

Stories

poetry, prose, and personal reflection

Vol. 10 — July 2022



*One child, one teacher, one book,
one pen can change the world.*

~ Malala Yousafzai

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Publisher

Lisa Browning

ONE THOUSAND TREES

3-304 Stone Road West, Suite 338

Guelph ON N1G 4W4

Email: lisa@onethousandtrees.com

Phone: 519-362-5494

Stories is published monthly, on the first day of each month. Submissions are due on the 25th of the month preceding the month of publication.

Please submit by email, as a Word doc attachment. Please do not send PDFs. If you are including photos/illustrations to accompany your submission, please put a placeholder in your word doc, indicating where each graphic is to be placed, and send the graphics themselves as JPEG attachments. Please do not embed graphics in your word doc.

First-time writers for *Stories* are asked to send a brief (two to three sentence) bio with their submission.

Because of difficulties with some articles sent in the body of emails, we cannot accept submissions in this format. Please send a word doc attachment.

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Publisher's Ponderings



As I sit at my computer, finishing up this last step before putting the magazine live, I am pondering what, exactly, to focus on. I know that the focus for the month is teachers, and so I have been thinking a lot about the teachers that had the most impact on me. (And yes, each of my top three was an English teacher!)

I have also been thinking about a response to a comment on one of my facebook posts, made by someone I went to high school with. The post was about perfection (or, more accurately, the importance of avoiding the need to be perfect), and this particular individual said that he had that covered ... that he was by no stretch of the imagination a perfectionist. Interesting, I thought ... because my impression of him in high school was quite the opposite.

And so ... this has led me to wonder just how different our impressions of ourselves are, compared to the impressions of those who know us. (Hence the focus quote for next month! I think it would be fascinating if those interested in writing something for August could ask someone they know to write a "My Impressions Of ..." piece about them, while they write a "My Impressions of Myself" piece prior to seeing the objective piece. I, of course, will print both!

My three favourite teachers each made many comments about my talent for writing ... and those comments stuck with me. High school days are long gone, but my love of the written word is as strong as ever. And I use that love to do as much good in this world as I can.

And perfectionism?? Well, I struggle with that. (Thank you, Dad!) But on days like today, when I sit in the peace and solitude on my back deck, doing what I love to do ... I know that I too am winning that particular battle. We are all perfectly imperfect, and that is good enough for me!

Lisa



Expect the Best to Receive the Best

Marilyn Whiteley

It was a rite of passage: in my small-town high school, everyone took English from Miss Broderick during their junior year. Some had her when they were sophomores, but I had Miss Steel then instead. I knew about Miss Broderick by reputation. I'd heard about her from her earlier students and also from my father, who taught industrial arts ("shop") and directed choral music in the school.

I'd also heard something from my mother. When I was in Grade 8, she began teaching English in a high school in another district. Each morning she got a ride to the school with two other teachers. On some mornings, they saw Miss Broderick plodding her way toward the high school building, and they offered her a lift. It wasn't much out of their way. And, my mother reported, when Miss Broderick got into the car, she exclaimed with delight, "Isn't it wonderful to be going forth to mold young minds!" My mother was a dedicated teacher, but she was not a morning person, and at 7:25 in the morning she could muster little enthusiasm for "going forth to mold young minds."

I thought I was ready for Miss Broderick, but she was more than I anticipated. She was always proper in appearance—every brown hair in place, no wrinkles in her dress, and of course never a slip showing. Her voice was well modulated, gentle but firm, and she taught us to be careful of our pronunciations. We must not sound the *l* in calm or palm, and she drilled us on the pronunciation of maraschino—*ski*, not *shee*. My grandfather had a cherry orchard, and I knew what *real* cherries looked like. Perhaps they placed those unnaturally bright red maraschino cherries on top of the sundaes at Baird's soda fountain downtown. I didn't hang out there the way some of my classmates did, so the pronunciation didn't seem relevant to me, but I tucked it away in my memory.

During part of the year, each of us had to get up in front of the class and give a speech. I was nervous,

though I probably did not shake in my shoes as much as some of my classmates did. But each of us was reassured by Miss Broderick's approach: when the speaker had finished, the listeners were first to say what they liked about the student's presentation. Only then were they to suggest—politely—what might make it better. And so I, and we, learned how to give constructive criticism.

We were regularly assigned a subject on which to write a "theme." But it wasn't enough to write it. We needed to revise our writing again and again. Miss Broderick told us that she wanted us to hand in our seventh copy! *We could always make our writing better.* This was long before the day of computers, and each revision had to be written out by hand—an immense amount of work. I very much doubt that Miss Broderick ever received a seventh copy of any theme. But we did edit our work, and she established in me the habit of revising my writing, of trying to make it better. Sometimes the revisions were on paper, but I also learned to do the work in my head. Now I do it on my computer, but the habit was set long ago.

Miss Broderick showed me how to give gentle, constructive criticism, and she planted in me the habit of editing. But her most important influence on my life is harder to explain. She expected the best from us. We always knew that, and somehow we didn't want to let her down. So even my laziest, my most incorrigible classmates worked and performed better for Miss Broderick than they did in any other class. I saw that, and I saw that if you expect more, expect the best, from people, they will usually give more, perform their best. Over the many years since then, I have tried to live by that assumption.

Fast forward twenty-five years, to our twenty-five-year class reunion. We crammed into the lower-level dining room of a restaurant at the edge of town. We were seated so close together that we could scarcely use our knives and forks to cut up the chicken in the dinners set before us. Then came time for the class picture. A row of chairs was set up at one side of the

room, with space to stand behind them. First seated were the two faculty guests, Miss Broderick and my father. Then the women came forward, some to sit in the remaining chairs and some to stand. Finally the men were called. One of them started forward, leaving his suit jacket draped over the back of his chair. Miss Broderick called out, "Robert!" and pointed to his jacket. She said no more. Robert had joined our class in Grade 6, reportedly kicked out of the town's Catholic grade school because he had slapped a nun. He had not been the best of students. Robert went back, retrieved his jacket, and put it on. Such was Miss Broderick's influence twenty-six years later.

