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ON THE COVER
WHILE THE OKANAGAN TOURISM INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, LEISURE TRAVEL REMAINS A CORE PRODUCT

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Congratulations to Okanagan College's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE Okanagan), who competed against 53 universities and colleges from across the country to win seven awards at the national SIFE competition, including a gold medal in the national Go Green team challenge.

The success and community contributions of SIFE Okanagan are helping to meet their mission to create, advance and inspire positive economic, social and environmental change in the Okanagan.



2010 SIFE National Awards

- First place Scotiabank & SIFE Go Green Challenge
- First place Campbell's Soup Let's Can Hunger Challenge (SIFE Okanagan raised 36,000 pounds of food for the Food Bank)
- Second place HSBC SIFE Financial Literacy Education Challenge
- Most supportive campus administration award
- David Henderson Bursary for Entrepreneurial Leadership (Matthew Cosar)
- John Dobson Ace Fellow awards for 2010 (Garth Maguire and Sheilagh Seaton)



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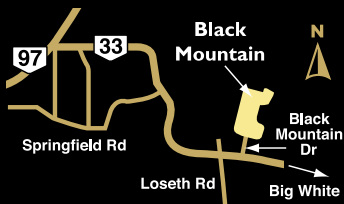
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AD GAMES

Who to trust

Phony circulation claims and intrusive misleading advertising are beating up the advertising industry.

Not long ago, advertisements were easy to spot. We noticed them and even paid attention—in return for a good story, article, song, editorial or program that was entertaining or engaging.

But today's advertising can be overwhelming for both advertisers and consumers. It has invaded every nook and cranny of society. It is so plentiful that marketers are struggling to find value for their advertising dollar in an increasingly fragmented market. Consumers are confused, upset and angry at advertising that masquerades as editorial and they're tired of its overall intrusiveness.

As I write, I'm in Providence, Rhode Island, at a City and Regional Magazine Association conference meeting with some of North America's best magazine publishers, editors, art directors and writers, sharing ideas and learning how we can make *Okanagan Life* even better.

Many years ago, our association unanimously agreed that our members must have their circulation and distribution audited by an independent verification company. There were simply too many pub-

lishers promising huge circulation and printing a much smaller number of magazines. In other words, they were cheating advertisers.

This is a huge problem in the Okanagan Valley. Publishers of magazines and newspapers have been promising inflated circulation numbers for years, all the while printing a fraction of their promise. For the record, this magazine is the only Okanagan magazine that is audited and verified. It has been this way for 20 years. The lesson—ask for the audit. Think twice about advertising in unaudited publications.

Advertising has become so intrusive that people are getting angry. People are angry about public place advertising because it gives nothing back to society, it only takes away. It has become the most intrusive of all forms of advertising. Jurisdictions like Hawaii, Vermont and Sao Paulo have deemed it “visual pollution” and banned it completely. Ask yourself this, if billboards have been banned in the Okanagan by all levels of government, why are we being forced to tolerate them?

If you take the time to separate the media that gives you value for your attention from the media that does not, you will find some friendly classics: magazines, newspapers, radio, TV and certain websites all provide a greater value by providing engaging information that you trust.

But a word of warning. If the outlet sells its editorial, it is not editorial, it is advertising and if this content isn't clearly marked, it is misleading consumers. It's all about integrity.



Paul Byrne
Publisher

paul@okanaganlife.com
for comments,
suggestions or both

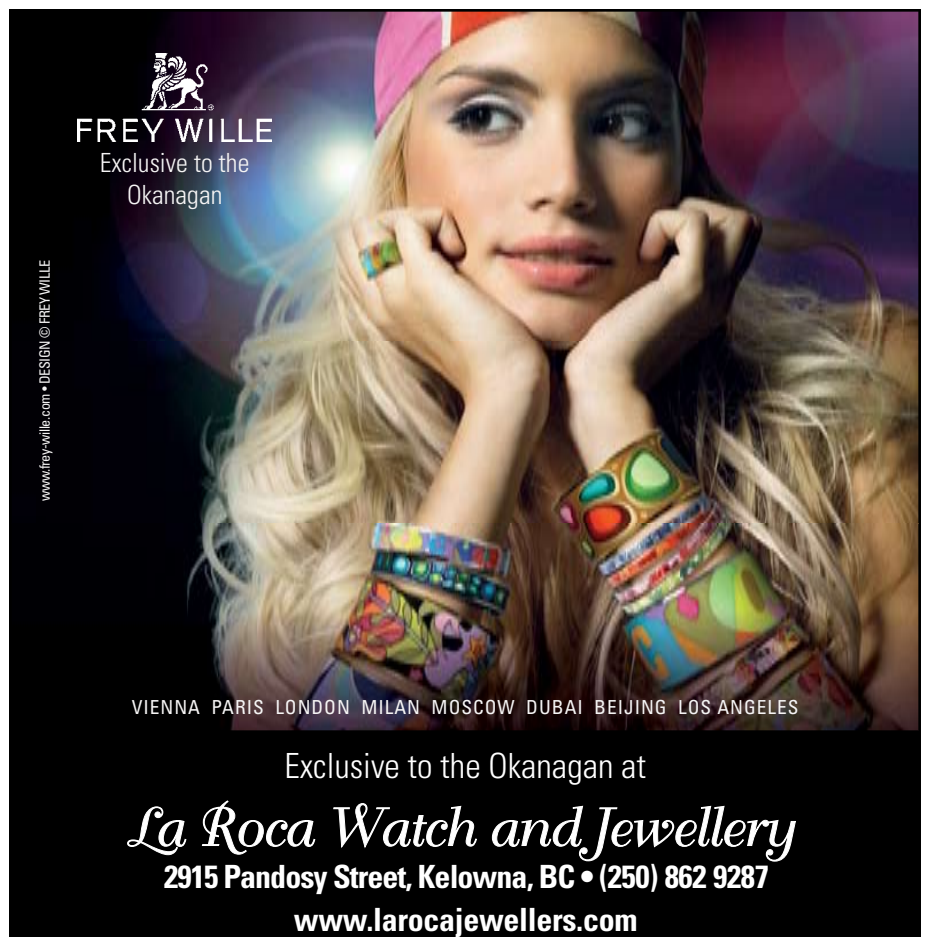



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SUMMER ART CLASSES

Penticton: July 5–August 20, 2010

Awaken your creative spirit, Okanagan School of the Arts offers summer art classes for all stages and ages including documentary film making (real life is so much more interesting than anything you can make up), the ancient art of encaustic painting using coloured beeswax, pencil to paint, improv theatre, creativity camps for youth and more. The school also offers private and semi-private art lessons for all ages. For more info and to register call 250.493.0390 or visit online www.osarts.com.



OPEN AIR PERFORMANCES

Lake Country: July and August 2010

For the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike, bring your lawn chair and take in the free concerts held at various community and regional parks throughout Lake Country. The summer evening performances are suitable for all ages and present a variety of music genres including blues, big band, classic rock and more. Local artisans and vendors will also have their wares on display for sale. For a detailed list of upcoming performers and where they will be playing visit www.openairperformances.com. See you at the park.



EVERYONE

Armstrong: July 20–August 22, 2010

Theatre under the stars, this professional company uses an 80-acre farm as its set. This summer Caravan Farm Theatre presents a new musical comedy with seven horse-drawn acts. Everyone is a modern morality play about one family's adventures with the problems of daily life: not enough money, mysterious ailments, rebellious teenagers, recycling.... Expect high comedy and low tragedy. Get your tickets online at www.ticket seller.ca or phone 1.866.311.1011. For more info visit www.caravanfarmtheatre.com.

MORE CHOICE HAPPENINGS

SAME TIME NEXT YEAR

Penticton: July 8–31, 2010

Bernard Slade's classic play follows the lives of George and Doris, who even though married to other people, carry on an affair for 24 years, meeting once a year. All shows at the Cannery Stage. Performances Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets go on sale about four weeks before each show opens, available at the Wine Country Visitor's Centre, 553 Railway St., Penticton; phone 250.493.4055.

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT

Kelowna Actors Studio: July 15–August 8, 2010

A crowd pleaser, Andrew Lloyd Webber's Joseph will take you on a lively journey through ancient Egypt. It's a rags to riches tale of a boy who is blessed with prophetic dreams who is sold into slavery by his conniving brothers and overcomes tremendous odds. For more info on Kelowna's dinner theatre and tickets visit www.kelownaactorsstudio.com or phone 250.862.2867.

BEACH BLANKET FILM FESTIVAL

Penticton: July 16–18, 2010

Trade your theatre seat in for a blanket on the beach and watch a flick on the big screen floating offshore on Okanagan Lake. It's a novel experience—the only one of its kind in Canada. Each night the festival presents top Canadian filmmakers screening their creations. Tickets are available online or at the gate. For more info visit www.beachblanketfilmfest.ca or call 250.490.7886.

OKANAGAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Kelowna: July 21–25, 2010

You don't want to miss this year's lineup of thought provoking movies. Screenings are at the Paramount Theatre, Kelowna Art Gallery and Mary Irwin Theatre, all in downtown Kelowna. Stay tuned to www.okanaganfilmfestival.com for show listings, dates and times. VIP passes include admission to all screenings, workshops and after parties.



GIRL IN PINK BY WENELDA ZURRIN

CHARITY OF CHOICE

HANDS TO THE NEEDY

Local artist picks up a brush to help children of the world

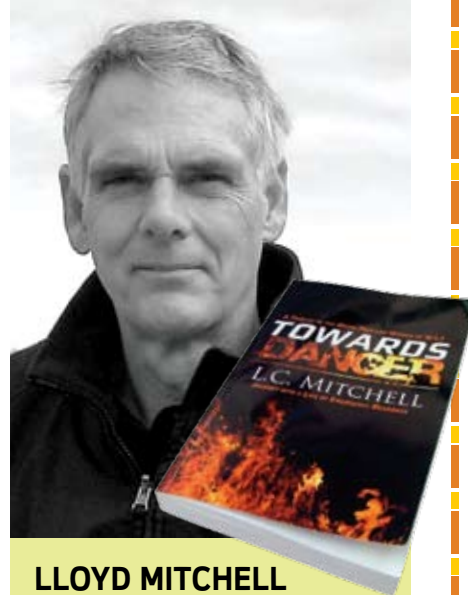
When Wenelda Zurrin of Lake Country was asked to paint pictures to raise money for a cause, she never imagined she'd find her calling. Today she sells her prints on canvas depicting children of the world and donates a portion of the purchase price to children's charities.

Her new life began last April at a conference where she received the request to produce paintings to benefit two Kelowna based non-profit organizations: Hope for the Nations and Be a Hero. More than a rescue operation, Hope for the Nations works in partnership with local communities and organizations in over 20 countries to provide orphans and vulnerable children with caring homes, health care and education in their communities. Local micro-enterprises and

community development projects help to support and finance these efforts. Be a Hero creates heroes out of ordinary people by giving them opportunities to change the world, one child at a time.

It took some convincing but Wenelda took up the challenge. A pencil artist, she braved the new medium of paint and set out to produce one picture a month, completing 15 paintings in under 11 months. In April of this year the Eyes and Wings Conference in Kelowna and Calgary sold 28 of her prints along with two other artists' works and raised \$100,000 for the children's charities. Fresh from that success, Wenelda realized there was no reason to stop and she set up a website where people can continue to view and buy her artwork to help children of the globe. She donates 60 per cent of the purchase price to a children's charity of the buyer's choice. To view her work visit www.handstotheneedy.com. —Karen Slivar

Q&A



LLOYD MITCHELL

Author, *Towards Danger*

WHY DID YOU WRITE TOWARDS

DANGER? After such a wonderful, but sometimes terrifying career, I felt that I had to get this part of my life off my chest. With 25 years of running fire, ambulance and rescue, something has to give. This was one way of saying goodbye — a final salute to my career.

WHAT DID IT MEAN FOR YOU TO WRITE

ABOUT SOMETHING SO PERSONAL? It was not easy at times, but I felt it was necessary if I was to give a true picture of what life was like for me both as a person and as a firefighter, rescue and ambulance worker. I wanted to paint a picture, not just tell horrific stories.

HOW DID YOU APPROACH THE BOOK?

It just happened, just came out, one chapter at a time. I was amazed how easily the words flowed. I'm writing a book on ancient Egypt now.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY FEEDBACK?

One day I received a letter from the son of one of my co-workers. He remarked that he did not know the sacrifice his father had made over the years, the dedication to duty, his understanding of the dangers inherent in fire, the dangers of drinking and driving, and the dangers in just responding to a fire. He thanked me for filling him in.

WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU

FOUGHT A FIRE? I thought, "Was it an accident or was it intentional?" Fire can cause some of the worst injuries. Please be fire aware. Teach your children the dangers. There is nothing worse than a son or daughter with serious burns. Beyond this however, there is also a heavy cost to the citizens of the community in taxes. Firefighting is a very expensive proposition. —Lucas Wiseman

Who knew?

CHRISTIE MEMORIAL PARK in Okanagan Falls is named in memory of airman Robert Gunn Christie, a pilot officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force, who was killed in action during the Second World War while serving as a navigator with the 97 Squadron at Bourn. The only serviceman from Okanagan Falls to be killed in action during the war, he and fellow crewmen were initially laid to rest at Ruchheim, Germany, where they crashed. Later their remains were moved to the Rheinberg War Cemetery. —staff

FUNTASTIC FELLA

JIM MCEWAN



FUNTASTIC
DIRECTOR

PHOTO BY BRUCE KEMP

“I think the next Wayne Gretsky is sitting out there, but will never get the opportunity to play hockey because of the cost or lack of opportunity,” says Jim McEwan, and the thought that this occurs in Canada makes him mad.

Jim is a community activist who takes things in hand and looks for solutions — primarily through sports. Since moving to Vernon he’s made a big commitment to improving the quality of life as executive director of Vernon’s annual Funtastic Slo-Pitch Tournament, an organization whose goal is to raise enough money to build a community sports centre. It has contributed \$1.1 million to the pot since it was started 25 years ago.

At 52, Jim has adopted his new hometown big time. He not only heads up Funtastic, but will co-chair the 2012 BC Winter Games and he sits on the board of the North Okanagan Sports Council.

Growing up in Vancouver as one of five kids, Jim was always involved in sports. From the time he could kick a ball, he played soccer (and still does on a masters team). “I remember playing on a wide-open pitch in kind of a vacant lot and pulling rocks out of my knees.” In high school he took up rugby.

After graduation from Simon Fraser University he went to work for the *Calgary Sun* in ad sales where he got to know the people who turned him into an activist. Never one to shy away from the “go big or go home” philosophy, Jim initially volunteered with the Calgary Stampede.

When he and his wife Maureen moved to Vernon, she found the advertisement seeking a new executive director for Funtastic.

Life comes full circle. From playing soccer as a kid to raising money through Funtastic for a sports facility that will encompass a decent set of soccer pitches and where no kid will lack the chance to play. —Bruce Kemp

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(L TO R) PHILIP BROCKHOFF, KYLE PARENTEAU, MEAGAN PRICE AND DAN ROBINSON EXTINGUISHED WILDFIRES PREVENTING MILLIONS IN PROPERTY DAMAGE. NOT PICTURED ARE BRANDON GIESE AND QUENTIN NELSON



ROOKIE FIRE FIGHTERS

Rutland high school students learn what it takes to battle wildfires

The summer of 2009 was one of the most destructive wildfire seasons in BC history. The wildfire management branch of the BC Ministry of Forests and Range reported that 3,045 wildfires burned across the province requiring more than 1,000 firefighters. Among them were six Kelowna students: Meagan Price, Brandon Giese, Kyle Parenteau, Dan Robinson, Philip Brockhoff and Quentin Nelson, who were part of a unique firefighting program at Rutland Senior Secondary School (RSS).

"Between the two crews we worked on 15 or 16 different fires," says teacher, Wayne Price, "everything from a five-metre by five-metre lightning strike to the Terrace Mountain fire that was 15,000 hectares or larger. We really did the whole gamut in terms of size and experience. We were all over the Valley from the top of the

connector to the eastern boundary of Big White and then across the lake up to McCullough."

The school program provides students with basic fire suppression and safety (S-100) training and they learn to use global positioning systems, chainsaws, compasses, climbing equipment and all-terrain vehicles. Students also qualify as level one certified utility arborists. Their firefighting and silviculture education prepares them for junior firefighting opportunities and post-secondary education. But for the handful of students selected to join Price on summer crews, nothing could entirely prepare them for the real thing.

"It was exciting," says Brandon Giese. "The first time out there, I did an overnight shift from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. There were 10 people on the crew. We used water pumps and sprayed with hoses. Two tanker trucks would drive up and keep refilling the pump. It was a long night because we didn't get much rest. We took a break at about

PHOTO BY WAYNE PRICE



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midnight and started up again at about 3 a.m. We didn't have tents — just slept on the ground.”

Like all firefighters, the students wore fire-resistant jumpsuits and boots, despite the stifling heat, and had to climb hillsides carrying a 20-litre water tank, firefighter's rake, pickaxe and shovel. And they learned first hand the unpredictable nature of wildfire.

