

A Journal of the Arts & Aging

Edited by Karen Close & Carolyn Cowan

NUMBER 13, FALL 2014

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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The Voices of Creative Aging

CREATIVE AGING is a powerful new social and cultural movement that is stirring the imaginations of communities and people everywhere.

This is the first book to document the movement.

“By publishing this book, we share our optimism that you, the reader, will be persuaded toward a fulfilling and different source of accomplishment and reward. All that is necessary is to listen, hear, believe, and follow your own artistic instinct. Aging with wisdom and creativity is an idea whose time has arrived.”

– Carolyn Cowan, Editor

From Wood Lake Publishing
In bookstores Winter 2015

CREATIVE AGING

STORIES FROM THE PAGES OF THE JOURNAL
SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE
SPIRIT, GRACE AND GRATITUDE

EDITED BY
Karen Close and Carolyn Cowan



“Creation brings a renewed excitement to everyday life. It’s something to look forward to and lose yourself in. The creative way to wellness is guilt free. You deserve to treat your brain, your body, your inner self and the soul in a respectful way, remembering that we are all born with talent and to be creators. It’s up to you to find your way. Start by putting art into your daily routine, like having your morning coffee or walking the dog.” – Linda Lovisa

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Okanagan Institute

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FROM THE EDITORS

"We all need space – free from demands, deadlines, expectations and judgments – to explore who we are and what life is all about. Free time, with absolutely no agenda, is rich with potential. How can we grow if we have no space and freedom to dream?" – www.higherawareness.com

This publication's message: Know Yourself and Grow Yourself With Higher Awareness is gaining momentum. The Journal was founded by the belief that when we go within and listen with perception and sensitivity to the moments of our lives we can creatively translate them into meaning, for ourselves and for others. This issue launches our fourth year of publication and the sharing of stories of those who are *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit Grace and Gratitude*. Together our writers and our readers are part of the momentum of those who are growing into higher awareness.

In this issue Florence Rita Rickards encourages readers that IT'S NEVER TOO LATE AND YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO REALIZE A DREAM. Eileen Murray points out it's about opening to THE ART OF RECEIVING. These two articles are the core message of this, and indeed every, Journal. Marjorie Horne in SOLES OF WISDOM shares how she is reaching out to bring seniors together to complete the canvas of their lives in a spirit of dreaming and becoming. At a time of international unrest

and insecurity the Journal is proud to present the voices of those who are choosing to creatively go within to find personal insight and inner strength. A Creative Aging movement is growing across this country. The article SPRING 2014 BIRTHED TWO CREATIVE AGING EVENTS presents events in London, Ontario and Kelowna, British Columbia.

The goals of the Journal found support in a recent Vancouver, British Columbia three year exploration of the relationship between arts and health which concluded that seniors' involvement in the arts was "associated with improved physical well-being and higher degrees of social inclusion" and that "the psycho-physiological ways that the arts contribute to positive health and well-being are just beginning to be understood".

The Journal is proud to be at the forefront of the twenty first century's shift from age-ing to sage-ing with creative spirit. Creative aging encourages playful, creative seeking so that each can manifest their dreams and find the integrity a life deserves.

As we move into this fourth year of publication we invite our readers to join in celebrating the potential that is within each of us when we find the space and give the time to open to creative spirit.

Karen Close and Carolyn Cowan, Editors

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SOLES OF WISDOM

Marjorie Horne



Our creative path in life has its own individual story. Each experience we have along the journey is like the brush against the canvas moving towards the final completion of our artistic life creation. We hold the brush that weaves the colors, the symmetry of the lines, the obtuse or soft angles that make up our unique expression. And so, as we are aging, the picture unfolds and moves closer to completion as the canvas begins to fill with all of the strokes of our experiences.

I believe at each juncture of the transitional stages that we pass through in the process, we can step back and look at our picture, just as an artist would, to pause and reflect on how our story is unfolding, what we are feeling and why perhaps we chose this particular combination of colors. We can pose a question to ourselves and if the right question is applied and it digs deeply enough, then we can stir up all the creative solutions that will help our artistry flow more easily as we pick up our palette again and move forward.

It is always uncanny how opportunities present themselves to let you know when to stop, step back from the picture and reflect. My experiences over this past year were not ones I would have imagined painting on my canvas, but such they came, unannounced and unexpected, when I made a

The colours of experience



sudden decision to bring my 92 year old Mom into my own home and care for her there. Over many months of watching and caregiving as her health began to rapidly decline, I was in a sense forced to slow down and turn the focus of my life onto her. One week after my Mom moved in, I began writing a seniors column for a local paper. In synchronicity, the two events happened almost simultaneously, giving me the creative outlet to share what I was experiencing during this instrumental time of change, making it easier to embrace the lessons I needed to learn.

With Mom having recently transferred from my home to Hospice House, it seems that now in the greater stillness that has enveloped my life, the universe is urging me to lay the brush down and enter into the deepest caverns of my own mind and spirit to pose that right question. Of course, a lot of the discovery is in coming to know what it is you need to ask.

What seems to perfectly capture the essence of this urging is described by Ma Deva Padma in his book the *Tao Oracle*. He states, "The well symbolizes the place within



Diving into the well

Approaching the heart of wisdom requires humility; you must go naked, carrying no props for the ego, wearing no masks of persona; unencumbered by the weight of fears or doubts, you can plunge in.

each of us that is a deep and ever-present source of renewal, its serene depths uncorrupted by the personality. It is the source from which intuitive knowledge springs. Wisdom is drawn out of its depths, from the darkness of the unconscious into the light of understanding. In order to receive the refreshing benefits of the well, you must dive deep, turning your attention inward and bypassing external influences. Approaching the heart of wisdom requires humility; you must go naked, carrying no props for the ego, wearing no masks of persona; unencumbered by the weight of fears or doubts, you can plunge in.”

He goes on to say that what you find within the deepness of the well is dependent on your attitude. I am discovering that the “going naked” part is not for the faint of heart who prefer to keep their clothes on. Entering the darkness of uncertainty to find truth and being fully receptive to the wisdom that we might find there, requires wearing only a cloak of deep sincerity and humility.

While caring for Mom with the expression of unconditional love that I offered, it opened new doors to my own soul. My column gave me the opportunity to express the vulnerability I was feeling and brought me to seeking and understanding more about the concepts of my own process of aging, and where it was taking me in the future. Reading many books on the subject and exploring the words of travellers that have gone ahead on the path of aging consciously, I became passionate about understanding this third stage of life which I have now entered. Because we seem to teach what we most need or are ready to learn, I shared this expanding perspective with others and gathered fellow seekers together in two workshops to explore these ideas on aging consciously and connecting with our innate wisdom. The first introductory one day workshop was called A Path To Elderhood and explored four steps of spiritual development available as we age as described by Lewis Richmond in his book *Aging As A Spiritual Practice*. A summary of his thoughts follows.

FOUR STEPS TO AGING CONSCIOUSLY

1. The Lightning Strike: this step begins with an Aha moment or Lewis refers to it as a lightning strike. It is the moment when we truly wake up to our aging and stop seeing things as we wished they were and for a moment, at least, see them as they actually are.

2. Coming To Terms With Aging: This step involves a process of comparing ourselves with how we once were, either favorably or unfavorably with how we are today. This step takes an inner inquiry into the body to let it speak to you and feel and accept that all of your emotions are okay. Embracing the

leave an imprint



anger or rage, stepping into the fear and releasing any guilt and sadness as you deal with unfinished business allows a letting go that is necessary before fully moving forward.

3. Adaptation: The challenge of adaptation is how well we can adjust and remain flexible as the signs of wear and tear in our world grow more noticeable. If we remain flexible physically, mentally and emotionally, roll with the punches so to speak, we age the best, stay the healthiest and live the longest.

4. Appreciation: As we look at our past experiences - the strokes we have made on our canvas, we can decide to embrace all of them, both *good* and *bad*. As we contemplate what we learned from them, our experiences in life can become our treasure chest of wisdom from which to draw to benefit others. This, I believe, is when our elderhood manifests into what can be the Soles of Wisdom. To walk on a new path in the third stage of life, mentoring others in a way that utilizes our unique gifts with a passion and creativity that brings us joy and the deep satisfaction that comes through an open expression of our authentic selves.

These steps involve quite a process of transition and life review, hence a second workshop was developed which I called The Wisdom Circle. It ran over two days and delved more deeply into the emotions that surface in this process, incorporating the use of my training in Integrative Breathwork to facilitate some gentle group letting go and release.

Uniting with others in these workshops to traverse the waters of aging was beneficial for all that participated, each person both teaching and learning within the group. It has been proven that when we watch someone else taking an action that it lights up the same part of our brain than if we had taken the action ourselves. This applies to the willingness to be vulnerable



My Mom

When we watch someone else taking an action that it lights up the same part of our brain than if we had taken the action ourselves.

and is the value of working together in a group when sometimes the way seems fearful.

Aging consciously is supported by joining with others, but ultimately this passage must bring us back to our own soul. The recognition of truth must be done alone and correct action for our own futures is influenced by the choices we make and the life we lead. Our unique answers lie deep within our own hearts and sometimes change is required and it is usually an inside-out job. We all leave an imprint in the world and I am looking closely at what mine will be.

I believe you receive a *call to elderhood* from deep within you that wants to be heard and it urges you to walk down a path to greater compassion, creative spirit, grace and gratitude. It takes willingness and surrender and I really did not fully understand the commitment that this involves until these past few months. The well is deep and the water is cool, but it seems important to stay with the discomfort before resurfacing. I know that I want to walk in the soles of wisdom. To draw from all that I have learned from my life experiences, including the mistakes that I have made, and choose how to use this wisdom to walk my talk and live my ordinary life in an extraordinary way.

I think that soon I will be ready to pick up my brush again and return to making some fresh strokes on my canvas as I continue to slowly integrate all that I have learned this past year. You are still and will always be my greatest teacher Mom.