* * *

The Blessing of Teachers *Marilyn Helmer*

Back in the 1970s, I was the mother of a very active young son and daughter, just fifteen months apart in age. It was a challenge to get these two go-goers settled at bedtime. My sister-in-law solved the problem by gifting us with a collection of her grown-up children's books and so, for Chris and Sandra, bedtime became cuddle-up and read time.

I quickly discovered that I loved the books as much as they did. What a joy it would be, I thought, to write my own stories. But could I ever write anything that would be worthy of publication? I was too busy being a mom at that point to do anything but scribble down a few story ideas here and there. All too soon though, my children were off to school. Now I had the time follow my dream. With visions of publication dancing in my head, I set aside an hour or so each day to write.

But what did I do with my stories back then? I tucked away in a file folder because I didn't have the courage to submit them to the critical eyes of a publisher. They weren't quite ready, I told myself. They needed more polishing. And so I polished on. If it had been a pair of shoes I was polishing, they would have been worn away to nothing.

Then fate stepped in. While reading through our local newspaper a notice about a Creative Writing course popped out at me. It was being offered in the evening at a nearby high school. I quickly signed up and it turned out to be the best thing I could possibly have done.

The teacher was Estelle Salata and over the years, Estelle became my mentor and my friend. Of the many pieces of advice she gave me at the Creative Writing course, perhaps the most important of all was to join CANSCAIP - the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers. I joined and went to their annual day of workshops that November.

The first workshop I took that morning was given by Kathy Stinson, a well-known children's author. Kathy told us how, in the beginning, she would file her stories in a drawer to be worked and reworked, before she dared to submit them to the critical eyes of a publisher. At that point, I'm sure my mouth dropped open. That was exactly what I was doing. But finally, Kathy told us, the day came when she decided it was time to take her dreams out the drawer and face reality with them. I felt as if she was talking directly to me. "The best piece of advice I can give you is this," Kathy went on. "Don't hide your stories in a drawer. Polish them to the best of your ability, take a deep breath and send them out to publishers. You'll never know unless you try."

On that November day I made an early New Year's resolution. Over the next six weeks I would polish three stories and have them ready to mail to off to publishers in January. It is one of the few New Year's resolutions I have ever kept and the best one I have ever made. From then on, one by one, my stories were rescued from the dingy drawer and mailed off to publishers, with fingers crossed and hope in my heart.

My first break didn't come until eight months later when I had a story published in *Buzz Magazine*. It was a day of celebration in the Helmer household and the payment I received was enough to take the family out to dinner that evening. Okay, there were only four of

us and we went to McDonalds but that didn't lessen the thrill of my first published piece.

With continual encouragement from Estelle Salata and the many workshops I took, I learned about crafting stories for children from skilled and encouraging writers. I even had the pleasure of being asked to give a workshop myself.

Since then I have been fortunate to have had over thirty children's books published as well as many short stories, poems and articles in children's magazines. So I will pass on the advice I received from Estelle, Kathy and others who taught me the craft of writing. If you have a dream, take courage in hand and go for it!

* * *

Ralph *Allan Berry*

I drove a taxicab in Fergus, Ontario from 2007 to 2009. During this time, I had the good fortune of meeting and transporting many interesting people: World War II veterans from all branches of the armed forces, English war brides, farmers, professional people, athletes and even one gentleman who came to Canada from England to work on the famous, yet ill-fated Avro Arrow project.

However, the most memorable of all these disparate personalities was a regular customer named Ralph. He was seventy-five years old but, if you didn't know, you would peg his age at a few years more. Frailty was beginning to establish itself and he had the look of a man who had fought a brave battle with alcohol and won, although probably not in time.

I was between jobs, having been unceremoniously 'downsized' from a company I had worked for in excess of twenty years, when I decided to give taxi driving a try. I had always struggled with shyness and I thought this would be an opportunity for me to "come out of my shell" a bit. I became something of

an 'interviewer,' posing questions and attempting to get people to talk about themselves. Some people needed little prompting and it amazed me how forthcoming they would be with someone who was basically a stranger.

Ralph was like this. He spoke about his childhood, growing up on a farm near Arthur, Ontario. He was one of seven children and he was forced to work hard, as they all were. After he left the farm, he spent many years on construction crews. He also spoke tenderly of his late wife, who he nursed through a long bout with cancer. His sense of loneliness and grief was still palpable.

I would drive Ralph on his various errands, on average twice a week. He was always unfailingly courteous, decent and considerate towards me. What made him memorable, in my eyes, was his generosity. After bringing him home from shopping, I would carry his groceries into his drab apartment and he would always provide at least a two dollar tip and often more "for your trouble." "It's no trouble, Ralph," I would respond. The two dollars to him would be like a twenty dollar bill to some of my well-heeled customers.

I often felt somewhat guilty accepting such generous gifts. One time after putting down the last of his packages, I attempted a quick getaway. He scolded, "Allan, come back here! That's not the way we play the game around here." Whereupon, he pulled out a handful of coins from his pocket and gave me twice as much as usual. I had a lump in my throat as I thanked him and bade him a good day.

He had one very good friend; a cynical, foul old bird named Betty. I would drive him over to her place now and again. In deference to Ralph, I was courteous to her, in spite of the language and the, "I just dare you..." demeanour.

Another time, I was dispatched to the market to pick him up. I stopped the cab out front of the store and I observed him speaking to a very attractive young

lady with a warm, friendly smile. As I popped the trunk and started to put his grocery bags inside, Ralph said, "Allan, I'd like you to meet my niece, Mary," just like I was an old friend and not some anonymous cabbie.

As I shook hands with her, she said, "Please take care of my Uncle Ralph."

"Of course, I will" was my response. It was uplifting that he had someone this nice who cared about him.

One day, after I had been working for the taxi company for a little over a year, it dawned on me that I had not seen Ralph in a while. I called the dispatcher and she broke the news that Ralph had died a few days prior. The rest of my shift was solemn. When I got home, I went through the old newspapers and saw his obituary.

When I returned to work the following day, I asked a veteran driver what had happened. He thought that Ralph was becoming quite ill and that he probably just gave up.