“On the Terrace Mountain fire,” says Giese, “we were sent out into the backside of the blaze. We wanted to stop the fire from jumping the road because we use that as a guard. Three helicopters came by to dump then we noticed that there were ashes landing behind us and we started seeing smoke spots. By the time we got what we needed and got back to the truck, flames were going over both sides of the hill and it had jumped the road. I got some pretty cool pictures of driving through the fire.” Giese says his mother was less than pleased but he shrugs it off as part of the job.

Despite the challenges and dangers, most of the students are eager to continue. Quentin Nelson plans to work on a ground crew this summer after graduation. “Someday I'd like to do structural firefighting for the Kelowna fire department. I want to be a person who puts everything on the line to save people. It was amazing to be involved in something this important, especially at our age; we were the youngest crew.”

A few students in the 20-year history of the RSS program have also considered joining the “Rap Attack” team. Alan Kolkind, who teaches the course with Price, took students on a tour of the Rap Attack base at Salmon Arm. There, specialized firefighters train to rappel out of aircraft with chainsaws, pumps and other equipment to fight fires in mountainous regions. —*Lisa Harrison*

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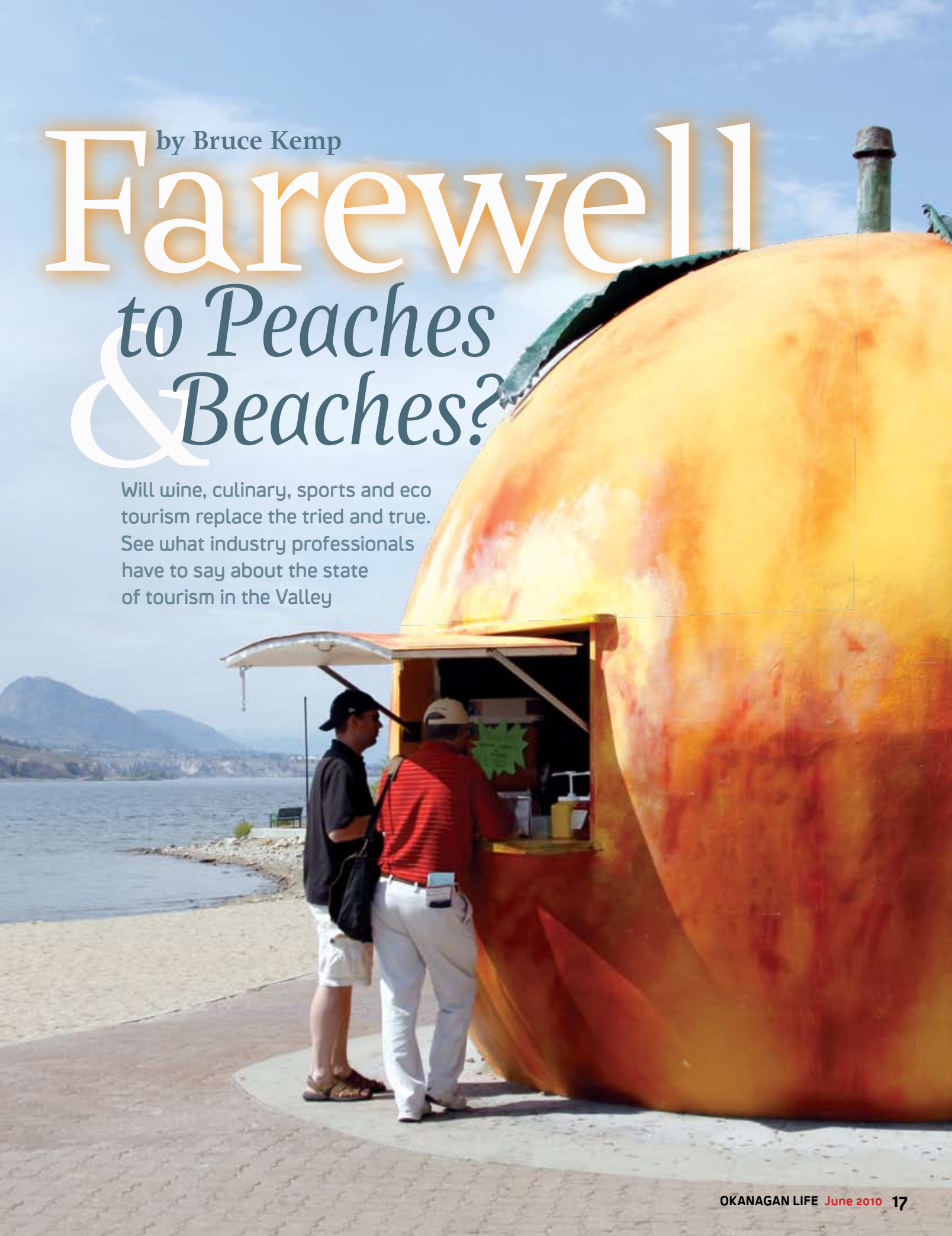
TOURIST ATTRACTION CITY

FREE ATTRACTION CITY

by Bruce Kemp

Farewell to Peaches & Beaches?

Will wine, culinary, sports and eco tourism replace the tried and true. See what industry professionals have to say about the state of tourism in the Valley





Ask a random sampling of Okanaganites what tourism means to them and you'll get a litany of responses from noisy nuisance to economic boon. The interrelationships and driving forces that define tourism and its impact on different people and communities in the Valley are often complex and the answers to some of the most self-evident questions are full of surprises.

While alluring produce, sunshine and pristine lakes — the so-called “peaches and beaches” — have always been and are likely to remain central to what draws visitors, the tourism product itself has slowly been changing over the past decade.

“Where the Okanagan was traditionally a summer destination for families,” says Nancy Cameron, CEO of Tourism Kelowna, “it's now broadened out because of the product mix.”

That mix includes an explosive wine industry, constantly developing culinary scene, lively arts and cultural community and the growing recognition that the Okanagan is rapidly becoming one of Canada's premier golf destinations.

“You now have a demographic that's much broader and a time period for leisure activities that's much longer, extending from the spring through fall,” she says. Factor in winter sports at the region's key resorts and leisure tourism is year-round — but it's still just one facet of the industry.

Meetings and Conventions

Convention traffic has been growing over the past seven or eight years filling rooms at hotels and resorts, many with excellent onsite meeting and conference facilities, and putting bums in restaurant seats throughout the region. Penticton took a leading role in developing this sector with the Penticton Convention Centre and added significantly to its potential drawing power with last year's opening of the South Okanagan Events Centre. Corporations from across Canada see the Valley as a low stress environment — terrific for corporate retreats, sales meetings, conferences and conventions.

Campion Marine found the Okanagan to be an ideal place to hold its annual dealer meetings. Dealers from as far away as Norway, Japan and Australia book their visits to test Campion's



NANCY CAMERON

PORTRAIT BY BRUCE KEMP, OTHER PHOTOS BY LAURIE CARTER



new models on Okanagan Lake at the end of every August.

“It’s our secret weapon,” says Brock Elliott, Champion’s general manager. “If you can think of a better place to hold a meeting, tell me. All our dealers go home talking about the best dealer meetings in the industry and they go with real estate brochures in their hands, they like it that much.”

Sports Tourism

While not yet a prime mover, sport is fast becoming a major factor in attracting tourists. The Winter Olympics, which brought numerous national teams to the Valley for training, gave BC a global profile and a good part of that enhanced reputation reflects on the Okanagan.

Few events draw a concentration of world media like the Olympics. Tourism Kelowna had a rep at the Vancouver Games

for 12 days, promoting the region and arranging familiarization trips to showcase the local product first hand.

But the Olympics aren’t the only game in town. Among the events confirmed for the Valley are the 2012 BC Winter Games in Vernon. In addition, Kelowna is bidding on the 2015 Canada Winter Games along with five other major events.

One tourism-oriented sporting event with an ongoing impact is Vernon’s Funtastic Slo-Pitch Tournament. The first pitch was thrown out in 1985 in an effort to support athletic programs for young people and raise money for a multi-sport athletic complex. In the intervening 25 years Funtastic has put \$1.1 million back into the community.

According to executive director, Jim McEwan, sports tourism is one area where the industry is growing. Teams keep returning to Vernon to have fun and play with other teams that are now considered old friends as well as competitors. Last year a group from New Mexico made the 19-hour journey in a replay of *Trains, Planes and Automobiles*.

Funtastic runs every summer on the July long weekend. The program includes 616 ball games during the four-day tournament and coincides with the Funtastic Music Festival. The organization is now expanding its sphere to include lawn bowling and tennis.

“Our operating budget is a little over half-a-million dollars and from that we put between \$100,000 and \$120,000 >>>

“You now have a demographic that’s much broader and a time period for leisure activities that’s much longer, extending from the spring through fall.”



in the bank after everything is paid,” says Jim. He recently distributed \$25,000 to nine different local sports organizations.

