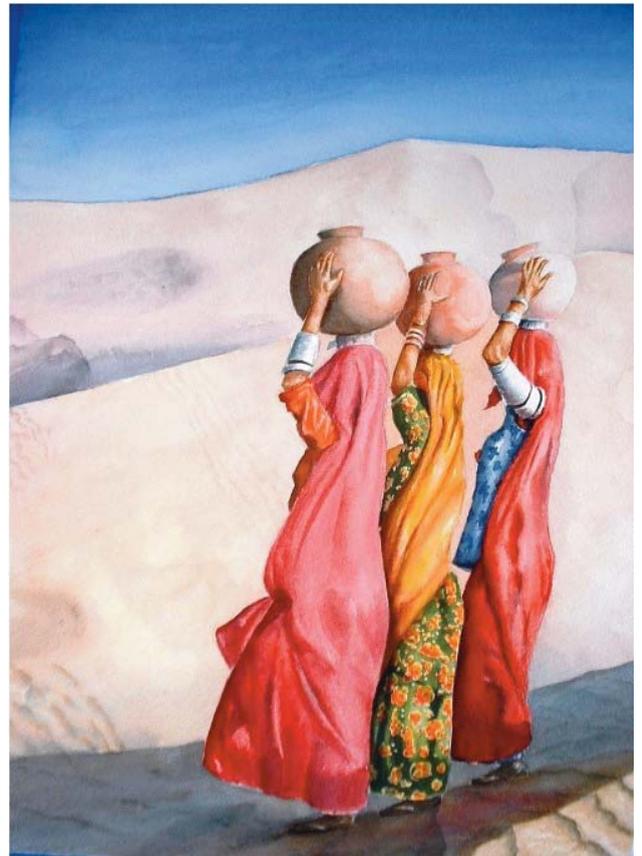
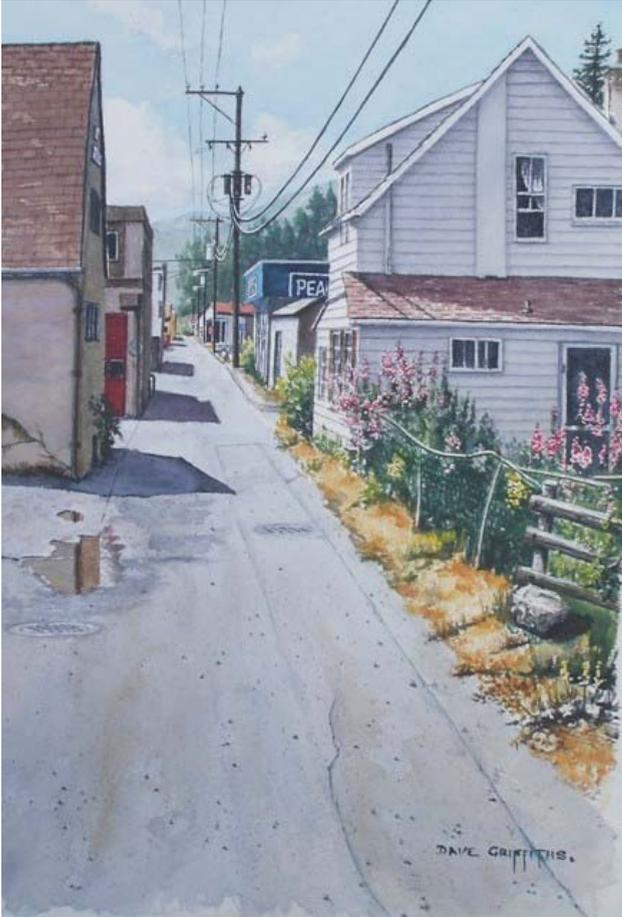
Gone from our lives now,
Dave Griffiths’ lingering shadow and
Eternal footprint
Remain within his watercolours.

He was a master.

The four paintings selected below are among many watercolours available on Dave's website at www.davegriffithsart.com
 Clockwise: The Alley, Peachland B.C. - Captivating colour of the Hollyhocks in the

shabby service alley creates a fascinating slice of community life in the little lakeside village.
 Wild - Wild horses on the move. So many washes to get the coats to glow with the wild health and strength!

Running Water - Painting available from U.K. Gallery. Vivid colours against a very parched background.
 Fire on Water - Fiery Mauritius sunset through the dust clouds of Africa to the west.



A ROSE FOR APOLDA

Harold Rhenisch



My journey as a pilgrim on the northern Camino opened in the *Sage-ing with Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude* Journal, in Fall 2012, with a visit to the poet Rilke's grave in Rauren, Switzerland. It continued in Winter 2012, with the miracle of St. Elizabeth's basket of roses in Eisenach. Now I'd like to take you deeper into the miracle of those roses.

I keep them in a corner of my garden as a form of memory. In this memory I'm gardening with my mother in the Similkameen. It's back in the day when I'm just tall enough that roses tower above me like fir trees full of birds. My mother has to kneel in the dirt to tend them.

Week after week, I've been going with her to the old ladies of Keremeos, all fifty years her senior – the generation of 1880. The Similkameen was still a cattle empire in the Wild West then. Only in the years when they married and bore children were the first orchards planted – in Upper Keremeos, Coldstream, and Greata. What they remembered of that were roses.

We walk in through bent wire gates of garden paths lined with flowers and step up into small houses of stucco, shiplap or even tarpaper, sip tea from china cups decorated with roses, nibble on Peak Freans cookies, and then leave with new flowers, roots and all, to our own little bit of wind. My mother plants them out under the open sky.

That was how my mother made a home on an orchard that had been a Mexican cattle ranch just ten years before. Passing their roses on to my mother is how the older women made it theirs.

Two generations later, I followed the pilgrim's path through the dark German forest. In the garden of St. Boniface's cathedral in Fulda, I found harshly pruned roses gracing beds of weeds and chunks of stone that had been bombed off the roof seventy years before. The gate was twice my height and decorated with black, hand-hammered iron roses. When I lingered there, at 5 p.m. precisely, a priest chased me out.

Three days later, I was deep in East Germany, in the Botanical Garden of the Castle of Peace in Gotha – the home garden of the German and English royal houses and the heartland of the Goths. The first priests in those parts built their churches as military towers and traded arrows with their parishioners. Sometime later, everyone planted roses instead.

Back when the ladies of Keremeos were being born to ranches of longhorn cattle, scorpions and cactus, this garden

Below: St. Boniface in Fulda





Above: Rilke's garden in Muzot (view 1)
 Right: Rilke's garden in Muzot (view 2)



In the early 1920s, Rilke wrote almost endlessly about roses. The present owners of his house in Muzot still maintain Rilke's rose garden, just as he kept it, as a way of honouring him.

was one of the jewels of Europe. Now it's mostly empty fields of grass under overgrown trees. Still, it came through forty-five years of the People's Republic with rough beds of roses ringing a crumbling Soviet tribute to the Great Patriotic War of 1939-1945. That's something. Two minutes away, there's a pond, too, with royal black swans, stinking algae, and way too many ducks. The neo-Nazis of Gotha throw their dogs in for fun, to watch them swim back out.

Day by day I travelled further East, passing more and more roses, planted by older and older generations. I started to understand: the generation of 1880 was the last European generation before the Great War of 1914 destroyed hope in history. Its greatest poet, the one who bore the purest, most refined form of German culture, was Rainer Maria Rilke. He responded to that tradition by ending it.

In the early 1920s, Rilke wrote almost endlessly about roses. The present owners of his house in Muzot still maintain Rilke's rose garden, just as he kept it, as a way of honouring him. Now, 'house' here means a thirteenth century castle, built when the symbolism of roses as tokens of love was brought to Southern Europe by Crusaders returning from Jerusalem. That all sparked the tradition of romantic poetry, which ended in August 1914. Rilke was the last to speak of it, here, where his table and chairs sit today under his old chestnut tree, where he faced down the war of the end of the world by drinking coffee in the morning, in the scent of roses.

Rilke was remembering, of course, in the same way I'm remembering 19th century Keremeos. He was also trying to throw away ideas. In their place, he was hoping to touch things for a while. Over and over, he said: "Look at this tree. Look at these flowers." He didn't mean words or poetry anymore. Sure, when he was younger, roses had been symbols of eternity and transience – big words for big ideas. Then he allowed himself to be kept



by a succession of aristocratic mistresses, from Paris to Moscow, in the last decades of their power. He ate off of their rose-patterned dishes.

By 1922, though, when he arrived in Muzot, he wrote about becoming one with the things of the world, and advised dropping “even one’s own name like a broken toy.” He also wrote: “Angels often don’t know if they’re walking among the living or among the dead.” He wasn’t talking about just angels. There’s a lot of autobiography in those words.

In the end, Rilke kept one thing from all his wandering: he was pretty sure that the scent of roses blew on both sides of the veil between life on earth and the other life after death. What I learned on the pilgrim’s road was that a good dose of the East German Republic of Farmers and Workers gave you those roses too.

The perfect place for that is Apolda. After German reunification in 1990, big cities like Dresden became dynamic cultural and industrial hubs, while small cities like Apolda remained broken by the rusty industrial mask that the workers’ state had laid around them like Sleeping Beauty’s thicket

of thorns.

Apolda used to make church bells. Any town that was anything had a church bell from Apolda. In the 1880s, churches were going up like crazy. Business was brisk. Apolda’s crowning achievement was its own Lutheran Church. The other churches on the road east are stern and nationalistic, even militaristic. The farther east I travelled, the more thoroughly the intricately carved prayer screens, choir stalls, pulpits and altars of 1400 had been replaced with black cast iron, like battleships. Not in Apolda. Apolda has the Gallery of Modern Art. I witnessed there a celebration of capitalism, that still expressed the Marxist workers’ aesthetic that had once called amateur sculpture clubs at metal fabrication workshops high art. The display? Adidas runners – every last one, ever. In the West, that would have been in a museum. Here it was Rembrandt.

After that, I walked into the Soviet memorial square to the Great Patriotic War, all littered with broken beer bottles, remnants of night-time neo-Nazi gangs, and the empty plinth that had once borne Lenin. Its corners had been rounded off by sledgehammers.

My first view of the church came a moment later, over the shoulder of a statue, a late Giacometti: Don Quixote on his steed. Quixote is famed for rescuing maidens and leveling his spear at windmills, which he mistook for giants. Giacometti is famous for creating small metal people that look like welding slag.