I sought out his obituary again that night; I noticed that his family was requesting donations to his favourite charity, the Canadian Cancer Society. I made a donation in his memory, thankful as I was for all he had given me. Ralph would have liked that.

Rest in peace, my friend!

* * *

Teach, Preach, Reach

Arlene Davies-Fuhr

My love of teaching started early. As a nine-year-old, I was convinced my five-year-old brother needed singing lessons. Never mind that he wasn't the least bit interested nor cooperative. I persisted. That quality stood me in good stead when I decided to pursue formal teacher training. The

supervisor on my first assignment in high school labelled me a dud and advised that I choose a profession other than teaching. I fared much better in a junior high which was my second assignment. That teacher thought I was the best student-teacher he'd ever had because I quickly re-evaluated and learned from my mistakes.

Over the years, I've taught junior high English and Social Studies as well as high school English. I've been an English as a Second Language as well as a Literacy instructor. These experiences provided me with opportunities to hone teaching strategies as I gradually learned my craft. When you are with the same class for five hours a day, five days a week, you become innovative and creative.

One theology course I took from Walter Wink radically altered my approach when he declared, "I am going to learn so much from you talented folk." Wowza. If someone of his caliber could learn from his students, so could I. It totally revolutionized my teaching technique. Rather than the "expert," I transitioned into a midwife on the learning journey.

Many students appreciated my wacky humour so I finally discovered an appreciative audience. My family was grateful I had found another outlet for my atrocious puns. I viewed my teaching role as one to empower students to think and assess for themselves. It was exciting when they caught the vision and began to make inferences and confidently express informed opinions. Although they did admit their ability to evaluate ruined the casual movie or television experience as they exercised their new-found ability to be critical and discerning viewers.

Over the years, I have had comments from former students who valued their classes with me and admitted the sessions did prepare them well for whatever work they perused. They would thank me for being a role model of inclusivity, patience, humour, and perseverance. They found they could do it, after all, if they really tried, but they had to put in time, energy, and effort. It was immensely gratifying when

a struggling student succeeded beyond even her or his expectation. How empowering for me, as the instructor, to see students reach their potential.

I thoroughly enjoyed attending conferences in Banff, editing a book of essays called *The Mercury Reader*, and teaching a short essay-writing course at Kyiv-Mohyla in Ukraine. I also mentored eight young girls in Grade Five French Immersion as I organized a poetry club in our neighbourhood. That group produced a book of poetry and art called *Under the Poa Tree*, which members fondly reference to this day.

Early in my career, I pledged when I was no longer having fun in the classroom, I would quit teaching. And I did. Six years before retirement, I left the community college to take up preaching. I was hired to be a minister focusing on the young people and older folks in a Mennonite congregation. What a hoot. Good-bye detailed handouts, marking, and office hours. Hello flex time, sabbaticals, and intense theological reflection. Now God was my boss. Yikes! Talk about intimidating.

I brought my teaching experience to the pastoral relationship and thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent working for the church. I discovered the value of WAIT (Why Am I Talking?) or Duct-tape Spirituality as I became a more intentional listener. In this position, I was blessed to have a month to study Mennonite Theology at a college in Elkhart, Indiana. During that time, I discovered there really is a town in the States called Shipshewana! Around this time, I embraced Celtic theology during a Pilgrimage to Scotland, northern England as well as Northern and Southern Ireland. We viewed numerous high crosses, heard testimonials for local church folk, and savoured the accounts of Celtic saints. During a four-month sabbatical, I was able to produce a book *Pilgrim Journey with Psalms*, which includes original prayer-poems based on Biblical Psalms as well as artwork for individuals to colour, and space for people to add their own material.

I encourage you all to reach for the stars. Go for it. See what emerges as you follow your dreams and fulfil your passions. Right now, I am encouraging a group of ukulele players in our retirement community. I never imagined that would be a role I would ever assume but, like a labyrinth, I have discovered life has many twists and turns. You never know where the love of teaching may lead.



* * *

Introducing Children's Reading Room

Joanna Szulc

Children's Reading Room (CRR) is a non-profit family resource organization that promotes early literacy and a love of books and reading! Each time anyone visits the CRR, they go home with a free children's book! It's theirs to keep, read, love, and cherish. No need to sign up for a membership or return the books. A welcoming, accessible, and comfortable place where families can socialize, browse books, read to their children, participate in planned literacy-focused activities, and of course, build up their home library!

The books we distribute are generously donated to the CRR by our partnering organizations and members of the community. Most of the books we distribute are pre-loved; however, we also give away new books thanks to donations from Scholastic Canada and Frontier College. All our books are screened prior to distribution.

Stories: poetry, prose, and personal reflection

Located in Guelph at 210 Silvercreek Parkway N, We are open every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9 am to 1 pm and offer planned literacy-focused activities. Circle time is at 10 am each program day! We read stories, sing songs, play games and learn poems. StoryTime and Crafts take place every Thursday at 11 am. We read a story and create a craft based on the elements from the story. We strive for excellence in cultural representation and make it as inclusive and barrier-free as possible.

Our policy is one book, per person, per visit. Come as often as you like and tell your friends! There is no catchment area, all families are welcome! Adults must have a child with them to take advantage of our services. We have books for children ages 0-12.

Reading is the gateway skill to so much knowledge. Research indicates that children who have their own personal libraries at home, which are truly their own, enjoy books, read earlier, read more often, are more likely to pursue post-secondary education and continue to read throughout their life.

Through engagement with families in an inclusive community space and distribution of children's books free of charge, our mission is to enhance literacy skills, family wellness and promote a lifelong love of reading!

For more information, please check out our website (www.childrensreadingroom.org) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

* * *

Guess Who's Back In Town??!?

