# ONE THOUSAND TREES



**JUNE 2019** 

#### **ONE THOUSAND TREES**

## FACILITATING WELLNESS THROUGH CONNECTION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

## PUBLISHER Lisa Browning

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS
Emily Brant, Cheron Kovacs, Andrea Lines-Botell, Christine Nightingale,
Kayleigh Radatus, Maureen Malone, Arlene Spencer, Sandra Wilson

One Thousand Trees is published monthly. Submissions for Feature Articles (based on the monthly theme) or Regular Departments are due on the 25th 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, 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.

NEW: Because of difficulties with some articles sent in the body of emails, we are no longer accepting submissions in this format. Please sent a word doc attachment.

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# ONE THOUSAND TREES JUNE 2019 THE WISDOM OF AGE

#### **FEATURE ARTICLES:**

LIFE'S A STRETCH by Sandy Bassie 1 For beautiful eyes,
look for the good in others;
for beautiful lips,
speak only words of kindness,
and for poise,
walk with the knowledge
that you are never alone.

– Audrey Hepburn

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Cover Photograph by Sandra Wilson www.quiteacharacter.ca

#### This Month's Contributors



**Sandy Bassie** *Life's a Stretch* 

Sandy is an artist, a poet, and a dreamer. She is a stubborn advocate for those she loves. Fierce, yet tender. She holds to this: it is never too late to learn or change. The things we believe

about ourselves drive our lives and choices. Choose to believe the good and those will be places we soar.



Emily Brant
Essentially Emm

Emily is a holistic health enthusiast who has overcome various health challenges herself and realized the power of nature's tools like whole foods and essential oils to assist in

healing. Emily is on a mission to share her unique story and gifts in hopes that it'll help inspire and motivate anyone who might be up against any challenges, selfdoubt or difficult times.



Cheron Kovacs Self-Love is Just a Heartbeat Away

Cheron was born and raised in Zimbabwe, Africa. She is the oldest of 7 children. She is married with three beautiful daughters aged 21, 5 and 4. Cheron came to Canada in 2001 with

her oldest daughter. Her purpose in this life is to humbly serve others through love and encouragement, by sharing her story, so others can learn to love themselves for who they really are, and so that they can pass their blessings onto others.



Andrea Lines-Botell Spice, Splatters and Soul

Andrea offers gentle support to others through her coaching company, Mandalia House of Healing. Many modalities are available including art,

mindfulness techniques and supportive tools for change. With a vast training background in conflict, crisis and mindfulness, Andrea's passion is to help others find their own solutions for inner peace and betterment. For more information visit www.mandaliahouse.com.



**Diane Lyndon**A Mother To Celebrate

Diane is a graduate of the school of life. She has studied a variety of healing modalities including reflexology, therapeutic touch 1 & 2, Access Consciousness: the bars, the F.I.X. code

for relief of anxiety, as well as floral design and interior redesign. She has been a reflexology practitioner for 27 years. She is ordained and can officiate weddings in Ontario. She has been a photojournalist and published poet for many years as well. But her favourite job ever is as grandmother!



Kayleigh Radatus
The Music of Life

Kayleigh is a Certified Life Coach & Certified Level 2 Reiki Practitioner, helping you feel the music of every day. She uses intuitive Spirit guided readings, Groovy Reiki, and personal

development workshops to help her clients remember what life on Earth is for, and create a life that feels as awesome as their favourite playlist. Learn more by visiting her online at www.ThisGroovyLife.ca, and on facebook at www.facebook.com/ThisGroovyLife.



David Rankine
The Story Behind the Story:
Warrior's Tale

Through his original music, art, writing and teaching, David explores the nature of creativity and its place in healing, and in the development of

conscious-ness 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.



#### Arlene Spencer Words I Couldn't Say

Arlene is a wife, mother of three grown boys, and a special education educator who has a passion for life, an abundance of energy and a need to be heard because at the end of

the day everyone has "Words They Couldn't Say." You can reach Arlene by email, at Arlenewics@gmail.com.



Madison Veldt Tears

Madison is 12 years old, and is in Grade 6. She lives with her mother and loveable cat, and in her spare time she enjoys writing, reading, playing video games, and watching anime. She really

likes the guitar, ukulele and piano since they are all the instruments she is learning, and they just sound really nice! Poetry has always been a great way for Madison to put her emotions into words, rather then having to use a diary or journal!



**Clay Williams** *Ultra Monarch - Update* 

Clay is a 58 year old Manitoba-born father of two living in Elmira Ontario with his wife of 37 years. He manages the Engineering Department of a manufacturing company

in Kitchener and has worked in Northern Ontario, Germany and South Carolina. Clay is an avid distance runner, having run dozens of marathons and longer runs, and creator of the Canal Pursuit for Mental Health, a 785 km run along two of Canada's longest canals as well as The Monarch Ultra, a 4300 km run following the migration path of Monarch Butterflies.



Sandra Wilson My Adventure Called Life

Sandra is a writer, photographer and educator with a passion for fun and learning. She holds a BA in English and History, and has continued to take courses online throughout her adult

life, deeming herself a life-long learner. She believes that life is a learning experience, and continues to find lessons every day, which she applies to her writing, her photography, and lessons she can share with others. Connect with Sandra at www.quiteacharacter.ca.