This one was life-sized and faced the church across the intersection – the perfect thing for inspiring welders after a day of assembling the weird washing machines of East Germany, designed, I think, to torture East



Top: Don Quixote in Apolda

Above: East German washing machines on display in a Nostalgia Museum



Above: A rose ornament from the Lutheran Church in Apolda

German women. Of this sculpture, Giacometti said, "It represents what I feel when I look at a woman." I made the mistake of joking at the long, outthrust head of Quixote's horse, but then I noticed he was facing down the Lutheran Church Or stopped in his tracks by it. Those East Germans resisted the state through wit like that.

For good reason, too. Out of all the central German churches rebuilt after Napoleon's soldiers torched the wood in them to grill sausages and cleared them for horse stables, the Lutheran Church of Apolda is the only church of love and feminine strength

on the entire road East – a bouquet of roses presented to God, or one presented to us. Rilke would know which.

It has warm, red brick; arches bearing stove tiles by the thousands – the hearth and heart of any old German home – each decorated with a rose. It has rose windows, rose capitals on the pillars, a door braced with roses, and roses entwining the beams of the main hall, the pews themselves, the chairs, the pulpit, and the altar. It is enchanted.

Literally. When it was consecrated in 1894, it was the fashion to write romantic tales of the age of knights, princesses and unicorns – like Tennyson's *The Lady of Shallot*. Only in Apolda did anyone build a fairytale church for them. When I stepped in, a cardboard sign propped on a pew begged for forgiveness for the desecration caused by rain leaking through a roof no one had the money to repair. In the square outside at night, neo-Nazis fight it out with communists and anarchists.

As it did to Don Quixote, the pure beauty of Apolda stopped this pilgrim in his tracks. For an entire year afterwards, I wanted to move there and turn it into a world marriage centre, and help give its roses away again and again and again.

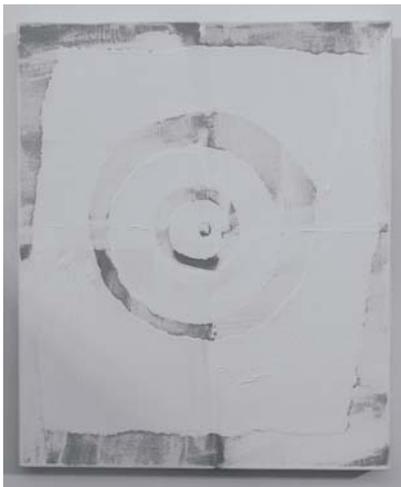
Harold Rhenisch has been writing poems and histories of the Okanagan for over thirty-five years. His work is based on a wide range of models from literature to ancient prayer, myth and spell-craft. He is currently exploring the deep roots of the language in Old Norse and Anglo Saxon. After twenty years in the Cariboo and on Vancouver Island, and after two long journeys on the German section of the Camino, he has returned home. He lives in Vernon, where he writes the deep ecology blog, www.okanaganokanogan.com. You can contact him at rhenisch@telus.net.

ASK A BLIND ARTIST

Ruth Bieber



I can almost feel Busser Howell, New York artist, cringing as he learns I am writing about the fact that all of the artists in the Kelowna Art Gallery's exhibition *JUST IMAGINE* are blind. When I first invited Busser to participate he responded, "My first thought is that by being just a disabled venue, it keeps us separated from mainstream artists. Ideally, I want to be in inclusive exhibits. Isolating the disabled keeps the focus on the disability, rather than the art." I understand Busser's reservations; however, an exhibition of only blind artists can open artistic awareness for both the viewers and the exhibitors.



I have been blind since my seventh birthday. I cherish the wisdom and clarity of truer vision that my apparent disability has brought me. To give Busser his due, he already knows dozens of other blind artists, and is soon to publish a book on the subject, *20/20 BLINDSIGHT*.

Thus, the novelty wasn't there for him. I, on the other hand, have spent the past two years learning to paint and introducing what I have learned about bringing visual arts for the blind to Kelowna. I believe this exhibition is a first of its kind in Canada, and after the experience I was delighted to hear Busser say, "I have never met a nicer group of people connected with an art exhibit. Every aspect from housing, travel, and material handling was professional and top drawer." As curator of the exhibition, I am proud of how we blind artists have challenged and changed people's perceptions.

Busser's delight with his experience of *JUST IMAGINE* is shared by another exhibitor, Eriko Watanabe. Eriko was born in Japan but now living in Germany. She has been blind from birth. Eriko's art shows no colour, but is detailed in its imaginative portrayal of thoughts and sounds such as bird chirps and even the heat rising from a cup of coffee. Imagine the deep sensitivity she has cultivated that allows her to appreciate from the perspective of other senses. Imagine how brave she is to then make these statements visually. Eriko writes, "It was the first time for me to come together with other artists with vision impairment, especially those who work with two-

Top: *Just Imagine* exhibit (r-l) Nataley Nagy, Executive Director KAG, Ruth Bieber, Curator, and artists - Eriko Watanabe, Bruce Horak, Busser Howell. Missing is artist PJ Lockhart

Above: Painting by Busser Howell, New York



Top: Drawing by Eriko Watanabe, Germany
 Above: Professor John Kennedy, Toronto,
 mugs for the camera

dimensional methods such as painting and drawing. I found it totally inspiring to get to know them personally and to learn about the artistic methods and creative processes each of them uses. Art-making has been always a private thing for me, and although I never meant to be determinedly a stay-a-loner on my creative adventures, it never really occurred to me to seek a link to other people who are doing similar things. When I was introduced to the other three artists, and Ruth, through this exhibit, it felt to me as if some intangible barrier I had unconsciously built around me quickly and inevitably melted away. What a heartfelt invitation it has been into this “gang of creative people”, with no one and nothing questioning my eligibility to be part of this thrilling group! And what a welcoming sensation it has been to realize that we work together, that I don’t need to be on my own in my creative enterprise.”

Yes, that is the response of a sage woman. I also surmise that this exhibition has opened the eyes of many to the union between creative enterprise and building community.

Eriko’s generous words wisely sum up how the arts can show us who we really are as individuals and as a community. “I did not know exactly what to expect of this exhibit and my Kelowna stay. So everything I experienced during that week turned out to be all beyond my expectations. I am saying this in a positive sense of course. What moved me greatly was how really professionally the whole thing was done - the works of all the exhibiting artists were all arranged with a style. My pictures up and nicely framed, all the media interviews, the panel discussion, the opening reception, the most fitting accompanying music at these public events. Everything was so fine, so formal yet friendly, appearing so natural, yet so much work for the people involved, I assume. Thank you! For me it was a hot, intense, very energy-consuming, absolutely rewarding week.”

Indeed, this exhibition was a collaborative work of art, reflective of many coming together and sharing their unique creative gifts. During the opening, young pianist Jordan Leibel’s sounds helped shaped the harmony and rhythm of the evening. Jordan is not blind, but he is an intuitive artist who composes spontaneously as he feels the energy in the room. The atmosphere was powerful and vibrant that evening. It was a perfect event at the Kelowna Art Gallery and the exhibition continued to bring in many visitors.

The paintings by Bruce Horak from Calgary offered another perspective to the other art works displayed. Bruce has the slightest amount of residual sight in one eye. He is still legally blind, but at times seems to manage as though fully sighted. “What do you see?” This is the repeated question that Bruce’s paintings respond to. The final products are fascinating and the gallery wall displaying a compilation of Bruce’s portraits makes an intriguing study. Bruce, like Eriko, found the camaraderie of the coming together of this group very appealing. He says, “I felt honoured by the presentation of my work, accepted as an artist, and empowered as a vision impaired person. This was the largest exhibit of my work to date. It was quite overwhelming to see



Top: Bruce Horak – one section of his wall of portraits at the Kelowna Art Gallery
Above: Painting by PJ Lockhart, Kelowna

my portraits all gathered together and displayed so wonderfully. It was like a wonderful reunion.” Bruce goes on to explain how his art is largely informed by his vision impairment. “The whole weekend was empowering for me. I believe that all of the art stands on its own. I also believe that my vision is a part of who I am and how I make art.

Over the course of this project, I have learned more about how I see than at any time in my life. I feel like this is just the beginning and I’m inspired to continue to explore and develop.” Bruce ended his stay in Kelowna leading a portrait making workshop at the Kelowna Art Gallery. In discussing this workshop he explains, “I sat with PJ on Sunday and did his portrait. As I worked we chatted. I discovered we share a love of Elvis, a love of the color blue, and a passion for art. We both feel that art is our strongest thread to this world. It was a wonderful session.” A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of sitting for one of Bruce’s portrait paintings, a very intimate and revealing experience. The enthusiasm these artists brought to this exhibition inspired many. Isn’t that what art is supposed to do: bind us within our collective humanity and create links of emotion and perspective?

PJ Lockhart, was the fourth artist presenting and sharing in the joy of this exhibition experience. “Wow, he exclaimed. This journey has been life changing in so many ways. It has been such an exciting year leading up to the opening reception of JUST IMAGINE. All artists dream of showing their creations in an Art Gallery for everyone to see and enjoy.” Not only are Lockhart’s paintings a colourful delight to the eye, but he has made them sturdy enough to be touched, so that everyone can explore this different sensual perspective for appreciating a work of art.

Ultimately, it is how art helps us to know each other that is its magic. JUST IMAGINE is a collection of intriguing paintings and drawings as diverse in their expression, as are the artists themselves. Visitors to this exhibition left with deeper understanding of how the perspective of a visual artist without sight can probe their own minds and open the viewer to deeper levels of awareness and indeed wisdom. Creating art is a human experience that can illuminate the very depths of the soul. Just imagine the compassionate human race we can create when we come together with the intent to learn and sage with creative spirit, grace and gratitude. Ask a blind artist.