“Forty-five hundred athletes show up. We’re just a little shy of the number of participants in the Olympics. We made a presentation this year called Funtastic vs. the Olympics. Where we had a budget of \$500,000 to \$525,000, their budget was \$2.6 billion. They had 25,000 volunteers and Funtastic had 425. They had 5,500 athletes and we had 4,500...”

Despite this growth in the sports, meeting and convention sectors, the main market for Okanagan tourism product remains leisure vacationers.

Leisure Travel

Wine tourism is a well known and continually expanding story in the Valley, and its cousin — agri-tourism — is also taking off. Joining

pioneers like Kelowna Land and Orchard and Davison Orchards Country Village, are new attractions such as Carmelis Goat Cheese Artisan and Poplar Grove Cheese.

One of the most interesting businesses in the agri/culinary sector is the Valentine Farm Vinegar Works.

Tilling 10 acres of land in Summerland, Kim Stansfield and her husband, John Gordon, came to the conclusion that fruit and vegetable farming was a hard way to make a living. “We had to start thinking outside the box and we learned that both the federal and provincial governments were encouraging small farmers to add value to their produce.”

They began researching different ways to enhance what they were doing without going down the old jam and jelly trail. That’s when they came up with the idea of producing vinegars. Although their first

product came to market in 2004, it wasn’t that easy to turn the idea into a profit. Kim and John found themselves going from winery to winery trying to sell their wares.

At first, the Vinegar Works wasn’t aimed at tourists, then in 2007 they opened a tasting room and things changed. Foodies from Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton began to show up at the door. Eventually, they found tourism brought their customers to them instead of them having to go out to find consumers. Now the company has year-round sales.

“People like to connect with their food and they like to go back home with a story to tell their friends about the vinegar they’re cooking with or serving for dinner.”

Unique elements of the Okanagan environment present still more new faces to the tourism industry. Jo Knight, executive director of Destination Osoyoos says:



PHOTOS BY LAURIE CARTER



“We have one of the best bass fishing lakes in BC and the bird watching at Haynes Point Provincial Park and Vaseux Lake is rated right up there with the national park at Point Pelee in Ontario. Europeans are coming too. They stop to see Canada’s only desert environment as part of their bigger vacations.”

Strategies

Nancy Cameron suggests that creating these new opportunities and revenue streams is the future of tourism. To illustrate, she holds up her hands in the shape of a bell curve. “Where the traditional curve is like this,” she says, arching her fingers into a steep curve indicating a peak in summer visits, “for the past number of years, it is starting to round out.” Her hands flex down into a flatter line.

“So if you look at those new markets—customer groups as growth opportunities for later fall,

winter and early spring—we’re able to bring some balance into the industry... That’s our strategy,” she says.

Like all strategies, this one balances investment against return. Tourism Kelowna spends around \$2.3 million annually and sees a return ratio of about four to one.

Demographics

When the discussion about tourists in the Interior gets going, we often assume the world is beating a path to our doorstep, but nothing could be more off the mark. Fully 80 per cent of the market is made

up of domestic visitors and of that, almost half come from BC.

After the Olympics and the glowing television reports from south of the border, we could be forgiven for picturing the Americans lining up in droves to come north for a visit. Wrong!

A gleeful headline in the March 26, 2010 edition of *The Province* read: Americans Love For B.C. Jumps 11%. But further on you find that 11 per cent more Americans are not necessarily coming to our province, they just have a warmer, fuzzier feeling about us. >>>

“...Okanagan is pretty well recession-proof as long as we have peaches and beaches to sell.”

MICHELLE JEFFERSON

The reality is that only about four per cent of our total visits come from the United States and the strengthening US dollar is no help. It simply serves to make Europe and Asia that much more inexpensive and when you offer an American the choice between a bargain basement sale on Paris or coming to the Okanagan, guess where their money is going.

Global Perspective

At the start of the global economic meltdown there was a lot of angst negatively affecting the industry. Normally cheery tourism leaders questioned when and if the discretionary income of would-be travellers would return to pre-recession levels. However, the actual picture proved not to be so bleak.

Like other people in the industry, Michelle Jefferson, manager of tourism services for Vernon, doesn't regard the recession as a disaster and is positive about the potential of the next five years.

"Taking the Okanagan as a whole, it all looks pretty similar, but there are subtle differences from place-to-place up and down the Valley. Still, everywhere in the Okanagan is pretty well recession-proof as long as we have peaches

and beaches to sell. Because we draw the majority of our visitors from BC and Alberta—the regional market—we're very well positioned. Those folks keep coming."

However, she admits that "when we deal with the international markets it gets a bit touchy. Then we're competing with Australia and Africa and similar exotic destinations."

The City of Vernon recently tabled a situational analysis—a technical report to facilitate planning for tourism marketing at the north end of the Valley—and its figures are current to October 2008.

The early half of that year saw the growth of tourism worldwide (measured by the United Nations World Tourism Organization—UNWTO). But with the collapse of the American mortgage market, tourism virtually ground to a halt and 2009 did not look promising as the recession deepened.

Last year Vernon reported numbers that matched the results logged by the UNWTO showing international travel four per cent below 2008 visits. So the Valley industry was suffering right along with the rest of the world. From all indicators, though, we appear

to have turned the corner in 2010. The UNWTO backs Michelle's optimistic view, predicting a three to four per cent increase in arrivals in Canada this year. And early results for some parts of the Okanagan are far exceeding these hopeful numbers.

Statistics recorded at the Osoyoos Visitor Centre show 2010 first quarter visits by American travellers are up 28 per cent and April alone produced a 33 per cent increase.

But once again, it was the regional Canadian visitors that saw Osoyoos through the worst. "We're now getting second and third generation visitors who came here to enjoy the lake as kids and keep coming back," says Jo Knight. And while most visitors come from BC, there are also snowbirds fleeing the Prairie winters.

Between the traditional peaches and beaches markets and playing to our newly developing strengths, tourism officials are confident that the industry in the Okanagan will continue to flourish and remain healthy despite the vagaries of the world economy. **OL**

“We're now getting second and third generation visitors who came here to enjoy the lake as kids and keep coming back.”



JO KNIGHT

PHOTO BY LAURIE CARTER, PORTRAIT BY BRUCE KEMP



Tourism by the Numbers

A study commissioned by Kelowna Tourism reflecting 2004 data reported 1.2 million visitors to Kelowna that year, of whom one million spent at least one night.

Each overnigher spent an average of \$425 for accommodation, retail, food and beverages, attractions and other items generating \$346 million per year—a figure that has no doubt risen since then.

This translated into 6,900 direct jobs (many of which are seasonal) equating to 5,100 full-time equivalent positions, positioning tourism second only to health-care as an employer in Kelowna.

In 2004 the total wages associated with tourism were \$130 million or \$18,840 per person (using the seasonal figure) or \$25,490 (full time equivalent).

Low wages are one of the elephants in the room when speaking to tourism officials. While the Okanagan has one of the highest cost of living levels in the country (and don't even mention the myth of the sunshine tax—especially this spring), the wages of the frontline tourism worker are among the lowest in the country. Twelve to fourteen dollars an hour is considered a good wage here while a basement apartment can fetch upwards of \$1,000 per month without utilities.

Another elephant is the fact that \$91 million was generated in tax revenues by tourism in 2004. But when that pie was carved up, the Feds share was 62 per cent and the province snatched 33 per cent while Kelowna's share was a comparatively paltry six per cent or \$5 million.



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by Karin Wilson

LOST & FOUND:

The Quest for Seniors' Mental Health

It's the silent elephant in the room for many seniors and their families. Misunderstanding and stigma too often prevent people from acknowledging mental health problems and accessing available resources. The fear is so pervasive that seniors interviewed for this story asked that their true identities not be revealed



CHRISTINE DOESN'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF, AND APPARENTLY THAT INCLUDES A REPORTER ARRIVING ON HER FRONT DOORSTEP 45-MINUTES EARLY WHILE HER HAIR IS STILL IN CURLERS.

At age 85, she simply welcomes me in to the expansive home she's lived in for the last 15 years. Within minutes we're nattering about everything from the state of the British government to the implications of the HST. Christine's eyes sparkle throughout and she laughs with ease. On a few occasions I have to repeat myself, but I can tell I probably spoke too quietly for anyone to hear, let alone a lively woman without a hearing aid. When her son Fred and daughter-in-law Linda arrive, we get down to business, moving to the table with our cups of tea.

At this point her story unfolds.

Four years ago no one would have predicted Christine could ever have an intelligent conversation again. Her doctors had given her an intellectual death sentence—vascular dementia—the second most common form of dementia after Alzheimer's. Her family was told she would live with it for the rest of her days, and those days were numbered in the dozens.