#### PUBLISHER'S PONDERINGS

I have to admit, I had some challenges with this month's topic. After giving it a lot of thought, I believe my difficulty stems a bit of denial. I have lived for more years that I will continue to live, and that is hard to accept (especially since I stopped counting at age 25!!).

Life goes by so quickly ...

Not that I am giving up .... far from it. Especially after having gone through a lot of very difficult times in the last few years, I have come

to the point in my life where I don't take a single second for granted. I'm not sure if that's wisdom that came with age, or just simply wisdom that I gained from experience.

In the midst of trauma, I had two choices: give up or get up. With the help of Spirit, and the support of friends, I got up. And I'm so glad I did!

As M. Scott Peck once said, "Life is difficult." But life is also incredibly beautiful. Each day, I look for those moments of beauty ... such as the call of the birds, the majesty of the trees, or the smiles of my grandchildren.

This is the 105th issue of *One Thousand Trees* magazine ... an amazing realization for me! But then again, time does go by quickly, as I've said. I am blessed to be doing what I do, I am blessed to have met so many amazing people, and I am blessed to have never stopped walking.

Lisa



## LIFE'S A STRETCH by Sandy Bassie

I saw her in a Facebook post; a ninetysomething gymnast. She said, "if you're sixty, seventy, eighty it's not too late to begin to stretch." Thank God!

My life, until recently, provided enough stress I'm amazed I understand the concept. I stayed clenched tight for too long. I couldn't run if I tried. Eventually, and very slowly, I learned to stretch. Breathe. Grateful every area of life craves a stretch. It's time, long overdue.

As a young woman, I got stuck in an unhealthy place. Family, faith and belief reinforced my expectation that doing the 'right thing' would bring good. I tried hard in the midst of abuse, and in some ways succeeded at living well. But I wonder; abuse, dysfunction, disability, challenges including unexpected needs like autism and deafness and ongoing problem-solving as daily fare. Sometimes grace is giving up your own for others' needs. Sometimes it's not. I did my bit and maybe more.

Parts were dangerous, costly. Some of it I wish I didn't have to face.

But I've raised two sons, kept us all alive and somewhat functional and I'm proud of what we've achieved. I speak to my sons whenever I can. One lives in a group home. He has a semiindependent apartment. The other is away at school. The first I gave many of my working years, yes, to some regret, but I'm glad he had opportunity to grow in his strengths building and making things. The younger one received my quirks and ample opportunity to develop his delightful sense of humour. We enjoy those moments. I still love to laugh and am proud of my odd sense of humour.

This far into the journey, I'm not old, but I'm not young, a little immature. I'm moved by writing poetry and sharing music with my friends. I maintain hope. I cry at times, but mostly I laugh, and am proud of my laughter lines.

I'm grateful for older women who lead the way, who say new things aren't impossible, who encourage me to live, to stretch, to age and to do so with grace. Lead on! I definitely plan on aging gracefully.

> My face is lined with crinkles They show how much I smile Around my eyes especially Laughter lingers there a while

My back's a little tender Though not yet very bent It comes from many burdens I'll admit some heaven sent

I struggle with the compliments And all the friends who care They flatter my resilience Insisting that I'm rare

I say my sense of humour Tugs me down the laughter lines And resist the hope there's yet A little grace to find

## A MOTHER TO CELEBRATE by Diane Lyndon

My mother was a late in life baby and my grandmother suffered mental illness. Growing up in Cabbagetown, my mother did not know a loving bond with her mother who was hospitalized shortly after giving birth. There were times she refused to feed my mother breakfast and she actually ate out of garbage cans on her way to school. Unbelievably sad for sure and yet, mom became a very loving, caring mother. From the age of 34 till her passing this Easter, she endured

cancer of the cervix, thyroid, kidneys, skin and breasts. She survived the death of my sister from brain cancer at age 29. That was the hardest thing for her.

But despite many hardships endured in her life, she remained fun loving and caring. She aged gracefully and yet loved to entertain in costume at every special occasion. Sometimes, we would be embarrassed but looking back, I know that it was her joie de vivre that got her through.

She loved a good bargain and she kept her friends for a lifetime which is a testament to her wonderful spirit. Every year on my birthday she would remind me that she missed her breakfast the day I was born. We were with her on Good Friday and little did we know that after breakfast the very next day, she would very quickly be at Heaven's gate. Of course, she had her breakfast first!

My beautiful mother was laid to rest with my grandfather and it was truly an honour to be able to make her last wishes come true. I had a good mother and I was richly blessed.



In loving memory: Patricia Ann MacAskill

\* \* \*



#### **OLD GREEN JOURNAL**

As I cleaned a closet today, I came across an old green journal that was my savior nineteen years ago. At this point in my life I was a relatively young woman with three small children and a husband who suffered from severe anxiety. I remember thinking to myself, I cannot do this. I cannot walk on eggshells trying to keep the perfect house and keep three small boys from being just that, boys. I was afraid that the life I had dreamed of as a young girl was suddenly a destined train wreck.

As I turned the pages, I felt its unevenness where my tears had fallen and on May 15, I wrote, watching him struggle is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. I remembered the distress call from him while he was driving on a major highway and psychologically couldn't get the car to exceed 40 km/hr. I thought about the time he had forced an Air Canada iet back to the airport because he feared he was having a heart attack. I watched as he paced our yard trying to find the courage to head to the arena and coach twenty other people's kids. I found an additional entry that reminded me of the months I went to work with him, sat there for the day and brought him home each evening. We had three small children to care for and I not only needed a husband, my boys needed their Dad.

