

ONE THOUSAND TREES



NOVEMBER 2017

ONE THOUSAND TREES

FACILITATING WELLNESS
THROUGH CONNECTION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

PUBLISHER
Lisa Browning

DEPARTMENTAL EDITORS
Connections: Lisa Browning
Creativity & The Arts: Sandra Wilson
Food & Nutrition: Krista Harrison
Giving Back: Kristen Feduck
Health & Wellbeing: Leilan Grace Adair
The Library: Lisa Browning

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY
Sandra Wilson

One Thousand Trees is published monthly. Submissions for Feature Articles (based on the monthly theme) or Regular Departments are due on the 20th of the month prior to each publication. Full Production Schedule, including summary of monthly themes, can be found at

www.onethousandtrees.com/magazine.html

Please submit by email, either in the body of your message, or as a Word doc attachment, by the above-stated deadlines. Please do not send PDFs. First-time writers for One Thousand Trees are asked to send a brief (two to three sentence) bio, and a head shot in JPEG format.

All rights reserved. Articles cannot be reprinted without the written consent of the Publisher.

ONE THOUSAND TREES
Email: lisa@onethousandtrees.com
Phone: 519-362-5494
Fax: 519-265-6712





Overcoming Childhood Adaptions, p 8

ONE THOUSAND TREES

NOVEMBER 2017

CELEBRATING OUR SELVES



My Day as a Bookworm, p 10

DEPARTMENTS: (*bolded articles are monthly features*)

CONNECTIONS

- Max H: A Great Old Pillar, by Russ Bentley 2
- **The Month in Review, by Lisa Browning** 5
- **Dear Angels, by Jill Michelle** 12
- **Spirit Babies, by Christine Nightingale** 11

CREATIVITY & THE ARTS

- Stage Calm, by David Rankine 1
- **My Adventure Called Life: *My Day as a Bookworm*, by Sandra Wilson** 10

FOOD & NUTRITION

- Nourishing Your Mind, Body & Soul, by Krista Harrison 6

GIVING BACK

- **Volunteer Profile: *Jessica Bigelow*, by Kristen Feduck** 16
- **Volunteering in Southwestern Ontario** 16

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Overcoming Childhood Adaptions, by Sue Rabideau 8

THE LIBRARY

- **The Story Behind the Story: *Sylvan Reflections*, by Barbara Brown** 6
- **Slices of Life: *As Clear as Mud*, a short story by Bob Smith** 13

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Russ Bentley

Max H: A Great Old Pillar

Russ was born in 1950. He grew up and loves living and writing in The Kawartha Lakes. He loves kids, young and old, and drives the local ones far and wide all over Ontario on adventures in a yellow school bus. He lives by himself, is never lonely and is ever so grateful to have his head above ground and, increasingly, up in the clouds.



Barbara Brown

The Story Behind the Story

Barbara holds a Bachelor of Science in Geography and a Diploma of Fine Art. She is an artist, writer and forest walker, living in the wild, forested mountains of the Slocan Valley in the remote West Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia, Canada, with her husband and a cat or two. For more information visit www.barbarabrownart.com.



Kristen Feduck

Volunteer Profile

Kristen works at United Way Waterloo Region Communities, where she promotes volunteerism in Cambridge and North Dumfries. When she's not doing that, she enjoys spending time at home with her husband and daughter.



Krista Harrison

Nourishing Your Mind, Body & Soul

Krista is the mother of three beautiful, courageous and creative children. Teaching her children to always follow their own truth without measuring their success against anyone else is a value she holds dear to her heart. Krista's passion is towards changing the health of our children and supporting them along their own journey. Please visit her website at www.kristaharrison.com.



Jill Michelle

Dear Angels

Jill Michelle has been communicating with angels for most of her life. She is an angel reader and channels healing light to her clients. She has been helping her international clients in person and on the phone for over 15 years. Jill's passion is to help people release issues and blockages, propelling them forward on their spiritual journey and bringing love peace and joy into their lives. For more information visit her website at www.jillmichelle.ca.



Christine Nightingale

Spirit Babies

After studying Hypnosis for Fertility, Christine found that while working with clients, she would get very clear messages from their miscarried or not yet conceived babies. Her speciality has become getting messages from these babies explaining their difficulties in coming in, and suggestions for making it easier. She has worked with over 400 couples, facilitating communication and pregnancy. For more information please visit her website at www.nightingalehealing.com.



Sue Rabideau

Overcoming Childhood Adaptions

Sue enjoys her work at Sun Life Financial in Waterloo, as a business consultant, and volunteer Wellness Ambassador. She is a registered nutritional consultant who believes in the holistic approach to optimal health, well being and happiness. She is motivated by the desire, to truly *live and enjoy*, vs just *exist and tolerate*. For more information visit rabideau.sue@gmail.com.



David Rankine

Stage Calm

Through his original music, art, writing and teaching, David explores the nature of creativity and its place in healing, and in the development of consciousness and search for self. David lectures on medieval sacred art and sacred geometry, and his work with mandalas (both graphic and sonic) as a healing tool has been recognized in a number of publications. He lives and works in rural Huron County.



Bob Smith

Slices of Life

Like many writers, R.K. (Bob) Smith has worked in widely different settings, accounting for diverse characters, settings, and story lines. He describes his stories as ‘character-driven,’ rather than ‘plot-driven.’ People face some kind of challenge and face it with creativity and integrity, often connecting with others as part of the process. He has published novels and short stories in online, newspaper, and more traditional printed formats, as well as having written Christmas stories heard on radio. To read more of Bob’s stories, visit www.slicesoflifestories.com.



Sandra Wilson

My Adventure Called Life

Sandra is a writer, educator, and amateur photographer. With a Bachelor of Arts in English and History, much of her work includes historic facts presented in fun and interesting ways. Although trained to take portraits at Sears Portrait Studio, Sandra prefers to capture nature with her camera. Her passion is to help people learn, laugh and be inspired. For more information, please visit www.werconline.ca.

“When nobody else celebrates you, learn to celebrate yourself. When nobody else compliments you, then compliment yourself. It’s not up to other people to keep you encouraged. It’s up to you. Encouragement should come from the inside.”

-Joel Osteen



PUBLISHER'S PONDERINGS

I almost died on my way home today. I was heading north on one of the main streets in my home town, waiting to turn left at a traffic light. The light had been yellow for several seconds before it turned red. Something stopped me from turning, and I saw a large dump truck heading southbound. I knew he wasn't about to stop, and so I waited. At the speed he barrelled through that intersection, I would have died instantly from the impact.

As I write this, I don't think that fact hasn't fully resonated with me yet. But I also don't doubt that the incident occurred as part of a larger message to myself today. The first message was delivered over several hours, beginning yesterday evening.

Technical issues seemed to have plagued me all day yesterday, and by the time evening rolled around and I faced yet another computer issue which rendered me unable to complete the work I needed to get done, I was overcome with anger and frustration, and I did the only thing I could do at the time. I went to bed.

This morning, as I walked on the trail with my dog, I thought about where all that anger came from, because I knew it wasn't the technical issues themselves. After self-reflection, I realized that my anger was (still) directed at the man who abused me, over six years ago. I was once again filled with shame as I thought about the coping mechanisms I used to survive in that situation, and some of the repercussions I had to deal with. "You destroyed my life!" I screamed at him silently.