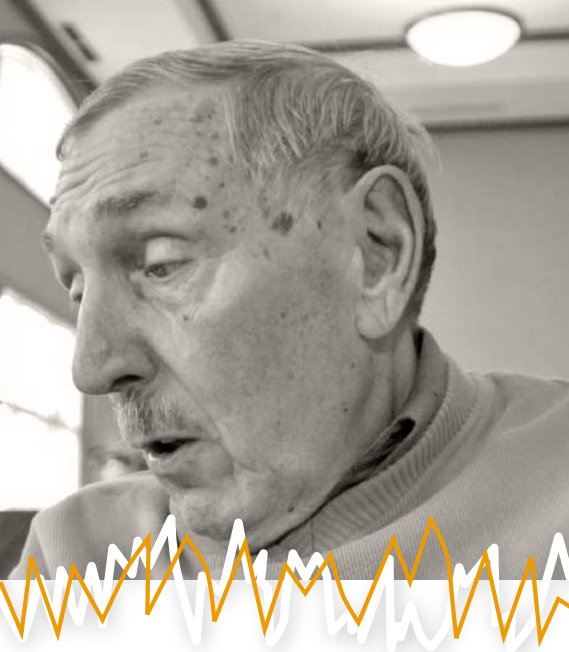
Her two sons, both living in Ontario, prepared themselves for the worst. They had already lost their father and now their mother was moving into the same care home in the South Okanagan. Her petite five-foot-three frame had dwindled to 85-pounds. She barely ate, barely spoke and when she did her talk was filled with dread.

"She wasn't eating because she thought she didn't have enough money. At one point my brother had to take in a water bottle with his name on it because she wouldn't drink the water at the care home. She was afraid she had to pay for it," Fred says, picking up the story at a stage where Christine's memory fails her, "luckily" she laughs.

Once in the home, a psychiatric nurse who knew Christine from the days when she was caring for her husband, pulled Fred's brother, Bob, aside and suggested

DR. ANNA WISNIEWSKA, A GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRIST, WORKS CLOSELY WITH PAM REES, A TEAM LEADER IN THE COMMUNITY SENIORS HEALTH CARE PROGRAM RUN BY INTERIOR HEALTH





he have her reassessed. He wasn't convinced she had dementia at all.

It took tremendous lobbying on Bob's part to get this accomplished, but when Christine finally saw a geriatric psychiatrist in Kelowna — one of only three such specialists in the Okanagan — the nurse's suspicions were confirmed. Christine didn't have dementia — she was severely clinically depressed.

What appeared on the surface to be signs of dementia, turned out to be psychotic depression — a type of depression that more commonly afflicts seniors. For Christine, the initial trigger was the death of her husband. News that her son Bob would soon be returning to Ontario tipped her over the edge. All the pressure of the financial realities, the loneliness, everything came tumbling down at break-neck speed. Within 24-hours Christine, who never took so much as an aspirin, was on the road to a depression that would kill.

With no time to wait for antidepressants to kick in, the

treatment was drastic but effective — electroconvulsive therapy, otherwise known as ECT.

"I vaguely remember being in the (psychiatric) hospital at KGH. I remember them taking me for treatment and one nurse there was really very good and as things went along I would help her with the cart. I remember being given intravenous and being told to breathe in and breathe out, and that's about it."

Christine received ECT three times a week, for literally a split-second. The first round of treatments took place over two weeks while she stayed at the hospital. Christine responded quickly and was soon well enough to move out of the care facility and back home. By this time, Fred and Linda had moved from Ontario. They stayed with her and drove her to KGH, leaving home at 5 a.m. for the weekly treatments that continued to taper off over the next two years.

The ECTs wiped out Christine's short term memory, but gave her back her life. Today she's on antidepressants

and sees her psychiatrist for check-ups every six months.

"The treatment was definitely worthwhile and I'm very thankful to my doctor and my family for looking after me," she says with absolute conviction. "I definitely think it was because of my psychiatrist that I'm as well as I am."

Christine's case may seem unusual, but there are indications it may be far more common than people realize.

In its report to the Senate's Standing Committee on seniors mental health and mental illness, the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry and Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health stated: "only 11 per cent of depressed patients in primary care received adequate antidepressant treatment, while 34 per cent received inadequate treatment and 55 per cent received no treatment."

In addition, while this wasn't an issue for Christine, the ongoing stigma of mental illness also plays a complex role in the recognition of seniors' mental health. >>>

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“(Seniors) may deny having mental health problems or refuse treatment from mental health care providers. Family members may not want to acknowledge mental health problems in their parents, which may further prevent access to available resources. For example, depression may be seen as a natural consequence of aging, loss and physical illness, and may not be diagnosed or treated.”

Dr. Anna Wisniewska, a geriatric psychiatrist who conducts assessments with severely mentally ill seniors through Interior Health's Community Seniors Mental Health Program, says depression presents a problem among seniors because some of its symptoms mimic those of dementia.

Fortunately, once caught, there are now so many options available that it can easily be treated. And for Wisniewska treatments like ECT are the “gold standard.” At any given time, as many as five seniors are receiving ECT treatment at Kelowna General Hospital.

“It's a god send of treatment. If people are unable to tolerate medications or they're not responding or they can't wait for it to work, it's a god send of a treatment. Depression can kill. It's a deadly disease.”

Wisniewska is part of the 11-member community health team that works with between 250 and 280 seniors in the Central Okanagan who have severe mental health conditions ranging



AS PRESIDENT OF THE INTERIOR ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT SOCIETY, LARUE HAYES WORKS CLOSELY WITH AFFECTED SENIORS, CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

(FACING PAGE) JOYCE HESKETH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERIOR ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT SOCIETY, PLAYS AN ADMINISTRATIVE AS WELL AS HANDS ON ROLE

from depression to schizophrenia. Only 20 per cent of their clients suffer from dementia.

“What I see is tremendous hope. We can't always fix every problem, but I see tremendous hope as long as we can get to them. There is so much we can offer to make people's lives better, to make that last stage of their life more important. The difficult part is identifying the people who are vulnerable.”

DEMENTIA AND DENIAL

Far more common among seniors are the illnesses connected with dementia — of which Alzheimer's is the most common.

There continues to be considerable debate, even among professionals, as to whether dementia and Alzheimer's should be termed



“FAMILY MEMBERS MAY NOT WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THEIR PARENTS, WHICH MAY FURTHER PREVENT ACCESS TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES.”

PHOTO BY LYDIA ROSS. (FACING PAGE) PHOTO BY DANIEL HAYDUK

a mental illness or not. Many care providers prefer to think of dementia as a "journey" rather than a disease. A lot of this hinges on the fact that so far, unlike depression, dementia can't be cured — only staved off. But there is no question that it affects the mind and the greatest risk of succumbing to some form of dementia is increasing age. Provided we live long enough, it could well be a fact of life, if not a healthy "natural" one.

Patients with dementia can access various forms of assistance, including psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers. But the condition also calls for multi-dimensional support — a sort of 360-degree approach that also takes in caregivers.

The Interior Alzheimer's Support Society, which provides counselling and education for both patients and caregivers, proved to be invaluable to Sue when she realized her 91-year-old mother was starting to fail.

Sue's mother was a fiercely independent woman who was widowed nearly 20 years ago. The first sign something was amiss was that she stopped cooking for herself, then stopped buying groceries and finally let her personal hygiene go. Sue had to do something, so she moved her mom to BC and set up a home for her. She and her sister took turns spending the night for a couple of months while their mom settled in.

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Mental Health STATISTICS

- Currently, 20 per cent of those aged 65 and older are living with a mental illness.
- Two to four per cent of seniors suffer from serious clinical depression. The figure rises to 10-15 per cent when all seniors with depressive symptoms are included.
- Estimated by 2021 there will be one million Canadian seniors with depressive symptoms.
- Incidence of depression in seniors in long-term care settings is three to four times higher than the general population.
- Some 15-25 per cent of nursing home residents have symptoms of major depression and another 25 per cent have lesser symptoms.
- Prevalence of psychosis in nursing home residents ranges from 12-21 per cent depending on how psychotic symptoms are measured. Psychotic symptoms among seniors are frequently associated with dementia or delirium and a number of physical conditions can also give rise to psychotic symptoms.
- The incidence of suicide among men age 80 and over is the highest of all age groups.
- More than 364,000 Canadians over age 65 have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Dementia affects approximately eight per cent of all people aged 65 and over, and almost 35 per cent of those over age 85.
- By 2031, estimates are that more than 750,000 Canadians will have Alzheimer's disease and other related dementia.

SOURCES: Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health, The Canadian Academy Of Geriatric Psychiatry and Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health's submission to the Senate's Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology—Mental Health and Mental Illness Seniors Round Table.