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Marjorie Horne is a bi-weekly columnist for Kelowna Capital News. Her column appears on Tuesdays. Her own caregiving journey with her parents set life on a new path. She founded Caresmart Seniors Consulting, assisting elders and their adult children through the evolving transitions that aging can present. 250-863-9577, resources@caresmart.ca, www.caresmart.ca 205-2377 Shannon Woods Drive, West Kelowna, B.C., V4T 2L8

SCARED SHEETLESS

Kim Foreman



Here I was, able to read any type of sheet music put in front of me, but was totally at a loss to play anything by ear.

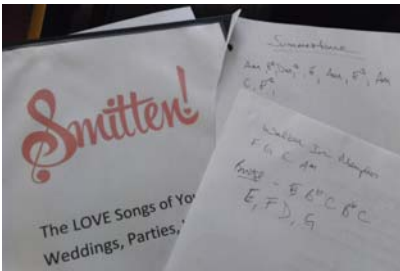
Growing up in a family where both singing and playing the piano was a birthright, I spent my childhood diligently going to piano lessons every week and ascending the grades of the Royal Conservatory. Singing lessons were added when I was 12.

In addition to taking my piano exams each year, I also took my singing exams. My mother was a single parent. It was a struggle to afford all of my music lessons and festival and exam fees, but it was a priority and she made sacrifices so I could study. Making music was as natural as breathing and by the time I was in my teens, I was a competent musician and an excellent sight reader of music. Classical music, musical theatre and 1940s standards were my genres of choice and I was quite happy staying comfortably within this realm for 40 year ... until I fell in love with Jim Rhindress.

Musically, we could not have been further apart. Jim is a classic rock musician and virtuoso guitarist who has the ability to hear a song once or twice and be able to play it – a skill that completely fascinated and mystified me. Here I was, able to read any type of sheet music put in front of me, but was totally at a loss to play anything by ear, write songs or even trust myself to harmonize unless I had some form of sheet music in front of me as a guide. Rock and pop musicians call sheet music addiction being a “slave to the page” and man, oh man, was I ever the poster child.

Jim and I began seeing each other in 2011 and his first gift to me was an acoustic guitar. Being without a piano in my life and completely smitten with him, I wanted to understand what made him tick. I practiced until my fingertips went numb and found that within a few weeks, I was able to play enough chords to pass off a few, slow folk ballads. Guitar is as different from the piano as beer is from wine, but this success lead me to start actually writing songs. It was something I had always wanted to do on the piano, but seemed unable to do on that instrument. A new door was starting to open for me musically and it was exciting to glimpse the possibility of trusting my ear and playing music based on what I was hearing instead of what I was seeing.

Time rolled on and I moved to Kelowna to be with Jim. His first gift to me when I moved here was a beautiful weighted key, full-scale keyboard. It had been more than two years since I had had a piano of any sort in my life and I thoroughly enjoyed playing again (still the same old songs, though from the books I had saved – old habits). I had a private room in our home so began teaching voice again, something I had loved doing a decade earlier in Connecticut, but had put aside while raising my children. Kelowna Voice Lab was born and my life was once again filled with music.



Top left: Kim and Jim are smitten!

Top right: Smitten! Performing at Summerhill Winery

Above: The actual hand-written changes for Walking in Memphis that we used to perform that fateful day



Having the house to ourselves and a lot of time on our hands, Jim and I started singing together and eventually formed our acoustic duo Smitten! with the mandate that we would only perform our favourite love songs from every genre and era – jazz, musical theatre, pop, folk, rock and contemporary. We had a beautiful Bose sound system and Jim played the guitar while I played keyboard, but still only for the songs that I had the sheet music for, of course.

This is where the first domino toppled that has now set off such a chain reaction for me. We were performing at Summerhill Winery one evening when Jim decided he wanted to do the song Walking in Memphis. Sure, no problem, except that for him to be able to adequately play the guitar solo, he needed another instrument to provide the chord foundation underneath and I didn't have the sheet music. "No problem sweetheart, it's a really easy song," he said and scribbled seven chords down on a blank piece of paper and set it in front of me. I felt the cold chill of sheer panic settle into my gut. "What. There's no way I can play this", I whispered to him away from the microphone, not wanting our audience to see my fear. "You know these chords honey", Jim reassured me, "just follow my lead" and with that, he began to play. I had just been thrown into the pool. Not dipping my toes in the water; a total dunk job.

It turned out, though, that Jim was 100% right. I *did* know the chords and I *did* know the song and I was able to play with him right through to the end. When the song was over, I felt euphoric and completely exhilarated. I did it. I had just played a whole song without sheet music. A locked prison door had just been sprung open in my mind and the musical possibilities were endless. If I could do this song, I could do others.

That one moment happened six months ago and has proven to be a pivotal turning point for how I now learn new music. That one moment has given me a new found musical fearlessness for taking on new songs. Not only has it made me a more versatile performer, but I am also incorporating this philosophy into my vocal coaching practice and encouraging some of my older and similarly stuck students to dip their toes into the sheet music-less

**It is so unbelievably
exciting to discover this
new creative freedom.**

pool. Not only that, I have also brought this new way of learning to my trio Kitsch 'n Sync. Most of our songs are now learned without sheet music. We simply find a track for a new song we want to sing and figure out our parts by ear. It saves us a huge amount of time, the high cost of buying multiple copies of sheet music, and doesn't limit our performance to someone else's idea of how the song should be sung.

Smitten! has grown musically, as well, in the last six months. Now, when Jim and I want to learn a new song for our duo, we simply have to listen to it five or six times on the computer, print off the lyrics, write down the chord changes and start practicing it. In most cases, we can learn a new song in an evening. It's fantastic. While I am still a long way from being able to sit in with Jim's five-piece classic rock dance band Cover-2-Cover, it is a goal that one day soon, I will solo on the keyboard during one of their shows. This is something I would like to do before the end of the year.

It is so unbelievably exciting to discover this new creative freedom as I approach my 50th birthday. I look forward to entering my second half century no longer 'scared sheetless'.

Kim Foreman is the founder of Kelowna Voice Lab www.kelownavoicelab.com/ where she loves helping people find their voice. She is a member of the love song duo Smitten! and is a founding member of the trio Kitsch 'n Sync, glam gals, vintage vocals. Kim is also secretary for Theatre Kelowna Society where she is also a regular performer and director. kim@kelownavoicelab.com, 250.878.8724

STAGING CREATIVE AGING

SPRING 2014 BIRTHED TWO EVENTS

“Creative Aging is about possibilities, freeing ourselves of limiting beliefs about aging and embracing the reality that individuals continue to grow, learn and contribute to their communities throughout the life journey”

Pat Spadafora, Sheridan College Elder Research Centre, Mississauga ON

Expressing one's identity, concerns and aspirations through some form of creative expression brings an increased sense of well-being and enhances the quality of life.

Karen Close, Okanagan

Across the country Canadians are discovering Creative Aging and becoming eager to embrace this invitation to harvest the bounty of a life's experience. Individuals are redefining themselves and celebrating the power of the arts to transform the aging process from age-ing to sage-ing. Pioneer in the field, Harvard MD, Gene D. Cohen, describes the process as $C = me^2$. Creativity is me to a higher power. By focusing creative energy on the mass of all we have experienced one's sense of self is enlarged and we are transformed. Expressing one's identity, concerns and aspirations through some form of creative expression brings an increased sense of well-being and enhances the quality of life.

Cohen's studies showed that older brains develop in ways that facilitate creative thought and exploration. He called creativity “chocolate for the brain” because it encourages the growth of dendrites, synapses between brain cells. Dendrites put the brain into what he calls ‘all wheel drive’. For many, senior years are perhaps the first time they find freedom to pursue interests and passions that might have been set aside in favour of family and career responsibilities. There is a rich opportunity for wise elders to both learn and teach. Imagine the contribution seniors volunteering their experience can have. When seniors engage in lifelong learning and sharing of wisdom, individuals and the community benefit.

“Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions,

satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture.” – Elliot Eisner, emeritus professor of Art and Education at the Stanford University School of Education.

With no outside funding, but having secured a day's use of the Rotary Centre for the Arts, and the support of the centre's Program Co-ordinator, a small group of enthusiastic volunteers in Kelowna BC set the following objec-

Drumming Circle





Top left: Galleria Exhibit

Top centre: Fantastic Musicians

Top right: Ponderosa Spinners

Middle: looking down at all the activity in the Atrium

Bottom: Audrey

tives for their first Creative Aging Day, June 20th, 2014.

- Examine the role that creative expression can play in promoting engagement, healing and wellness
- Network with individuals actively engaged or interested in creative expression and aging programs
- Initiate promotion of Creative Aging Programs in Kelowna

The day was a huge success and the centre filled with vibrant seniors eager to share the passion of living creatively and being engaged. Audrey, a 96 year old hula dancer set the pace, swaying to a magical inner rhythm and enthralled by the moment.

The range of interests seniors in the Okanagan are pursuing is vast and energetic and they were delighted by this opportunity to share their spirit and 'show off' their talents. Performances by actors, singers, poets, and musicians delighted and booths intrigued with their variety of paths to expression.

The words of Sandy McAfee were echoed by all who enjoyed the day.

"I am confident that I can speak for my fellow board members who participated from Artists for Creative Alliance and say: KUDOS! ... I was truly amazed at the turnout which exceeded our expectations... pat yourselves on the back for a job well done. Much appreciated."

Thank you to committee member Donna Duke for her excellent photographs of the day.

Kathy Smith, London Ontario

In May 2014, a group of 5 retired volunteers in London Ontario launched London's first annual Creative Age Festival. Without any government funding, they organized and produced a four-day festival with the support of local artists, performers and community-based organizations.

The two main community sponsors were Museum London and The London Public Library.

The festival steering group was committed to involve health, seniors and arts organizations in the planning stages. Many thanks to Dr. Marita Kloseck Director of Western University's School of Health Studies who is a great cheerleader of the festival.

Well-known London arts educators and performers presented workshops and special events at community theatres, art galleries, retirement homes and library branches throughout the city. London's newest seniors'



Left column descending:

- Jim Schaefer (director) and Chartwell Royalcliffe Readers' Theatre performed *OUR TOWN* by Thornton Wilder
- Audrey Cooper, art exhibit Audrey started painting at the young age of 75 photo: Sun Media with permission
- John Dell Chartwell Senior Star 2013 London region Recognized for 70 years on stage vocal performer and musical theatre
- Don't forget Theatre Company

Top centre: Kathy Smith, Creative Age Festival London Founder/Director

Top right: Dann Ebbs Playwright/Actor London Ontario Seniors' Improv Theatre Workshop



theatre group called Don't Forget Theatre Company presented their first production "Look Up: From Rock n Roll to Recliner" to a sold out crowd.