But as I continued to walk through the forest, my guides, who I know were responsible for keeping me safe on my way home today, gave me a new perspective, one which I knew to be true on a rational level, but had not internalized. *"If you hadn't gone through what you went through, you would not be doing what you are doing now. You survived that situation because you are strong, not weak."* And in that instant my anger dissipated, and I was overcome with gratitude. And I realized that I could, and should, celebrate myself.

I am so grateful that I am still here, able to do just that.

Lisa



STAGE CALM by David Rankine

Throughout my life have been blessed with an easy ability to master various art forms and musical instruments. Well, I should really say I am blessed with an ability that was manifested through a massive amount of hard work. Oddly enough, I was attracted to doing things that would expose me – my creativity – to criticism and place me and my creative expression in a very public forum. It is and was a paradox. Up until my 40's I would rather eat glass than do public speaking. Musical performance was always problematic because my shyness combined with the all-powerful law of "thou shall not be seen" created an extremely nervous performer. And as a nervous performer, I would always have a massive adrenalin rush after surviving what to me was a life or death situation. Yet, I kept doing it. I kept putting my art out there in public display and I kept performing. It was as if my need to express myself in such public ways was burning through the family and cultural admonishments.

I had grown up in a "traditional" household and a number of subtle (and not so subtle messages) about self were taught. One of the biggest and possibly most damaging ones was, "we do not talk about ourselves" which was some odd spin on the "sin of false pride". This cultural and family belief essentially translated into me never celebrating my victories or accomplishments for after all, – THAT was prideful. It took me a very long time to dismantle that belief and still, there are times when it jumps out of the shadows and bites me. In a nutshell, I was not allowed to or even given the language for being able to celebrate myself and my accomplishments. Add being painfully shy to that and I had a quite the toxic cocktail of self-belief.

I started performing musically when I was 15 and I stopped performing in my late 20s and did not perform again until my mid 40s. I had by that time taken up playing a different instrument and after my first few public performances I realized that I was not nervous prior to or during the performance and afterward I did not suffer from any kind of performance high. This realization was quite a joyful one. I had found my groove. I started to write, record and perform all of my own music and I found that I did not even care what others thought. I knew (or should I say I felt) that it was good, pure, and beautiful. I was playing from a place of pure flow and I was playing from a place of passion.

In fact, what was happening was that my performance became an act of celebration of self.

Since that return to music I did a lot of thinking about music and performance and the dynamics of performance and observed how, when I played, people seemed to "join in." They were not passively consuming the music but rather they were using it to take them somewhere else – to a place where they experienced their own sense of beauty. I was not seeking out applause but what I was seeking out was connection. A small angry voice in my head told me I was performing for approval but in my heart I knew that it was a lie. I look out at the audience and look for the people who have "entered the journey" with me.

Along with the message of "false pride" I received, as a child, a strong message about being perfect. All of my early musical performances (starting at age 15) were focused on being perfect, playing perfect and presenting perfectly. Of course that is a recipe for failure as every performance became not about celebratory self-expression but about chasing the ever elusive and rarely caught shadow of perfection. It was probably the biggest factor in my

decision to stop performing. I could not create a perfect performance therefore I was always less than good – no matter how many people told me otherwise.

My return to music in my 40's came along with the beginning of the abandonment of messages about perfection. Strangely enough I had adopted a style of performance and music that kept me away from performing set pieces that could be open to criticism for "not playing it correctly." I improvise all of my performances and I have been blessed to be able to play along with some great improvisational percussionists. This "in the moment" playing required guts and it required a certain level of technical skill but most of all it required that I trust in my own creative expression, - a belief that whatever I created would be beautiful in that moment. The music performance had become joyous celebration. Music had become about the act of 'making music' and no longer about "playing music."

Now, when I sit in front of an audience, I am calm. I am not bothered if high caliber musicians are present. I actually welcome it because I know they will recognize what I am doing and where I am going. I am not worried about "playing it right". I trust myself and I trust the audience. I trust that every note, every rhythm, every phrase will be flowing from my open feelings, my joy and pain, hope and despair and that the act of publicly expressing it will move me and the audience. We will walk through a door together and come out the other side having co-experienced expansion and truth. My feelings and experiences are my own and they create music that is my own and in that act of creation the expression of self becomes the celebration of self.

* * *

**MAX H:
A GREAT OLD PILLAR**
by Russ Bentley

So quiet and soft-spoken, Max understated things so important to our recovery which he'd picked up and practiced every day in his own recovery program of 54 years and counting.

Throughout his 50 plus years in AA he always attended 2, 3 and often 4 AA meetings a week. In his late 70's and early 80's I was lucky enough to have him for my sponsor at a time when he also needed a companion, and often a driver, to accompany him to the many far away meetings he was asked to speak at by close friends he'd sponsored over the years who knew the worth of what he had to say.

One time, after a meeting far away, I watched a young man's eyes well up shaking Max's hand, trying to stay casual as he thanked him, talking about his father. On the long drive home Max explained to me that "that young fella"

was just new. Twenty years ago, when the man was just a child, Max had gone out to his mother and father's house one cold winter night. She'd got his number somewhere and called him because the kids were cold and hungry and her husband was really asking for help. At the house Max couldn't go in by the front because the father had pulled up all the floor boards in the living room and burnt them up in the kitchen stove for heat. Max remembered so well this little guy, 3 or 4 years old at the time, peeping out from behind a blanket nailed up in a bedroom doorway, looking so thin and cold and scared. Max visited them for years throughout the father's early sobriety. So often when he'd go out to the house this little guy would rush up and cling to his pant leg because he was always so glad Max was there helping his dad get better and better. And now here was the same kid all grown up and doing so well in the program.

Back in the 40's and 50's and even into the 60's there wasn't really anything

like the treatment centres we have today. Max told me that back then, occasionally, when he needed to and when Cassie, his wife, could manage it, he'd go out to a meeting, find a new guy and bring him home for a month or two. Just like that. And all the guy had to do was not drink and go with Max to the meetings. Apart from that he could do whatever he felt like doing that day. He could eat, rest, walk along the lake, swim or go with Max up to the barn and talk and help Max take care of his big Clydesdale horses. And always with the simple, clear understanding that if he decided to drink then they'd get back in the truck and Max would drop him off at the exact same spot where they started. Simple as that. Just part of the personal program of recovery of Max and Cassie.

By the time he took me under his wing he was about 45 years sober in AA attending 3 or 4 meetings a week, some of them a good long drive away. Old acquaintances from near and far were often asking him to come and speak.

**MONTHLY SHORT
FILM CONTEST**

**CALL for
ENTRIES**



Online Library for Interactive Video and Engagement

**\$1,000 CASH PRIZE
EVERY MONTH**

Films must be:

- 5 minutes or less
- About mental health
- Produced in the past 24 months

Submit at www.artwithimpact.org

That's when he and I started spending a lot of time together in the truck. If it took 3 hours to get there Max would always leave a good 5 hours to make the trip. That way he never had to hurry and he always had time. Just one of a hundred things I learned from Max...how to always have lots and lots of time. So simple: just leave early. How impatient I was at first and how amused he was by how I felt I always had to time things out to the minute and then hurry up all the time to get there before it was too late. If Max had his way he'd have gone everywhere at a Clydesdale walking pace. It took me about 5 years riding around with him and working together up at the barn and around the place to realize how wonderful and important it is to always have lots and lots... ..and lots... of... ..time.