A Just Imagine exhibit video, including Eriko Watanabe, by Ricardo Mendes, Brazil
www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-3KnXvUJulo

Bruce Horak – www.brucehorak.com/

Busser Howell – www.busserhowell.com/

PJ Lockhart – www.pjartmanstudio.com

George M. Kennedy, Professor of Psychology – My research is on pictures in vision and touch and metaphor in language and pictures. – www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~kennedy/

THE HEALTHY PRACTICE OF ART MAKING

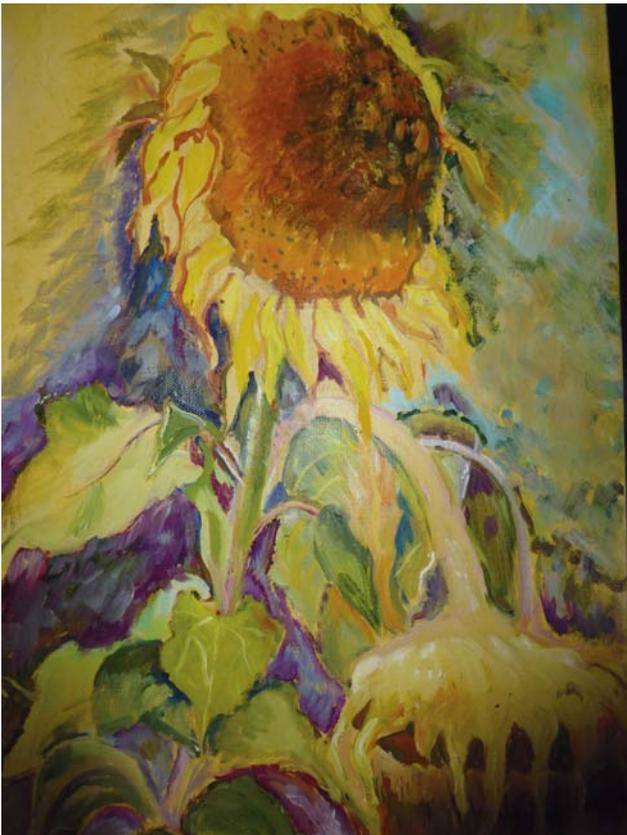
Karen Close



Above: Pat Higgins
Below left Sunflower
Below right Peaches

Humans of the twenty-first century are driven by the same forces that drove cavemen to create images and engage in rituals. Humans have a deep need to engage in art making for our health and well-being. As more of us come to this realisation, I imagine the growth of what I've heard described as The Contemporary Community Studio. Envision a place where two or more might gather to create the opportunity to make art, to feel deeply and to grow together in wellness.

My search for others enlivened by creative spirit keeps me in the moment and paying attention to whatever and whomever I might encounter. Therein begins the delight of sage-ing with creative spirit. There is beauty in every moment, and new possibilities sprout, not just in springtime, but all year long. Sage-ing is timeless. Creative spirit nurtures endurance that enriches self, family and community. Cultivating wisdom asks us to pay attention, let our imaginations ignite and share with each other from a place of inner knowing.





Top: Close-up Sunflower
Above: Tour Bus Driver

Last summer a call to pay attention began to whisper while I undressed in a darkened room in preparation for a massage. I looked up to see a painting of sunflowers on the wall.

I moved closer to observe the brushwork and felt a curiosity that made me smile. Later in the fall, on another visit, I felt the call more strongly. This time I was drawn to sumptuous peaches which seemed almost alive with energy.

Underneath was a card with the artist's name and a contact number. I called Pat Higgins and asked if I could interview her about her paintings. She agreed and we made arrangements. On a Sunday morning in early December we met.

"I was a nurse, but I've always been interested in art. I can't paint realistic. You might as well take a photograph," she began. "Where I lived in England, in Bethnel Green, outside London, there were evening sessions I could go to. If I got off early I went. My first painting was hung in an exhibition, and that was a great motivation, but I really got into it when I moved to Kelowna in 1968. Mrs. Grigsby taught outdoor painting and later Okanagan College came and I studied art part-time. I did know that I always wanted to paint so when the college opened I knew I should go. That is when I learned there was abstraction. I also volunteered at the gallery which was in the museum

then. I got my diploma in 1982 or '83. My studies at the college made me realise there were different types or styles of art, but I always liked doing portraits best.

I like Van Gogh; he liked bright colours and strokes. In my last house, I planted a sunflower and when it blossomed I painted it.

When I first moved here in 1968, I joined the Kelowna Watercolour group. We painted at the Laurel Building. When my son was two years old, in 1972, I went to the Palette Club, but I didn't find what I was looking for. In 1986, my husband died. I was a young widow with three children. I continued to look for groups to paint with. I needed that. In 2004, I joined the Company of Artists which still meets at the Rotary Centre for the Arts.

Everybody is very friendly. We just paint and critique each other. You get influences from other people. It is so nice to just be away, relaxed and absorbed in your painting.

I've joined other groups. The Federation of Canadian Artists was started here by a woman from Vancouver. I also paint with Livessence, a figure drawing group started at the Rotary Centre for the Arts, but I get the most pleasure from my mornings painting with Lynda Grealish. We paint together

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.” Joy J. Golliver

I get so excited when my mind’s eye can take something that is really there, and I see it, and develop it into my idea, from the experience of being who I am.

in each other’s studios every other week. She was a nurse, as well, and we’ve painted together for a long time.

Painting continues to give focus to my life. I’m not painting to make money, although I’d like to because when you sell something you feel appreciated. Even if I don’t sell though, I need to paint. When I go on vacation, I always paint. I’ve taken holidays in France – Normandy, Brittany and Ireland. I’ve met some nice people.”

My time with Pat Higgins gave me reflection. This is a woman who has realised that giving attention, and painting her responses to the moments of her life, provides documentation and she has accumulated a concrete personal record of the moments when she has been enlivened by creative spirit.

As well as personal direction and fulfillment, painting has also given her a good, supportive friend. Later in December, I joined Pat and Lynda Grealish. I arrived after lunch when they had completed their morning of painting in Lynda’s studio. Pat, Lynda and I sat in Lynda’s dining room to chat and get acquainted. My attention kept wandering to a painting on the far wall in front of me. When I asked Lynda about it, she explained that she’d done it a long time ago. “I call it *A Meeting Place*.

It’s the only watercolour that I have hanging in my home. It is an earlier work, but it reminds me that you can be anywhere in the world and if you want to find common ground, you can find it, and also find support. I can find this belonging even in a large city. Art does that for me. I can find a bond without my even knowing anyone because you discover those who have the same plan for themselves. Making art makes you want to better yourself and improve your talent.” I smiled. We hadn’t yet discussed the theme of this spring journal. I love synchronicity.

Lynda was eager to expand. “I get so excited when my mind’s eye can take something that is really there, and I see it, and develop it into my idea, from the experience of being who I am. Often I’m taken way past exhaustion, but you have to get it all out.”

Pat joined in, “Painting for each of us is something we have to do. For some artists, making art is something they just engage in. It is all a learning experience. Being able to paint is a gift, and there is a responsibility to develop. A gift is not something to be disregarded. You have to push yourself and really try. You have to explore what you struggle with. That’s how you grow. For me the struggle is with landscapes. I have to really look.”

For both of these women nursing, the medical science of nurturing, had been their first calling, but now when given the time for self-nurturing, making art together is how they look after themselves. Pat explains that her struggle is with capturing light and dark, and seeing her subject in terms of values. I remark that it is interesting that the description of light in painting is called value. It seems there’s connotation there. Our conversation wanders and she muses, “If you ignore the psychological, you have physical repercussions.”

Lynda interjects, “Well, when you’re painting, the focus changes. Your dwelling place becomes saturated with the more positive; instead of focusing



Top: A Meeting Place by Lynda Grealish
Above: Lake Kootenay by Lynda Grealish

on I, me, my, you focus on making your painting be the best it can be and letting your creative process come to the forefront instead of focusing on the physical self.”

Pat continues. “It is relaxing. When I paint, I’m into myself in a positive way and when I’m finished I’m terribly tired because I’ve pushed myself. Still just before I reach the point of exhaustion, I feel exhilarated and relaxed. I’ve forgotten everything outside that distracts me. There is ease in my movement and that affects my brushwork.” I think back to why Pat’s works first caught my attention. Did her strokes transfer that sense of exhilaration?

Lynda is again quick to relate. “As an artist I’ve discovered that when the right side of my brain kicks in, it seems to affect every cell in my body. I think Pat and I are healthier because we paint, and really I can’t imagine what I would do with myself if I didn’t paint. It’s exciting, not always fun, because there is the struggle and painting demands me to be my best. Still I need painting. Painting balances out my life.”

Pat and Lynda evidence an emerging group of sage-ing individuals who are realizing that creative engagement energises our connection to ourselves, to each other and to the environment. A sense of greater purpose and belonging evolves as we embrace the opportunity to explore all we encounter with awakened curiosity. There is *A Meeting Place*.

Lynda Grealish

I have been blessed with the gift for painting. It is not an option, but a lifelong experience of discovery in colors, shapes and reading my mind’s eye, in relating to the subject matter. Landscapes, floral abstracts and still life take on new and varied patterns under brush strokes applied with passion and intent.

I was born in Saskatchewan and moved to northern Manitoba where I married, raised three children and took up painting in watercolors and oils. In 1991, we moved to Kelowna and found that art was flourishing. I enjoyed membership in The Manitoba Society of Artists and while in that province with the FCA, and now with art groups here.

Presently, I paint with the Company of Artists and show with Gallery 421, 560 Raymer Ave. off Pandosy, Kelowna B.C. www.gallery421.ca

Arts Health Network Canada advances understanding of the many ways that arts-based activities contribute to individual and community health and health care.
www.artshealthnetwork.ca/

A CONVERSATION OF MARKS

Deborah Anthony

“A painter should begin every canvas with a wash of black, because all things in nature are dark except where exposed by the light.” Leonardo da Vinci

Breathing in the night, I stretched my arms over my head waiting to be taken in by the dance above, wanting the aurora borealis to carry me away. Certain moments shape our lives because something indescribable moves us, changes us. A spark of inspiration fueled by feelings is no small thing. That spark is responsible for many great works of art that have helped shape our lives, communities, and cultures throughout the ages. Art can carry us beyond the smiling eyes of a Mona Lisa to fill us with desire, but is there more? What is art’s ephemeral quality that interrupts *normal*? How long can we sustain it? Can we conjure inspiration at will, or is it a gift from a Greater Will? And for what purpose?

Inspiration has been defined as a feeling of exhilaration, divine, arousal, and flash of enlightenment. We have a sense of being healed, whole, and empowered. I found union with the ineffable in both the healing and expressive arts; in my massage practice and my performance art, I felt the benefits of that union. I hoped this same experience would avail itself in my visual art making. I sensed I had to go deeper into the process.

Below: Sorry to Leave



In 2000, I met Deborah Koff-Chapin and was introduced to the method of drawing she calls *touch drawing*. In a workshop with eighty participants of all ages, I felt the familiar rush of excitement, but I didn’t expect the next rush to engage me so unrelentingly. I experienced it deep in my solar plexus. Blindly, I moved my hands across tissue paper over a surface of ink and could feel my creativity come alive. It was spontaneous, rhythmic, internal. I was breathing it, and being breathed into creativity itself. I was curious, conflicted, excited. Not in charge. Yet, a stack of drawings quickly piled up. I turned them upright one by one. It was overwhelming. The marks were naive and raw - bold and subtle strokes. My works were both mono and multi-colored, with tiny masterpieces embedded throughout.