Recognition Awards were presented to honour contributions to the community. John Dell received a lifetime achievement award for celebrating over 70 years on stage. The Nostalgic Theatre (1978) was recognized for leadership and vision in Seniors' Theatre. Dr. Bonnie Younker from the Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University was recognized for excellence in music education for the New Horizon's Adult Band.

The Creative Age Festival London steering group regards our London Public Library branches as centres for learning and creativity for older adults. Working closely with the library staff, the festival organizers and arts educators can now take creative aging programs to older adults in their neighbourhoods. Kathy Smith the festival founder and director says "Every library auditorium is a mini Performing Arts Centre for our older adults."

This de-centralized approach is in line with Ontario's Aging at Home Strategy. Delilah Deane Cummings and Leonor DaCosta from London Public Library Community Outreach & Program Services view the initiatives as an opportunity for older adults to engage, to create and to discover the Library's resources.

London Ontario was the first Canadian city to receive the World Health Organization's Age Friendly City designation. The Age Friendly London Task Force and The London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy are committed to developing collaborative efforts with resident-driven initiatives such as the Creative Age Festival in London.

FRANKENSTEIN MEETS HIS MASTER

Harold Rhenisch



Men and women promenaded from town in carriages, with parasols and top hats, and snacked there with the god Pan, who always liked to help people see how silly they are.

Curled into the western shoulder of the white limestone spires, bartizans, dikes, rock falls, berms, breastworks, caves, outcroppings, crenellations, corbels, keeps, caves, and mantlets of the Vaud Mountains in the northwest of Switzerland lies Lac Neuchatel. Its main town, Neuchatel, climbs the hill on the northern shore, like a last bastion of civilization in the wilderness. Above town, there's a romantic stairway cut into the stone – made to look like a ruin from some time before civilization came to these parts. A century ago, it was a picnic site. Men and women promenaded from town in carriages, with parasols and top hats, and snacked there with the god Pan, who always liked to help people see how silly they are. The oak trees are scrubby up top, rooted in the stone, but the view is marvellous and bright, all the way to Mont Blanc. Kids are practicing their rock climbing on the cliff. There's a rough, hermit's cave. Kids have lit a fire there, and burnt their beer cans in it. I scrambled up the old stairways like the Pan himself.

This thing with the picnics, though. It wasn't just Neuchatel. If you were a richer Swiss you took the cable car up the Rigi, a mountain with a view down the centre of the country and a luxury hotel in the alpine meadows. Silver thistles, that look like they're hammered out of aluminum, grow among the wild flowers. If you were a rich Russian, you took the direct train from Moscow to Montreux on Lake Geneva, to your vacation house that was designed to look like a wedding cake. You'd take the cog railway up the mountain among the vineyards, and lunch at the top, with a view across the blue water to the blue, French Alps.

If you were poor, any ruined castle in Germany would do. Psst! They're all ruined. Napoleon saw to that. If they're not ruins, you can be sure they've been rebuilt. One is Castle Frankenstein, in Darmstadt rebuilt 150 years ago to look like a film set for Wagner. The 20th century installed an ice cream stand, so it's completely up-to-date.

There's an Australian film about all this, called *Picnic at Hanging Rock* – about a group of girls from a private school who picnic at Hanging Rock. There's a lot of late 19th century mysticism, of the schoolgirl kind, with fairies, spirits and the ghost world of the Aborigines. The result of all this emotion is that two girls go missing and are never found. Their bodies, seemingly, literally disappear — into another dimension. Or does sexuality just overcome them? Only Pan knows for sure.

Or Konrad Dippel. He was born in 1673, in Castle Frankenstein. Genera-



tions after alchemists talked to angels at the pleasure of kings, he strenuously resisted the arrival of the scientific method, which strictly separated spiritual issues from physical ones. He moved back to his birthplace, Castle Frankenstein, and experimented at recreating Jesus's trick at resurrecting his friend Lazarus from the dead, with maggots and everything. Not a good idea. His body was soon found on the castle grounds.

He was resurrected by Mary Shelley. On her way to holiday with Lord Byron in Switzerland, Mary and her lover Percy, an alchemist poet, stopped off at Gernsheim, near Castle



Frankenstein. The ghost story about the local boy who'd made a deal with the devil there was the foundation of the local tourist trade *and* the local version of the Sunday promenade to honour a half human creature up on a crag. Mary was 18. She was charmed.

After that, the trio were sitting around one evening in Byron's villa on Lake Geneva, taking turns reading each other German ghost stories from a collection called *The Phantasmagoria* — just published in London. Pretty soon, they'd dared each other to each write a ghost story of their own.

Mary's contribution was *Frankenstein*. To pull it off in a hurry, she did what every winner of the Three Day Novel Contest knows: she cobbled things together and hoped they'd come to life. In other words, she plundered *The Phantasmagoria*, and conjured up Konrad Dipple, too, for the delight of her companions.

Mary's Frankenstein was a Swiss doctor who raided graves during the Napoleonic invasion — a long-standing practice used by medical students throughout the Renaissance to get corpses for dissection, so they could figure out how the things worked. Dr. Frankenstein was a late comer to this practice, but stubbornly hung on to secret and forbidden traditions. Nothing makes a better ghost story than that. Now that bodies were understood, physically, as structures made of bone and blood vessels, heart, lungs, spleen, nerves, and so forth, Frankenstein went one extra step: he went for the soul. He used the bodies in experiments aimed at getting at the origins and nature of life itself. He was, in other words, throwing down his gloves before God and challenging him to a duel. He forgot about Pan. Never a good idea.

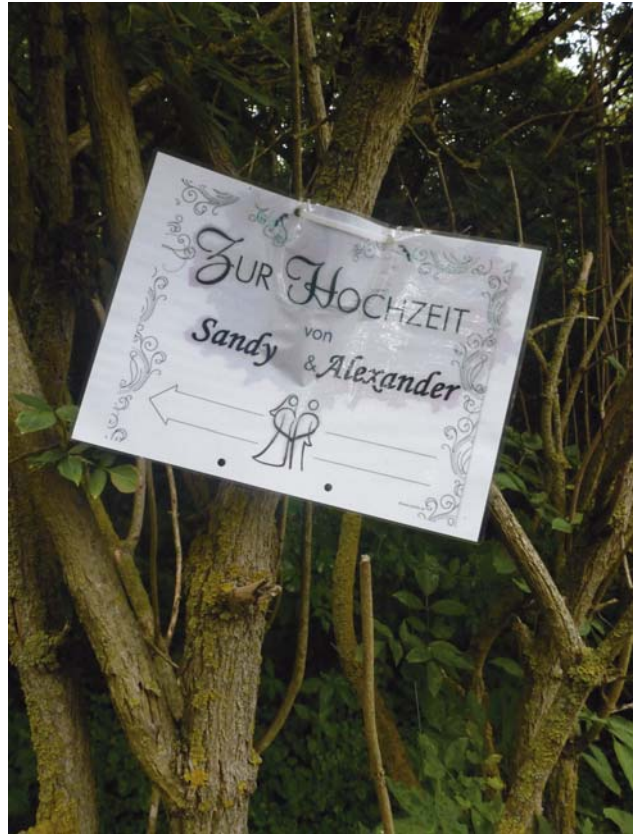
God played along, though. Before long, Frankenstein had cut up a number of corpses, sewed them back into a rough body, and wired them up to a big lightning rod. To his complete shock, a big Kazot! of lightning set them working again. It even kick-started the brain of this jig-saw puzzle

Top: Burg Frankenstein

Above: A knight in prayer at the base of the chapel altar



Left: View from the Dezaley vineyards in Switzerland over Lake Geneva to the French Alps



Right: A couple's wedding notice, indicating direction, at Burg Frankenstein

creature and it wanted its freedom. Oh-oh.

Mary stole *that* idea from Percy. Like Frankenstein, *he* was seriously into politics, mysticism and freedom — big stuff, worthy of a male imagination. He wrote a play about Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humankind because they were so seriously cold and miserable. As punishment, he was chained to a cliff, while an eagle dove at him continually and tore at his liver. Mary, on the other hand, was seriously committed to the notion that it was the dedication of generations of women that actually kept civilization going, whatever else the men thought. Shelley drowned, while sailing in Italy. Mary stood by while his body was burned on the beach.

I went to visit Frankenstein's Castle on a whim, one Sunday afternoon. A castle that had been ruined by a silly remake, then turned by occupying American GIs into a Hallowe'en party setting, like *Animal House*, during the 1980s, and now the centre of the incursion of Hallowe'en into German life? That sounded less like Germany than downtown Los Angeles. My German cousin Thomas, a historian, begged me not to go, but at the end of a two-week-long trip through Neuchatel and Lake Geneva, including long afternoons looking over the French Alps, so blue, I found myself standing in the rain in the vineyards above the Rhine. I just wanted to get dried out, so I went to the great hilltop picnic site of Frankenstein's Castle. I could write about it, I thought.

Instead, I got lost. Pan made sure of that. Thunder cracked overhead. The air shook. It was as dark as dusk. Rain came down through the beech

Mary's Frankenstein was a Swiss doctor who raided graves during the Napoleonic invasion — a long-standing practice used by medical students throughout the Renaissance to get corpses for dissection, so they could figure out how the things worked.

trees in torrents. I plodded across a carpet of dead, brown leaves, then through a tangle of bushes, creepers and thorns gone wild since the Celts (we now call them the Swiss) had a fortress up on these heights, and got wetter yet. And then, high above me, through the bushes, like Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty's Castle, there was a gate above a long stair matted with soggy leaves.

As the thunder cracked a hundred metres overhead and the rain splattered and spattered and smashed down, I passed through the gate into the courtyard of an ice cream restaurant. The umbrellas were folded. The chairs were tipped up. It was closed.