**“ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL.
YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT PERSON-CENTRED CARE.”**



A key part of the family plan was to get mom interacting and that's when she started going to one of the three programs provided by the Interior Alzheimer's Support Society.

“My mother loved it and she still goes,” says Sue. “She has to have that interaction. An hour later, she might not remember, but she needs that interaction or stimulation—maybe it helps to ensure she doesn't regress. And it helps with her mood. On the days when she's not doing something, I can see the difference.”

But the challenging issue for the support society is the nature of the disease itself, which doesn't appear overnight. It's a continuum. Some patients may be living in an assisted living facility and slowly their mental condition is deteriorating. Since facilities aren't set up for personal one-on-one care, as their condition deteriorates, they may not recall that their support group is scheduled for Tuesday at noon.

Donna Dufort, who organizes programs at three different locations throughout the Central Okanagan, is facing that hurdle head on. A cadre of elderly volunteers shows up religiously, but the number of clients seeking help is dwindling away.

This particular Wednesday, only Rosa appears. An elderly gentleman who was part of the group now requires too much physical care to take part and Rosa might have even missed the session if Donna hadn't gone to her room to get her. Rosa doesn't remember what happened last week. She needs to be prompted to recall who won the dart game 15-minutes

UBC-OKANAGAN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR COLIN REID IS WORKING WITH INTERIOR HEALTH TO IMPROVE THE PROTOCOL FOR MOVING PATIENTS WITH DEMENTIA FROM ONE FACILITY TO ANOTHER

PHOTO BY DANIEL HAYDUK

ago. But she's relaxed and doesn't flinch at being reminded. Not like Isobel at one of the society's other programs. In the early stages of Alzheimer's, she flushes, tears brimming in her eyes, at the mere realization that she's forgotten something. Getting used to not remembering is the hardest part.

Working with seniors and their mental health issues is a complex web. Even transferring a patient with dementia from one facility to the next increases their risk of death. Colin Reid UBC Okanagan assistant professor and research affiliate at the University of Victoria's Centre on Aging is conducting work with Interior Health to improve the protocol for hospital transfers of elderly patients with dementia. It includes the proviso that communication must include not only the patient and staff, but caregivers every step of the way.

Joyce Hesketh, executive director of the Interior Alzheimer's Support Society, says no matter which way you turn, working with seniors not only requires, but demands a personal approach. It's what seniors both need and deserve.

“One size doesn't fit all. You have to look at person-centred care. You have to take the time and ask them what they want, what works for them. Communication is so central. It's a journey, but it's fraught with obstacles along the way.” **OL**



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By Michael Botner

Gamay is the grape of Beaujolais (in the southern reaches of Burgundy). Officially

Gamay Noir à Jus Blanc, the early flowering and ripening grape flourishes in cooler areas like the Loire Valley and in Canada. Partly because it is naturally low in tannin, Gamay's calling card is its vivid expression of fruit and spice. To maximize the grape's inherent fruitiness and juiciness, most producers use carbonic maceration fermentation in which bunches of uncrushed grapes are placed whole inside closed tanks.

There are distinctly different styles of Beaujolais or Gamay. Beaujolais Nouveau, which originated over a century ago when casks of just made wine — light, fresh and grapey — were shipped by paddleboat to the bars and bistros of Lyon, is meant to be gulped as a harvest celebration. As it is now released around the world on the third Thursday of November, there is a risk of over manipulation in the rush to market, leading to wine that tastes something like purple Popsicles or Jell-O. Some traditional growers wait for grapes to fully ripen, keep yields below the amount allowed, do not capitalize (adding sugar to grape to raise alcohol), lightly filter and hold the wine for several months before releasing as an estate wine. Better quality wines like St.-Amour, Moulin-à-Vent and Fleurie are produced in Beaujolais-Villages and from Beaujolais Crus.

In British Columbia, Gamay represents about three per cent of all red grapes planted and is often used in blends. But fine wines comparable to Villages and Cru are made in the Okanagan by such wineries as Sandhill, Blue Mountain and Gray Monk.



BEAUJOLAIS'S GAMAY FINDS VALLEY HOME

Celebrated as Beaujolais Nouveau, Villages and Crus wines, Gamay now features in Okanagan blends and varietals

The Reviews

Add exuberance to your summer get-togethers with a wine made from the Gamay grape, pink or red, blended or single varietal. The five-star rating system stresses value for price.



St. Hubertus Frizzanté Rosé 2009

Okanagan Valley, Kelowna ★★ ★ 1/2 (\$14.99)

Celebrate summer with this soft, smooth charmer, composed of 70 per cent Gamay and 30 per cent Pinot Noir. Pinkish red brilliance and a gentle spritz in the glass. Fresh, lively palate exhibits juicy strawberry, pink grapefruit and cranberry with a note of spice. Serve chilled on the patio with grilled sausages, hamburgers and fish.

Where to get it: St. Hubertus Estate Winery, VQA and private wine stores.



Robin Ridge Gamay 2007

Similkameen Valley, Keremeos ★★ ★ ★ (\$19.90)

Think great Canadian barbecue to partner this tasty, richly-flavoured Gamay. The potent bouquet is followed by flavours of plum, black cherry, black pepper, licorice and toasty oak. The finish nicely balances a note of softness with a hint of bitter almond. Serve at room temperature.

Where to get it: Robin Ridge Winery and select LRS stores.



Desert Hills Gamay 2009

Okanagan Valley, Oliver ★★ ★ ★ (\$19.90)

Dynamite Gamay features inviting purply hue and fragrances of flowers, dark berries, earth, pepper, fresh bread. Bursting with sweet cherry/raspberry fruit, smooth palate balances vivid fruit, spice and acidity. Serve slightly chilled with turkey, ham, ratatouille and spicy dishes.

Where to get it: Desert Hills Estate Winery, VQA and some LRS stores.

the profile



WALTER HUBER

Owner/winemaker,
Deep Creek Wine Estate and
Hainle Vineyards Estate Winery

When Walter Huber arrived at the Canadian border in 1980, the 21-year-old had a briefcase full of cash. Sent by his family to buy a hunting and fishing lodge in Ontario, he was turned away. Returning to Germany, he did his homework and succeeded in entering Canada later that year. While the lodge was his focus, wine held a special place in his heart. "As a boy, I spent summer vacations at my uncle's winery in Austria, where I learned traditional winemaking methods," he says. When he visited the Okanagan in 1991, he purchased a 20-acre orchard in Peachland, named it Deep Creek Wine Estate and in 2000 started planting vines with a plan to build a winery. When the Hainle family put their estate winery up for sale, Walter snapped up the icon. Busy with the lodge, he hired others to run the Okanagan operation, but in 2009 he moved to the Valley and now devotes full attention to the wine business. One of the Okanagan's best-kept secrets is Deep Creek Zweigelt. The 2004 vintage took Best in Class and Best in Show at the 2007 LA International Wine & Spirits Competition and was served at the Academy Awards dinner. Only a few bottles remain in the winery's vintage library. Walter is having the time of his life making an array of organic wines under the Deep Creek and Hainle labels.

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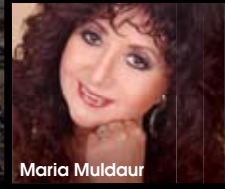
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by Ted Morrison

“Do you know anything about sailing?” asked my friend Christine, “I built a sailboat, a Puddle Duck Racer. I’m in a race next weekend, but I can’t sail.”

“You built a boat?” It was as though I’d caught the cat building a siege engine.

“Don’t make that noise; I’m proud of it.”

Soon I was wallowing around Okanagan Lake with Christine, bailing with my hat. We came in second. And somewhere out there I fell in love with Puddle Duck Racers. When Christine moved away, I adopted her boat.

The Puddle Duck Racer (PDR) philosophy is that sailing is for everyone. The boats measure about four feet by eight, are built of plywood, and have sails made of tarp. They’re easy and cheap to build, easy to handle even for novices and fuel is free. Summerland’s PDR fleet is the third-largest in the world, behind Texas and the nation of Australia.

My boat needed work, so I went to the Summerland Builder’s Mart Puddle Duck >>>



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Hatch. Gord Seiter, who founded it, explains the concept:

"It's about many hands making light work. Boats get built faster, people don't make as many mistakes and they have someone experienced to help them out."

The Hatch brings people together to build boats. For about \$300, each team or individual gets a complete PDR kit. In fact, Hatch materials are donated by Builder's Mart, and proceeds go to Agur Lake Camp for special needs children. Ten teams built boats in 2006, but by 2009 there was only one. Seiter says that was the last organized Hatch unless interest revives.