This time was tough and throughout that year we attended anxiety counseling, listened faithfully to a series of self-help videos and worked through workbooks teaching us coping mechanisms and strategies. Most

importantly we prayed. He still suffers from anxiety on a daily basis and over the years we learned to fight back to combat his fears. Some of our strategies include, "It's no big deal," "This too shall pass," and "Nobody died."

I know this is a brief introduction to my experience with anxiety but do know many people suffer in silence from this lonely disease. We cannot begin to imagine what anxiety sufferers go through on a daily basis. The strongest people are not those who show strength in front of us but those who win battles we know nothing about.

As I reflect back on that time in my life, I know it is not always the good things in a relationship that make it flourish, but the times when one has fallen, the other has to be strong enough to pull them up.

The "Words I Couldn't Say" are, "We had to fight like hell and fighting like hell has brought us to where we are today.

### TEARS by Madison Veldt

A hot water substance...
It drips down my face.
Drip....drip...
Drop...drop....
They fall down
my sad and pained face...
As I look down...
No hope.
No luck.
Just sorrow.
And tears.... hot wet tears...



# THE MUSIC OF LIFE: SOUNDS OF THE SEASON by Kayleigh Radatus

Welcome, to The Music of Life. Some of the most important connections of our lives, those we form with ourselves throughout life, as well as those we form with our families and friends, are being lost in this modern world of "social" media, minimalism, and keeping up with society. I hope, through this column, to remind my readers of all that matters, and help them re-establish their bonds with life, memories, mementos, and traditions.

I was, for a few minutes, stuck on what to focus on for The Music Of Life column this month. The last month has flown by, and I'm deep in one of the busiest times of year at work. Then, I did as I always do when I want to write and feel stuck; I let myself mentally and emotionally fall into the concept I was working on, and suddenly there it was; all the sounds that filled my world over the long weekend that just passed.

We have the supreme good fortune to have access to a mobile home in a park near Bayfield, ON, and we can stay there often. We were there on the Victoria Day long weekend, and much to my surprise, it didn't rain for the entire weekend. Instead, we had a full range of temperatures and skies; running the gamut from cold and gray, to raining, to sunny with blue skies and 26 degrees. All in 3 days.

My daughter and I spent Saturday indoors working our tables at the local craft fair, while my husband "opened" the trailer; getting our water & electrical and things like that all up and running.

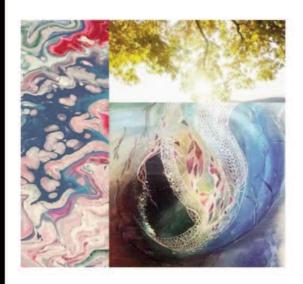
This day was a mix of so many sounds; my daughter's joyful laughter as she earned money from the products she had made to sell, her subdued squeals (trying to be professional, you know) when she realized she made enough to buy the stuffed, hand-knit elephant another vendor was selling; then her breathless excitement when she told me the lady who made the elephant sold it to her for a dollar off. There were the familiar voices all around from the ladies who run the craft event and sell their wares, as well as the other regulars who come to share their creations, baked goods, pickles, and businesses too.

There were moments when foot traffic slowed, and my daughter ran out of excitement for the event, and that familiar refrain of "I'm bored" reached my ears. We worked through the moment, and she stuck out the day, earning more money than she ever has before. She left that day, walking a little taller, proud of her accomplishment, and already thinking of what else she could do with the money.

Over the rest of the weekend I got to enjoy an early morning walk with my daughter, a trip to the playground with our dolls, sharing coffee and reading time on the deck with my husband. and all of us roasting marshmallows over the campfire. Through it all, there was an incredible mix of sounds from nature - lots of Blue Jays and Red-Winged Blackbirds to be heard this year, Canada Geese calling to their young, and human young running around playgrounds, splashing in the

"lake", riding bikes all around, and running into the shop for ice cream. There was the sound of horseshoes clanging against poles, adult laughter, and yes, some lawn mowing and saws running too, but it's all part of life, and I'm learning to appreciate it all. My favourite sounds though, are the voices of my family, the wildlife (including those playing children), and the crackle of the fire. They stand out most in my mind as a strong reminder of the fun of the weekend, and the joy of this time of year, when we no longer need heavy winter gear.

Life truly is a symphony; every time of year has its own songs that showcase the energy of the time. Right now, the energy is all about the celebration of life; the joy, fun and freedom of play. It's about the preparations for growing, and watching all things grow and wake up with the returning warmth of the Sun. I'll be savouring



Art journeying
Mindfulness
Meditation

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the memory of the sounds of this weekend for a long time, making more than a snapshot memory of this weekend; making a window into the collective past of our family.

Coming in July's issue....Summer Living

I'd love to hear from you! Chat about
The Music of Life column by visiting
my blog;
www.thisgroovylife.ca/blog/themusic-of-life-column.



### A LITTLE SPOT OF LIGHT by Sandra Wilson

I work very hard at finding a positive within tough times but the other day I was having a really hard day. I was running late for work, hadn't had any dinner yet and was rushing, eating on the go and feeling flustered. When I got to work (just on time to start my class) I discovered that none of my students were there and I had an hour before my next class. I was even more frustrated and annoyed, and I sat simmering in my frustration for that hour.