A week before, a couple were married here. The path to the parking lot was decorated with computer-printed signs directing the guests to what was, I suspect, a feast of black-lipped Goths. I laughed. Pan, the god of wine who haunts all places overgrown and all rocky outcroppings, was playing games with us all. He had led the wedding couple into the surreal maze of love, and me into the weeds. Because of his energy in the air, I found the castle only after I was spooked. My original mockery of the castle's bad reconstruction and its lazy Americanization was translated into awe, and then respect for a power that could so neatly cut me down to size. Well played, old goat!

Harold Rhenisch has been writing about the Okanagan for over thirty-five years. His work is based on literature, ancient prayer, myth and spell-craft. 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. Harold lives in Vernon, where he writes the deep ecology blog, www.okanaganokanagan.com.

THE HUMBLE COLOURED PENCIL



Karen Close

In the last issue of the Journal I shared with readers how esteemed Canadian artist Daphne Odjig experiences joy as she communes with her drawing pad and coloured pencils at Cottonwoods Care Facility in Kelowna B.C. The Journey continues as she fills each day, usually humming softly, and intently looking into her heart to see where her pencil will take her. The exhibition *Drawing on My Experience* will be available September 20 – October 1 at The Bearclaw Gallery in Edmonton, AB. “At the age of 95, Ms. Odjig has created a momentous body of work in her lifetime. These recent drawings reflect the many themes that are a constant in her paintings; nature’s beauty, family love, legends of the Ojibway and an underlying presence of spiritual connection. These pieces have a special place in Daphne’s career and in Canadian art history.” www.bearclawgallery.com

Also on September 20th, Odjig’s 95th birthday will be celebrated by a gathering of friends for the opening of a newly selected retrospective collection at Gallery Gevik, 12 Hazelton Avenue, Toronto, ON. www.gevik.com

“What would I do if I couldn’t draw. I’m still always surprised. I don’t know where this one came from, but the nurses seem to find it entertaining.” – Daphne Odjig

Engaged



Her drawings are full of humour, optimism and enthusiasm for a well lived life. “I think I’m good with line, don’t you,” she laughs.

Mentoring has also become important to Daphne as she fills her days. Many, both from inside and outside the facility, come to visit and share in this woman’s vitality and creative spirit. Particularly affected by knowing this generous and loving Sage is recreational therapy assistant, Kellie Schonfeld. Fondly, Kellie explains, I remember sitting in front of the TV in high school with my sketchbook and pencil crayons. I have always felt comfort and serenity when drawing, but life intervened and I’d stopped. Watching Daphne has made me start again.

Today, when I arrived for my visit Daphne was eager to tell me how delighted her new, younger doctor was by her sharp mind. “Keep on doing what you’re doing,” he advised as he left. When I share his words with Kellie, both she and I look at each other and nod, “It’s her art.”

With great patience Kellie tries to encourage others in her care to just pick up a coloured pencil and relax into where it can take you. “So many



Top left: My Grandmother smoking pot

Above: drawn the week Daphne turned 95

Top middle: Kellie loves to draw owls

Top right: Her five year old son has noticed her love of owls.

people are afraid to relax into their art. I ask, 'Why is it so important for you to copy that? Why can't you just let it come from your heart? They say they don't know what is in their hearts and I ask well, what is important to you and often the reply is, 'I don't know.' It's sad. I say well just paint and it will come. Don't worry about what it looks like. You know I've never taken a class. I goggle things and watch Youtubes, but I've never sat down with an instructor." Kellie was delighted to learn that Daphne also taught herself to be an artist.

Similarly, through Kellie's efforts to inspire those in her care at Cottonwoods, she has become very proficient at what she herself can do. As she shares her sketchbook with me she explains, "Daphne told me to just start with a line and let my pencil go. She always tells me it's her soul that is speaking. I feel the same way - in my drawing and in my photography."

Frequently she sits at the kitchen table drawing with her young son and daughter.

"I'm passionate about drawing. It's truly where my passion lies." Kellie has found particular purpose and new respect for how easily and deeply one can become engaged and enlivened by the humble coloured pencil. At home she has bought sketchbooks and pencils for her son and his younger sister. Happily the three sit around the kitchen table and draw together.

"When she looked at my sketchbook, it was Daphne who said, 'Put some colour in there.' I'm glad I did." Kellie recalls fond memories of her Metis grandfather who also inspired her as she was growing up. She is happy to have rekindled memories of her native ancestry and it too is influencing her drawing. Like Daphne's, Kellie's style is a unique expression of who she is.

As she reads about all that Daphne accomplished as an artist, Kellie considers possibilities. Both of us hope that just as Daphne influenced public perception of Native Art in Canada in the 1970's, her example might now make people aware of the friend art can be in their senior years. Just picking up a coloured pencil and doodling is within everyone's grasp. Robert Browning in describing the artist Andrea Del Sarto said, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp. Or what's a heaven for?"

When I listen to Kellie's enthusiasm and her hopes for the art program at Cottonwoods, I am reminded of Marshall McLuhan's quote: "I think of



Top left: Bear

Top middle: I imagine

Top right: I create

Above: With matching sketchbooks, Daphne and Kellie are ready to change lives.

art, at its most significant, as a DEW line, a Distant Early Warning system that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it.”

Like Daphne, Kellie’s pencil leads her into whimsy, but perhaps also wisdom and meaningful recreational programming for seniors.

Recently the Journal received a letter from a woman who enjoys the stimulation she finds in our content:

“I am in a facility that is not bad but the activity director has never heard the word “creativity”. They play bean bag baseball and a horsey-race game. All games, all sports focused. No sense of the feminine part of the world and the deep universe. People’s souls are not being fed at all. And yet they are happy and have no ideas for new activities (of course, because they have never heard of creative movement and until they experienced it they wouldn’t know.) I am considered a ‘complainier”.

More sensitive, thoughtful care givers like Kellie are needed to give long-term care residents stimulation that can feed the soul.

THE ARTFUL EYE:

DRAWING AND PAINTING AS CONTEMPLATION



Lisa Lipset, Ed.D.

“Art is contemplation.” – Auguste Rodin

In August of 2008 I attended a weeklong Vipassana meditation retreat entitled *Awake in the Wild* www.awakeinthewild.com facilitated by Mark Coleman. In addition to attending the silent meditation sits, walking meditation and Mark’s activities which inspire deeper connection to nature, I set myself the task of painting daily to give shape and colour to my experience.

It became immediately apparent that the combination of meditation and art in nature enhanced my feeling of connection both to my inner process and to the living world. I felt and saw myself change from the prickly contained arrival to someone entranced with rainbow dew balls on the wet grass by the end. I developed attachments to a large catmint plant and a white moth, and have since come to appreciate the ability to remember the retreat experience through images.

Beauty, meaning, joy, serenity and belonging can be ours when we approach art-making as a contemplative practice. To contemplate means not only “religious musing” but is an “act of looking at”, “to gaze attentively, observe,” as we purposely “mark out a space for observation”. We don’t just see more fully, we feel the communion of self with other. What keeps contemplative art distinct is its reduced emphasis on the finished product. Instead we commit to process over time, strengthening our ability to easily shift into connection in more daily moments.

Art-making as contemplative practice helps us to engage holistically with ourselves and our world. We engage our thoughts, feelings, senses and intuition and go beyond to a realm of synchronicity and mystery. John Loori in the *Zen of Creativity* (2004) illuminates various elements that awaken our creativity and support our participation in what he calls the artless arts. Among them are opening to a still point, simplicity, spontaneity, a sense of trust in the unknown, creative feedback, and art koans- exercises based on paradoxical questions that can be resolved only through artistic expression. To these key characteristics I would add: in the moment presence, attention, intention setting, receptivity, actively using more than one sense simultaneously, following what attracts, cultivating joy and wonder through reflection, and opening our hearts. It is in this way that we learn to see through the artful eye.

Beauty, meaning, joy, serenity and belonging can be ours when we approach art-making as a contemplative practice.

We don’t just see more fully, we feel the communion of self with other.

The Artful Eye

In his book *Integral Psychology*, philosopher Ken Wilber (2000) describes three different ways of seeing: the eye of flesh (sensibilia), the eye of mind (intelligibilia) and the eye of contemplation (transcendelia). The eye of flesh perceives the “outer” material realm, the eye of mind or reason is engaged in the conceptual realm of symbolic language, the contemplative eye experiences the transcendent realm. Sufism calls these three eyes: the eye of flesh, the eye of fire and the eye of art. In his book *An Art of Our Own*, Roger Lipsey states:

“Eyes of flesh focus on the thing itself, eyes of fire on facts but still more intently on their participation in a larger meaning by which they are raised. Eyes for art strike a balance between these two.”

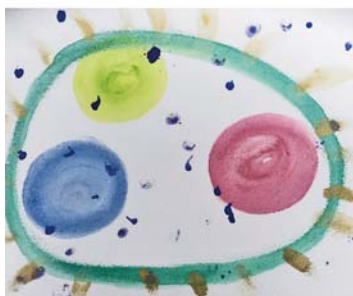
Contemplative art practices can in general be defined by their starting intention. Some practices focus on how to open to mindful connection to self, others teach attention and mindfulness in relation to the world, and finally a few marry connection to self and other in a seamless process. All engage the artful eye as a way to open and commune.

Connection with Self

We can paint and draw as a way to commune with self. Drawing and painting can give expression to body sensation, emotion, dream imagery, intuition and ideas. Contemplative art couples the stillness of meditation with the movement or action of art making. In her book *On Not Being Able to Paint* (1957), Joanna suggests that in the doing of contemplative art there is the realization of an entirely different almost universal way to know that transcends our preconceived ideas of things. Images have a life of their own that we can connect to as both self and separate through what she called contemplative action. This is similar to what Laura Sewell describes in *Sight and Sensibility: An Ecopsychology of Perception* (1999). We come to see and feel our own nature as it is revealed in a language of shape and colour simultaneously fresh yet somehow familiar.

“We see our own patterns rise to the surface as we find ourselves meandering along the relations, as we begin to get it; to see and understand that we too are natural, that we too are truly of the earth.”