Puddle Duck owners often attend to spruce up their boats. I arrive at the Summerland Curling Club on Friday afternoon, with the boat atop my Ford Focus, on the roof rack. Another benefit of a PDR: no trailer required. Current president Jane Turnell, carries her boat in the rear of her mini-van. I need help to unload, but Puddle Duckers help each other out. Gord and I carry my boat, Christine, inside.

There are three other people there, with two boats and a pile of plywood: Larry Harder and Richard Wachal are building a boat. Jane Turnell has brought Granny's Goal, and Gord is fixing up Goliath, the grand old man of the fleet.

Gord and I discuss a new boat. Christine is four, just one year younger than Goliath. Her seams have loosened and her mast is starting to warp.

"Well," he says, "you could build a new one and give her a Viking funeral." Looking at my face he adds: "But a lick of paint and glue'd probably get you through the season."

As we work, Blue Lightning (Larry and Richard have decided on a Winnipeg Blue Bombers theme) takes shape. Gord provides expertise and a steady hand. Pilot holes are drilled and boards assembled. Soon Blue Lightning has "gone 3D"—meaning that the sides have been attached to the bottom, mak-



LARRY HARDER AND RICHARD WACHAL DEMONSTRATE HOW EASY IT IS TO TRANSPORT THEIR PUDDLE DUCK RACER, BLUE LIGHTNING, ON A ROOFTOP CARRIER



GORD SEITER MAKES A LAST MINUTE REPAIR TO GOLIATH

ing her eligible to be registered as hull number 313. She's not finished though: A Puddle Duck must have enough enclosed air boxes built in to keep afloat if it capsizes.

Blue Lightning, Granny's Goal and Christine all need sails too. The sail material is blue plastic tarpaulins and duct tape. Blue Lightning gets a conservative 10 square feet or so. I'm more ambitious (some might say crazy)—I end up with about 90 square feet. That's a lot of sail on a Puddle Duck.

"There was never a PD Racer built without at least one good leak," says Gord.

For older boats, it's time to see whether glued joints have shrunk, screws pulled loose, or squirrels have nibbled at lines and sails. For new boats, it's the final test.

Hull #313, Blue Lightning, brave in her new paint, goes into the water for the first time at Sun-Oka beach. She turns out to have only a single leak through the seam along her bottom. Gord counsels Larry and Richard on how to repair the leak and we head home.

The first race of the season takes place two weeks later at Peach Orchard Beach. Standing on the shoreline, I look around and realize how truly inclusive Puddle Ducks are. Ages span the decades from six to past 60. Sailing ability ranges from "old salts" like Gord to Jane—who despite being president claims to be "the worst sailor in the fleet."

It's a placid, almost windless day, interspersed with strong gusts and white caps. The gusts can make sailing challenging. In a boat as small as a Puddle Duck, >>>

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it's easy to lose control or be dumped by a very strong wind.

"You could get out there and sit for ages waiting for a wind, couldn't you?" says Mandy Smith.

"Or get blown clean over," responds her husband Gary. The pair are ably assisted by their two children in a pair of Puddle Ducks, Sink-a-Moose and Lincoln Imp. Before we go out, we hold a captains' meeting to determine the course.

I've got my safety gear, plus a bottle of water and a granola bar. I put my valuables in a zip-lock bag, attached to a float. That way if I tip over my wallet and keys don't wind up in Ogopogo's lost-and-found. All sailors are wearing oversized hats and sunscreen. An open boat is no place to sit for hours on a cloudless day without protection. The air smells of coconut as we raise masts and attach rudders.

Then we put out the boats. Within 15 minutes it becomes apparent that the winds aren't favourable to the chosen racecourse. So we vote to change it. Puddle Duckers are easygoing like that.

One hand on the tiller, one on the sail rope I bob, nearly motionless, about 100 metres from shore. Abruptly my mighty sail fills with a light breeze and I start to scud along nicely. I pass Sink-a-Moose, whose crew have resorted to paddling. I'm looking to overtake Lincoln Imp, too.

But then I throw the tiller hard over and hear a sad, wet crunch. My rudder, held to the boat by short, rusty, wood screws, falls off. Unable to steer, propelled by my oversize sail, I wobble out toward the middle of the lake before I can lash a plastic oar to the remains of the tiller. Limping in to shore, I think hard about the changes I'll have to make to the rudder design.

Later, I'm astounded to find that I've been given second place, even though I thought I was out of the running or disqualified. Nobody protests. Puddle Ducking is for fun. **OL**

TIPS

- It's easy to build a PDR. Basic plans are available free on the Internet. But it really helps to have an experienced Puddle Duck builder handy. If you're building a PDR in the Okanagan, email Gord Seiter at gordon@seiter.ca for expert advice.
- If you feel you want to build your own boat but aren't quite sure, you can usually take a test ride. Contact Gord or just turn up at a race. Race days and locations are listed at: www.seiter.ca

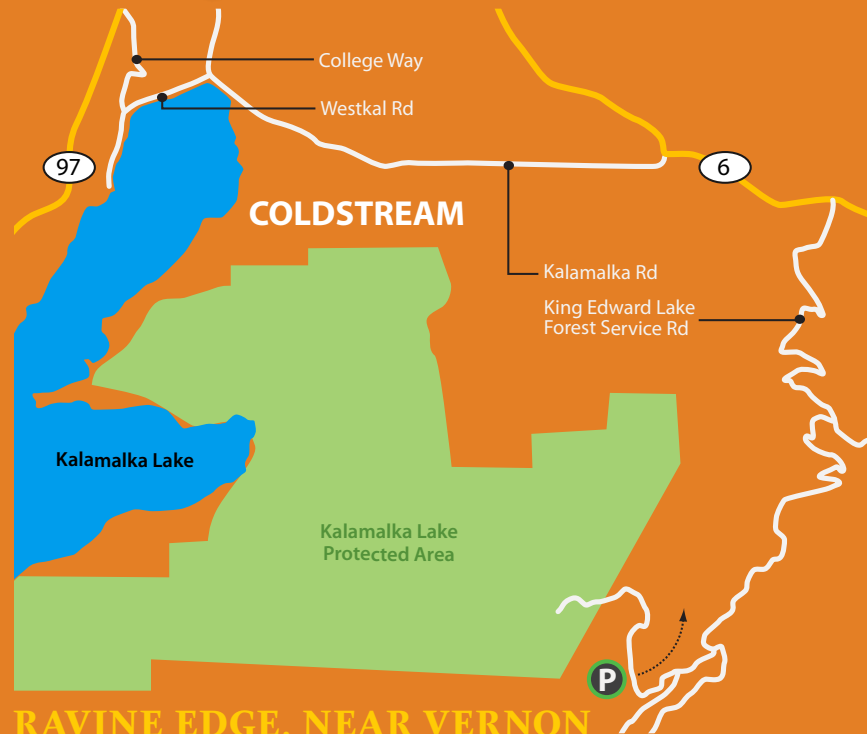
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Raw materials vary in cost, but a full kit is available for about \$300 through the Summerland fleet. It's easy to learn to sail a PDR. But you should have help until you have the skills and confidence to go solo. Sailing lessons are available through many organizations, including the South Okanagan Sailing Association (SOSA): www.sosailing.ca. Wear a personal flotation device and follow all safe boating practices.

IF YOU GO...


With no safety boat on hand for Puddle Duck races, you should know how to right a capsized boat and be prepared to row back to shore if the wind dies. Bring water, a snack, sunscreen and a hat. You can burn in minutes on the water. If you're looking for bloodthirsty competition, you won't find it here. Expect to help other people move and rig their boats and to stick around until the last racer is out of the water.

Okanagan Trail



RAVINE EDGE, NEAR VERNON

Instead of climbing up for a view, this easy (but lengthy) eight kilometre loop will have you perched on a rim overlooking Kalamalka Lake, Vernon and the Coldstream Valley. From Vernon, drive east on Highway 6, over the railway tracks and past Coldstream Ranch to King Edward Lake forest service road. Turn right. An active route, watch for logging trucks, ATVs and dirt bikes. Continue on this well maintained gravel road keeping right at about the four and eight kilometre junctions. Around the nine-kilometre mark turn right and proceed over a small creek (trailhead) and park in the clearing down the road. The trail, which is marked and maintained by the Vernon Outdoors Club, follows a ravine and starts with views of Coldstream Valley and Silver Star Mountain to the north. At the clear-cut take the right fork down the embankment and continue along the edge. Yes, you're going to have to climb later, but the views are worth the effort. In spring, wildflower addicts will want to keep a watch out for shooting star, Indian paintbrush, blue clematis, fairy slipper orchid and even chocolate lily. The trail leads to a lovely rest spot overlooking Kalamalka Lake and beyond — so don't forget your camera. You'll want to fuel up here because further along the trail becomes steep. Once you hit the old logging road you have a choice. Make a scenic detour (two rights) to the old hang-glider take-off ramp or turn left and keep an eye out for the mountain bike trail on your right, which will lead you back to the clear-cut and the trailhead. Allow four hours for this one. Hiking boots a must. Poles will come in handy. —Karen Slivar



FAVOURITE SAYING: "DO NOT LET THEM TAME YOU." IF I MAKE A MISTAKE RATHER THAN BEAT MYSELF UP I CORRECT AND CONTINUE. I BELIEVE THE WAY WE DO ANYTHING IS THE WAY WE DO EVERYTHING.