As my next class was about to start the first student arrived and asked for a hug. I'm not sure who needed that hug more. Ander there, just like that, I found the positive in my day. It is a little thing but by highlighting this small act of kindness I can focus on the positive, I can blur the frustrations of the day.

There is a lot of negative in the world and stress and worry about that and about issues in our lives. All this stress can create a focus on the wrong things. Instead, find that little spot of light to brighten your mood, and your day.



How To Stop Emotional Eating by Emily Brant

Before we begin, here is a quick disclaimer. I am not a health practitioner or expert in this field by any means. I do not have this entirely figured out myself, and have been gathering tips and tricks from friends to see how they find alternatives for emotional eating. If you struggle with an eating disorder this article could potentially trigger negative emotions and you should seek professional help if you're currently struggling.

As human beings, we face a variety emotions and stressful situations or times in our life. Nobody gets to avoid it. What happens when we feel stressed is our minds and bodies look for ways to cope, or to numb. The most common way we numb or "deal" with stressful or unpleasant emotions is of course with... you guessed it—eating!

Other common coping mechanisms can include alcohol, sex, television, smoking, social media scrolling, drugs, and other unhealthy habits.

For most of us though, food is a big one. We often eat when we feel positive emotions as well. When there is something to celebrate, we eat! Social gathering? Let's eat! Got a promotion at work? Go out for dinner! On vacation? Pig out! Excited? Tired? Sad? Happy? Stressed? You should eat!

Emotional eating has become such a major part of our culture. I know for me it definitely has. When the work week is over? I love to celebrate with my favourite take out, and coconut ice cream for dessert is a must! When something makes me sad or mad, or even when I get sick- I seek out chocolate and salty food too like fries, chips or popcorn.

I would say there's nothing wrong with this if it's in moderation, or if the food you're eating is all relatively healthy. For most of us though, it's not, and these patterns have caused many of us to have an unhealthy relationship with food. See, here's what usually happens.

- 1- Something triggers us to feel a certain emotion.
- 2- We eat a burrito, then some peanut butter and cookies. It brings us happiness while we eat it.

3-We start to feel like garbage and totally hate ourselves for that lack of self-control and massive belly ache we now have. We feel terrible that we clearly have no willpower and can't seem to stick to any diet or promises to ourselves about healthy eating. 4- Since we now feel bad and sad again, we should probably eat something because we might as well, and we need something to make us feel good again.

Step 1 repeats. It's a vicious cycle.

So how do we cultivate a healthier relationship with food and stop all the

emotional eating? Well here are a few tips I've gathered that are already helping me, and hopefully can help you too.

# Tip #1 You can't change the trigger, but you can change the response

It will take some work and serious commitment, but we can actually break old habits. Instead of reaching for junk food as a reaction to stress, try another response. Many of my friends said that they now go for a walk, read quietly, hit the gym, do crafting or beading, meditate, journal, play music, sing, dance, or do some yoga when they are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. One friend said sometimes she just needs sleep and goes to bed, knowing that tomorrow is a new start. I personally like to go on a "gratitude walk" where I do a quick walk around my neighbourhood and I mentally list everything I'm grateful for. It is so uplifting and energizing!

Trust me, I know, when you're in a bad mood or super upset about something, the last thing you want to hear is "take a walk!" or "go to the gym!" but obviously it works for many people, and it can work for us too. We just have to retrain our brain to stop thinking we NEED food and nothing else. You need food when your body is hungry, not when it is stressed. When you're not even sure if you're hungry but you want to grab a bag of chips or some pizza, ask yourself this: if there was a plate of broccoli in front of me, would I be hungry enough to eat it? If the answer is no, you're probably not actually hungry. Try some water, herbal tea, or any of the other suggestions above. We keep a luxurious set of loose-leaf teas in our house that I feel absolutely abundant and happy when I make and drink. If tea is not your thing, maybe you could try homemade lemonade or iced tea (sugar free or naturally sweetened), sparkling water with fruit, or a homemade smoothie or green juice. It sounds unlikely, but I drank a green detox juice the other day and it boosted my energy and mood almost instantly. It had cucumber, celery, ginger, apple and lemon. Totally took me out of my funk, and I had been feeling sick with a cold, too!

#### Tip #2 Recognize why you're eating

Stop and think about why you're wanting to eat what you are about to eat. Is it food that will bless your body or harm your body? Is it sugar? Food addiction is so real, especially sugar. A friend of mine said that she realized she was eating junk food to cure her headaches without realizing what she was doing. Once you get to the root cause or real reason, you can address it in a healthier way. Am I lonely? Am I bored? Am I just tired? Am I sad? Am I happy? Maybe call a friend instead! Have a good chat with someone you love. Do something creative like colour, craft, write, play music, or go do something you love doing. If you have time to binge eat, then sit around feeling bad about it, then binge eat some more- you have time to do something healthier. The issue is not time. The issue is breaking those old habits, and realizing what the root cause is in the first place.

#### Tip #3 Use healthy treats as rewards

This tip may also make you roll your eyes, but if you're like me and you absolutely love to celebrate with food, consider making your treats healthy ones that you can actually enjoy without guilt. Maybe make a batch of chocolate bark with coconut oil, cocoa powder and some nuts and maple syrup. Make a beautiful açai bowl with some yummy fruit and oats! Get together with a friend or partner and make your own homemade pizza or tacos! These things can be pretty healthy if you make them at home and

can control the ingredients. My fiancé and I love to try to recreate meals that we've had during our travels, and this feels like a celebration or treat. Cooking and eating with someone else may also prevent you from overeating (like you would of you were eating alone in your car...cheese fries anyone?).