Opening to what is present



1- Prickly Container



2- Energy Inwards



3- Unbounded Heart



4- Melding

We often find words pouring out during the time the images are created and later when they are reflected upon. It's as if a lid has been pulled off and we can engage in dialogue with ourselves. Dreamworker, Jeremy Taylor speaks of the power of dream work to bring the "not yet speech ripe" into view. Contemplative painting and drawing can do the same.

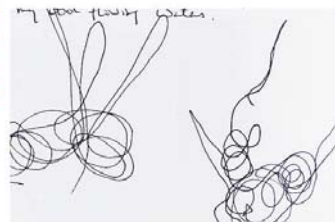
The first four paintings created during my Awake in the Wild retreat were initiated by opening to what was present for me each morning. I started with a quiet meditation in my tent having organized my paper, paints and water beforehand. I closed my eyes to choose the colours and painted with both hands keeping my eyes closed. The images mirrored my original shift from feeling contained and prickly, to finding energy and heart that energized and dissolved my bound state.

Below: following the Create Cycle

Bottom: catmint painting last in series



5- Painting with Cat Mint



6- Eyes closed Drawing



7- Drawing Cat Mint



8- Intuitive Drawing of Cat Mint



9- Cat Mint Painting eyes opened

Connection with Nature

In the tradition of Shambhala Art (www.shambhalaart.org) based on the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, art wakes us up when done with attention and mindfulness. To attend is to stretch one's mind toward something, to reach out and meet the world. According to Archetypal Psychologist James Hillman, attention to the qualities of things resurrects the old idea of "notitia" as a primary activity of the soul. "Notitia" refers to the capacity to form true notions of things from attentive noticing. It is the noticing on which knowledge depends. Ecophilosopher David Abram feels this attention is reciprocal.

"We can learn a new reciprocal way of seeing. If the surroundings are experienced as sensate, attentive, and watchful, then I must take care that my actions are mindful and respectful, even when I am far away from other humans, lest I offend the watchful land itself."

In his book *Zen Seeing and Zen Drawing*, Frederick Franck describes meditation in action- a kind of contemplative doing that softens our gaze and opens our hearts to the beauty of the world. We can engage our wakeful attention anywhere at anytime. Physicist David Bohm describes this as "artamovement", a kind of fitting together of self and world through art making.

In Creative Nature Connection (CNC) we are supported to make the shift from thinking about nature to directly engaging by following the Create Cycle (I describe this in Sage-ing 8 and 9).

On Day 4 of the retreat I found myself attracted to the catmint outside the dining hall. I loved the tall fronds of purple blue and how full of life the plant seemed. I drew



10- Light Balls



11- Moth Drawing and Painting



12- Flight and Light Balls



13- The Knowing I



14- Dew Balls

Top: painting with my moth

Above: rainbow dew balls on wet grass

and painted with eyes open and closed using both hands in sequence.

This image is the last in the plant series and was done completely intuitively with closed eyes. I love the dynamism of the lines and the intermingled colours.

Connection to Self and Nature

When we weave both ways of working together we can connect with both self and nature in a single session. We express the inner “not yet speech ripe” and connect with and express our relationship to a natural pattern, plant, animal, or element (like earth, air, fire or water).

In my book *Beauty Muse: Painting in Communion with Nature* (www.LisaLipsett.com) I share how over time creating with self became fused with creating with nature. We began to see myself mirrored as J Ruth Gendler in *Notes on the Need for Beauty* so aptly describes:

“We expect to find the world outside the window, expect to find ourselves in the mirror. But I am interested in what happens when we let the world be our mirror, go deeper into ourselves and find the world, go out into the world and find ourselves anew.”

As the retreat wound down I had a day that began with lightness, a sensation of ease. I brushed my teeth and was immediately attracted to a beautiful white moth on the mirror. That same moth or same kind of moth sat on the wall during that morning sit. So afterwards I quickly grabbed my art supplies and drew and painted with the moth. I painted again at the end of the day revealing flight and ball image, followed by the sad face and the observing eye.

On the last morning of the retreat I found myself mesmerized by the iridescent rainbow dew balls in the wet grass outside the hall.

Learn more about Lisa Lipsett's work at www.LisaLipsett.com

Creative by Nature Center – an online network with classes and event information:

www.creativebynature.org

Art – www.Lisalipsettimages.com

Blog – The Drive to Create: www.thedrivetocreate.com

LIFTING VOICES, SPIRITS AND HEALTH SCORES

Jill Hilderman



He was just the chauffeur.

Angus McNee agreed to drive his wife Beryl and friend Carol to a *Silver Song Club* session in West Kelowna. The ladies fancied the idea of dropping-in to the singing group they'd read about. It was billed as non-performance, fun and requiring no lyrical talent. Instead, *Silver Song Clubs* are structured, participatory singing and music-making sessions with proven wellness outcomes; they are designed to enhance the physical and emotional well being of seniors who are aging at home and keen to 'get out'.

Angus took a chair with the intention to sit at the back or to pop out and run errands and collect the ladies after the 90 minute session. Instead, volunteers welcomed him into the circle and suggested he just sit and enjoy. Now, two years later, Angus belts out enduring sea shanties, Sinatra smoothies and show tunes with the more than 30 participants who come and enjoy the experience twice a month. And, he feels better for it too: "I'm glad I do it. It's a real pleasure; the opportunity to get together with a group of people singing their hearts out."

The west side group and two other *Silver Song Clubs* in Kelowna are offered free to area seniors by the Sing For Your Life Foundation, BC. It's the Canadian chapter of the U.K. originating charity started more than ten years ago. The proprietary program was developed in collaboration with the Sydney De Hann Research Centre for Arts and Health at Canterbury

Christchurch University in the U.K., which researches the value of music and the arts for well-being and health.

The Centre conducted the world's first randomized controlled trial on community singing, with older adults showing improvements in mental well-being. Their ongoing evaluations of the *Silver Song Club* model confirm that over time participants report an improved overall rating of physical health, have fewer doctor visits, and less unscheduled hospital visits; they tell of increased morale, less loneliness and improved respiratory function.

Silver Song Club meets in West Kelowna
Photo by Gary Nylander, The Daily Courier





Top: (l to r) – Carol, Angus, Beryl Photo by Gary Nylander, The Daily Courier

Above: Angus's 10-year old neighbour, Breckin, and the McNee family dog Toby. Photo by Angus McNee

Always creative, Angus doesn't consider himself a singer. Instead, a camera – and in recent years his Apple Mac computer – are his tools to creative expression. Born in Perth, Scotland, 73 years ago, he dabbled with photography as a young man. Working in the hotel industry he shot scenic photos for pleasure, and developed them at night in a darkened staff bathroom. It was a fortuitous entry into the British Navy's Fleet Photography Unit that was to hone his skills and build his passion. His role took him throughout the world recording the U.K.'s naval exercises with the fleets of smaller countries and documenting large-scale military events. His navy career was

followed by a stint with the Portsmouth Evening News where he met his future wife, Beryl, a journalist and editor. The couple immigrated to Canada in 1975, and Angus established his commercial photography business in Calgary. The oil patch kept him busy, and aerial photography became one of his specialties. He built added profile through his assignments for Maclean's Magazine, as their Western area photographer, and other large corporate accounts.

Now retired in Kelowna, and following nine years as a volunteer in the youth justice system, Angus is a committed mentor. Ten-year-old Breckin is a neighbourhood friend whom Angus has introduced to photography, badminton, music concerts and financial management (through the establishment of his first bank account). Breckin occasionally joins Angus and Beryl at a *Silver Song Club* session where intergenerational experiences are encouraged. Often a 16-year-old student musician will lead a hand chimes experience or a participant's toddler grandchild will be spotted perched among the percussion instruments.

Angus keeps his camera with him at all times. He's embraced the evolution to digital photography and is known to leap from the car to capture local sheep swarming their oat-laden owner or to record the weighed down boughs of a friend's apricot tree. Says Angus: "My computer keeps me young, and with it there is endless opportunity to be creative, regardless of my age."

ALIVE INSIDE is a celebrated documentary that won the Audience Award at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. The full length movie is being screened in Kelowna on October 23, 2014 as a fundraiser for the Sing For Your Life Foundation, BC. *ALIVE INSIDE* is a powerful exploration of the human relationship to music. Click here to view the trailer, www.aliveinside.us Tickets are available for the documentary, or learn more about the evening by contacting www.singforyourlife-canada.org/

For the 2014–2015 schedule of *Silver Song Clubs* in the Okanagan visit: www.singforyourlife-canada.org or call 250.860.5408. No registration required; drop-in encouraged.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

AND YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO REALIZE A DREAM



Florence Rita Rickards

Do you hunger to ignite the fire of your dream; to ignite or reignite your passion, your purpose in life; to live a life beyond your wildest imagination; to wake up every morning saying, I love my life? No matter what your age, or your circumstances, it is never too late to realize a dream. It's *only* too late, if you don't start now.

I have devoted over 30 years to assisting hundreds of organizations and thousands of people from ages 17 to 80, from all walks of life and all different backgrounds, from all over the globe, to create a vision, achieve their biggest goals, create richer, more fulfilling lives, and realize their dreams. My joy, my passion and purpose in life is helping people maximize their potential, realize their dreams and create a life they love living.

I personally have two black belts - one in success and the other in failure. I know that to succeed in life, you've got to be in the game. You have to be up at bat. To become a Babe Ruth, you have to have a lot of strikes at the ball and you have to be willing to strike out. In 1923, Babe Ruth broke the record for most home runs in a season. That same year, he also broke the record for highest batting average. There is a third record he broke that year that most people don't know about. In 1923, Babe Ruth struck out more times than any other player in major league baseball.

Some people live 90 years. But most people will live one year 90 times. Which one are you choosing to be? It is a choice, whether you are aware of it or not. Do you choose to live a life by design or by default?

Too many people are not really living. They are just going through the motions. They are sadly, the walking dead. They get up every morning and go to a job they hate and that makes them sick. Why? Because they are letting their paradigms, their fear and doubt stop them from going for the life they really want. Most of us have been trained from the time we are small children to live an *outside in* life - to look to our conditions and circumstances to determine how we shall live as opposed to living an *inside out* life where we create our lives from the inside out with our thinking and visioning.