And thank God I eventually managed on those great long drives to learn how to shut myself up and listen. Great long stories he would tell that seemed to wander all over the place with no point really other than to fill the time while driving. I'm so glad now that I was really listening. I can remember them now and get the golden nuggets of wisdom out of them. One time, after rattling on so crazy with what I had to spew out, unloading a lot of insanity, I caught Max turning his hearing aid back up. We had a good laugh about that. He never failed to let me go on and on and on and get it all out of my head and I hasten to add that as far as I can remember he never once missed or failed to respond at length to a single thing I ever said that was really important. He knew how to separate the wheat from the chaff. He knew how to listen and with 50 years experience in the program he had a terrific level of understanding how best to reply.

He was rigorously honest but readily admitted he'd never met anybody, including himself, who was one hundred percent. Years ago he'd

checked the wrong box on purpose on a form and saved himself years of completely unnecessary work and bother. But I never saw him dodge a 12 Step issue. He had a way of simply confronting the truth head-on when it was important, no matter how uncomfortable a topic it might be. And he did it in such a totally non-argumentative off-handed polite quiet friendly sort of way that I was routinely astounded at the otherwise outrageously provocative, confrontational truths he could say to someone, who needed to hear them, without ruffling any feathers. I never heard one iota of one-upmanship or talking down to anyone in his tone or manner and as far as I'm concerned that's what gave him license to say some very hard things that needed to be said in the right here and now. He had the same strong, quiet solid presence and strength I felt when standing next to his Clydes and I do believe he got a lot of that strength working with big horses out in the bush when he was growing

up. And likewise his own "big boys" seemed to settle down so well when he talked to them and cared for them. Treatment centre residents would benefit from learning how to be around heavy horses, if someone like Max was there to make the introductions or as he would say: the how dee do's.

Around home at all the local AA meetings in Victoria County he was such a permanent presence, so soft spoken and easy going, that sometimes he went unnoticed and unheard. I regretfully admit that having him around all the time I sometimes took him for granted too. We don't know what we've got til it's gone as the saying goes. He wasn't fancy and he didn't have a big comedy act to put on. He always told his story with lots of self-examining humor and so matter-of-factly that it was entirely possible to miss the point. But those who knew the significance of what he had to say often went a long way out of their way to get to where he was and to get him

"...when we move out of faith into the act of creation, the universe is able to advance."

— Julia Cameron



The Artist's Way

an interactive journey to discover your inner creator

12 sessions starting in January 2018

For more information contact Lisa Browning
by phone at 519-362-5494 or
by email at lisa@onethousandtrees.com



a branch of One Thousand Trees

to come and speak where they were. Wonderful meetings. Wonderful great long drives in the pickup truck.

Well, Max is gone now. Over 54 years he had in the program and over those last few years I benefited much from his fellowship. I also learned how to harness and drive the horses, Bill and Bob. Max and his 'big boys' helped me to slow right down finally, so I could stop and simply listen. Easy does it.

In September of 1946 Max H. got sober at age 28. A year later, just like he'd done with them himself many times, two of his friends got cold and sleepy walking the long old road home after a night of drinking in town and they laid right down and slept out for a few hours as they'd done so many times before. But that night they froze and had to have their arms and legs amputated. On that particular night Max was safe and sober at home with his wife and daughter. Close call.

Maybe I should change it, but why, if it's not broke? As a sponsor he still works for me so well that when I need a good talk I can usually get just what I need and then some leaning up against the fence in the shade of the great old trees by Max's headstone that has the two horse's heads, Bill and Bob, carved into it out at the back of the little old cemetery at Fenelon Falls. I just think my thoughts and if I get good and quiet and relax and really listen I can usually remember half a dozen things Max used to say about all that kind of stuff ten years ago when he was still here.

It's so simple, Max liked to say, so simple and wonderful, this God-given program. So simple that if we're not careful we can look right at it, look over it and under and look right clear through it and miss the whole thing.

He had one simple prayer that I've adopted for my own: Thank you God. Thank you God. Thank you God.

One night long, long ago at the one and only meeting there was back then in Toronto he met Bill W. and didn't know who he was. "Max, this is Bill," someone said. Max shook the fella's hand, said "How dee do," and carried on. Later the guy who introduced them told Max how pleased Bill was to be just another Bill at a meeting like everybody else for a change. I know Max never wanted to be treated or talked about as being any more or less than anybody else but, as a very early member of AA in Canada and one who stayed active every week for over 50 years, the fact remains that Max H. is one of the foundation pillars of the program in this country. It was built and grew up around people like him and in his case he carried the responsibility just as joyfully and easily as his Clydes pulled the wagon loaded up with kids so slow and easy around the lakeside resort he started and which his family still runs and carries on in the same quiet, light-hearted family oriented way they do today. What a gorgeous place it is on Balsam Lake, right out of the picture books, providing work and lakeside bliss and soothing serenity for so many families, and will continue to do for many years to come. How did his resort get started? Why, that was simple too: an AA friend asked to come out one summer from the city and park in his field by the lake for a few days of serenity and swimming in the cool refreshing lake. There are 300 camping sites there now.

Always with a little smile and a friendly, humorous glint in the corner of his eye, "What a corker," Max would say and "I do declare" and "Now isn't that a glorious day."

Max is gone now but'cha know, when I look to see where he stood and wonder if that corner of the program might sag a bit without him supporting it, I'm always so pleased and relieved to see so many who knew him well, his entire family and so many friends of

and in the program helping to keep his end up and moving forward so nice. It may take a lot of us to fill his boots but he was way ahead on that score too. He spent a lifetime gathering fellow AA supporters together around him.

And Bill and Bob, his last team of Clydes, at first I couldn't believe it, were such a classic case of serendipity because Max didn't name them. They were named after the two brothers who had nothing to do with AA at all until they sold them to Max! Now isn't that a corker, as Max would say.

I remember so well Bill and Bob standing outside the church all dressed up to the nines in their finest harness, how alert and still they were, on their very best behaviour, and how they knew he was right there with us as they drew him quietly along out to the cemetery, how proud and sure-footed they clopped along. One could tell that they felt his presence very strong, just as I do when I go out there to visit and have a little talk about things or just stand and look out back over the fields and say my Thank you God for Max, and Thank you God for so many like him, and Thank you God for AA.

Now before this writing habit gets the best of me I have to let go of it, get my ass up to Balsam Lake, set my hands around the tiller and go sailing, any which way the wind blows.

Russ B. 1989-2017, one day at a time and counting...



From Max's headstone

MONTH IN Review



An Evening of Sharing: Facing Our Fears
From left to right: Gord Melville, Lisa Woolgar, Dominic Mitges
- our amazing speakers!



All set up at Book Bash 2017!



Jean-Paul Bédard, after running 6 marathons back to back,
to raise awareness of childhood sexual abuse.



Guelph's first annual Freedom Walk,
to raise awareness of human trafficking.



Harvest Bowls, a fundraiser
in support of
Chalmers Community Service Centre.



NOURISHING YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL by Krista Harrison

Celebrate that you are here! There is so much to be thankful for and that our hearts are grateful for.

In the days after the passing of Gord Downie and reading a compelling tribute, I feel there is so much that each of us can do create our own reality of love and compassion with the beauty that lies within each and every one of us. This is cause for much celebration! Take the passion that is deep within you, nourish it with all things beautiful, connect with people and make a difference. Live for the only moment you have ever been promised – The Now.

Whole foods, exercise (that aligns with us), relaxation, and positivity are but a few ways we can celebrate and nourish who we are.