S.O.S.
Stories On Stage



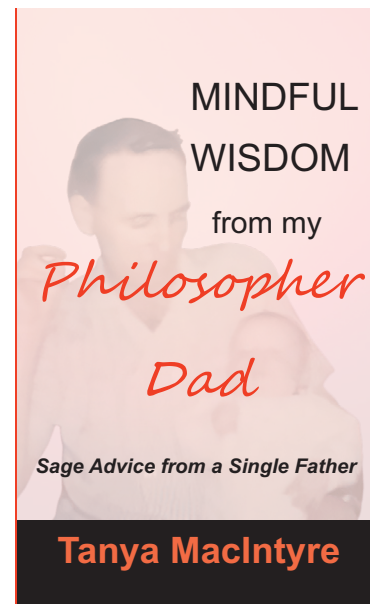
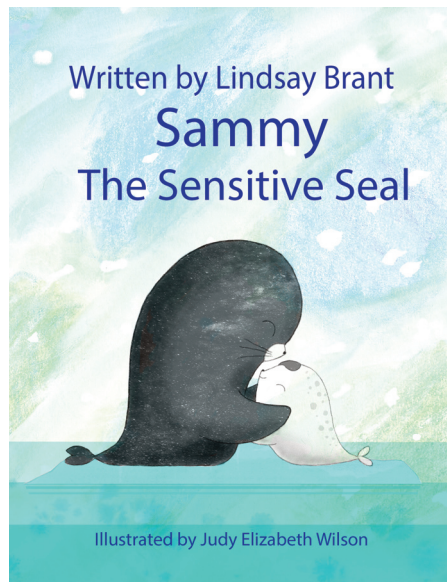
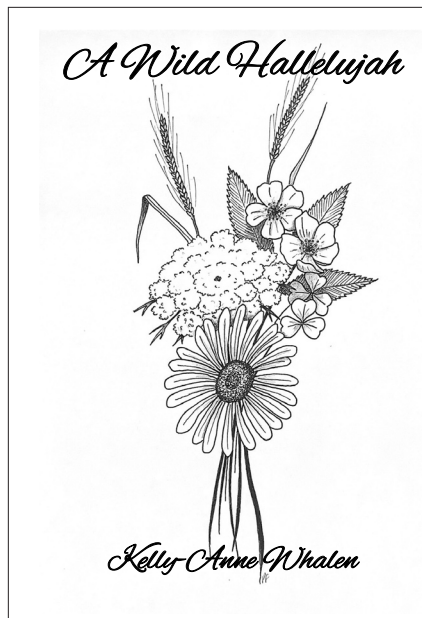
Do you have a story to tell?

**Lisa Browning, Admin & Promo
Rob Osburn, MC & Production
info@storiesonstage.ca**

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**A new name, a new location ... but the same
great inspiration & community connection!**

MONTH IN Review →



Above: Hot off the press, second print runs!

Left: *A Wild Hallelujah*, by Kelly-Anne Whalen

Middle: *Sammy the Sensitive Seal*, by Lindsay Brant

Right: *Mindful Wisdom from my Philosopher Dad*, by Tanya MacIntyre

Below: So nice to be back to face-to-face events!

Left: One Thousand Trees Book Sale, Sunday, June 26

Right: Family Fun Day in supportive of Sick Kids Cancer Research, Saturday, July 9



Self-Love and Mashed Potatoes

Kelly-Anne Whalen

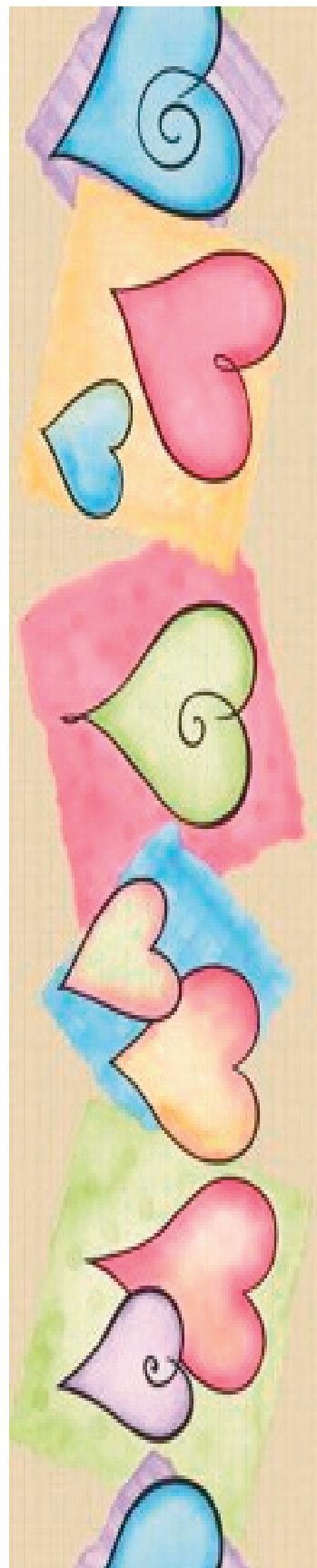
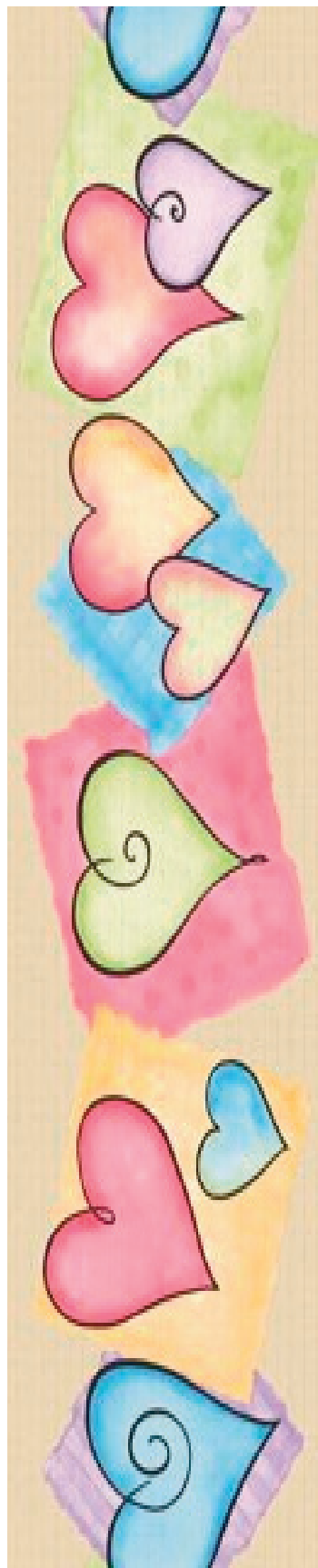
When Disney tells my 7 year old
That 'skinny' girls get to fall in love
And 'average' girls are for comic relief.
When an old man tells my son
That boys shouldn't have long hair.
When a family member asks my oldest
How she can still be hungry?!