Yet, I could not truly claim these works as mine. Inspiration, the process, and me, the mark maker, had been caught up in a beautiful conversation that



Top left: Nightwalker

Top right: Under Red Umbrella

Above: The Meeting

sketched itself out on paper. Something had entered the world through me, expressed visually, as a language encrypted with secrets. I knew intuitively that the greater portion of that meeting remained inside me waiting for the next creative burst. I don't understand it fully, but the body is key here. Perhaps that is why an artist's collection of works is called a *body of work*.

Our instructor called touch drawing "...a natural, universal way of drawing." I think it is primal, a mode of creative expression not for everyone, but an exercise of self-expression for all. In my works, I invite rhythm, breath and movement. I engage the process through the body, eyes closed. I draw first, think later. I may add additional marks that change *the conversation*. Like hieroglyphs, the roots are deep and the learning continual. da Vinci says, "...all things in nature are dark except where exposed by the light." Touch drawings are like that, they bring to the surface what is vulnerable, discoverable and timely inside us. Our marks expose meaningful parts of the mystery of who we are. What comes to light can be transforming, and lasting.

Art making and inspiration can be one, and the same. Ultimately that energy will be felt as happiness, sorrow, or fear. When these emotions are expressed, healing can take place. Wherever inspiration comes from, a well-timed creative encounter offers an opportunity to respond. For me, responding through making art and sharing it, is the greatest gift, and medicine. It is a process described by a conversation of marks, and one that my well-being has come to depend upon.

Deb Anthony is an Art for Health Workshop Facilitator. For classes on 2 Hands Drawing, check the Vernon Community Arts Centre calendar

Contact Deb directly about Appreciative Guidance Sessions using touch drawing images. debanthony44@gmail.com /



The Arts Council of the Central Okanagan created the Okanagan Arts Awards to celebrate excellence in the arts in the Okanagan.

The Arts Council believes it is important to support and encourage those who are instrumental in ensuring that the arts thrive in the Okanagan Valley.



The Arts Council of the Central Okanagan (ARTSCO) created the Okanagan Arts Awards to celebrate excellence in the arts in the Okanagan. The Arts Council believes it is important to support and encourage those who are instrumental in ensuring that the arts thrive in the Okanagan Valley.

The awards include the entire valley and are given on an annual basis. Presentations are made during a celebration event. March 2, 2013 marks the council's 5th annual awards celebration. Each year, the Arts Awards foster the importance of art and culture in the Okanagan community by encouraging its citizens to not only participate, but to partner with the Arts Council of the Central Okanagan in honouring the Arts.

Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude accepted that invitation and joins with students from the class of Tommi Hanley, CITE, Lead Instructor of Event & Promotions Management at the Centre for Arts & Technology Okanagan (CATO), organisers of the event.

Six students in the class have written profiles of artists whose beliefs, and works, stimulated them to think about how individuals and community are enriched through creative expression. Perhaps these student articles offer a glimpse into what a future generation might expect from its artists, and how they use their talents to advance community values. Articles are written independently from the jury process. Five students selected from among the forty-two nominations in the Council's ten categories.

However, one student chose her own approach. Lauren Suranko was unable to determine an appropriate category for the place, Arion Therapeutic Farms, that inspires her. She wanted to share with Journal readers how she finds this place an important form of creative expression.

Sage-ing is timeless and we invite all ages to contribute their perceptions and discoveries. As you read about the candidates these students chose to profile, a rich dimension is added to this issue of the journal. Are creative values changing? How is art defined?

COOL ARTS

NOMINATED FOR THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN FOUNDATION
COMMUNITY ARTS ASSOCIATION AWARD

Maja Krol



Cool Arts – www.coolarts.ca – is a Kelowna-based non-profit organization that encourages disabled adults to find their creativity. President, Sara Lige, who is the parent of a disabled son, started the organization with a small group of people who recognized the need for a program focused on disabled adults. Lige noticed that there were several programs established for disabled children, but none for adults. Rena Warren is a contracted art instructor, grant writer and a program developer for Cool Arts. When asked what inspires her, and how she became involved in Cool Arts she explains she had a desire to be more involved in the local community. Rena works at a warehouse gallery and does collaborative works with the Rotary Center for Arts. She also teaches painting and drawing classes and runs her own after school art program to help children understand the elements of art.

Adding to her busy lifestyle, she enjoys teaching art classes for the Kelowna Mental Health Association which she finds quite a different experience than Cool Arts because mental health “is more hidden when compared to disabilities,” she says. Rena’s involvement in many art programs has allowed her to learn something new every day. Her message to any artist is “never isolate yourself, but collaborate with others because this will force you to stretch your capabilities and strengthen your skills.”



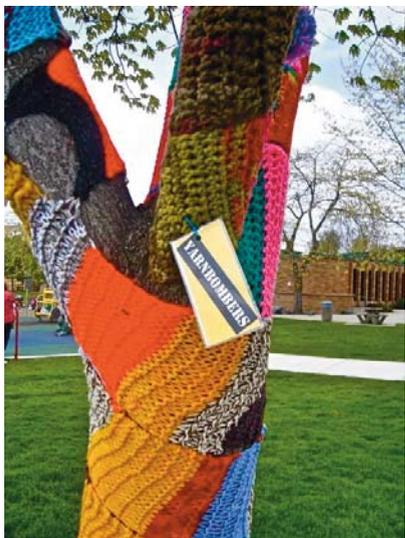
This past year, some of the metal railings around the Kelowna Art Gallery and the Rotary Centre for the Arts were adorned with some colourful and eye-catching artwork, called yarn bombing. “I stumbled upon a yarn bombing article in a knitting magazine and decided to investigate it further on line.” says Rena. “I found there was a lot of information on this topic coming from many areas around the world. I liked the idea of not only taking art outside of the studio, but also using a traditional medium such as knitting and adding a creative spin to it.

She explains that people yarn bomb for a variety of reasons – some do it for fun while others try to convey a message. Another reason why she loved the idea as a project for Cool Arts was because it does not cause any damage to public spaces and property, unlike graffiti. “This was also an opportunity for our Cool Arts members to learn a new skill. It is important for them to have a hobby to bring home and work on.” she says. “We also took the opportunity to introduce the word ‘diversability’ to the community. We made ‘Diversability’ tags and encouraged members who found crocheting or knitting too difficult to help us attach the tags, as well as pom-poms and other crafty things, onto the yarn work. “The event gave everyone a sense of accomplishment, and it helped to break down barriers of preconceptions. We also noticed that most people from the community found it humorous and got a charge out of how unexpected the event was.” says Sara Lige.

‘Diversability’ is a term created by Shelley Dacoste who believes the word

Top: Maja Krol

Above: Rena Warren



Top and above: Yarn bombing

disability receives a negative reaction. She wants to get people thinking in a new way about disabilities and open their minds to new possibilities. She feels that art points to diversity because everyone can create and enjoy art. Therefore, she was thrilled that the Cool Arts organization decided to promote the word through its yarn bombing initiative.

Cool Arts runs three programs throughout the week, and another two on the weekend. Each program is tailored to the diagnosis of the disabled adult ensuring individual needs are met. For example, for adults with autism, the class size is small, a variety of activity options are provided and instructions are clear and brief. Cool Arts also offers an advanced workshop for those who are able to work on more complicated projects. Currently, there are approximately sixty members who attend classes, and expansion plans are being considered to tailor programs for teens.

Cool Arts has showcased some of its work at a variety of events in Kelowna; the most recent of which was at the Rotary Center for the Arts. The exhibit featured canvases created by three or four people participating in midweek programs. An event that Cool Arts considered a significant milestone was the *We Are Artists Exhibition* held at the Kelowna Art Gallery in 2009. It was one of the most well-attended events the Art Gallery has ever held, and showcased unique self-portraits that consisted of a chair, a pair of shoes and an abstract collage. Each member used mixed art mediums to give the chair, shoes and collage a personal touch.

Another event that Cool Arts considers to be significant is its *Bee Box* partnership with local beekeepers. Members visited local farms and were taught about beekeeping while they painted their own bee boxes. The whole event was filmed including the presentation of the bee boxes to the farmers, and it became an exhibition at the BC Orchard Museum at the Laurel Packinghouse. This event marked the start of Cool Arts seeking out innovative partnerships that are not normally linked to arts, such as agriculture, in order to bring the community together. Cool Arts was also featured at the recent Ecotone Festival last month at the Rotary Center for the Arts where a film called *Superheroes* was screened. The opportunities continue to grow and the future of Cools Arts looks very bright.

VICKI VIEW

NOMINATED FOR DANCE

Marika Luczi



Vicki View is a dance teacher and choreographer originally from Saskatchewan who lives in Kelowna. Her decision to move here was guided by her desire to have a family and still pursue her passion for teaching dance. Vicki has been dancing for twenty-three years and has been producing award-winning choreography for thirteen years.

As a child, Vicki wasn't much for words. She would use dance as an escape and a creative outlet to cope with her life experiences. Her 'career' began when she was just four-years-old after her mother enrolled her in a formal dance program. She instantly knew it was her passion. Over the years, she became a dance instructor while continuing her professional dance career. She soon came to realize that instructing was the most fulfilling part of her profession.

Vicki's inspiration, as a choreographer, is to take the emotion she instantly feels from hearing a song, and then paints a picture of those feelings through dance. Music is very influential in her work as she shapes music into movement in every piece she creates. She teaches people of all age groups and backgrounds who have different abilities, strengths, and goals. She still continues to travel to keep her choreography current. Sometimes she refers to classic movies or musical productions for inspiration. Her role as an artist is being able to turn music into visual art. She believes it's important to evoke emotion in an audience whether it is to send a message, have a conversation, or tell a story through movement.

She finds living in the Okanagan offers great versatility and has an impact on her work. Every studio has something different and unique to offer, and she feels honoured and grateful to be able to teach at multiple studios and interact with students who have an array of unique talents and abilities. Vicki isn't confined to a particular style of dance and this allows her to be creative in different ways. It makes her job exciting every day and she feels blessed to have the opportunities to work as a choreographer, a teacher, a mentor, and role model. "I am responsible for constantly learning and exploring in order to challenge my students and provide them with the knowledge that they need to pursue their passions," she says. "My role as an artist is to embrace my students' differences and individuality to help mold them."