Food has not always been a focal point in my life. In fact, at one point it was a means to ensure my tummy was full. Fast forward many years and my philosophy is that food gives life. Food as the ability to make you feel alive, clear, focused, energized and happy. It also has the ability to make you feel depressed, give you brain fog, migraines, stomach aches and feel lethargic. How can food have the remarkable ability to do both?

It all comes down to the type of food you are choosing, which is not always easy.

Often times are cravings take over and will power gets pushed off the train, causing our choices to be detrimental to our health. I have been there and it is not pretty! Cravings are a sign that your metabolism is not functioning optimally.

At this time of year, there are many foods that are grown locally and give

us great nourishment. Eating foods that are in season provide us with more nutrients and support our local farmers. One of my go to foods at this time of year is squash. High in fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and much more, this food is super nourishing and found locally!

Celebrate who you are by supporting and nourishing your mind, body and soul!

Warming Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp coconut oil, butter or ghee
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups peeled, chopped celery root
- 4 cups peeled and chopped butternut squash
- 1 cup peeled and chopped sweet potato
- 6 cups homemade broth (if have on hand) or organic vegetable stock
- 2 cups canned coconut milk (full fat!)
- 2 cups peeled, cored, and quartered sweet apple
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 3/4 tsp cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp ginger
- Sea salt and ground pepper to taste

Directions:

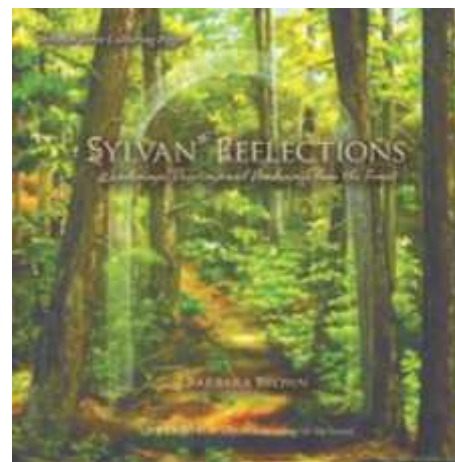
1. In a large heavy saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, turmeric, ginger, sea salt, and cinnamon. Cook until onions are soft (approx. 5-7 minutes)
2. Add celery root, butternut squash, sweet potato, stock, and coconut milk. Reduce heat to low and simmer until root veggies are soft.
3. Add apples, cinnamon and coconut milk and continue simmering for 5 minutes.
4. Remove saucepan from heat and puree using an immersion blender or work in batches in other blender.
5. Season with sea salt and pepper.



SYLVAN REFLECTIONS: WANDERINGS, PAINTINGS AND PONDERINGS FROM THE FOREST by Barbara Brown

I was so moved by the October issue of One Thousand Trees . . . the vulnerability of all of us, facing our fears; and when we do and we move through them, the joy we feel – I call it ‘deep fun’ – gives rise naturally to the impetus toward celebration, . . . of self.

My journey toward the creation of *SYLVAN REFLECTIONS: Wanderings, Paintings and Ponderings From the Forest* is about facing my fears; and it’s about wanting to get to know better that feeling of wonderful satisfaction, fulfillment; those times when you’re having fun . . . deep fun, . . . you’ve come out the other side of that fear and you do feel celebratory towards yourself, self-congratulatory, proud yet always oddly humbled . . . blessed . . . grateful. Thankful that you’re able to get your message across; so pleased that it is well received; so honoured that it touches others and adds to their lives . . . what a feeling that is!



I'll begin my story about ten years ago; I was in my early fifties, and no longer creatively challenged by my work . . . but always resisting, or somehow never fulfilling, the deep-seated urges I always felt toward making art.

There was then a year of many deaths, close in to me, including my mother. And then the next year I was diagnosed with lung cancer. And in these losses, and in the facing of my own mortality, I awakened to a new level of awareness of what this life is all about; it's about embracing it as the wondrous gift it is, as fully as we can; it's about finding what gives you deep joy and sinking yourself into those depths.

I made the decision to sell my small home-based business (I had been annually producing my area's tourist maps and street maps for twenty years) and to reinvent myself as the artist I always knew I needed to find out if I could be. I felt like I was jumping off a cliff . . . and I was going to need to learn how to fly.

I remember feeling like somehow my whole being – even my past selves and ancestors, my future selves as well – were all crying out to me saying: "It's time!"

I didn't know what it was I was going to do; all I knew was that I had to give myself the time and space to see what wanted to percolate up from the depths. I attended a Hay House 'I Can Do It' conference, without knowing really why I was there, and speaking to barely another soul there, but being immensely inspired by the likes of Louise Hay, Marianne Williamson . . . and Wayne Dyer with his "don't die with your music still inside you."

So I freed up my life to begin painting. I hadn't done a painting in twenty years; I had huge resistance to the actual act of painting; I didn't know what I wanted to paint; but I knew I had to. I knew I had demons that

needed to be faced. And I felt I had promises to keep that I had made to myself way back in the mists of time. I registered as a participating artist in our local ArtWalk, knowing that if I had a deadline, involving a commitment to other people, that I would meet it. I created rituals to help me to break through my resistances, using music and aromatherapy and the wearing of what I call my 'power necklace' that I made for the purpose from bones and amber and feathers from the forest. I listened to webinars by inspirational speakers. And I began experimenting with watercolours, pastels, colour schemes, figure drawings and symbolism, abstracts and landscapes.



But most importantly I simply asked. I asked myself, my higher self, and the universe . . . I asked what was I meant to do. And then I did my very best to step back, to get out of my own way, let go, trust and surrender . . . to let the answer come. Allow the answer to arise. And it was when I asked myself the question "Well, what is it that you love the most?" that the answer came: I love spending time in the forest.

I had been walking in the forest as a daily practice for nigh on two decades – ever since I had seen a psychologist in the late '90s, seeking relief from the chronic low-grade depression I had suffered from for most of my life; and one of the first and best things she said to me was "well, do you want to be depressed or do you want to go for a walk every day?" I began walking,

every day, in the forest where I live – in the remote wilderness of the Slocan Valley nestled in the mountains of southeast British Columbia – and it immediately became the best-loved part of my day. It became 'who I am,' the activity I most identify myself with. As my connection with the forest deepened, all aspects of my life – my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual selves – all experienced deeper levels of well-being.

And the realization came to me that while I was in the woods, being awestruck every day at the beauty of nature, feeling so blessed to live where I live and have this amazing gift right outside my front door – I realized that while I was walking there, and sitting in stillness there, I was imagining sharing it with others – in my imagination I had an audience who I was showing the beautiful images to and telling my stories to, of animal encounters and of the finding of treasures and the feelings of reverence and connection I was experiencing – I wanted to share all of this. It was a feeling of being filled up to overflowing so that it had to flow out of me and be shared.



For the last painting completed for ArtWalk that year I thought I'd try my hand at oil painting (it had been thirty years since I'd done an oil!). There was one particular Grand Fir tree on the

OVERCOMING CHILDHOOD ADAPTIONS by Sue Rabideau

edge of the forest, that struck me every day with the gorgeousness of its great and graceful boughs sweeping out from the depths of the shadows of its deep dark core, and I decided to see if I could capture this presence in oil. And I did it! It worked! I called the painting 'Grand Depths' and I knew I could happily spend the rest of my life painting the forest.

I had begun to write as well, following those same urges to share. I wanted to somehow offer the experience of the forest to people who weren't so lucky as I was live within it. The book began to take shape, and then the website . . . with the idea to bring the forest to people. I had in mind especially elders, house-bound, or even just city folk who can't get out into the forest as much as they might like to, to join me, vicariously, for a walk in the woods. Three years later I published the book.