#### Tip #4 When you do eat a "cheat" ENJOY IT

I really do think it's important to develop a healthy relationship even with the "bad" food. Sometimes you really do deserve that quesadilla, that cookie, or that ice cream cone. If and when you do treat yourself to it (maybe just a couple times per month) make sure to enjoy every single bite and really savour it. Avoid eating food so fast you don't even taste or enjoy it. If you're going to treat yourself, let it be a celebration of your ability to eat healthy the rest of the week or month! Let it be a TREAT, not a coping mechanism all the time for stress. Let it be a reward for something good you did, but not a regular addiction. We want to associate healthy food and even the "cheat" food with positive feelings and emotions. You don't want to go out for pizza, and remember all the times you cried into a box of pizza and loathed yourself and your body. You want to associate everything you put into your body with enjoyment, pleasure, and most of the timenourishment!

I hope these tips help you, and we'd love to hear from you if you have any others you'd add or share what your biggest take away was. Stay happy and healthy my friends!



## **An Evening of SHARING**



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#### I WATCHED THE SUNRISE THIS MORNING

My daughters and I have recently moved into a brand new house! I believe this is part of our Brand New Era in our lives (especially for me).

The third day after we moved into the house, I found out I get to experience the beauty of the sun rising each morning from several rooms in the house. I have always loved watching the sun rise and set, so am deeply grateful for this blessing! The magnificent colours of the sky bring great joy to my heart. Each morning brings a different spectacular picture painted across the sky! Many different spectacular hues fill the sky. Each morning, as I open the curtains, I feel as if I'm allowing the love and warmth of the sun into our home and hearts! An incredible feeling to experience!

Since my transformation has begun, I have learnt it is important to continuously count the many blessings that are bestowed upon me. Being able to spend five minutes (or more) each morning watching the sunrise and awaken my part of the world, gives my heart great peace and joy! Most days, this sets the tone for the day. I have to admit that getting a four and five year old ready for school sometimes presents learning opportunities (in other words, tantrums from one or both young ladies and screaming and shouting from me). In the moment, I don't see the learning opportunities, but am grateful to be able to reflect after the ladies are at school and course correct.

I have taken several photos of the magnificent sunrise, which I intend to print and hang around the house, as a way to keep calm and grounded (mostly for me).

I love how my appreciation for the sunrise has impacted my daughters. Sometimes, they wake up and find me at the window watching the sky, and eagerly join me at the window, to experience the beauty that beholds our eyes. They eagerly point out the beauty that speaks to them. I AM grateful for these priceless and precious moments.

I'd like to encourage you to count your many blessings that are all around you, and watch your life transform in the most incredible ways!

Remember: "Self Love is just a Heartbeat Away"

#### KLEENEX AND PLAY MONEY by Lisa Browning

"You mean your mother hoards kleenex too?" Carol's eyes widened with incredulity. Her simple question held complex implications.

We are both part of the Sandwich Generation, simultaneously caring for aging parents and young children. Sandwiched ... between the needs of the dying and the growing.

Carol's question caused my mind to wander. In the year since my mother moved into the nursing home, I have been fascinated with her obsession with kleenex. She keeps it everywhere — full boxes in dresser drawers and garbage cans, and crumpled sheets in every pocket of her clothing. The laundry staff cringes every time her clothes come in for washing.

She does not have allergies and is never sick with a cold, so the kleenex

is always unused, and unneeded, at least in any physical sense. Emotionally, however, it is a different story.

The family first noticed my mother forgetting things three years ago, when she was in her late 70s. We didn't think much about it, assuming it was the normal process of aging. But then the hallucinations started.

"Did you see that man?" my mother would ask, pointing to the hallway. Of course, no one was there.

"Surely you must see the little girl?" she asked my daughter. "Right beside you on the couch." Carrie's eyes darted in confusion.

One winter night, my father awakened to intermittent flashes of light in the backyard. He found my mother outside in her nightgown, flipping the porch light on, off, on, off.

"What in the hell are you doing?" His words erased any gentleness he tried to convey.

"I need to get someone's attention," came the frantic reply. "The little girl has died in the fire."

No amount of persuasion could convince my mother that the house was intact, and there were no little girls in the living room, dead or alive. My father called a geriatric specialist the next morning.

The first available appointment was three months away, and we were told how lucky we were to get in so soon. My mother did not feel so lucky, and worried that her deepest fear — Alzheimer's — would be confirmed.

On the day of Mom's appointment, I accompanied my parents to the hospital, and was invited into the examination room with them.

I marvelled at the doctor — young, but with a wealth of knowledge and bedside manner that belied her age. She gave my mother a series of simple cognitive tests, then asked her to walk a straight line.

"Well, Mrs. Tripp," she said soothingly. "I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is ... it isn't Alzheimer's. I know you were worried about that."

As I watched relief flow over my parents' faces, I knew they were no longer listening. The doctor directed her comments, quietly, towards me.

"What your mother has is in many ways worse than Alzheimer's. It is known as Lewy Body Dementia." She went on to explain that this particular dementia is characterized by paranoia and delusions, is far more rapidly progressing than Alzheimer's, and very difficult to deal with.