"I am very fortunate to work with such talented, disciplined, and hardworking students who put a lot of love and attention into what they do, and I hope audiences see that in our works." Vicki is diverse and crosses over into other genres and different styles of dance because she doesn't want to be defined by just one style. Her ideas constantly evolve. As an artist, it's really important to stay fresh and current whether it be taking classes, experimenting with a different skill set, or meshing styles together. Since coming to the Okanagan, Vicki has been very fortunate to be offered many teaching opportunities; seeing improvement in her



Top: Marika Luczi

Above: Vicki View



students' abilities is her greatest achievement. "I'm happy to play a role in shaping my students' life paths and the smallest, positive gesture can be such a motivating and uplifting experience."

One of Vicki's fondest memories was when she was eighteen years old and was offered an opportunity to travel to Afghanistan to choreograph and perform a show for the Canadian Armed Forces.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and she collaborated with a variety of artists, ranging from singers to comedians. It was an overwhelming, eye-opening experience and unlike anything she has ever done before. It was her first time working outside North America and she was fearful of the unknown, yet determined to be part of a great cause and to boost troop morale.

If you're just starting out, Vicki's words of wisdom are, "Let go and immerse yourself 100% in your craft. Something I'm always telling my students is 'The day you stop caring what other people think is the day you will truly become a better dancer.' I think that as dancers, we spend a lot of time worrying about making mistakes, trying something new for fear of falling down, and playing it safe with what is familiar. I think that the more you open yourself to uncomfortable situations and learning new things, the better artist you will be."



Top: Afghanistan

Above: Brazil

TREVOR BUTLER

NOMINATED FOR DESIGN

Tenicia Muhle-Rensby



Top: Tenicia Muhle-Rensby

Above: Trevor Butler

Right: Salmon Arm Saving and Credit Union (SASCU) – Earth tube system

Art comes in many forms, for Trevor Butler it comes from creating sustainable designs. Trevor is a Professional Engineer, who strives to improve energy efficiency, while making things simple to run. Trevor works for Archineers Consulting and, as the name suggests, the firm is all about working as a team to achieve great success.

It all started when he was a young boy playing at the beach and building sand castles. He was fascinated by how the tides came in and drove the sand back into the waters, and how the natural system of the ocean worked. He was interested in the role of nature and the impact that it had on the environment.

Engineering systems which offer simplicity, are environmentally friendly and easy for people to understand and use, have driven Trevor for the past 20 years. Through the years, he has done some truly remarkable things, all over the world. He started green building in the early 90's, creating recycling water systems as a first step towards new ways for healthy living. Introducing sustainable energy such as solar power and air cooling systems in Zambia, Guatemala, and China was only the beginning.

Trevor's ideas and creations come to him and his team by learning from the past, and studying other cultures, from around the world. "You need to keep an open mind, share with one another, take part in conversations, and listen to the community around you," he says. "There are so many things that we can learn from the world around us if we take the time to stop and listen." When asked what he hopes people see in his work, he says, "It's not what they see, rather an experience of positive change that lasts socially, economically, and environmentally." Living





Top left: Mill End
Top right: Kashara Building
Above left: Halifax Seaport Farmers Market Rooftop Garden
Above right: VanDusen Gardens (Vancouver)

in Okanagan for the past four years has had many positive impacts on the creations and teamwork of Archineers Consulting. The beautiful Okanagan encourages Butler and his team to open their minds to new possibilities and a live/work balance. Healthy living and great air quality are powerful motivators in their work and designs.

Trevor had some great advice for those wanting a career in this special art form. He says to be prepared to work hard for the things you want to achieve and hungry for knowledge, and always be open to new ways of learning. Be a positive team player and trust in the team you are a part of. He says there is a shortage of people getting into engineering, which is surprising because it is such an amazing career path.

As Trevor shows the different designs and photos of systems Archineers has created, I can hear the passion in his voice. Art comes in many forms, and to be able to create art the way Trevor and his team do, is truly inspiring and amazing. Trevor is a great example of a person who is empowered and inspired about the world around him and the true meaning of art.

CRYSTAL PRYZBILLE

NOMINATED FOR SCULPTURE

Megan Parker



Top: Megan Parker
Above: Crystal Pryzbille
Right: Father Pandosy

Crystal Pryzbille was born and raised in the Okanagan Valley, but has also lived and travelled in Europe. In 1997, she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts, at the University of Victoria. Ever since she can remember, Crystal has been creating things.

Art is a form of expression for her. Although, painting was her first love, and the challenge and beauty of mixing colors gave her a thrill, she soon discovered her true passion is sculpture. Over the years she has utilized many different mediums and approaches to art-making including: performance, temporary installations, and nature-works. "I never limit myself when it comes to making art," she says. "Most often, it encompasses an emotional state or psychological environment."

When you look at Crystal's artwork she hopes to express "the idea of living a life filled with creating interesting and beautiful things that celebrate and embody some of what I have experienced and processed while living," she explains. Her works express much emotion, and she strives to affect those emotions in others.

Crystal has found it very rewarding to be an artist living in the Okanagan. Because the Valley is somewhat isolated compared to art meccas such as Paris, Florence, and New York, she feels her art is more honest, intimate, and personal. On the downside, career opportunities are limited she notes, which means artists must be highly determined.

Crystal has been nominated for a 2013 Arts Award for her sculpture entitled "Father Pandosy Mission 150th Anniversary Commemorative Sculpture." It was a vision she held for fifteen years, and it took more than two years to create. It is her first life-sized figurative bronze work and is displayed at The Father Pandosy Mission in Kelowna. She concluded that he looked at home when she saw him placed in the middle of the green field, surrounded by the original Mission. In that moment she knew she had given the project her best. It is a stunning piece of art that now blesses our Okanagan landscape.



ARION THERAPEUTIC FARM

Lauren Suranko



Above Lauren Suranko
Below: A Happy Rider

Arion is a mythical winged horse with a handicapped hoof and the gift of prophecy.

Some of you may know firsthand how joyful and peaceful all types of Equestrian sports can be. However, most have never envisioned how huge an impact therapeutic riding has on children with disabilities and on their families.

Three-and-a-half years ago Heather Henderson founded Arion Farms in Kelowna. Heather was a cross country equestrian competitor until she had a fall and sustained a serious injury. By using therapeutic riding as part of her own recovery plan, she discovered how beneficial it was and decided to open up her own facility where anyone with a mental or physical disability would be welcome. Today, Dustin Drader, Farm Manager of Arion Farms, is able to share many inspiring stories about the children who come to Arion Farms and how the impact of the horses has empowered them. One such story is about a young boy who never spoke. His lessons and introduction to horses began very slowly, commencing with just seeing the horse. In the next step of his lesson plan, he briefly touched the horse, just once and then the horse was taken away. Gradually, over time, the boy would pet the horse for longer periods of time. Finally, the day came when he actually rode the horse. When you ride a horse there are many verbal and physical commands you can use. Examples of command words are "go on", and "whoa" and horses listen for these words. This boy had never talked before, but by teaching him these command words and by learning how a horse responds to the words, it motivated him in a unique way and encouraged him to talk. Dustin says this





Above: At Arion Farm

young boy still comes to the farm and loves to talk to the animals. He also continues to ride today.

At Arion Farms they use many different teaching methods for children with various disabilities, but the end goal is always the same: to allow the child to feel important and empowered. Learning to ride a horse is most definitely a healing art in its very own and special way. Some of the physical benefits of therapeutic riding are muscle strength, core strength, confidence, coordination, and stability. Some of the mental benefits are confidence, respect, trust and compassion. Arion Farms does not receive any funding from the government

and operates entirely on the goodness and generosity of its volunteers. With an inventory of twenty-four horses, three ponies, goats, llamas, potbelly pigs, and donkeys, it is a costly facility to maintain and operate.

The farm is currently accepting donations to build a roof for their arena so that it can be used during the winter months as well as all through the summer (when the heat and direct sunlight are intense). All of the animals are special at the farm. For example, there is a very special pair of miniature ponies, named Susie and Frankie. Susie is completely blind so Frankie leads Susie around and always stays by her side. If Susie and Frankie are ever separated, Frankie will neigh for Susie and doesn't stop until she is back by his side. Arion Farms demonstrates how animals can bring out so many positive characteristics in a child, including confidence, compassion, courage, and strength, while positively impacting an entire family in a meaningful way.

www.arionfarm.org

BEN KLICK

NOMINATED FOR MUSIC



Tayler Tustin

Ben Klick has loved music ever since he was five-years-old. It was then that he received a purple microphone for Christmas and picked up his first guitar just a year later. Today, at seventeen, the country music singer has gained a loyal following that just keeps on growing, in the Kelowna area. After moving from Vancouver with his family when he was ten, Ben has called Kelowna home. The city has helped him find his roots in the country music scene and has given him an outlet to turn his emotions into something concrete. Summers on Lake Okanagan and winters on the ski hill are reflected in his songwriting.

Music is Ben's passion and his influences range from country music stars Shania Twain and Brad Paisley to his own friends and family. "My goal is to have my music connect with people, so they can relate to the things I've experienced in my life," he explains. From playing in his basement, to the Youth Talent Show at last year's Interior Provincial Exhibition (IPE), Ben has watched his fan base grow from schoolmates to people throughout the community. His YouTube page and the various charity events he performs at help get his name out into the community. He loves the positive reactions he gets from playing live and it continues to motivate him to improve at his art.

During his time as a performer, Ben has received positive and negative reviews, but he doesn't let the negative comments bring him down. "I know people won't always have something nice to say and I'm always trying to learn something from their comments," he says. Music is his passion and even though the road ahead may be long and daunting, Ben Klick is willing to set his dreams high and see where his music will take him.



Top: Tayler Tustin
Above: Ben Klick

ENDURANCE

Kim Lake



Memories have incredible power to create intense emotional tides that do not reflect our present experience of the world, or even our present experience of things past. Rather, they cause distortions that can cause us to suffer. Conversely, the same memories also hold the seeds required to heal. Memory is rarely reliable, never static and variable in its intensity.

Fortunately, memories can fuel us consciously and unconsciously to create the stories of our lives. All of life is a creative act we perform as we enter into each new moment of our lives. In the present moment we are fully alive, fully engaged, and in it we can find all the possibilities available to us as human beings. In it we find the strength to endure.