It begins: "Come, let's go for a walk together, in the forest . . . If you are unable to spend time in the forest today let me take you there; come along with me. I'll be your eyes and your ears, your nose and your skin. Come drink from the creek with me, get a little wake-up slap on the cheek from a tree branch in passing . . ."

It is my hope to inspire and to soothe people by bringing to them the beauty and healing magic of nature.

I still have many hurdles to get through, fears to face and challenges to rise to. In many ways it feels like the publishing of the book is just the beginning of the journey, as now comes the work of finding the people it can touch, sharing it wider — the prospect of which fills me with terror! But I have come to learn that those fears always hide the joy; it is in moving through our fears that we come to the deeply fun experiences of sharing our gifts, our offerings, and shining our light. . . . And in that is the ultimate feeling of celebration of self.

Last weekend, my granddaughter and I made cookies together. I chose five different cookie recipes from which we hand-picked the items to include in our creation. Our recipe — a combination of ingredients — was influenced by the type and volume we chose to include. In order to attain the desired result we did some targeted tweaking and adjustments to ensure success.

What do you think of the concept that **you** are also the end result of a collection of ingredients, some chosen by you and some chosen for you, all of which, have had a positive, negative or neutral influence on the character and behaviours that you present to the world. AND sometimes that recipe can benefit from some tweaking and adjustments. This is **your** personal 'recipe.'

The human 'ingredients' we are all subject to, that influence our character and behaviour over the years, include, but are not limited to:

- the people you encounter either by choice or by chance — parents, friends, relatives, teachers, caregivers, siblings, boss, partner, spouse, casual acquaintances,
- the environment/location your caregiver(s) provided when you were a child, and
- the environment(s)/location(s) in which you choose to live when you become independent.

Since our decisions are made for us as a child, I expect most of us have had to make choices and find ways to adapt so that we could cope and manage to exist in our environment. These adaptations, which just happen naturally, mold our childhood behaviours and often settle in, lingering into our adult years. At around age 46, I woke up,

and was able to 'look in the mirror' and begin to see mine. I finally realized, if multiple people were giving me the same feedback — I should listen. Do you recognize any of the following adaptations in your own personal 'recipe?' Like defiant independence with attitude or a need to be acknowledged, recognized and valued? These behaviours were so ingrained for me that they had become my 'go-to' position. I was completely unaware of how I was impacting others — as hard as that may be to believe, it's what I perceived from my vantage point.

I spent most of my time, in seminars or meetings at work, thinking of tough questions to ask or profound points to share, with the underlying, unconscious motive, of wowing the crowd, with my intelligence. As you may expect, I rarely got the response I was going for. The actual affect I was having on people was that they felt challenged, and often 'put on the spot.' I chose to interrupt others when they were talking and finished their sentences. My communication was often interpreted as abrupt and disrespectful. I wasn't a good listener either. I spent most of my energy concentrating on remembering the profound statement I wanted to make, instead of paying attention, to what someone was saying.

I often thought, *How did this happen?*, *Why do I act this way?* and *What caused me to adopt these behaviours and speak/communicate like this?* **No answers, just questions.** The first step in my discovery process began with being open to receiving and accepting input that I didn't want to hear, as probable truths and embracing them as opportunities for growth and development. I definitely required this input to gain insight about myself. For many, many years I wasn't able to see what other people's experiences of me were like.

The second step was **owning and admitting** that other people were observing behaviours I was not aware of. I also started to recognize aspects of my behaviour/character that were not how I wanted them to be. The third step was to figure out what needed to be done to tackle it, and to take the appropriate action, to alter years of disruptive behaviour, negative thoughts and stories I had told myself. As much as I knew what I was doing, I found it very difficult to catch myself. Progress was slow.



As it turns out, some of my adaptations ended up being necessary to help me get through specific situations, in my adult years. It appears timing is divine, and perhaps we are only able to discover these things that ultimately we seek to correct when we reach the point, at which we no longer need them anymore.

In my 18th year, after finishing high school I got married before the end of that year. Our daughter was born 2 years later, and 3 years after that a bouncing baby boy arrived. When the children were 2 and 5, I chose to leave the marriage. I had 100% custody of our children and they were with their dad every other weekend. This is where the independence, and ‘I can take care of everything’ attitude, came in handy.

From the ages of 25 to 46, my ‘personal worth’ was unfortunately measured by whether or not I had a

boyfriend. If I had a man in my life, it meant someone thought I was **OK**. I attributed this to an extreme lack of confidence, and absence of friends in my life. I had a number of relationships during these years, another failed marriage and a lot of years being on my own, as a single mom.

At 46, I finally realized being single wasn’t so bad. I started to embrace being able to do what I wanted to do, when I wanted to do it, and with whom. Whew! It took a long time to get here, but it felt good! My children were independent, living on their own and it was just me. I had lots of opportunities for socializing, education and engaging in activities I loved. I was very aware of my shortcomings at this point, and, although I had not yet wrestled them to the ground, I continued to work on them and was committed to making changes that would benefit all of my relationships. However, the ‘how’ had still not revealed itself.

At 48, after being severed from my job of 19 years when downsizing occurred, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity and dive into some education, in the wellness field. This created a chain reaction of learning for about eight years. New education opportunities kept flowing to me in succession, some of which ultimately targeted the ongoing efforts to overcome my unwanted childhood adaptations.

The main catalyst occurred during one of my last classes with a teacher at the Institute of Holistic Nutrition. He seemed very different in comparison to what I observed of him during previous classes. He was energized, and couldn’t stop smiling. This man was so pumped about the experience and the effect it had had on him! Ultimately, he couldn’t help himself and took time in class to share. He had attended a three-day free seminar the previous weekend, and in his opinion,

it was life-changing. I wanted some of this for myself. I collected the details from him and signed up to attend the next seminar.

I attended high school up to grade 12 only so I had never really invested in myself. I was committed to figuring out what to do to replace or eliminate the adaptive behaviours I was dragging around with me. I also decided I wanted to find my ‘softer’ side. In addition to everything else I’ve mentioned, I felt I had developed a ‘tough’ nature and wanted to change that. From the three-day free seminar sprung many other educational opportunities, some more meaningful and life-changing than others. My biggest shifts occurred after attending the following:

- Peak Potential’s Wizard – 5 day experiential course
- Mastery of Self Expression with Larry Gilman
- Meditation course with Cheri Huber
- The Passion Test facilitation program with Chris and Janet Atwood.
- 10 day Vipassana retreat

With the knowledge I gained from becoming a certified Passion Test facilitator, I capitalized on my learnings and went through the process for myself, in May 2013, to determine my top 5 passions. I had completed the process twice before, but the end result both times, was mediocre, at best, and yielded only minor changes. However, in 2013, I experienced some major shifts after this work. The following were my top five passion statements.

1. My life is ideal because I feel vibrant, healthy and younger than my years as a result of a healthy lifestyle.
2. My life is ideal because I have an open and honest relationship with my children/grandchildren, in

which I support them in a way that inspires them to live in their highest and greatest good.

3. My life is ideal because, new experiences and opportunity for fun outdoor travel and adventures regularly present themselves and I accept.
4. My life is ideal because, I see, hear and speak from my heart, which always results in me feeling good about what I say and do.
5. My life is ideal because I feel vibrant, energized, independent, trusted and blissfully happy in a relationship with my ideal partner.