We witnessed the rapid progression. In September 2000, my mother was well enough to attend my nephew's wedding. She was confused for most of the day, but managed to stay for the reception. By Christmas, she was a shell of her former self. Just as we began dinner, she left the table, and we found her huddled in the fetal position on the living room couch, sobbing and shaking uncontrollably. Dad took her home, his dinner left untouched.

The decision to put her in the nursing home was made in January, 2001.

Since my mother has been in the home, the family has tried to come to terms with a mother who is present physically, but absent in every other sense.

The staff at the home are wonderful, and have made the transition much easier than we expected. Their patience, with the anger, the tears,

and the idiosyncracies, inspires us all.

They never question my mother's obsession with kleenex. Perhaps they have seen it all before.

For Carol and me, it was a new experience. My mind now back in the present, I answered her question.

"Yes, Mom is completely obsessed with kleenex. She has to have it at all times. Just like money. My Dad is looking for play money that looks real enough to fool her, because she insists on carrying money in her wallet, and every time he visits, the money is gone."

"I know," said Carol, "my mother-inlaw is the same. Except with her it's credit cards. There's nowhere to spend money in the retirement home, but she refuses to be left without her credit cards."

Even though we couldn't explain these obsessions, we both felt better, knowing we were not alone. Everyone in the Sandwich Generation is dealing with similar issues. Most are dealing with Alzheimer's, and no one ever heard of Lewy Body, until I brought it up. However, all of us are dealing with the emotional loss of parents whose minds are preoccupied with little more than kleenex and play money.

Perhaps, with these relatively insignificant items, they can retain some of the control and independence their conditions have taken away.

And we cannot deny them that.





#### RIPE BANANAS by Andrea Lines-Botell

It seems that within our society as people age they tend to be treated with less value. Other cultures hold the older generations in respect and awe often referring to them for guidance and knowledge and great care is given throughout their later years.

Here people can be treated as more of a nuisance and an inconvenience perhaps even being seen as needy. Shifting focus to love for all and holding a place of compassion allows so much growth for all humanity and opens the door for much lost valuable connection.

Aging gracefully comes not only from our own attitude but how we respond to others who treat us as less than. What age we are does not reflect each person's value whether it is a newborn, a teen or an elder. It is within our power to start changing the tide of how we all view each other. Love, respect and compassion from the day we are born until the day we leave this body is a humanity healing code of life.

I am sharing a blog this month that I wrote recently on aging and how it seems that from the outside world we decrease in value as our age increases. The world is missing out on the massive value that the elder generation can bring.

Amongst the dogs barking and the bearded dragon trying to catch crickets today I began making another batch of chocolate chip banana muffins. A lone ripe banana caught my eye, and for a moment all the noise stopped around me. I became wholly

absorbed in the yellow of its skin and the slight mottling of the brown signs of age. There were areas where the skin had started to sag a little and creases here and there. It was lying next to an unripe almost green tinged banana, and this was smooth and seemingly flawless.

I looked at my own hands and saw that there were some similarities between the ripe banana and my hand. Slight sagging and creasing and some brown spots starting. I had noticed at the grocery store yesterday that the overripe bananas had been bundled into bags on the discounted rack. "Still good for baking" the sign had said. I considered how this too felt in parallel to humans and how in time we become less smooth; more wrinkled we are often discounted. We are often placed as less than but still good for some things. As I continued to stir the batter, I placed the spoon down and peeled the ripe banana. The inside was a little mushy and brown in places. A memory came to mind where my son had talked to me about how someone had said that there were two types of older people. Kind and bitter and no real in-between. We had a fantastic conversation discussing why some people may feel this way and what could be done differently. As I considered this I tasted each banana in front of me. The vaguely green one and the saggy overripe one and the tastes, as you know, are very different. The overripe banana so delicious and sweet and the young banana without too much flavour. This also can be said for the richness of the soul. Most humans with time become richer in their journey with stories and life lessons that some never share. All humans, actually all beings, have an exterior shell they present to the world, and the soul and or heart is the true richness. The beauty of the exterior often never mirrors the bounty within.

The bananas had now become delectable moist and tasty muffins for

breakfast, and so the circle of life continued. Young and old we all have worth as is true for all things. The barking delights of the dogs became more present in my mind, and the bearded dragon caught all of his crickets. The day's journey now began with muffins warm and ready on the table.

\* \* \*



### WARRIOR'S TALE by David Rankine

The stories contained within Warrior's Tale have had a long gestation period. The first one, The Lost Boy was based upon a real-life experience - a day of revelation and pain while out walking with a friend at a time in my life where I felt depressed and lost. The story was written later that day and it came pouring out in a flow that surprised me. Even the main character (Warrior) popped into my head. More stories started to appear- often in dreamstate and I would quickly write them down when I awoke. New characters appeared in my dreams and within the dreaming I was very aware that I was that central character- Warrior. As soon as I re-read each new story, I became aware that I had created many characters to stand in for me- to take the dark and dangerous journeys for me.

From the first story onwards, every new dream and subsequent story took place in the same location — Inverhuron Provincial Park on the shore of Lake Huron where my family had spent our family vacations

camping. This in itself was very telling. I could see that my subconscious mind had chosen a 'safe' dreamscape to stage all of these stories within It was (and is) a landscape I know like the back of my hand and one that is rich in good memories. It is a location my heart and mind had chosen to experiment with, be safe within and a place I could grow out from.