I made this picture for the memory book of my son, Orlando. I drew this image of him from a last photo taken by another family member. The side image of him as a young child was taken by a friend who is a photographer and teacher. The text comes from a notebook that his biological mom and I kept of his early years.



Creativity is an essential aspect to our fulfillment as human beings. It engenders a flexible mind, and opens us to the mystical. We humans are not on the whole mental gymnasts capable of seeing each other in the continuum of impermanence. We want the illusion of certainty. Buddhists suggest the answer is in learning to live in the present moment, being awake to the present moment and opening ourselves to the inherent creativity of the universe. It's fairly straightforward stuff, but not easy to achieve. Becoming actively creative can awaken us to the present moment.

Creative expression comes in many forms. It's about letting go. It is what we do when we let our brush trail languidly over a surface, when we follow the melody that lurks in the cacophony of city noises, when we move our bodies in joyous celebration as we stroll down the street, or when we capture the perfect image with our iPhone and post it for our friends. Letting go is just spontaneous play. The list of activities is as endless as human expression. We write in our journals, create beauty, discover a cure, perform athletically, write a poem, make a meal. In the present moment, we can find all the possibilities available to us as human beings.

Most importantly, we discover that we are not alone, but rather part of a great community of fellow creative beings who all share the same source of life, wisdom and love. We are all aspects of the same consciousness. When we open to this realization, we open to an understanding inherent in each of us. We share our experiences, our insights, and our love. We draw from the same source and contribute to the greater body. For me, art cannot exist in isolation, any more than the individual can. Art is an individual expression, sure, but it is not something that is born in isolation. What we produce comes

Top: Kim Lake

Above: Leftover Shadow

Painting Inscription: Walking home one night from pizza at the bakery, a big wind came up and Orlando said "I saw the leftover shadow of a person and it's going to snow" and I dreamed he was right.



Above: This is an example of digital art with found images. I start by taking pictures of graffiti and creating something that is a combination of my vision, industrial objects and the intersection of art, personal expression and vandalism.

through us, through our ancestors, through the culture, through the passage of time, but most importantly, through each other. I think all of us want to share what we do. Many of us find that collaboration is an essential part of our practice. The desire to share what we do is fundamental to our experience and enriches those who are open to giving and receiving. We want to exist in community and to help the larger community be as healthy and vibrant as we ourselves would like to be. We want to give back, to give hope, and to give love.

RETREAT

I'm going to take a moment to share with you a part of my experience of how creativity heals, energizes, creates community and helps us to endure the impossible. In the summer of 2011 my 16-year-old son, Orlando, drowned in a kayak accident. As you can imagine this is one of the most difficult things we can deal with as a parent. The death of a child peels away all of our protective ideas, exposes us to the rawness of existence, demands that we surrender to what is. There was everything and then there is nothing. The death of a child changes who we thought we were, what we thought life was for. All hope is abandoned. We want to fix it, but we can't. There is only surrender.

Creativity, that of others and my own, helped me in immeasurable ways. I decided to share my experience after seeking out and reading what others had shared after they too had experienced the death of a child. Not only would reaching out help me to heal, but hopefully my sharing would help others as well. I created a blog about my experience as a bereaved parent. I wrote as positively as I could. I made digital paintings and picture poems about my son's life and death. Working with his images, and with what others donated to the project, was inspiring. Each day, I spent many hours

Right: Out To Sea

At Orlando's memorial service, hundreds of people from the community of Hornby Island gathered along Big Tribune beach to launch boats made from natural material to send out to Orlando.



being in the moment with my creativity. I also spent many hours with the writing and artwork of others, coming to understand my experiences through the wisdom offered by other people and their stories. I remembered what my son taught me about unconditional love and while I spent my time alone, I began to love the world unconditionally.

This time of retreat was as rich as it was painful. I wrote, created stories, did my visual art, walked, took photos, contemplated life. I taught myself to see things as they were, not how I wanted them to be. Then, as with all retreats, this time alone came to an end. I began to envision myself in community and I set about re-entering the flow of life. It was time to take this creative energy out into the world and I began to look for ways to create in community. Opening to creative energy is asking to exist in community and draws others to us. It allows us to see others and enables them to see us. People appear out of nowhere and gift us with exactly what we need; we appear out of nowhere gifting others with exactly what they need.

EMERGENCE

I met Anja about a year before she came to me with the request to help her achieve her dream. We were both having challenges, wanting change and wanting to create something positive, not only for ourselves, but for others as well. She wanted to see Canada and she wanted to do something for Canadians. Anja is from Germany and is a recent immigrant to Canada. Her dream to see our country by bike began to materialize when she teamed up with the Sunshine Foundation, a group which raises funds to grant the wishes of seriously ill, handicapped, and abused children. Anja's goal is to raise \$90,000 for the Foundation to help children enjoy enriched life experiences while they and their families cope with severe disabilities and life limiting illnesses.

In order to do this, Anja needs to find generous Canadians to sponsor her bike ride from Victoria to Halifax planned for this summer. She has asked me to be one of two support drivers for her tour, and to think about how I could contribute to the goal. I thought immediately that I could make artwork to capture the moments of this ride as we experience it. Later, I will have a show and sale of my paintings. I will donate the proceeds to the Sunshine Foundation, fulfilling my wish to extend my creative practice into the larger community. We will have many stops across the country, meeting many families whose children have life limiting illnesses. So many of these kids will predecease their parents. All of them are loved. All of them can benefit from the efforts of a caring community.

There are countless challenges that we all must face in this life. Opening to creativity and opportunity heals and holds us in the space of infinite possibility. It connects us, blesses us, and makes the impossible possible. Creativity helps us endure.



Above: Anja Rietdorf and Kim Lake

More on Anja's ride can be found on her Facebook page: Anja's Sunshine Ride at www.facebook.com/sunshineride2013. Donations are greatly appreciated. My bereavement blog can be found at www.afterallissaid.wordpress.com and my current creative work can be found at www.kimlake02.com. Beginning in May, look for my creative journal of our trip across Canada.

STORYTELLING: A QUILT OF COMFORT FOR A WOUNDED WORLD



Cathryn Wellner

The 15-year-old was burned over most of his body. He was sure death would be better than a future as a freak, someone who would be stared at wherever he went. Then he heard the story of the Freedom Bird. He clung to this story and decided to soar. www.catchingcourage.com/2010/05/10/soaring-on-the-wings-of-a-story/

Within the stories we tell and hear, we find meaning. They teach us the lessons in our painful memories. They return to us the loved ones lost through death or distance. They give us the relief of laughter. They draw our tears of empathy.

Stories are a quilt of comfort for a wounded world. Richard Wagamese confirmed my belief in stories, more poetically than I could have expressed it. On his January 2, 2012, Facebook update he wrote: “In the deep snow moons there are stories hovering around us. They are whispered by the voices of our ancestors, told in ancient tongues, told in the hope that we will hear them. Listen. In the drape of moon beams across a canvas of snow, the lilt of bird song, the crackle of a fire, the smell of smudge and the echo of the heartbeats of those around us, they speak to us, call to us, summon us to the great abiding truth of stories: that simple stories well told, are the heartbeat of the people. Past. Present. Future.”

SUMMONED BY STORIES

Stories summoned me as I snuggled beside my weary mother to hear bedtime tales. They called to me as I walked the halls of a middle school that felt like foreign land. They whispered my name as I searched for a way to deal with a transition I wanted no part of.

Their call became a mighty shout when I became a teacher librarian and met Amber (not her real name). The five-year-old was in one of 24 classes that came to the library for 45 minutes each week.

The oldest child in the school was eight. They did not need the research skills I had taught to high school students. They did need stories.

One day I decided to set the books aside and tell a story.

Stories summoned me as I snuggled beside my weary mother to hear bedtime tales. They called to me as I walked the halls of a middle school that felt like foreign land.



Above: These young storytellers were among those I trained in Upstate New York in the 80s

They were absorbed more completely than they ever were when I read to them, but it was Amber's response that hooked me into storytelling.

“Where’s the book?” the children asked.

“Today you’re the book. I’ll tell the story. You’ll make the pictures in your minds.

I had learned Diane Wolkstein’s Haitian tale, *The Banza*. In the story a little goat and a little tiger shelter in a cave during a storm. The next day the tiger brings the goat a banza (a kind of Haitian banjo), telling her it will protect her because its music comes from the heart.

As the story unfolded, the kindergarteners grew still. They were absorbed more completely than they ever were when I read to them, but it was Amber’s response that hooked me into storytelling. She was a quiet, unresponsive child, the kind of self-contained little being it is so easy to overlook in a class of thirty small children. I had learned something of the horror of her home life so was not surprised when stories held no drama for her.

This time was different. Eyes wide, mouth slack, body frozen and leaning forward perilously, Amber traveled every step of the story characters’ journey. With no pictures, no pages to make it clear the story was something outside her, she dropped her defences. When the little goat triumphed over hungry tigers by playing the banza and singing the song in her heart, Amber triumphed too.

The group was silent when the story ended, still lost in its spell. It was Amber who broke that spell. She leaned back, relaxed, and sighed, “Oh, that was a good story.”

The story did not change Amber’s life, but it did give her a talisman to



Above: Adelaide, Australia, Storytellers welcome each other all over the world

hold, the vision of someone small whose heart could protect her.

Amber had a talisman, and I had a new calling. Her response to the story was the turning point for me. I threw myself into storytelling, wanting to bring other stories to other Ambers.

ABANDONING CAUTION

By year's end I had persuaded a local storytelling guild to admit me to membership and persuaded a bookstore owner to let me tell stories in the series he

launched. Before long, I abandoned caution and a good salary and declared myself to be a Storyteller. My first clients were mostly schools and children's programs of various kinds. To cast a spell of stories over a gymnasium filled with hundreds of small, wriggly people was to understand the power of words.

Over the next decade, I performed, taught courses, conducted workshops, and spoke at conferences. I spent less time with children, more time with adults. I knew I had found my calling, not just a job but the work I would do the rest of my life.

Then a major life transition took me from Seattle to Vancouver Island and then to Cariboo. Gigs dried up like fields in drought. With savings emptying, and bills mounting, I cast a critical eye on my job skills.

THE REINVENTION OF A STORYTELLING SHEEP MIDWIFE

Demand was limited for someone whose resume read, *teacher, librarian, storyteller, sheep puller*. Desperate for any job, I answered an ad for a three-month community development contract.

I repackaged my experience and struggled with the impostor syndrome. Three months later, the community development organization hired me as coordinator. One contract led to another, keeping me too busy to worry whether I was qualified.