Where did I land after all of this education and concentrated effort? Well, I am much calmer and truly feel peaceful within. As a result, I talk less, listen more, and no longer have the need to impress or gain approval. The bond with my children and grandchildren continues to be strong. I eat healthy, exercise and engage in the many physical activities I'm interested

in. I have attracted many close friends into my life, as well as, my ideal partner who I have been with now for 4 years. We dated 37 years ago, for about a year and a half. Timing, our personal situations, and my adapted behaviours all made for a bad mix. The personal changes we both have made and our common interests have come together to create a strong, lasting relationship. Travel opportunities have also presented themselves. Since doing the Passion Test, I have travelled to Italy twice, and one of the trips included an amazing trek, in Austria.



In closing, my personal recipe for life goes something like this song, "Live Like You Are Dying," sung by Tim McGraw. It inspires me to live life to the fullest, and to be the best **COOKIE**, I can be!

Live like you are dying

"I was in my early forties
With a lot of life before me
And a moment came that stopped me
on a dime
I spent most of the next days
Looking at the x-rays
Talkin' 'bout the options
And talkin' 'bout sweet time"
I asked him
"When it sank in
That this might really be the real end
How's it hit you
When you get that kind of news?
Man, what'd you do?"

I went skydiving
I went Rocky Mountain climbing
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named
Fumanchu
And I loved deeper
And I spoke sweeter
And I gave forgiveness I'd been
denying"
And he said
"Someday I hope you get the chance
To live like you were dying

I was finally the husband
That most of the time I wasn't
And I became a friend a friend would
like to have
And all of a sudden going fishin'
Wasn't such an imposition
And I went three times that year I lost
my dad
I finally read the Good Book, and I
Took a good, long, hard look
At what I'd do if I could do it all again"

* * *



MY DAY AS A BOOKWORM by Sandra Wilson

I enjoy dressing in costume and, having worked with children for over 35 years, I have been given many opportunities to be many different characters. At first, it was a chance for me to be a little silly without judgement on my person; after all, I was in character so it was okay to act that way. But eventually I became strong enough within myself that it didn't matter to me how others felt about how I acted. I was me, I was quite a character, and I embraced my uniqueness. So now, when I dress as a

character, it is not to hide me and be someone else, it is not to 'get away' with being silly; instead, it is because of what I receive from others.

Let me explain. Recently I spent the day at The Eden Mills Writers Festival, dressed as a bookworm. Since it was a writer's festival, I felt the costume was fitting. And so, I donned my fleece, striped onesie and my custom-made cardboard book and I paraded up and down the street. As I travelled my route I was met with smiles, laughs and comments of well done. People had me stop for photos, one man gave me a hug and a young boy even had me stop so he could read the book. My day as a bookworm brought joy to many people, they appreciated the fun and were encouraged to laugh or smile.



I have never had a problem with dressing up and chatting with people but I know some people do. But let me tell you that when you spend the day as a character you are rewarded by the faces that brighten when they see you, by the laughter that greets you and by the joy that people are thankful to share with you.





SPIRIT BABIES & PAST LIVES by Christine Nightingale

When a mother becomes aware of her future child, it can take many forms. Some hear a little voice saying, "Mommy, mommy, I'm here" when there is no one around. One saw a butterfly in the kitchen sitting on a curtain for hours, another heard a bird frantically pecking at her window. Some mothers feel a warmth or a shiver when thinking of a future child. And some just know they are pregnant before tests confirm it.

These are some ways Spirit Babies can make moms aware of their existence. But where do these spirits come from?

The great majority of Spirit babies choose their mother from their soul group. A soul group has about 45-60 members, with a great deal of overlap between groups. Think of throwing a handful of pebbles into a quiet pond. The ripples would intersect, but no two stones would have exactly the same ripple.

What this means is that a mother may attract a Spirit Baby who was once her best friend, her sister or her mother. A spirit baby may also choose the father. And sometimes an older spirit baby will invite its younger siblings in ...all because of past karma (unfinished business, often caused by a premature passing, such as a friend or fiancé lost in wartime, or a childhood death

(which was once very common everywhere in the world.)

Most people are reasonably familiar with the idea of karma, and how the soul's past lives may impact on current ones. For example, a woman had an apparently kind and caring boyfriend, Charles, but she could not imagine having a child with him. A past life reading made clear that Samantha had once been his slave, in the Old South, that she had borne his child, and the child was sold away from her.

In this lifetime, Charles is very concerned about affirmative action, trying as it were to correct his own karma. But Samantha has now found the man who, in that lifetime, was another slave who she cared about. She is also healing her karma, by having a child with her soulmate.

Less well understood is the second source of Spirit Babies: current life connections (in which at least one parent knew the spirit in this lifetime in another form).

The following are some examples about how that works.

A woman had a male friend who died young in a motorcycle accident. She knows that the energy of one of her daughters is the return of her friend.

It is necessary to clarify that a soul is neither male nor female. Some certainly have a preference, but over many lifetimes, for the 'sake of the soul's learning, it may attach to a male or female body, try out different races, different ability or disability levels, and so on.

1. Another woman's brother died in a car accident as a teenager. Tess says that one of her three children is 'exactly like her brother.' It is sufficient for Tess if she understands that there is healing around having a son who very much reminds her of her

beloved brother. If Tess were inclined to investigate any further, she would understand that her brother's spirit actually re-turned to complete unfinished business with the family. (The most common chosen mother in such situations is the sister, if there is one.)

2. A third mother had a stillborn baby girl. Many years later, her second daughter gave birth to a little girl. The grandmother said the grandchild looked exactly like her lost baby.

3. A baby boy died very young. His sister was born nine months later. The boy's spirit was her Spirit Guide from the beginning of her life. Many years later, he returned to incarnation as her first child. The baby's grandmother often made the "Freudian slip" of referring to her grandchild as her son.

4. Mary had no particular interest in becoming a mother, nor did her husband care about being a father. Mary had endometriosis, which doctors told her needed treatment or she would never become pregnant. But Mary refused treatment; she felt that if she were meant to become a parent, it would happen.

Mary's husband's brother Peter was a troubled young man who became ill and died on his sister-in-law's birthday. A couple of years later Mary became pregnant, and was told by doctors that her endometriosis had disappeared without treatment. This is practically unheard of. Now Mary and her husband are eager to become parents.

The spiritual explanation for this situation is that Mary originally had no Spirit Baby, as none had chosen her. It is the Spirit Baby which makes a mother wish to have a child. But Peter died with unfinished business and wished to return to his own family. So he became his former sister-in-law's Spirit Baby.

Once Mary had her Spirit Baby's influence in her aura, her body mysteriously solved the endometriosis which had kept her from becoming pregnant. The clue as to where the Spirit Baby had come from was that Peter's soul chose to pass on Mary's birthday...a fairly clear clue that he wanted Mary to give birth to him in his next incarnation!

5. Great-grandmother Pauline was a very proper English lady, always impeccably dressed with matching shoes and purse. Pauline told her adult grandson and his wife that they should plan on having a second child. The son they had was shy, and Pauline thought that he needed a sibling to be happy. In time the young woman became pregnant, and great-grandma Pauline often called her "little mother." Shortly thereafter great-grandma passed.

Then grandma had a dream in which a dried-out husk of a queen bee appeared. Out of it came a new little queen bee.

When the baby girl Megan was born, she immediately started exhibiting traits which the family associated with her deceased relative. Megan was very picky about her clothes, insisting on choosing them by the time she was 6 months old. She especially adored shoes! And as soon as she could walk, Megan showed care and concern for her big brother.