The first few stories so moved me that I decided to perform them at poetry events and even at festivals. These stories that reached so deeply into my heart often making me cry, so obviously I could not read them in public, so I had talented friends do the reading while I accompanied them on my mountain dulcimer. It was pure bardic storytelling. As the story was read, I watched the audience's reaction and noticed the closed eyes, tears on cheeks and the quite wholeness of the event. It was as if we had all - musician, storyteller, story, characters and audience entered into a consensual "story-time" - a place where the walls dissolved, time stopped and all that mattered was the experience of the story and the shared feelings.

Thus was born the idea of the "story-time"-- the structure that would tie all of my short stories together within a book."Ah!" I thought, I would simply have the characters tell each other stories that were often about themselves. This in itself helped to create a dreamy depth to the stories. They were just not stories, but they had become stories within stories, each one presenting a new piece of wisdom, each one an archetypal adventure.

Now, I would be lying If I said that I wrote any of these stories for an audience, but I would also be lying if I said that I didn't! I was very aware that the principal audience was me! In writing and then reading each of my stories I could see that I was placing

myself (as other characters) in situations that were drawn from real life but in a safe landscape. The themes of fear, loss, friendship, adventure, curiosity, terror, awe, insanity, meaning and belonging all resonate loudly with so many people. So, like any of my other musical or artistic creations, because they are coming from my heart, they will appeal to an audience beyond me. But in the end, they are for me and each time I read my own stories I deepen my understanding of myself, and how I walk through this world.

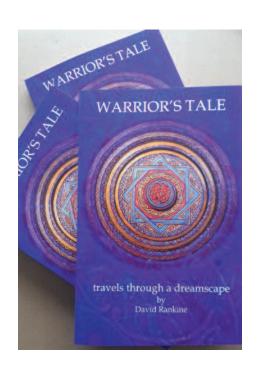
Over the last ten years the more stories that arose from my subconscious via dreams, the easier I found it to just sit down with nothing but a feeling to focus on and just start writing with no idea of what would happen or which characters would be involved- except that I would place the action and the characters within the safe 'psychic-container' of that landscape that I know so well. It was almost an act of getting out of my own way and I should not have been surprised as this is how I create when I paint or perform music. New characters kept appearing, ones with new skillsets, many of them looking like me but dressed differently. Characters based on people in my life started to appear – friends, my daughter etc and their stories and experiences began to interweave with my own. Each new story spilled out of me quickly - often within an hour and always resulted in a tearful catharsis. Every story, written and read, healed me and much to my delight healed others.

Of all the characters in my stories there is one who did not look like me and who I did not create- a lost shaman. He had appeared to a number of other people at events that I run, and I decided to include him in my own stories. He was the character that I chose to take the most dangerous voyages, to experience the

greatest terrors and to battle with his own humanity, creativity and mortality. In the end he turned out to be the MOST like me and his journey of healing within the stories prompted and assisted my own healing journey. It was a case of 'beware the stranger, for he will be you."

As a healer, it occurred to me that my stories were yet another tool to be used and I see them for what they really are-medicine for the soul. I use them to heal others, to calm my own soul and to safely explore new ways of being. I even have friends who now write their own stories that cross over into mine and yes, they create their own healing. I am pleased that my characters can do their work within the story of another.

I love to write. I love to see where my characters will go. It is something akin to imaginary play – a safe place where I can encounter various aspects of myself, resolve issues and process feelings. The stories keep coming and I look forward to releasing a second and third volume.



\* \* \*



UPDATE ON MONARCH ULTRA by Clay Williams

It's June already and the planning for the Monarch Ultra is forging ahead! I've been working almost daily on the running route. The basic route is plotted, all 4350 km, and I've been working to find a decent place to stop every 10 km or so to pass water and food to the runners. That's 435 aid stops. I've also been working on clear turn-by-turn instructions so that the runners don't get lost along the way and I'm about 75% done.

There has been no end to the twists and turns along this journey of creation. Carlotta and Rodney and I had hoped from the start that this would turn into something big, but we didn't have a very good image of that meant. It has been a learning experience, and some of the things I've learned were things that I really didn't set out to learn. My initial responsibilities included preparing a route, gathering all the needed info about the runners, and for the runners, and planning the support crew logistics for the event. But this huge international event has become a little more complicated than I had originally thought. We need to find sponsors to cover the costs of transportation, food and accommodations, but the people we counted on to do that have let us down, so all three of us are beating the bushes for sponsors. I've been in touch with car manufacturers, car rental companies, and hotel chains asking sponsorships. And we finally have some sponsors!! Our first official sponsors pledged their support in

early May, but we have a long way to go financially. There will be at least four of us as film and run crew living on the road for seven weeks, so the costs will add up.

Another thing that has become more of a learning experience than I expected is insurance. Because it is an international event, insurance is complicated. We have runners from each of the three countries running in Canada, the States, and Mexico, and want to make sure we have them protected as well as ourselves. There is way more work to be done on that front before the run starts.

Our other main area of concern is recruiting enough runners to fill all of the running segments. 4350 km is a long way. We have runners for about half of the run segments, which means there are still a lot of open segments.