The common thread in all the contracts was storytelling. As a performer, I knew audiences of any age were moved by stories. As a community developer, I discovered that every organization hiring my services was in search of a story that would move them forward. My job was to help them identify and tell the stories that would attract funding, volunteers, clients or community support. My role shifted from performer to mentor.

The one constant was storytelling, the calling I had answered so many years earlier. Though my focus and audiences had shifted dramatically, my underlying intent remained the same. Stories were the quilt of comfort I offered a wounded world.

STITCHING A QUILT OF WORDS

Storytelling is a vocation with no retirement age. Now past the middle of my seventh decade, I perform less and write more. These days I do a lot of my storytelling on blogs. I wondered what would happen if I focused on what was right with the world instead of what was wrong with it. Remembering the story of Scheherazade, I decided to look for 1001 reasons for hope. I've been focused on the blog, that has me posting every day, named This Gives Me Hope. www.thisgivesmehope.com

Blogging for hope has turned my antennae to the world beyond headlines. I am well aware that every individual and organization that inspires me is as flawed as I am. Still, they are holding visions of a world transformed by determination, passion and a healthy dose of laughter.

By the time the Spring issue of the *Sage-ing with Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude* journal hits the online world, I will have passed the 600 mark. Scheherazade, wife of the Persian king so afraid of betrayal he married a new woman every day and had her executed the next, saved her life by telling the king a new story every night. She always feigned exhaustion just before the end, offering to finish it the next night. It took 1001 stories, but she changed the heart of the king. The best I can do is change my own and add some story squares to a quilt of comfort for a wounded world. That is a legacy I can continue to stitch for however many years remain to me.

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Cathryn Wellner has reinvented herself many times—French teacher, school librarian, itinerant storyteller, university instructor, community developer, arts organizer, retail store owner, communications consultant, and project manager. She has also spent years in gumboots, being followed around by sheep, pigs, and a couple of bull camels. She can still be startled by injustices and is grateful to have opportunities to write about them. At the same time, she knows of too many generous, brilliant, kind people to be pessimistic and blogs about them on This Gives Me Hope and Catching Courage.

Blogs:

Catching Courage – www.catchingcourage.com

Crossroads – www.cathrynwellner.wordpress.com

Story Route – www.storyroute.com

This Gives Me Hope – www.thisgivesmehope.com

Twitter: @StoryRoute

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cathryn.wellner

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WORDS FROM THE HEART

THE HAN SHAN POETRY PROJECT: POETRY MATTERS

Susan McCaslin

I initiated The Han Shan Poetry Project in October of 2012 as a way to raise public awareness about the Township of Langley's determination to sell off for development a mature rainforest in Glen Valley, just east of Fort Langley, British Columbia. In October of 2012, in collaboration with a local conservationist group WOLF (Watchers of Langley Forests), I organized some arts and activism events in the forest that gathered poets, musicians, a dancer, visual artists, ecologists, conservationists, and the general public to celebrate the forest's beauty.

When brainstorming about "what next?," I recalled studying an ancient Chinese poet, Han Shan, from the Tang Dynasty, who scrawled his poems on rocks and hung them from trees on Cold Mountain. What if poets from all over Canada and beyond sent in tree poems as a gesture of support and protection for these ancient guardians? Within two weeks over 200 poems poured in and I, with the help of WOLF members, tied them to the trees with colourful ribbon. The public came to stroll and read poetry in the woods throughout the holiday season. The story of how poetry arrived to protect a forest was covered in the local and national press, including Global TV and *The Globe and Mail*.

The forest's installation has now been dismantled, as the project has run its course, but images of poets reading in the woods and trekking out to Langley from all over the lower mainland to read, hug, or be photographed with their trees remains. It's as if a circle of protection still hovers around each tree.

Other arts initiatives followed upon this one, and as a result of all the press and public attention, the Mayor and Council announced on Jan 28th that they would take more than half the land off the market. We were elated! Yet, the politicians also decided to divide the baby and sell off two of the five parcels to a developer despite the B.C. Ministry of Environment's recommendations that the entire area be designated an ecological reserve.

The forest has gifted me with a kind of restless unrest that will continue to bring together art and activism in innovative ways to insure that this beautiful forest full of cedar, hemlock and an ancient Black Cottonwood, likely up to 240-years-old, remains as a legacy for future generations. Meanwhile, the forest keeps giving me poems.



Top: Old Tree. Big trees in McLellan Forest East with arts tents in background, Oct. 28, 2012, An Afternoon of Art and Action Photo by Erin Perry

Middle: Han Shan sign at entrance to McLellan Forest trail Photo by Erin Perry

Above: Susan McCaslin with her family under the ancient Black Cottonwood (possibly 240 years old), Dec. 2012. Photo by Mark Haddock



Above: Visitors reading poems in forest,
Dec. 2012. Photo by Myrna Pfeifer

A Forest Riff on Don Domanski's
"Biodiversity Is the Mother of All Beauty"

BIODIVERSITY IS THE MOTHER OF ALL BEAUTY

Susan McCaslin

Beauty is the mother of all biodiversity
 Biodiversity is the all of the mother's beauty
 The all is the mother of biodiversity
 Beauty is the biodiversity of the all's mothering
 All is the biodiversity of the mother's beauty
 The mother is the all of beautiful biodiversity
 Is the mother biodiverse in the all's beauty?
 Beauty is all-mothering and biodiverse
 Mother-beauty alls biodiverse *is-ness*

Biodiversity is the mother of all beauty

OLD HAN SHAN

Susan McCaslin

Zesty poet-monk
 timewarps from China
 to rural B.C.

Action-rouser
 hangs hermit thoughts
 on Western Red Cedar

Planet's big climate-shapers
 (Fir, Black Cottonwood)
 spray spritzers in our mouths

Old Han Shan
 (more spritely than a teen)
 drops rime on twigs

Words wilder
 than tossed moss
 ascend a mushroom stair

Leaves' trills dangle
 words—ephemeral elaborations
 scrawled on deep-time rocks

For more information about the issue, including reports on McLellan Forest East's ecological rarity, the red-listed species that live in it, and who to write if you wish to make your views known, check out WOLF's website: www.mclellanpark.blogspot.ca

ALL THINGS NEW

Lesley-Anne Evans

It's robin red breast gives word to backyard junkos,
calls a five minute warning. And as tundra swans v-wing
I know for sure, light stretching elastic to meet early risers,
leaving winter to a little death. I breathe, restless

for essence of rain and reclamation, earthworm soundings
in soil depths. The glory, glory hymns of songbirds, glory
in the fullness, Fibonacci curve of lambs wombed and
waiting, subtle fissures of fragile shells, greens'

insistent pierce through monochromatic grey. Revival days,
when tulips prove their faithful hearts, and bridalwreath
believers blossomed arms rise wide and white in praise.
The woods' Amen. And a song, expectant on air ~

Metamorphosize me God, shed me like a snake, birth me raw
responsive, bones shaped for bending. Reacquaint this
wintered ground with gossamer dawn of first days. Fill me
with God scent, spirit favour, something good.

NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

Greg Schlosser

Blind for the observation
Though dry for the condensation understanding is overlooked
like renting hookers for conversation
Irrigation for the ocean
Floor
A wizard without a potion
poured
A world leader without a notion
For
A statue standing tall looking for a motion that has meaningful properties
Quoting everything
without a word from the lips
Letting it all slip away with the world at your grips
An earth preserved for a circle of life
A blind man that sees clearly while he is working at night
A rabbit's vision with sex on his mind opposite to that is myself check mating a rhyme
Still knowing that
Pleasure comes to those that wait like certainty
Like a doctor that operates that feels the pain from the surgery
Parallel to that is
a deaf individual that hears this clear as a bell
To let you know
that it is you

who decides what is heaven or hell

EXCURSIONS TO LAKESHORE IN EARLY AUTUMN

Pablo Tsolo

not far from our home
 in the grey mornings, we would
 wake up early and go with dad
 in the big family car

to an amenable place. george and i
 with some old bread.
 it was very chilly in the car ride, after a while
 the heater kicked in, but to say it was chilly seemed so necessary;
 it was a lovely canadian word and as i said it i forgot how
 cold
 my cheeks and frozen
 my fingers were. The three of us would get there
 listening to the radio, in 26 minutes
 –after all it was just north and close to home.
 as if following our journey...

a skein of wild geese
 define the newborn sky. once there we'd walk across
 the park and benches to the sand, ours would be
 the day's first footprints

behind the world
 at the edge of the lake (i don't know
 what the future has but these waters
 have no end
 as far as the eye

can see).
 they smell of hard salt,
 they people themselves with swans and geese
 while the cries of bandit seagulls
 stab the air like knives

george hands me stale bread: the ceremony has begun, we toss it
 into the air and it doesn't find the ground
 – instead a mouth; a bird!
 they gather around us raucously
 in a frenzied communion on the shore
 'till the last piece of bread is no more:
 So many feathered creatures still fatuously
 honking, filling the dawn around us.

even after, not for long, but even then

we still hang around evading the waves:
 our footprints have patterned the sand
 and appear as if danced

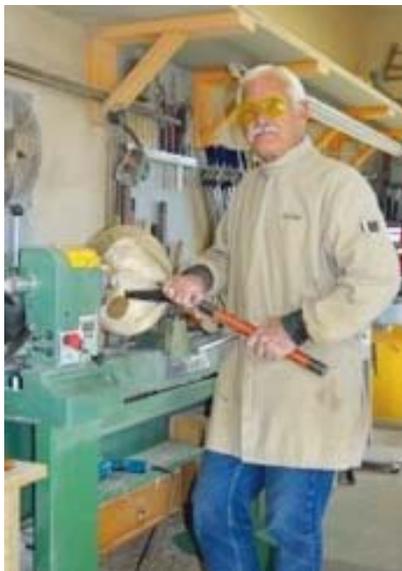
meanwhile
 this place suddenly becomes a realm.

**Poetry might be
 defined as the clear
 expression of mixed
 feelings. – W.H. Auden,
 New Year Letter**

**Always be a poet, even
 in prose. – Charles
 Baudelaire**

TURNING/ TRANSFORMING “THE FALLEN” INTO ART

Ed Bownes and John Topham



Above: John at his lathe

Turning in this context is the art of using a lathe and chisel to carve slabs of tree trunk into bowls as desirable and functional pieces of art.