With one knowing look
Into their searching for truth eyes,
I will confirm for them
They are not here to make other people comfortable.
They are not here to please the rest of the world,
Or seek its approval.

They are not meant to fit
Into undersized boxes not made for them.
They are meant to take up space,
Grow their hair and their souls.
Love themselves and their hunger for more.

And I will tell them
With my words and my actions
That the way they look
Is the least interesting part of who they are.
And I will lovingly brush the knots from their tangles
Until they can confidently do it themselves.

And when they ask for more
I will pass them a heaping platter
Of self-love and mashed potatoes
Because we can't change the world
On an empty stomach.



A Rose for Barb *Judith Rosenberg*

She was miniscule in stature, yet a titan warrior in life! Barbara Julie Cohen. Born September 9, 1953. Died tragically and unnecessarily on August 29, 2021, alone in a barren hospital room. Without her cell phone. Without her chosen brother who was ever by her side in life.

Twenty-three years ago, I was called by my mentor Susan, who wished for me to meet the mother of a woman, an artist, with severe mental health issues. The intention was for this mother and I, both devoted to our beloved adult children with the lived experience of mental illness, artists in common and with a shared love of their faith, to somehow introduce our kids to each other.

In the end, we mothers were not the impetus in these two meeting. In fact, my son was hosting his first exhibition as “Artist in Residence” at the original Wyndham Arts in downtown Guelph, and Barb walked in on opening day.

She was forever on the streets and in the studios of established and fringe artists, curious, supportive and asking, “Would you like to see my work?” And out of that ever-present, oversized satchel bag, would appear reams of tiny booklets and photocopied, plastic-coated pages of her unending drawings of robots and the ‘project themed-machinations’ of the moment. Breathtaking, haunting, disturbing, genius ... all with tiny, almost illegible, words in English or Hebrew, delving into G-d’s meaning and messages to her as she suffered to understand her mission on this earth.

Her constant torment was of how to live the life that He had prescribed for her and gain acceptance of her work and her tiny, humble being. Little did she know or understand that her very presence, her life of sacrifice, her love of all who came before, her

courage and resilience, were more ... so much more ... than any god would ask of her.

She and my son, her “Gentle Giant” of a chosen brother, would speak on the phone and meet weekly, sometimes daily and of late, during COVID, used text to stay connected. Their bond was rock-solid, never wavering, constant throughout the years, as each experienced the ebb and flow of the ravages of mental illness. The hospitalizations. The messed-up medication pitfalls. The collecting/hoarding of found objects, saved as precious, sometimes for years, to become an art piece ... perhaps, or never. Visiting each other in the mental institutions that became ‘home’ for months on end, or the psychosocial rehabilitation centers where they each lived, toward recovery, amongst others who walked and ate in silence or spoke in less than understandable mumblings. Sitting for hours when neither spoke or one or both slept away the day under the influence of heavy, brutal antipsychotic drugs.

And other times, Barb was included in every gathering, every celebration, every restaurant dinner and was saved a place beside us in Synagogue on Sabbath and High Holy Days. That was us ... the three Amigos. Barb took over the seat in our family pew where my beloved mother Bess once sat with my son and I. Barb was the perfect companion to occupy that special seat with us. Her quiet, reverent, presence was always comforting and when my son was called to the Bimah (altar) for the honour of reading from the Torah, I could ‘feel’ Barb’s heart fill and soar with pride and love for Jay.

We often attended synagogue events and dinners together and over the years, when the numbers began to dwindle, as elders passed on and other members moved away ... it was just a small band of “Woe-be-gones,” as Barb dubbed us, who came together in camaraderie.

Barb enjoyed many true and long-lasting friendships throughout her years in Guelph. She gathered

dozens, perhaps hundreds of people from all stations in life. She attracted every manner of intellectual, creators, makers of art, poets, authors, business people, religious and agnostics. All were Barb's fan club, protectors, students and beloveds.

She could be spotted daily in the downtown core. Walking in her trademark stride. Burdened by her huge knapsack, bags and purses. Attired in whatever 'costume-like' expression she decided upon for that day. She saved every imaginable pair of shoes, boots, jackets, patterned tights, decorated socks, adorable hats, colourful scarves and jeans ... many different styles of tiny, little jeans. She remembered each item ... when it was purchased ... what year ... the shop ... who gave it to her and why.

In our many, many hours over the years of attempting to downsize and purge her sparse living space to make room for more, for new works of art, for a spot for her to sit or sleep, she would not part with any of it. If we did manage to slip a few things into a donation bag, she would continue to ask for it ... for years to come.

The guilt for me was deep and profound. There were some improvements she permitted. When her mother passed away and we felt it was now respectful to step in to help in some little way, it was shocking and heartbreaking to witness how she treated herself in her privacy.

We removed that broken down bed without a mattress and only a board to sleep on ... precariously propped up at the head with the foot on the floor. I couldn't sleep or find any peace until we were able to convince her that her G-d did not want her to suffer in this way. That she was enough and more, without suffering, and was able to have a new bed and mattress purchased and installed.

There came a time, sadly, when Barb experienced one too many falls, was walking with a cane and would benefit from a safe environment with care, medications monitored, meals prepared and no stairs to

climb. Of course, a pathetic sign of the times is that such facilities of quality care where a person such as Barb who was not considered ... elderly ... or with dementia, could find a place that would provide her with access to her studio space downtown in Necessary Arts with her fellow creators, close to her community of artists and friends and where she could meet and greet folks at the Bookshelf and Miijidaa for a coffee and a chat.