Megan's parents had no doubt that great-grandma has returned in another form ...and had even made sure that this body would be available to her!

Most families have at least one example of a child who exhibits an uncanny resemblance to a deceased relative.

(Most of the examples above come from my own extended family.)

* * *



Dear Angels,

How do I know if I am on my soul purpose path? How can I get there?

Marla N., Brampton

Dear Marla,

It is your angels' most important mission and desire to help you achieve your Divine life purpose. Ask in earnest for help and your angels will answer you. They will answer you in whatever way they think you will be able to understand. Be open to receive their messages from all aspects of life. They may use your hearing and speak to you through other people whether they are family, friends, acquaintances or strangers. A person or animal may give a message that resonates with you. You may hear a program on the radio that answers your questions. Your angels may use your vision to show you messages such as cloud formations, an article in a magazine or newspaper, or a television show. Your angels may use your feelings to give you messages, such as helping you to feel elated or upset when certain subjects arise. Take notes, for sometimes we get messages that alone don't mean much but put together with other messages take on a theme with a great meaning.

If it is hard to get up in the morning and feelings of negativity or stress come over you when you think about going to work, or wishing you were working somewhere else, it is not your soul path to be there. If while at work,

you feel that your feet are stuck in mud, or that there is a huge weight on your shoulders, or that it's hard to breathe, or that you just can't move forward or that you just don't have the energy to finish the day's work, then it is really time to think about moving forward into your life purpose work.

Sometimes we need to work at a certain job until we are set free, having learned all we needed to learn from that job, the co-workers, location etc. It could be that you are there to release negative karma, or to create the foundation you need to do your life's purpose. If this is the case, once you are asking for help, you will start to get inklings about whether you need to be there or how much longer you will need to be there. One morning you will wake up and think "I don't have to work there anymore," and then you will decide when to leave and make plans, or perhaps you will still stay for a while until the time seems right and you have the courage and faith to move onto your path.

Release control. Control is the opposite to surrender. When we are running our life through our ego-mind, life is challenging, weary and we carry much fear. When we are micro managing everything, it doesn't leave any room for new ideas and energy to emerge within us. Control closes us to God's gifts and angel energy. The angels can only help you move forward if you surrender your control to run your life your human-ego way. Letting go of control makes room for new divine ideas and energy to come into you. Then the soul journey begins.

Humility is necessary for you to receive angel help. Humility is the knowing that you are never alone when you are pursuing your soul path. You have angels, archangels and God helping you every step of the way. Humility is accepting that you are filling a piece of the puzzle in God's plan, and that your soul's will is God's

will. We never have to be afraid of God's will. It is what our souls have determinedly come to do. It is the best most amazing fulfilling work you can do.

You can only receive when in a grateful state. Otherwise the gifts your angels bring you will fall away from you, and perhaps even be picked up by someone else. Keep an open and grateful attitude: you never know when an angel will pop into your life and give you an important message.

Anxiety hinders the angelic messages so they are often unrecognizable. Therefore it is important to trust that you will be given the correct information at the right time. Your angels are always impeccable with their timing. Being in a peaceful state helps you to communicate with your angels more clearly. Peace helps you to relax so you can trust and trust helps you to be calm so you can have peace. The two go hand in hand.

When you are on your path, you wake up in the morning with a joyful feeling in your heart and the desire to work in your chosen field. You will receive light and love from above and you feel this throughout your day. You may feel as light as a feather, and that you can continue doing this job forever, joyfully and with love in your heart. It's not always easy, but when you are on the right path, your angels bring you the perfect energy to complete your day. You will feel excited about your life.

Most importantly, follow your joy. When you think about something that brings you joy, research it. It may be about work, hobby, travel, relationship, moving, having a baby, starting a business or anything that interests you. See if finding out more about it brings you more joy. If so, keep pursuing it. If not, look for similar things and keep asking your angels for more information about what you need to

learn to embark on your divine soul path.

Have faith. When the time is right, you will know it innately, and you will make the right decisions and move in the correct direction for your divine purpose path. Your life will change and grow into where you are meant to be. Sometimes we just need to take a leap of faith, to land in the perfect place.

Blessings to you from Your Angels, channeled by Jill Michelle

Please email your questions to: jillmichelle.ca@gmail.com

* * *



AS CLEAR AS MUD by Bob Smith

Mostly I like high school now that I'm in Grade 9. Especially Math. But not English and after today not Health.

I like Math because the rules never change. Sometimes we have to learn new ones but that's okay. Once you know the rules, the questions are easy. Other kids struggle with word problems but I don't. You just have to translate the words into numbers and then follow the rules.

But English isn't like that. Rules there have exceptions and even then there are special cases. I know about 'special' because they've called me

'special needs' at school as far back as I can remember. 'High-functioning autistic', whatever that is. English has rules like 'i before e except after c, unless it makes the sound 'ay' as in 'weigh''. But there are many other weird exceptions too. Like weird. And what about neither? Or height? In History class, Mr. MacMillan wrote 'foreign' on the board and I saw it wasn't i before e. So what gives with the rule? At least math rules never change.

Yesterday in English Mrs. Falgreen said you make verbs past tense by adding 'd' or 'ed'. Like play-played or behave-behaved. So why don't all verbs do that? Why isn't it do-does or eat-eated? The word changes like it's did or ate, but some are truly bizarre, like cut which doesn't change at all.

The worst is metaphors. I understand similes where you use the word 'like' or 'as', such as 'the lamp is as hot as the sun'. The sun is hot and bright so that means the lamp is hot and bright too. Maybe not exactly like the sun, but I understand. But if someone says 'the lamp over my desk is a sun' I don't get it. How can a lamp be a sun? Suns are huge and a million degrees so how could you have one over your desk? I know that's a metaphor because it was in a short story we read in class and Mrs. Falgreen had to explain it to me. When I was little, I started a list of expressions like that, things that don't mean what the words say. Yesterday Dad was talking about buying a new car, which he has been discussing for weeks. At dinner, he said to Mom, "I've narrowed it down to three but the jury is still out." 'Narrowed down' is on my list. I know 'it's an expression that means you've eliminated some things so there are fewer choices, so I understood that part. The three cars

didn't really get squeezed together like my head pictured. But the other part about the jury being out didn't make sense. A jury is a bunch of people who sit in a courtroom inside a thing they call a box even though it isn't and listen to everyone. Then they decide. I've seen it on TV. And 'out' is the opposite of 'in'. I didn't know why a jury would be listening to my Dad about cars and what they were doing out of their box. When I asked, Dad explained it was an expression. Why couldn't he just say he hasn't decided yet?

Mrs. Falgreen said they're called idioms and gave us a list. Some of them were already on mine like 'seeing eye to eye', which is a really weird image if you think about it. But there were totally bizarre new ones like 'when pigs fly' and 'hitting the books'. I have another list of ones I made up. I call them 'Idiots' instead of 'idioms' since an idiot is someone who doesn't make sense. Like I invented 'the teapot is silver', which makes just as much sense as 'let the cat out of the bag'. I used it a few times but no one understood what I meant. Do they have a class I missed where they teach people all those strange sayings?

But that's why I don't like English class. Too much confusion.

As of today, there's also Health. Monday to Thursday, we have gym but Fridays we have a class with Ms. Harper in Room B211 where she talks about things like reading food labels or STD's. Last week, she explained about self-image and body-image, terms I understood because they mean exactly what they say – the picture you have of yourself. I listened carefully because much of what she said involved math, how to count calories and calculate

your daily food intake so you don't get fat. At the end of the class, she said this week we would celebrate ourselves and everyone should be prepared.