I recently had the opportunity to revisit an indelible memory of my junior high school days in shop class - carving wood on a lathe. This recall may well have been the birthing of my creative interests that have surfaced again in my retirement. My wife and I are members of Kelowna's Newcomers' Club, a group that organizes a wide variety of tours to introduce newcomers to the Okanagan. When the topic of a tour to watch wood-turning by a local artisan came up, I was immediately drawn to think of my fondest hobby – crafting things from wood. This is how I met John, an artisan in love with both his craft and the medium he has chosen to transform. Imagine an artist who works in unison with nature's unique rhythm and design to transform a fallen tree trunk into stunning works of art.

John Topham of Summerland B.C. is such an artist. His pieces are beautiful and functional. They seem to generate a sensual pull asking you to caress them as you move your hands slowly over their smooth surfaces. Your eye delights at the splendid wood grains and unexpected patterns unique to every tree. John has shared his creative passion around the world.

John explains: “For the most part, my pieces are turned from local trees that have fallen as a result of rot, disease or age. I turn hardwoods, not indigenous to the Okanagan Valley, those that were once planted as landscape ornaments. Mature, they may yield up to forty or fifty pieces, depending on size and integrity of the tree. The process has many stages. First, the tree is slabbed which involves cutting the tree trunk into rough slabs or blanks about five inches thick. Next, these slabs are roughed out by carving away the inside of the slab in preparation for making bowls. Finally, these bowl blanks are stored for three months to dry, and be ready for the final shaping, turning and finishing.”

Here are a few beautiful examples of John's talent in wood-turning.

John also creates other wooden items by order that do indeed fall into the “art” category.

On our studio visit, as John began his presentation, I could see right away that this was a talented man with a gentle demeanor, and “teacher and guide”



Top to bottom:
Walnut maple-rimmed bowl
Bowl with lid
Jubilee west maple bowl
Gariana oak box
Objet d'art

approach. But above all, I saw that he was having fun. I can imagine that most artists would enjoy watching onlookers like me, as my eyes got wider, seeing a piece of art emerge from rough, shapeless materials.

It is the turning process that triggered my passion for making various items from wood. In fact, since my retirement in Calgary, and the move to Kelowna, I have had the luxury of time and materials to design and build an artist's easel, jewellery box, portable bar, picture frames, and Franklin stool, to name a few. However, since I don't have a lathe, I have not had a chance to "turn" a bowl or table leg, spindle or lamp base.

In as much as I love *doing* woodwork, I also enjoy *observing* a talented craftsman, such as John, at work. I was glued to John's presentation for an hour. He took a very heavy and round, 5"x12" slab of walnut, bolted it onto his lathe, gently positioned and clamped the tool rest to within a 1/8th inch of the wood. Next he selected a wild looking and long chisel from an extensive set of woodworking tools on the wall, and turned on the lathe.

Oh, it sounded so smooth and powerful! You could tell it was going to be great! I chuckled as I looked at the amazement on the faces of my friends who had also come to the presentation. As John put the chisel on the tool rest and started to shape the block of wood, spaghetti-like spirals of wood filled the shop. The sweet smell of fresh cut walnut added yet another surprise to our experience that day.

Safety was stressed as John stepped us through the stages of turning a bowl on the lathe. My memory of carving a bowl on the lathe in my shop class, almost fifty years ago, became a very personal part of this presentation. In that class, the one-inch gouge chisel I was using to shape the bowl hit a crack in the wood. This caused me to jerk the chisel back and then right through the joint on my left pointer finger. With stitches and time came infection, which threatened the loss of my hand. Luckily, I was treated and spared the loss, but missed my grade eight final exams.

As John was turning his bowl, it may not have been evident to the others, but what I saw was the synergy and sensitive relationship between John's left hand on the tool rest, the chisel in his right hand and the block of wood. I watched a graceful performance where all worked in unison and harmony to transform roughness into a thing of beauty.

When we were invited to shift our eyes around the shop, I was drawn to the stacks of roughly turned bowls wrapped in plastic to dry and be prepared for the next stage of finishing. Why are they wrapped and left to dry out I asked?

John's experience with wood, coupled with his desire to produce top quality results that won't split and will endure the test of time, makes the drying and curing process critical. He shared an insight that when people buy a beautiful wooden item they expect it will remain in the same condition, and are truly disappointed when it splits or cracks or the finish comes off. It is John's diligence in the crafting, drying and finishing processes that ensures this will not happen, and that the dramatic lustre of each piece will be yours



Above: John with students

to enjoy for a very long time.

While sharing his insights into the process, John told us he was recently invited to the African country of Mozambique by a Mission organization to teach locals wood-turning skills as a means of developing economic and business initiatives. He had just returned from his second visit after a successful month of teaching and working with local artisans. What a golden opportunity to pay it forward, have fun and see his own passion become a vessel of hope for a developing country.

Speaking of his life-long passion in wood-turning John says, “There is a certain solace in creating a one-of-a-kind wood form, the issues of the world are set aside, thoughts of ‘is it good enough’ have been replaced by ‘it is the best’, and Mother Nature and I have collaborated once again.” John’s creative art and story are true examples of *Sage-ing with Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude*.

John concludes, “There is a lot of experience that goes into my wood-work. During my thirty-four years in the explosives industry with CIL/Orica, I have travelled extensively throughout Canada, Africa, the U.S., the Caribbean and South America. Since my retirement in 2002, I have been consulting for Austin Powder Co. of Cleveland. My other interests are photography and guitar. My passion for turning evolved from my formal training in Fine Arts. I have been turning for a dozen years; I am a founding member of the Summerland Wood-turners Group. We meet monthly at a member’s shop - a social time devoted to turning, safe work practices, products, tools, design and finishing.”

CHOOSE TO SEE YOURSELF



Barbara Burke

We often hear the importance of mind body and spirit in the healing process. I believe we do well in supporting individuals in mind and body, but often neglect the healing of their spirit. It is often their spirit that is in the greatest need.

I can only imagine that a person faced with a devastating diagnosis of cancer experiences a multitude of emotions and may feel lost, hopeless and powerless. I believe each person has a powerful inner team led by that wise voice within. I believe it is important to be reminded of that on a daily basis.

In 2001 I created a set of meditation cards, which I call "I Am Divine". They are composed of 52 evocatively illustrated cards using healing colours to reflect powerful "I Am" affirmations.

I created the cards as a result of being asked to create some affirmation cards that began with the words: "I Am". Over time, they grew into I Am Divine Gratitude, I Am Divine Co-operation etc. In all, I had created over one hundred cards. I sat in my kitchen each morning, wrote the affirmation with my calligraphy pen on a recipe card and then intuitively chose prisma colour pencils to illustrate the words. I wasn't *thinking* as I drew; rather, I let the image draw itself. I felt compelled to drop a spot of gold and squiggle on most cards, which I think of as spirit. A friend then suggested I write something for each card. I remember thinking I am not a writer, but one day as I sat at a cafe, I began. My plan was to write what I knew about gratitude and thus the first meditation was given birth. I proceeded to do this with 52 of the cards over my cereal each morning. I never dreamed I would actually publish them. You can experience the cards and my accompanying journal, *A Year of Living Your Divinity*, on my website www.iamdivine.com

Those who choose can use the I Am Devine cards to help guide them in their own healing journey, as they connect to their own inner wisdom.

Mary Vachon is a psychotherapist who works in Toronto. She primarily

Design samples of the I Am Divine meditation cards.





Design samples of the I Am Divine meditation cards.

works with people challenged with cancer. She was gifted the I Am Divine cards by a patient and started to incorporate them into her sessions. Clients began to ask where they could get the cards. She recently wrote me: "I have shared the I Am Divine cards with many of my clients who have incorporated them into their lives. Often they are surprised as they may get the same card over and over, then they realize they "aren't getting the message.

Frequently, clients will come in and draw a card. When they do, then I also draw a card because to me we are all on the path together and what message the client gets is also one which I am meant to receive and vice versa. Recently, I was speaking with someone who was feeling pretty powerless. She asked about the cards and I suggested that she draw one and that I would as well. She drew "I am Divine Strength". I was "Divine Love". I told her in a loving way that it was clear she had more power than she thought. We wait with interest to see how this message manifests."

Last year in Toronto, I offered a workshop at Wellspring, a cancer support group.

Each person was gifted with a set of I Am Divine cards. They were often amazed at how the image and message were so important for them to hear on that day. I found they helped drop people from their heads into their hearts. Within the workshop, we then explored how to set up a daily practice which would support each living so as to give value to his or her best self.

Recently Kylie Delfino, at the Ottawa Integrative Cancer Care, used my cards at a wellness retreat for cancer survivors and caregivers in Jamaica. A group of generous sponsors donated a set of I Am Divine cards and *A Year of Living Your Divinity* to each participant.

Kylie says of her experience with the I Am Divine tool that "Using the I Am Divine cards as part of the annual Cancer Survivor Yoga and Wellness Week proved to be of great benefit not only to the cancer survivor, but also to their care givers who also participated. The cards were incorporated into a daily meditation and reflection exercise.

Having the specific I Am Divine word gave the exercise a personal focus resulting in deeper reflection and self-connection. The response from the participants was overwhelmingly positive.

I feel the I Am Divine tools made this daily exercise richer and more personal for all who attended the retreat". Kylie Delfino, RNH Clinical

Right: Choosing an I Am Divine card

I invite you to imagine that as a patient steps into a cancer clinic for their first treatment, they are gifted with a set of the I Am Divine cards as a gesture of support and empowerment for their future.



Nutritionist, Ottawa Integrative Cancer Care

It is my dream that the cards will be used as a regular part of health care. I invite you to imagine that as a patient steps into a cancer clinic for their first treatment, they are gifted with a set of the I Am Divine cards as a gesture of support and empowerment for their future. A friend of mine who is a ten-year breast cancer survivor recently told me, “If I had been offered a set of your cards at the time I was diagnosed, I would have experienced myself being seen as a person, not as my disease.”

Sitting in the solitude of my kitchen twelve years ago, I felt my creative spirit powerfully urging me forward, guiding my hand to reach out, to share myself and to give support to those who needed to see their own beauty and to feel their own divinity.

Together with creative spirit we can heal each other.

Barbara Burke, Luminous Creations, “bringing Spirit to form” www.iamdivine.com

Download “I Am Divine” from iTunes at:

www.itunes.apple.com/ca/app/i-am-divine-cards/id409192439?mt=8

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Sage-ing is about seeking – satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Aging can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to *Know Thyself* and contribute that knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and well-being for the individual and to our culture.