And of course, where the meager government subsidy for people with mental health disabilities would cover the expenses. So, the place Barb would be 'housed' was in the south end of Guelph, where she would need to take the Assisted Care Bus to the city bus stop, to wherever she was headed, or cover the cost of a taxi once mobility became too challenging. She would prepare for a full day in her studio, take a lunch and arrange to meet up with her beloveds.

On that Friday afternoon in August 2021, my son faintly remembers her usual call to wish each other a "Shabbat Shalom." He remembers the spot at my flat where he took the call. That was the very last time he spoke to Barb. He was confused why he had not heard from her, but of course, they never spoke on Saturday, our Sabbath, as Jay had become Shomar Shabbat, where he refrains from work, phone calls, technology and reads Jewish scriptures and prays during the day until sunset.

On Monday morning Jay received a call from Barb's sister in Kingston, Ontario, as he was arranging a post-accident car rental, to give him the devastating news that ... his soul sister Barb was dead. In shock and total disbelief, he arrived at my doorstep for comfort. Together we grieved but I could not possibly be in his heart and share his decades of memories. He disappeared into his private world of Barb and his life of shared experiences for a very long time.

We listened to Dylan and Leonard Cohen ... her music and her creative muses, in silence. I stayed with the lyrics and finally understood and heard her heart in those words.

We planned and hosted a memorial for Barb on her birthday in the Guelph Enabling Garden where perhaps 75 or more souls who loved Barb and could not make sense of this unexplained and sudden loss, came together in masked silence, heavy with tears and hearts burdened in sorrow.

We spoke of her. Sang and listened to local musicians play their memories. Said prayers and read self-written poems and stories of our own special bond with Barb. And WE FLOATED ROSES, again in silence, along the Speed River.

Judith F. Rosenberg
One of Barb's claimed "Woe-be-gones"



* * *



Bruce Trail, End to End (part 10)

Clay Williams

In early June 2021, my good friend Debbie and I decided that we would hike the full length of the Bruce Trail, all 800+ km, by doing day hikes on weekends throughout the coming year. This is the next chapter in our adventures on and off the trail.

I'm writing this as I prepare for a very exciting and busy couple of weeks away from work. The first thing I'll be doing is helping a good friend as she attempts to run the full length of the Bruce Trail. I'll be one half of her support crew for one half of her run along the trail. As soon as I leave that, I'll be unpacking and then repacking for an eleven day road trip on my Harley to Alabama and back.

Mark Your Calendars!

**One Thousand Trees has booked our table
at The Eden Mills Writers Festival,
Sunday, September 11**

We're so excited to be able to be back in person!



**Eden Mills
Writers' Festival**

The Bruce Trail end-to-end run is being done by Gillian Chow, a young lady that I've known for a few years. She had initially started planning to do the run as an FKT (Fastest Known Time) attempt. It seems she wasn't alone in that ambition, there were several record attempts in the past two years, and the 2017 women's FKT of 12 days 15 hours was absolutely demolished by Karen Hollans in 2021 with an incredible 8 days 22 hours, even beating the men's record by 5 hours.

With the FKT out of reach, Gillian will be doing the run as a personal quest. She has set her daily goals and nutrition plan, and I've worked on confirming safe parking spots for the support crew as well as places to spend each night in the RV or tent. I recently switched up vehicles, selling my 2011 Nissan Juke, a tiny SUV, and buying a 2017 Dodge Grand Caravan, one of the most practical vehicles I've ever owned. We'll be using the new van as a support vehicle; there will be room for someone to sleep in the back and plenty of room to store our gear.

It has been a lot of fun poring over the maps online, looking at the familiar landmarks, and planning out the logistics of each support stop. It's kind of cool to see the chosen aid stop on an online map, and know exactly what the intersection of trail and road looks like because I've recently been there on foot. I can imagine what Gillian is going to feel like after coming down the huge vertical descent onto Forks of the Credit Road, or after running across the face of the escarpment west of Grimsby. I'll be meeting some old friends and some new ones as we wrangle the pacers and sleep in a new location every night. On the sixth day, June 22nd, which is also my birthday, I'll be leaving the runner in the care of another support crew and heading back home. When I get there I'll have a few hours to unpack, do laundry and repack for an eleven day motorcycle road trip.

The motorcycle road trip is one that I've been planning since 2018. I had initially planned to do the road trip in 2019. It was going to be a trip eastward, across upstate New York to Massachusetts, all on

secondary highways, winding through all the small towns along the way. I planned the route using Google maps and Streetview, and while I was virtually driving through some of the little towns, I noticed that many of them had town clocks and clock towers. So I intentionally started searching for clock towers and replanned the route so that I could see more of them. I eventually nicknamed the trip "The Clocktower Tour." But when the spring of 2019 came around I realized that I would be using ALL of my vacation time and several weeks of unpaid leave to run the Monarch Ultra to Mexico. So the Clocktower Tour was postponed to 2020. Then COVID scrapped all travel plans for 2020 and 2021. Since I've also aged four years since I started planning, I'm pretty sure this will be my last opportunity for a long solo road trip, so I've decided to go someplace I haven't been to before: the gulf coast. The trip will take me down to Mobile Alabama, then back up through Texas, Oklahoma and back home.

But for now, back to the Bruce Trail ...