I thought I understood what that meant. 'Celebrate' is what we do at home for birthdays. There are five kids in my family plus my parents, so we started having one big party for everybody instead of each person having their own. So I figured we were going to do the same at school, have a birthday celebration for everyone.

At home, we always wear silly hats when we have a birthday thing so that's what I thought Ms. Harper meant when she said we should be prepared. I got a hat from the cupboard where we keep the birthday stuff, a floppy felt thing with neon pompoms, one you can fold so I could put it in my backpack. Today, I stopped in the washroom across from B211 and put it on.

I expected everyone in the class to be wearing a hat, but they weren't. They all laughed at me. I could tell even Ms. Harper wanted to laugh. I turned around and left so I missed the party. The cake must have been in a box somewhere because I didn't see it. Maybe someone was bringing it later. That's not the first time people laughed at me but it's the first time in high school.

But 'celebrate' isn't just about birthdays. It's what you do if you win something. The opposite of 'win' is 'fail' and that's how I feel, only that's not celebrating yourself.

Other stories by Bob can be found at <http://slicesoflifestories.com/>

* * *



An Evening of SHARING



Celebrating Our Selves

Featuring:



Amanda Gazzola
Believe in ME, Believing in YOU!



Holly Mastrogiamo
Owner, Smitten Apparel



Kathryn O'Brien
The Evolving Alchemist

Thursday, November 16, 7-9pm

Harcourt Memorial United Church
87 Dean Avenue, Guelph ON

free admission (reservations recommended)

For more information visit www.onethousandtrees.com.
To reserve your spot email lisa@onethousandtrees.com.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

by Kristen Feduck

In honour of International Volunteer Managers Day, which takes place on November 5th each year, **Jessica Bigelow**, a Volunteer Manager, is the focus of our profile.

After obtaining her degree at the University of Toronto, an Honours B.A. majoring in English and Political Science, Jessica pursued a Social Service Worker diploma at Conestoga College. It was this program that connected her to a student placement at Big Brothers Big Sisters Waterloo Region (BBBSWR). Once her placement ended, Jessica continued to volunteer for the organization and was later hired as the Volunteer Manager.



As a lifelong volunteer, Jessica has experienced the positive impact of volunteering and for her, having the opportunity to connect others to this impact is the most rewarding part of her work. Jessica recounts a story of a

mentor named Rob and a mentee named Cam. Once Rob started to mentor Cam, his family started to see an improvement in grades, a better attitude and some leadership from Cam. Speaking about Rob, Cam said 'He has made me a better man and I will be a good father and friend one day because of the things he teaches me.'

A typical day for Jessica includes connecting with staff on different teams and determining how she can support them in their work with volunteers.

The biggest challenge in Jessica's work is going to work every day knowing that there are boys on a two-year waitlist and girls on a one-year waitlist for a one-to-one mentor match. The organization is in real need of Big Brothers. Please contact BBBSWR if you, or a man in your life, would like to make a difference in the life of a little boy. Before wrapping up with Jessica, I asked if she had a favourite quote. She chose a quote by Henry Ford: "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right." To Jessica and all the other Volunteer Managers out there, thank you for engaging and inspiring volunteers to make such impactful change in the lives of others.

Do you want to volunteer but aren't sure where to start? Search the online Volunteer Opportunities Database at <https://volunteercambridge.cioc.ca/volunteer/> or call the Volunteer Centre at 519-621-1030, ext. 234.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN GUELPH

Socks for Shelter Fundraising Volunteer Wyndham House, Youth Resource Centre

Dec.1st @ Old Quebec Street
Shoppes, Dec.14th @ Stone Road
Mall, Dec.16th @ Guelph Farmers
Market

Volunteers will help to sell personalized Wyndham House socks to the general public as a part of our Socks for Shelter fundraising campaign.

Christmas Dinner Event Volunteer The Elliott Community

Volunteers will assist with the preparation and implementation of the Christmas dinner special event on Saturday December 16th/Sunday December 17th from 12:30-4:00pm. You will assist with serving food, cleaning up dishes from event and helping provide a fun and engaging atmosphere. Following the event, you will help assist staff and help with cleanup. There will be an opportunity for you to provide input for evaluation of the event.

Student Nutrition Program Volunteer Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington, Food and Friends Student Nutrition Program

Serving Snacks/Breakfast to local children.

**Board and Committee members
Community of Hearts Lifelong
Learning Centre**

This is currently a working board that is working towards becoming a governance board. Board members will oversee the organization to ensure it adheres to the mission statement of the organization. Board members are asked to sit on one of the various committees in order to grow and strengthen the organization. Potential committee members will work directly or indirectly with the population served by the organization.

**Supportive Dining Volunteer
Village of Riverside Glen**

Volunteers are needed to assist and encourage residents during mealtimes. Duties include escort/porter residents to and from dining area, provide supervision and verbal cueing for residents requiring direction, provide hand-over-hand assistance for residents requiring physical assistance, offer nourishment to residents requiring feeding, promote social involvement and self-confidence, clean up after resident and offer resident a hot cloth for the hands and face, and record resident's intake on the nutrition form as required.



**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
IN KITCHENER-WATERLOO**

The City of Kitchener is recruiting for the **event squad** to do events such as Christkindl, Christmas Fantasy, Kitchener Market, and the New Year's Levee.

Volunteer Action Centre is looking for an individual who is interested in assisting with the **Volunteer Action Team** on Tuesdays from 4:30-6:30.

March of Dimes Canada: Visit new stroke survivors within the hospital, providing help for recovery with hope, optimism and encouragement.

HopeSpring Cancer Support Centre is looking for a **certified art therapist** to help cancer patients and families who enjoy creative expression.

Epilepsy South Central Ontario is recruiting **gift wrappers** for the annual gift wrapping extravaganza at Conestoga Mall.

Canadian Blood Services is searching for outgoing, motivated individuals to participate in events, promote awareness and assist with donor recruitment.

* * *



**Have you been, or are you being,
emotionally/verbally abused?**

**Would you like to be heard ...
in total anonymity?**

**Email lisa@onethousandtrees.com
for details on an upcoming project
to raise awareness and
offer hope and encouragement.**





**NEXT MONTH
IN ONE THOUSAND TREES**

Our focus for December is **The Inner Child**.

“Can you remember who you were before the world told you who you should be?”

Unknown

Do you have an inspiring story you'd like to share?

If you know of any community wellness events taking place in December, please complete and send us the Event Listing form found on the magazine page of our website.

Articles are always welcome for any of our “regular” departments ...

Connections
Creativity and the Arts
Food and Nutrition
Giving Back
Health and Wellbeing
The Library

**Deadline for submissions is
November 20.**

As always, we look forward to hearing from you with any feedback or article ideas!

lisa@onethousandtrees.com



The Grand River flows 300 kilometres through southwestern Ontario from the highlands of Dufferin County to Port Maitland on Lake Erie.

The Grand River Conservation Authority manages water and other natural resources on behalf of 39 municipalities and close to one million residents.

One Thousand Trees' target market is defined by the borders of the Grand River Watershed. Department Editors are responsible for promoting practitioners, events and volunteer opportunities in the cities of Brantford, Cambridge, Guelph, Kitchener, and Waterloo.

Visit the Grand River Conservation Authority at www.grandriver.ca.