The internal critic is firmly planted in our thoughts at a very early age. It's the voice that says, who do you think you are? or don't be a fool, they will laugh at you, you will fail, you will look like an idiot, you don't have what it takes, and so on. We all have those voices. The crucial point is do we *have those voices* or do we *let them have us*? Oscar Hammerstein II said it best in his song, Happy Talk, from the musical, South Pacific, "You gotta have a dream.



If you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?"

Just as a blade of grass will push through the cement to reach the light, you are being pulled toward your greatest self yet to be. Feel the pull. Pay attention to your longings and your discontents. Pay attention to the situations that have you feeling stuck, or hemmed in. They are telling you something. Like the blade of grass, you are being called to greater aliveness. And, it is those longings and discontents that are letting you know. I encourage you to answer the call. The Talmud says, "every blade of grass has an angel that bends over it whispering grow, grow", become, become.

And just as the acorn has within it everything required to become an oak tree, you have an acorn within you. The question is, Will you become an oak tree? Will every acorn become an oak tree? No. Only the acorns that are in the right environment, and that receive the right support and nourishment become oak trees.

"The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the highest vision of the soul, a walking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities." – James Allen

Your dreams are no different. They need the right soil, sunlight, nourishment, support, and encouragement. So pay attention to your longings and your discontents; dust off those dreams and let's get to work. As Maya Angelou (1928-2014) said, "Love life. Engage in it. Give it all you've got. Love it with a passion because life truly does give back, many times over, what you put into it."

When Diana Nyad was a young woman and a world class, world renowned, award winning swimmer she had a dream to swim from Cuba to Florida. She tried a few times and failed. At the age of 29, she hung up her bathing suit and became a couch potato. Then, when she was 60 and her mother died, Diana began contemplating her own mortality and she decided to resurrect her dream of swimming from Cuba to Florida without a shark cage. She tried and failed several times. She went through what some consider absolute torture in her attempts. She swam in frigid, shark infested waters, throwing up violently and constantly. Diana was stung by jelly-fish all over her body until her face was so swollen she was unrecognizable. But, she persevered and at age 65, after a 58 hour, 110 mile swim in frigid, shark infested waters, without a shark cage, she walked up on the Florida shore having successfully realized her dream.

What a testament to the human spirit. What an inspiration. She had three things to share with everyone as her tired, wobbly legs barely held her up: 1. you should never ever give up; 2. you are never too old to chase your dream; and 3. it looks like a solitary sport but it's a team effort. None of us can do it alone. Knowing that is one of the keys to success in life.

When Sarah Patricia 'Paddy' Jones was a young woman she was a dancer and dreamed of going professional. But then, she fell in love and got



Nico and Paddy, a 79-year old spectacular salsa dancer on Britain's Got Talent

married. She hung up her dancing shoes to be a wife and mother. In her late seventies her husband died. Paddy had not danced in over 45 years. She decided to take up a new type of dancing salsa. Her instructor, Nico, was so impressed with her ability that he suggested they enter Britain's Got Talent. And just a few months shy of her 80th birthday, Paddy and Nico appeared on the British talent show and shocked the world. The audience and judges could not contain their amazement at Paddy's incredible skill, flexibility and agility as she jumped up on Nico's shoulders and he swung her around as though she were a school girl. You can watch and listen to the audience go absolutely wild during their performance at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjHnWz3EyHs

Sadly, too many people bury their dreams so deep, or gave up on their dream so long ago, that they don't even allow themselves to recall the dream(s). Benjamin Franklin said, "many people die at age 25 and aren't buried until they are 75."

One thing we all know for certain is that we have an end date. There will be a day when you will lay your head down on the pillow for the last time and you will take your last breath. What I consider to be one of life's most important questions is, When you die, will you be dying with your music still in you? Will you die having not done that one thing, that one special thing that you were called to do - that one thing that you spent your life wishing you could do but kept telling yourself all the reasons you couldn't do it? Don't let your paradigms stop you from chasing and realizing your dream.

"Whether you think you can, or think you can't you are right." – Henry Ford

In closing, my hope is that I have inspired you to dust off an old dream or to create a new one and that you will decide to live your dream.

Florence R. Rickards, MBA, Certified Transformational DreamBuilder Coach, Certified Life Mastery Consultant, Bob Proctor Certified Life Success Consultant, CHRP, RSW, CCRC, CLL and Certified Professional Co-Active Coach. Contact her at 250-868-1101, florence@lighthousecoaching.ca, or visit www.lighthousecoaching.ca. You can also become eligible for a complimentary DreamBuilder Strategy Session by completing the free Passion Thermometer Questionnaire at www.lighthousecoaching.ca/passion. Your name will be entered in a monthly draw for a Complimentary Dreambuilder Strategy Session with me (value \$250). I look forward with enthusiasm to hearing from you.

THE ART OF RECEIVING

Eileen Murray



I didn't always know how to receive myself, thus I didn't know how to receive others. As I've come to know what it means to love, forgive and receive, I've come to know wisdom and creativity.

During an art class in grade one, I drew a picture of myself with blue hair. Excitement coursed through my veins, as I presented myself with my bright curly blue hair to my class. Immediately my teacher chastised me, which turned my excitement and open-heartedness into shame. Freedom that was once clear, partnered with an unobstructed joy descended deep in the basement of my psyche, until well into my adult years.

Ever since I was a child I had a guiding factor influencing every aspect of my life. My mother's father was a monk before he left the monastery to marry my grandmother. My grandmother had a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin who appeared to her when my aunt as a child was very ill imparting the message that my aunt would heal. I grew up with a deep connection to the divine and through my inner connection I knew in my bones that our true inner nature is divine. That was not honored in our culture, thus a deep split was created in my psyche and that which I *knew*, went deeply underground.

Back in the late 80's I was being overwhelmed by dreams and images from my unconscious. I entered Jungian analysis for nine years where I delved into all levels of my psyche. My dreams showed me that what I knew as a child was true. In my naiveté, I thought it was something we would do and had to seek, not as the truth that we truly are. So, I sought and sought to try and find this true self, through study, spirituality and hundreds of courses. I obtained my BA in the arts in an independent study program at

Norwich University focusing on dream imagery and art. I went to Cuba and taught Therapeutic Touch to the medical community, I went to Brazil to meet the Brazilian healer, John of God and I did my Masters in the arts through Lesley University, where I wrote on Therapeutic Touch in Cuba. Everywhere I went I took my sketchbook and colored pencils. The desire to connect to the insatiable creative part of myself hounded me. No matter what I did, I felt unsatisfied.

I was looking outside for that which could only be found by receiving all aspects of who I am, ultimately leading to that which I sought after is The True Self, the One who is always there as Love and Creativity.

Even though I created art in my early adult years,

The Girls Playing - Fabric, yarn, Thread
Pens Glitter





Top: Freedom Dancing - Liquid acrylic, pens, and fabric

Above: Hearts Connected - Molding paste, acrylic paint

I could not connect to the joy and freedom that I knew was there, for the inner critic still had a strong hold over my playful spirit. One of the first experiences that began to create a crack in the inner wall of judgment was when I took a weekend course called the Painting Experience. There were a couple of rules for this workshop. One was that it was in silence and the second rule was that we were not allowed to make any kind of comment on anyone's work. We were there to be with our own experience, to be with whatever we were feeling and the emphasis of the art was on that, what we felt not on the end product.

I greatly value that we could not comment on anyone's work, for then we had to be with what we were doing for ourselves, and for its creation and not about what it looked like as an end product.

Living in Victoria opened me more and more to my creativity, finding my own way of creating and exploring the world of paint, mediums, fabric and whatever else works with mixed media. The inner child was beginning to feel safe to come out and explore. When I moved to Kelowna, I found heART fit. And heART fit has the emphasis on creating for the pure joy of creating. It is a place to explore, allow the creative spark to come forward, share, be seen and honored. Art can provide that container if we will allow ourselves to explore the

feelings within, that which is around us, and to be bold and vulnerable. We need to explore the darkness as well as the light, while knowing both are part of being human.

Wisdom knows that creation is the drawing of the line for the pure joy of knowing that that line is an extension of my inner self-expressing. That line that I created carries my soul's energy and for that reason it is a part of me, being shared. Sometimes the voice of the inner critic of perfectionism says



don't bother, it's not good enough. I make a conscious decision to create the inner space of kindness towards that voice, standing firm within to not beat myself up by its rants. I then decide to turn inward and ask myself, What is here in this moment? and I move and create from there.

Knowing who I truly am, knows who we truly are. There is the gift. We are not the inner programs of our conditioned mind. I can give myself permission to acknowledge whatever is up in the moment, and make a conscious choice to be creative no matter what is happening.

The beauty of art is allowing the moment to be expressed. As I continue to learn techniques to enhance my art, I learn from the place of playfulness, exploration, from the joy and celebration of my inner child, which I now call The Sovereign Magical Inner Child. The Sovereign Magical Inner Child is sovereign,

in that she knows who she truly is, having the consciousness of what it means to be sovereign. She is magical, as she is open to what the moment is showing her, and knowing that she can be a creator with the moment, and she is a child in that she is spontaneous, open to the wonder of life. This is the archetype that lives within. She is The one who knows the art of receiving.



Eileen Murray has worked various forms of energy techniques since 1982. She has consulted and taught Therapeutic Touch, Art classes, Jungian Dream Therapy and Shamanic therapies. As well she offers lessons and consultations in the Akashic Records nationally and internationally. She teaches people how to open and access their Akashic Record. Presently, she is involved in a networking company with a skin technology, which prevents trans epidermal water loss. It is very exciting to see how this product supports the body's natural rejuvenation.

Top: Creating - Molding paste, sand, fabric acrylic paint, and objects

Above: Aging Beauty - Wilting tulips, photograph

WORDS FROM THE HEART

My Mother, My Self

Antoinette Voûte Roeder

Walking by a mirror
is a sobering affair
these days and sometimes
when I do, I hear myself say
"Is that *you*? I had forgotten."

More often it's
my mother I see,
her blue-grey gaze
not yet dimmed by
Parkinson's sculpted mask;
her pleated lips, a string
bag gathered at its neck;
vertical lines descending
at the corners of her mouth
drawn into folds and pouches
by gravity's inexorable pull.