Day 24 May 14. This was our first time back after being away for a couple of weeks. Everything was noticeably greener. For the entire day we saw the forest floor carpeted with trilliums. Thousands, maybe millions of them. We had planned to hike 39.4 km through the Beaver Valley area which included about 1000 metres of elevation gain, and after we were done the GPS said we had hiked 40.9 km with 1124 metres vertical. This was more elevation gain than we did on our first day when we hiked 85 km. The temperature was much hotter than we expected, right

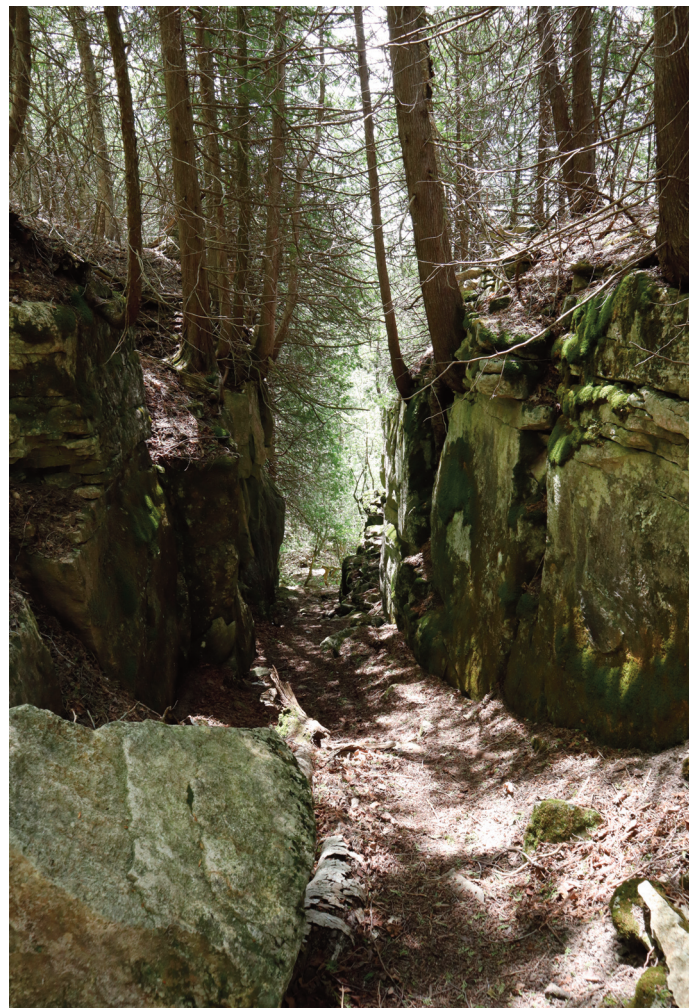


from the start. Even though the weather forecast had predicted 26°, it had been cold for so long that we just didn't prepare for it, like we didn't believe it would happen. I knew we were in trouble at around the 25 km mark, when a trail reroute took us from the top of the escarpment all the way to the bottom, then all the way back up to the top. I had brought plenty of water, but still ran out; I drank my last little sip of water when we were about 3 km from the car. I have a couple of old three litre Clamato juice bottles that I fill with water and freeze, and I had brought those along in the car. They were waiting in the cooler when we finished, our wonderful refreshing little ice bottles. I drove from the finish point to the start, to Debbie's car, and she spent the trip holding onto the ice bottle, hugging it like a baby, her ice baby. We were exhausted.



Day 25, May 23. We hiked a similar distance to the previous weekend, 38 km, and with a similar amount of elevation gain. The temperature, though, was much cooler so we had more than enough water. In fact, by

the end of the day I felt like I had brought far too much water and regretted having to carry it all day. There's no satisfying some people I guess. There hadn't been much rain for the previous week, so the footing was pretty good and we were able to maintain a really fast pace. Up until these past two weekends I haven't had to focus much on calorie intake, but as we are getting into the longer days with more effort, I've found that I need to eat more food early in the day to avoid being very tired at the end. I didn't on this day, and was really hungry by the time I got to the car. I also spent the day feeling a little stressed about getting home in time for a meeting and to sell my car, so I was really conscious of pace and was pushing it as much as possible. We saw lots of trilliums on this day as well, including lots of pink ones.



* * *

A decorative border of various tropical plants, including palm leaves, banana leaves, and colorful flowers, frames the central text.

Summer

Colleen Heighington

Sunshine, beautiful flowers
Are seen everywhere ...
As people seem to be more happy and content
Relaxing in their lawn chairs!!!!

Umbrellas are always ready on hand ...
To welcome a much needed rain to a dry and thirsty land!!!!

Malls are super busy with shoppers
Especially being in the air-conditioning when the summer heat is on ...
And they are surely hoping when they leave
The heat-wave is finally gone!!!!

Making new friends along the way ...
Especially during the times when we all are on our holidays!!!!

Excitement is seen and felt in the air ...
While being on our vacation either going to the beach or visiting the fair!!!!

Rejoicing and being thankful to our Heavenly Father
For Blessing us all ...
With the Beautiful Seasons of Summer,
Winter, Spring and Fall!!!!

Summer

Bill Brubacher

Like magic, we feel like kids again just ‘released’ from school.

The days are longer, hotter; southerly breezes tickle our skin, and bring a smile to our faces; blue fluffy clouds float in scattered shapes as though lost in the sky; and the sweet songs of birds bring melodies to mind, that puts a spring in our step even if only walking our dog down the street.

The spirit of freedom spreads from person to person and can be seen in the energy of children running like the wind through an open park or playing ‘pick-up’ soccer in the field.

Trees are bursting in bloom as are flowers of every colour and kind are plentiful to brighten our outer world and inner mood. Water shimmers and sparkles like diamonds in the sunshine and beckons the child in all of us to swim in the eternal universe of timelessness.

Life takes on a different meaning as though the shackles of former limitations have been loosened. We are free to simply experience a new plane of existence beyond our making.

One of the things that makes summer so precious is that it only lasts for the summer – like the elusive enchantment of summer love, or the mystical opening of summer’s petals, perfuming the spacious air.

Summer is like a magical spell that changes the way we see the world and our fellow human beings.

Still, we know it will someday come to an end like a candle burning down, and the flickering light will dim and die, and we will have to return to another world – another ‘season’ of life, older and perhaps wiser.

For as long as it lasts though, we will bask in the lavish abundance of summer’s gifts for all to receive.