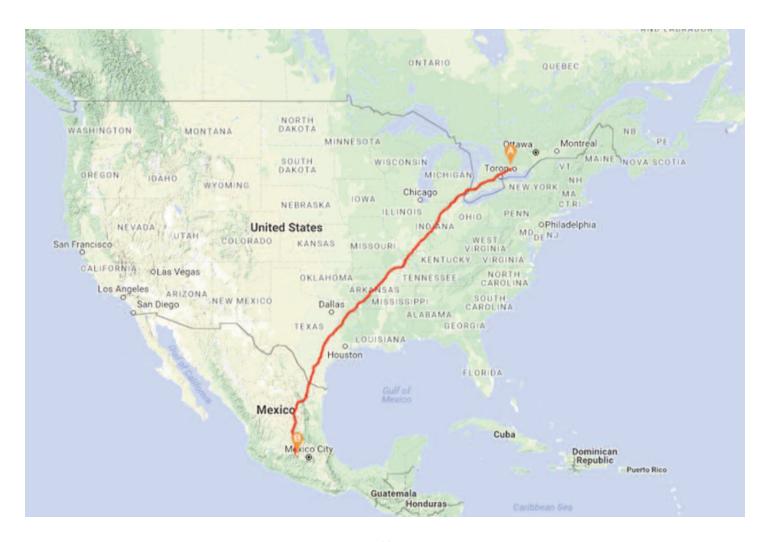
So if you know anyone who wants an amazing adventure, and wants to run 50 km or even 100 km, put them in touch with me!! We have recruited a few ambassadors to help with promotion of the run, so I've put together some social media posts to recognize them and generate a little excitement about individuals getting involved. There are also a lot of conservation groups that are helping us out by sharing social media posts, as well as promoting our project with some potential sponsors.

One of the cool things that's happening is that most of the Mexico States through which we will be running have offered to help us in some very tangible ways, including providing police escorts to keep the runners and crew safe while in their state. This is something I didn't expect at all, but welcome with open arms.

Tourism is very important in Mexico, and the annual migration of monarch butterflies plays a big part in the tourism industry.

Did I mention that the last few days of the run as we're getting to the Monarch Butterfly sanctuary in central Mexico will take place during an annual celebration? For thousands of years the people living in Mexico's mountains have believed these butterflies are the spirits of the dead. The arrival of the butterflies as well as our runners coincides with Mexico's most spectacular festival, Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead.

Though we have a lot of work behind us there is still a lot of work ahead of us, but I think our publicity is picking up some momentum and the team gets a little bit of good news every week. For more information go to themonarchultra.com.





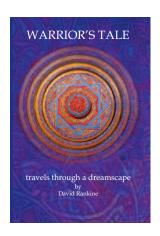


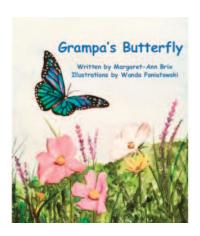


#### The Power of Telling Our Stories!

Left: Maureen Malone-Trovo, Susan Stewart, Lisa Cipparone, Mala Singh, the four speakers at our Evening of Sharing about *Energy Healing*.

Right: Our May momondays Guelph show!
Rachel Jones, Lisa Browning, Alan Garrett, Jamie Pritchard, Marion Reidel, Gwen Potter, Rob Osburn





**Dino-Stars** 



by Sandra Wilson

Whiny Walrus



by Sandra Wilson

Sensitive Sea Lion



by Sandra Wilson

Hot off the press in May:

Warrior's Tale, by David Rankine; Grampa's Butterfly (another reprint!), by Margaret-Ann Brooks Dino-Stars, Whiny Walrus and Sensitive Sea Lion, the latest in the Emotional Alphabet Series by Sandra Wilson.



## NEXT MONTH .... IN ONE THOUSAND TREES

July's focus is **Metamorphosis**.

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

— Desmond Tutu

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

If you know of any community wellness or charitable events taking place in July, 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 ...

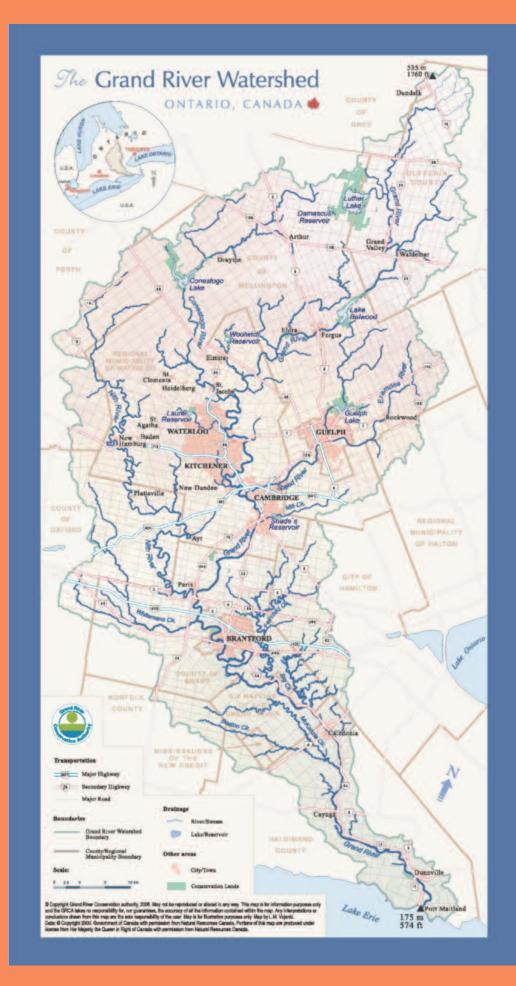
Connections
Creativity and the Arts
Food and Nutrition
Giving Back
Health and Wellbeing
The Library

Deadline for submissions is June 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.