Instead of drowning in despair
over resilient skin forever gone
I am so glad to have
my mother back
if only in a mirror.

Lovely Grammar

Kelly Pond

Love goes by
If all you look for
Are i's to dot
And t's to cross
You miss each letter
When you think it's better
To straighten the "v"
And unbend the "e"
So you have two
Straight lines
And two circles
Something you can relate to
Unlike the mystery
That is love
With no i's to dot
And no t's to cross
It 's rules
Bend you into
Unrecognizable shapes

First Thing

Kelly Pond

Yes
The first thing I say
As I wake to this day
Like a mother duck
I corral my baby thoughts
Before they grow too fast
Guide them to safe places
Grouped in order
Counting heads
Making beds
Tuck in the corners
Where ideas bend
You out of shape.
Fold neatly
And completely
Put away
In the linen closet
Of your heart,
Where memories are stored
Stained and frayed
Piled in deep layers
Fresh for the new guests
Arriving momentarily.
Yes, come in,
Let's get acquainted.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

TWO STORIES

Marlene Laszlo

THE WISDOM OF UNCERTAINTY



So here I am at my desk, sitting in front of nothing but sheer windows and a stupendous view. And suddenly a man appears like an apparition, outlined against the sky. For a moment I'm taken aback, until I realize he's standing on the edge of a scaffold, brush in hand, preparing to paint the side of the building.

He's young, and we make eye contact.

I experience a mixture of emotions – relief that I'm sufficiently clothed – and indignation at the thought that my private space is not really private at all. This is definitely something that would never happen in Canada.

But I'm not in Canada. I'm in Mexico. Things are different here.

I have only been in this apartment for just over a week – the only resident in a massive building still under construction – except for the daily crew of workmen, and I find myself unsure whether to make eye contact when I pass them on the way down the stairs, or to keep my eyes fixed straight ahead. I sense they feel the same, unsure of how to react to a foreign woman walking through their space.

I glance up again and see the man is still there, painting and pretending not to see me. I have a stew cooking on the stove and, picking up my glass of wine from where I put it on the desk, I go and place it onto the kitchen counter and get out the cutting board and start chopping chili peppers and tomatoes and onions. I'm listening to music – music moves me. I take a sip of wine – wine moves me too.

I lift my head and look outward, watching the man smooth his brush up and down. He smiles. The strangest feeling comes over me then, followed by a wild, crazy thought that I could go and turn up the music and crook my finger and invite him in. He could easily make the leap onto my balcony, and...well...it's not every day that I glance up from my work and see a man materialize in my midst.

But I'm too old for such ideas, or at least old enough to know better. So I subdue my thoughts and turn back to my chopping board and continue what I'm doing. When I glance back the man is gone. I'm relieved – I suppose – and a little surprised at how my feelings are so easily swayed. From irritation at having my privacy invaded, to a slight thrill at the thought of a man all but falling out of the sky into my living space.



After a hard day at work

Selecting a bright shade of lipstick she draws shaky, red lips and dots two spots of color onto thin cheeks then rubs it in, managing to cajole a glow of life into aging flesh.

Yet maybe this conflict of emotion is not so strange – maybe that’s what stepping out of one’s comfort zone is all about. After all, I did open the door to uncertainty the moment I decided to give up my secure lifestyle, and pretty much everything else other than what I could fit into my Toyota, and come down to Mexico for a year.

My eyes light on a book, *Counter Clockwise*, by Ellen Langer on the desk. I pick it up and flip it open to a paragraph I highlighted sometime in the past: “When all is certain there are no choices for us. If there is no doubt, there is no choice.”

I go and turn up the music and gaze out the window, at the empty scaffold jutting out to meet the vast, indifferent sky, and feel the enormity of uncertainty. Even the familiar strains of Bach in the background sound different. Which means that I am different too.

And the more I allow myself to be different than I think I’m supposed to be – the more I become myself.

MIRROR IMAGE

Naked. Perched forward on the edge of the toilet seat, sharp elbows resting on knees, the old woman mutters, “Come-on baby,” coaxing the resistant trickle much the way a gambler might sweet-talk a slot machine. An unintentional witness, I flinch at the sight of the bare skull and sagging, withered flesh and contemplate the wretchedness that must surely devour this poor woman’s days.

I turn away, only to see her image reflected in the mirror – stripped, exposed, vulnerable – a living picture of my own recurring nightmare from which I awaken in a sweat.

So this is what awaits those lucky enough to make it to old age, and I find myself considering the merits of making a final exit before reaching the age of incontinence. Not the sort of revelation I had hoped for when I decided to volunteer at the care home, having myself passed the age of retirement.

My reflections are interrupted as the old woman gets to her feet, apparently resigning herself to the fact that her body has yielded all that it will, hobbles to the sink and holds out frail limbs to be washed and moisturized by strange hands. Then, taking dentures from a bowl, she inserts first one set and then the other, clicking them together as she motions towards a tiny box. I lift out a hearing aide and place the delicate object into an ear. Wincing, at the high-pitched screech as she adjusts the sound.

Turning to a side-table she picks up something large and padded and hands it to me. I do my best to keep my expression neutral as I grasp the ominous-looking evidence of the ultimate indignity, pulling the elastic wide so she can step inside.

She motions to where her clothing is draped over a hanger. Tailored black pants to conceal the ungainly undergarment and silky white blouse to cover the empty sacks drooping against her chest. Disturbing reminders that



All dressed up for the day

this body was once alive with purpose. For a moment our eyes meet in the mirror and she winks.

"I don't wear a brassiere any more, dear," she says. "I'm a swinger, now."

Next, the old woman turns her attention to an ash blonde wig perched on a wire frame and, lifting it with both hands, expertly adjusts it onto her head, transforming the bald eagle into patrician elegance. Selecting a bright shade of lipstick she draws shaky, red lips and dots two spots of

color onto thin cheeks then rubs it in, managing to cajole a glow of life into aging flesh. Finally, with a sense of completion, my lady smacks her lips, checks for lipstick on her teeth and fluffs her perfectly groomed hair. Then turning from the mirror she takes both of my hands in hers and looks into my eyes.

"Good-morning, you sweet young thing," she croaks, a mischievous smile lighting her eyes. "I think the sun is shining again. Aren't we lucky to have another glorious day to look forward to?"

Since retiring from her job in Edmonton as a therapist in a forensic mental health clinic, Marlene Laszlo has kept the door to possibility open by occupying herself in a number of different endeavors, including volunteering at a care home, spending time with her aging mother, writing and self-publishing two books and making photo art. She divides her time between Canada (Okanagan and Ontario) and Mexico, where she resides in a community that encourages creative expression. She is often compelled by small, seemingly inconsequential details that inspire her to pick up camera or pen as a way to express her interpretation of events. Recently, when she was stuck in an uncreative phase, she was fortunate to discover heART FIT at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna. She learned about the concept of creating art without fear of failure.

At the time of this writing Marlene is working on a series of novella mysteries that take place in the 1930's which are centered around a character she created after reading a casebook of one of the first female pathologist's in Canada. She is also preparing for another stay in Mexico. marlenelaszlo@yahoo.ca

MEMORY BANK

Ed McLean



Hearing In the silence

Midnight. Strange waking from a sound sleep to find exactly 12:00 staring back in glowing red letters. Precisely the time I had been told not to take anything further by mouth. Perhaps body, mind, time and apprehension do link in some mysterious way. I lay listening to the late city noises, cars rushing on wet pavement, quiet snow-muffled footsteps on the sidewalk, a siren wailing faintly in the far distance - perhaps running for the hospital I'll enter in a few hours. This neighbourhood was seldom completely silent, not like the dark summer nights on the farm when a screen door slamming at the Jamieson place, three fences over, carried clearly to my dormer window.

Not fear exactly, but some heightened awareness filled the next hours. Any operation is a risk, even a supposedly straight-forward one. The hospital entrance at 7A.M. reminds me of the few airline terminals and bus stations I've known, always at the brain-fuzzy hours associated with the cheapest fares. The RN who picked me up from reception checked a long list of details, proceeding with a professional snapping of her three-holed binder and



decisive pen ticks. The hospital name tag identified her as Joan but she didn't react when addressed by that name. Perhaps thirty years of caring for patients was about her limit. "Do you have someone to look in on your for the first two weeks?"

"Yes," I lied.

Doris had seemed surprised and then faintly embarrassed when I worked our post-bridge coffee moment onto the subject. She'd darted a glance at the other women who were gathered farther into the kitchen, having a lively chat.

"Actually, I'm pretty sure Brian and I have a lot on the go those weeks. Isn't there any family nearby?"

After Marty left, his side had never been in touch. And with mine, it was years since there'd been any contact.

"Perhaps I could call you once or twice," Doris offered. There were a few other acquaintances I'd considered asking, but finally decided to manage somehow rather than court more embarrassment.

I had thought Marty and I were happy together, but we'd never had many friends in common. He'd always been more of the athlete, something that had attracted me when he started paying attention, though I knew I would never match his energy or social skills. My first ski lesson started well enough though I was terrified of falling, even on the bunny slope. He had stayed with me for some time, trying to get me to loosen up and lean out of the hill but, when some of his friends arrived as I struggled to get back on my feet, I said, "Go, please. I'll be fine." He hesitated, but a moment later he and the others were whooping down to the chairlift, like children let out of class early. I never had the courage to ask if there were other things we could do together and, in less than eighteen months, he'd moved out. I learned later that he had quickly remarried and moved east where the economy was strong. He called once after the divorce, but the hum of laughter behind him made our talk difficult and we soon hung up. It seemed as if all that previously linked us had never really existed. When I learned much later that he had three children, two boys and a girl, I realized we'd never talked about having a family.

However, the warm tremor I felt when he first took my hand on that beach walk with some other acquaintances was still perfectly clear in memory. And later when he had opened two of my blouse buttons and reached inside, popping a third button with his efforts, I never realized how fast my heart could beat, drying my mouth and producing little gasping breaths. Intimacies, as they were called then, had not been part of my upbringing. The family did not hug or kiss and when Aunt Eleanor visited and asked for a kiss I had felt wooden and strange as I pecked her heavily powdered cheek.