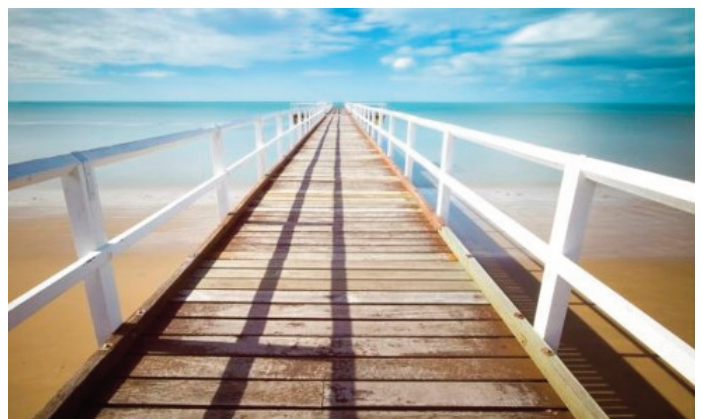
This is not an ode, but rather, a clarion ringing the song of summer for all to hear and to enjoy. It is a poem of heartfelt delight and worship of nature given freely; a new paint-over of the world in the most vibrant of colours by the hand of the ‘master’ from his rainbow pallet.

Nothing lasts forever, yet if you listen carefully, you will come to hear its final cadence and marvel at its majestic sunset dance. This can invite us to relish the unfolding days of tomorrow even more.

Plant the seeds of summer in the spirit of creating the happiest of memories and the best of times spent with friends and family, making dreams come true. Turn your anticipation into the fulfillment of what still remains.

Knowing the end of summer simply adds deeper awareness of the now and the chance to enjoy it even more. Think not of endings but of beginnings, because as one day ends, another begins. So with time, as one hour closes, another opens. What the next will hold will be different than the last, and will remind us of the time and potential of our life still to be lived to the full, each and every day and every hour through each and every season.

Wishing you many more good times of summer without regrets.



This Month's Contributors

Bill Brubacher

Bill is a long-time resident of the Region of Waterloo, a former successful business entrepreneur and an internationally published author of 15 national bestselling books. He is a Certified Bereavement Specialist, and a Certified Conflict Coach/ Elder Mediator, helping seniors and their families through difficult time through Caregivers Oasis, Pathfinder Canada, and Heart and Soul Bereavement for Seniors. Bill has recently authored a new book about his amazing life's journey. His book, *Against the Odds*, is a ten-year testament to his incredible emotional, spiritual and mental tenacity as he fought to reinvent himself after experiencing tremendous loss. His model and message are an inspiration to all who struggle to survive in the face of defeat. His latest book, *The Secret Pond*, is a classic love story fantasy about the shared journey of a young boy and an unusual stranger finding healing from grief and loss at a mystical pond in the midst of an ancient magical forest. For more information about his books go to <https://legacypress.ca/> or contact Bill at billbrubacher@gmail.com.

Allan Berry

Even though Allen has embraced creative writing somewhat later in life than most, he has always had an affinity for words, their origins and the versatility and multiplicity of their uses. Although his post-secondary studies were primarily in the realm of business, some abrupt and unexpected life changes, along with the encouragement of a dear and trusted friend, led him to embrace writing as a creative outlet. A resident of Fergus, Ontario, Allen is a member of the Wellies creative writing group in that community.

Arlene Davies-Fuhr

Arlene is retired and resides in Guelph. She has been a lay-minister in the United and Mennonite churches, a college English instructor, and an ESL teacher. She has published a workbook on the Psalms and has edited a book of essays. She has travelled widely and currently enjoys playing the ukulele and the mountain dulcimer.

Colleen Heighington

Colleen is happily married to a wonderful husband named Ken. They have been blessed with three beautiful children, and four terrific grandsons. She enjoys reading, writing stories and poetry, and she keeps fit by walking 3 to 4 kilometres every day. Her summers are spent at their trailer in Orillia, and she really enjoys the time she spends with family and friends. She has been a volunteer with Hospice Wellington since 2015.

Marilyn Helmer

Marilyn is the award-winning author of many children's books including picture books, early chapters, retold fairy tales, riddle books and novels. Her short stories, poetry and articles have appeared in numerous children's magazines and anthologies in Canada and the United States and her penchant for entering writing contests has resulted in success with short adult fiction as well. Marilyn has just published a collection of her short adult fiction called *Birdsong on a Summer Evening* with One Thousand Trees Publishing. Visit her website at www.marilynhelmer.com.

Judith Rosenberg

Judith is a graduate of The Ontario Department of Health Nursing Assistant Centre; President's List Conestoga College Applied Counseling Program, with 30 years' experience in the Mental Health & Addictions and Developmental Disabilities sectors. She is a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario's Medal for Good Citizenship, and the YMCA Women of Distinction Award, for breaking down systemic barriers. She is the Founder of Spark of Brilliance (www.sparkofbrilliance.org), focusing on healing & recovery through the arts & R.I.S.E Aging with Pride Satisfaction. She is a long-standing social activist in capacity building and transformation and her commitment to providing personalized facilitation service to individuals and families is well documented in the community.

Joanna Szulc

Joanna is a Registered Early Childhood Educator, who's had the good fortune to work in several different sectors of the field. Her experience includes working as an RECE in licensed group childcare, as an Instructor Therapist for children with autism, and as a Family Support Practitioner at an EarlyON Child and Family Resource Centre serving newcomers to Canada. She is passionate about early literacy and love making connections with families in her community. Joanna is also a mother of two beautiful and active children.

Kelly-Anne Whalen

Kelly-Anne has been writing since she was a little girl. Words have always enchanted her; taught her who she is, where she is going and who she is meant to be when she gets there. This, her first book of poetry, takes the broken pieces we all share, the truths and the trials, and offers up a wild, hopeful prayer of peace, gratitude and authentic beauty. She makes a life in rural Ontario with her wildly capable husband, their three kind, creative and charismatic children, an assortment of furry and feathered critters and an ever-growing collection of magical moments and charming memories.

Marilyn Whiteley

Marilyn has taught at universities in the United States and Canada and worked at the archives of the United Church of Canada. As an independent scholar, she has written on many aspects of women in the Christian church in North America. Most recently she has written *Threads of Joy: A Memoir*. She lives in Guelph with her husband, Hugh, and finds particular joy in music and in photography.

Clay Williams

Clay is a 61-year-old Manitoba-born father of two living in Elmira Ontario with his wife of 40 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.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

**Deadline for submissions for August
is Monday, July 25.**

Here's a focus quote to inspire you ...

***"And the best way to know who we are
is often to find out how others see us."***

— Paulo Coelho