CURRENT READ: I LOVE PERSONAL GROWTH BOOKS. ANYTHING BY WAYNE DYER.

MOST ADMIRER: GHANDI. MOTHER THERESA. MARTIN LUTHER KING. ALBERT EINSTEIN. BUDDA. I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT FOR OPRAH, MY GODMOTHER AND MY AUNTIE PAULINE. MY MOTHER IS ALSO AN AMAZING AND WONDERFUL WOMAN.

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8:00 am

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PHOTO BY TERRY ROSS

PUPPETEER WITH A PURPOSE

Kids and adults dealing with a range of tough life issues find help and understanding when Cindy Bertrand takes centre stage with a cast of savvy puppet characters and the life experience to back them up

by Maureen McEwan

I believe the way we do anything is the way we do everything,” says Cindy Bertrand, creator of Puppets on Purpose. Cindy is a certified therapist and a workshop facilitator. She’s a network marketer, an author, an actor and a believer. Entrepreneurial by instinct and a healer by nature, she is also the life behind her professional puppet company.

“I’ve always wanted to know what my life’s purpose is, ever since I was a little girl,” says Cindy. Now at age 47, she knows exactly. She also has a clear perspective on where she’s been and in her mind that’s what’s made her successful.

“The more authentic I am about my own journey, the more my audience can relate,” she says. “I want to help people heal and I use my puppets to take down their defences.”

Cindy’s own journey to personal healing has been filled with unexpected twists and turns. After living a life no different than many of those

sitting in her audience, she’s now comfortable sharing her past. She believes her stories and experiences can help others take the same journey to self healing.

“The reason I’m good at what I do is because I understand abuse, addiction and sorrow—I really do. But all of my struggles have made me useful to humanity.”

With the help of her puppets, Angela, Grandpa, Derrick, Sara, Eric and Damien, and a supporting cast of 30 animal characters, Cindy works with groups of children and adults who are dealing with a variety of issues.

“The purpose of the puppets is to help people see the things that are in their way so they can accept them as a teacher or a stepping stone instead of an obstacle,” says Cindy. “In a way, all their issues are the same—I help people see them, name them, feel them and heal them.”

She’s worked with schools, churches, Sparks and Brownie groups, transition houses, seniors programs, even direct marketers. She also works with the Crossroads Treatment Centre in Kelowna, specifically with people in the Men’s and Women’s Residential Treatment Centres who are dealing with various forms of addiction, including cocaine and alcohol, gambling, shopping and Internet use.

“Cindy has a very powerful presence,” says James Lalonde, an interim program manager at Crossroads. “She speaks from a lot of experience and from her heart and people open up to that. Some even say it’s the most powerful experience they’ve had.”

When Cindy gives a two-hour presentation at Crossroads, she uses her puppets along with a combination of new decision therapy and reality therapy. Through various mental exercises, >>>

11:00 am

ATTEND VERNON WOMEN IN BUSINESS MEETING OR SPEND TIME NETWORKING TO BUILD DIRECT MARKETING BUSINESS. MAY DO SOME COACHING OR PHONE CALLS

3:00 pm

GO FOR A FIVE-KILOMETRE RUN OR HIKE AND CELEBRATE GOOD HEALTH. THANK GOD FOR THE BLESSINGS AND THE BEAUTY OF THE FOREST

5:00 pm

EAT A HEALTHY DINNER, MOSTLY VEGETARIAN CUISINE, AND PREPARE TO WIND DOWN THE DAY. TOUCH BASE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS AFTER DINNER

8:00 pm

WRITE FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES THEN REFLECT ON THE DAY. ASK QUESTIONS LIKE, “HOW DID I USE MY TIME TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE TODAY?” AFTER REFLECTION, SPEND TIME MEDITATING BEFORE BED

TIME TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

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-beatles

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- Chef Rod Butters and Audrey Surrao

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Cindy encourages her audience to open up and focus on what's causing their problems and pain.

"I'll always ask everyone, 'How many of you ever wonder why you can't get your act together?' All of their hands shoot up," she says. "So then I need them to focus on why, to pinpoint their problems and release them. To think about whom they would be and how would they be different if they didn't have these issues. Then they need to ask themselves these questions: How can I heal today? How can I be the best person I can be today? The quality of your life depends on the questions you ask."

Cindy knows asking questions can make for a positive learning experience. Just ask any of the 700 elementary students she spoke to during Poverty and Homelessness Action Week in 2008. Sponsored by the Kelowna Community Food Bank, Cindy created a puppet show that dealt with poverty and asked the kids what they thought about it and what they could do to help.

"What could have been a very scary topic wasn't at all. Instead it was entertaining, excellent and informative," says Lenetta Thordarson, the Foodbank's associate executive director.

"I saw the show and was in awe—even some of the teachers were moved to tears. The kids were inspired and they learned a lot, and it got them thinking about what they could do to make a difference."

Making a difference is exactly the goal Cindy is aiming for. It's the reason she's writing a book, *Twelve Pennies*, which she hopes will inspire people to use the challenges and obstacles they face as stepping stones to a better life.

It's also the reason she believes in putting a positive spin on whatever life throws her way.

"The biggest shift that happened for me was when I gave myself permission to succeed," says Cindy. "Success is about liking who you are—and when you do, you'll live a satisfied life." **OL**

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Laurie Carter takes a break from the grape at the Okanagan Summer Wine Fest. Join her for a hike through wildflower and berry country on the slopes of Silver Star Mountain.

by Patti Shales Lefkos

ALL BY MYSELF

Rambling recluse retreats to solitude

Coffee houses are sprouting up everywhere, from Tim's to Starbucks to bean to whatever. And it's a good thing. An increasing number of students and seniors, realtors and reporters flock to these cheery, congested venues to study or conduct business. Armed with cell phones, iPods, laptops, BlackBerrys and eBooks they settle in droves coaxing one latte to last a lifetime.

I don't want to cause a stir but working in chaos leaves me as cold as a stale decaf double-double. Still, thinking there must be something to it, I strive to keep an open mind.

So one Saturday afternoon, along with seven members of my writing workshop class from Vernon's Gallery Vertigo, I find myself in a cozy Main Street coffee shop. We have dutifully trooped along to experience writing in this java rich milieu.

Rock music pumps out at a barely tolerable level as we gather, shoulder to shoulder, on mismatched, rickety chairs around scarred wooden tables. Mugs and notebooks define personal space. Our instructor, Vernon writer Karen Meyer, hands out assignments. We are hard at it—or appear to be.

Snippets of conversation drift by, mostly annoyingly unintelligible, frustrating me, a self-confessed nosy observer of human nature. Comments from the alarming—“She left him? Why? What a shock?”—to the banal—“Is that steamed milk for here?”—fade hopelessly into the backdrop of grinding beans. Never having been adept at eavesdropping, most of the juicy bits are filtered by my mocha-induced jitters.

The street door opens and closes constantly. Pedestrians stream by the foggy plate glass window. The lineup lengthens and wanes. Group members sip and turn notebook pages. Trying to write in these surroundings could cause me to grind my teeth and foam at the mouth.

I sneak a peak at my classmates who appear engaged in the task at hand, heads down, pens furiously scribing

thoughts no doubt far more brilliant than my own.

After a childhood in a vociferous family of five followed by 36 years at the front of a classroom of enthusiastic elementary students and a stint as principal of several overcrowded Vancouver inner city schools, you'd think the talent of blocking out the world would rank, by necessity, high in my skill set. But no. Fascination with the idiosyncrasies of the people around me is my weakness.

Which is why a solitary writing space suits me just fine. From my desk in our Silver Star Mountain home I revel in solitude, disturbed only by electric blue Steller's Jay feathers flashing to the nut feeder.

Don't get me wrong. I appreciate a well-run barista haven, buzzing with human interaction. My friends would tell you I have a soft spot for all things caffeine. But I'm through with multi-tasking and unlikely to learn to concentrate in confusion any time soon. This final workshop exercise of the day has cemented my passion to create in seclusion. Save the coffee shop forays for no holds barred people watching. Been there, done that. Call me a hermit. For serious writing, I'm off to the woods. **OL**



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