I was mostly alone in high school. Homework, house chores and a few other projects served as a protective screen. Playing the clarinet and riding home from the old stone-façaded Carnegie library with my bicycle carrier

I learned later that he had quickly remarried and moved east where the economy was strong.



melting

brimming with books filled the rest of the time. I enjoyed reading about Greece, Rome and the medieval knights as well as stories by Flannery O'Connor and Katherine Mansfield and the novels of Willa Cather and Gabrielle Roy. No one in my highschool of one hundred students seemed to share these interests. The future farmers and future teachers' clubs were full, but no one organized an English for lonely girls club and if a soul mate had existed in that herd of pimply-face farm kids none was discovered. For certain, the black Bakelite rotary phone mounted in the corridor by the bathroom never rang about a Friday night outing or a Saturday house party, and in the end I was one of the few who left the commencement evening before the gym was reset for dancing.

Later in the insurance office, the boisterous lunch room had once burst into even louder laughter when snippy young Sylvia shouted to me at the far end of the table. "Your mouth certainly doesn't match your name, dearie!" she said. I smiled tightly, and remained silent. It was difficult to put up with such things, but with nearly a decade to wait for the small but vital pension, there were no other realistic options. I couldn't imagine tackling all that would be needed to start a new job.

I realized slowly that I was in a new bed. The room was quiet and I was next to a large bright window.



Peace
photographs by Ed McLean – “as nature
inspired him”

“How are you, dear? What is your name, please?” I’d always hated my name. Perhaps this was a good time to pick a new one. However, I answered honestly and was then left alone. When I woke again, not remembering drifting off, the room remained quiet except for the deep breathing of a person nearby who was screened by a white curtain. In the corridor a tiny, insistent bell was chiming, unseen people were speaking and laughing quietly. From my window I had a sweeping view of a bright snowy world and the late afternoon sun flowed in like treacle. and its touch made my skin glow. It reminded me of apricots and suddenly I could smell clearly the ambrosial jam that Mother made each August. It was just the drugs perhaps, but the world seemed suddenly brighter, as if I had been viewing it previously through a murky lens.

Moments later I was surprised to see Doris at the foot of the bed, looking friendly, but somewhat hesitant. Beside her stood a light-haired young woman with warm brown eyes who was holding a pot overflowing with gorgeous pink azalea blossoms. We exchanged shy smiles and I felt I had known her for a long time. I sensed the girl looked like someone wise beyond her years.

“Hello. We hear that everything went well. I hope you are feeling all right,” said Doris.

“Actually I’m surprised how little it hurts. They’re treating me fine so far.”

“I wanted you to meet my niece Hannah. I thought there might be some way she could help. Hannah is going to complete some courses here before applying for the LPN programme. We thought it might work if she visited or perhaps stayed with you for a while. I am sure she won’t be a problem and could be a help to you.”

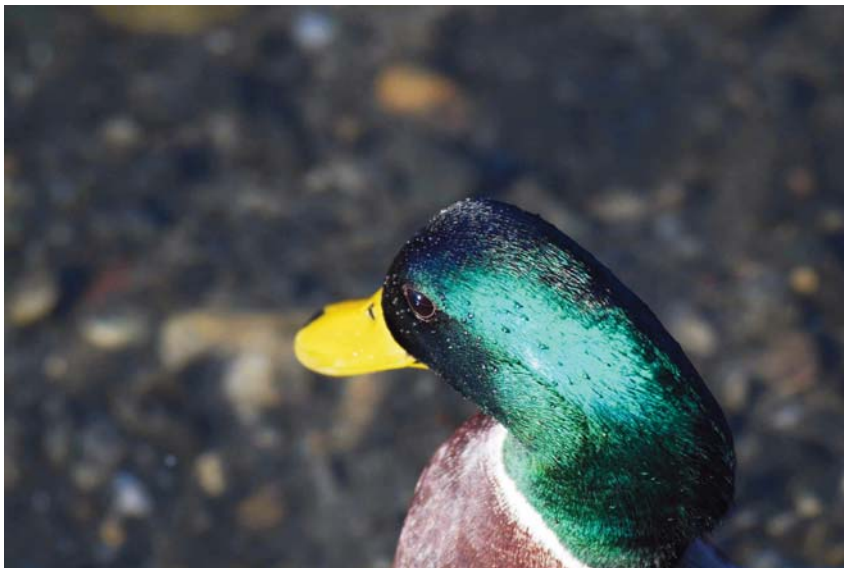
We can get you higher than LPN I suddenly thought. There’s a whole universe of time and chances out there. And how strange, on this particular day, to be acquiring a child. The others laughed and I realized that I had spoken the last thought aloud. I joined them in the humour of the moment while suddenly recalling a saying of my grandmother’s, “the happiness brought by the hope of happiness.” Nan had been full of these sorts of expressions – “stomach empty as a banker’s heart,” “no path without a puddle,” “every dog has its day.” She had been a warm, wise person, as a result or perhaps in spite of all that her generation had faced in the dirty thirties. Quite different from the woman who linked us. Perhaps that sort of deep knowing skips generations, I thought. But then, in memory, I heard Mother’s voice again so clearly – “Florence, you just need to make one good friend.”

Ed McLean enjoyed a wide-ranging career as a teacher and college director in British Columbia, Yukon Territory, the United Arab Emirates, China, Turkey and Malawi. He and his wife Elizabeth raised their children Jeremy, Damon and Nicole to appreciate all that the world’s cultures have to offer. And also the importance of sometimes just going with the flow. For instance, the family’s original two-year assignment in UAE took fourteen years to complete and they were as sad to leave Naramata in 1988 as when their time in Ras al Khaimah ended in 2002. In his classes, Ed also appreciated the value that authentic literature can have on the lives of all types of students and believes this is equally true, if not more so, when people begin to savour and make sense of their senior years. Ed and Elizabeth now appreciate the beauty of the Okanagan from their lakeside perch when not on the road or on the wing to faraway places.

ART IN TRANSIT

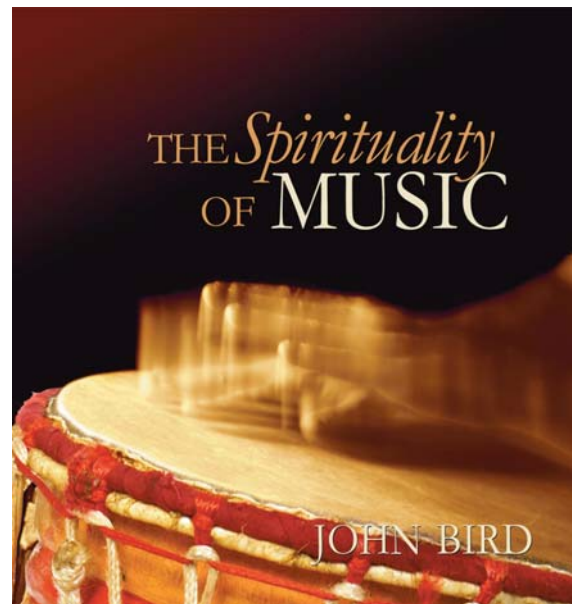
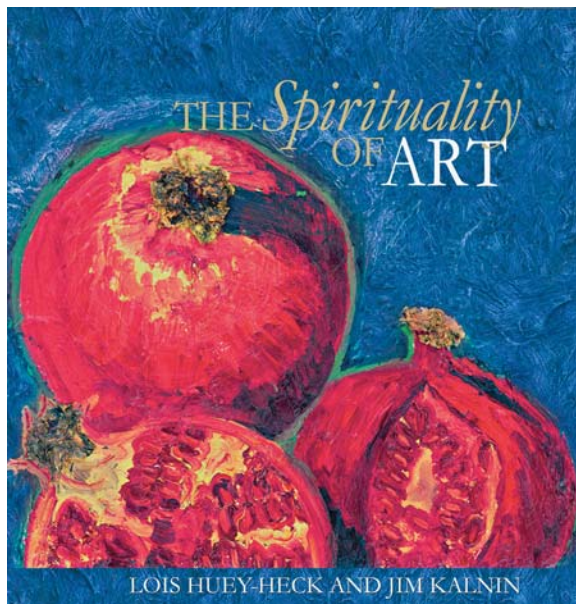
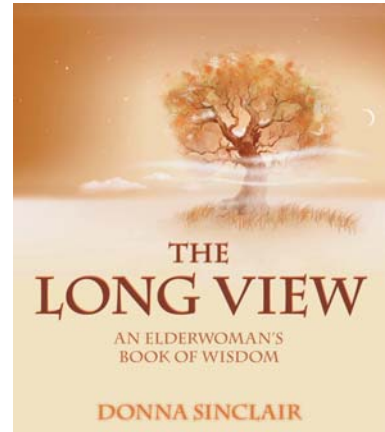
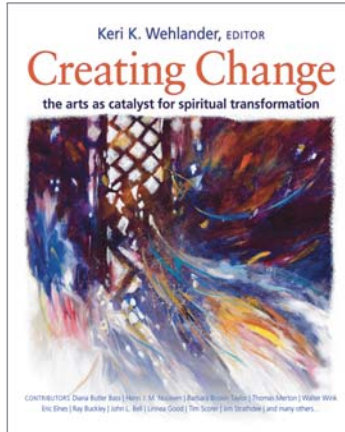
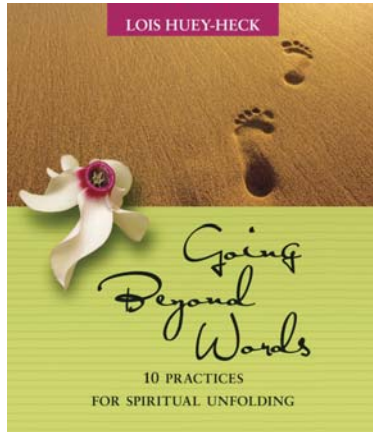
Art – the living kind – is always in transition. For awhile now, we’ve been collecting photographs taken by visual artist, Steve Aird, from Kelowna. The images remind us how the camera’s eye can capture art in the moment.

The Night Moon photograph has been included simply because it’s a beautiful shot.



Creative Aging Books

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SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity.

It is a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. It presents the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement. 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. This journal is an easel for any form of artistry undertaken out of personal intuition and imagination.