

# *More Musings*

## *Print version with size 16 for easy reading*

10 years ago while doing distribution  
I awoke with an Angel thought ~ time to work on *the book* and the title would be

### *The Making of Angéle and her Angel's Guidance*

Their message was clear but life was full so I let that thought stay in the back of my mind.

When a volunteer stayed one winter I had her scan 25 years of Issues.

Then I found time to update the Musing column and rethink my website.

Once the Retreat Center sold, I typed and retyped my story and eventually gave it to Diana, my long-time editor of *Musing* for editing. She suggested *More Musings* as a title, thinking it might resonate with the past readers of Issues Magazine.

I did not use the term Angels in the early days as I didn't want to argue or have people call me nuts. I was glad when Doreen Virtue and others made angels more real.

Recently I discovered Grammarly . . . To err is human; to edit, divine!

Thank you, virtual teacher. Great way to learn English lessons.

This final process took two more weeks and made writing more readable.

If you wish read my autobiography in chronological order  
click to page 197 - *Back to the Beginning*

*The World According to Angele* starts on page 253 ~ *More Thoughts about Life*.

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***This book is dedicated to:***

QuanYin and the Return of the Feminine

Diana Holland, whose modifications made Musings readable.

Peter Morris and his guide Big Eagle for their knowingness

Harry and Nora Jukes, and the Festival Deva for making it happen.

My husband's Rae and Richard for journeying with me.

My children and grandchildren, may they feel inspired as I do.

My soul sisters and brothers who make life amazing.

My many advertisers and supporters who kept me thriving.

All Moms for giving birth to these seeds of love we call our kids.

August 16 and 17, 1987, launched the world's first synchronized global peace meditation via word-of-mouth.

Joseph Arguelles called for 144,000 people to gather and meditate so our collective energy would open the energy circuits of global awakening and usher in a spiritual transformation before the internet made this easy.

The Mayans predicted these cycles inside of cycles in their Tzolk'in long calendar. These 2500-year cycles are confirmed by scientific solar activity.

The Aquarian Age has arrived, similar to when the North Star aligned with the birth of Jesus and the Piscean Era began. Planets were aligning themselves once again, cycles within cycles over the millennium.

Many cultures follow the movement of the planets, and some suggest this. The age of Communication started with the invention of the printing press, as it takes time for energy to build and create shifts in our lives.

By 1987 the internet had significantly more users creating new models of egalitarian power and access to global interconnectedness. The worldwide web, growing quietly at the time, is such a complete necessity that it's easy to lose perspective on the magnitude of this shift.

At the 2010 Winter Solstice, our sun and a lunar eclipse shone directly into the Galactic Center, heralding more alignments that will amplify our awakening.

I shall begin my story in 1977.  
My inner voice was louder than ever.

My many growth spurts seem more exciting than my beginning, so as it happened in the Star Wars series, I will return to my childhood after I tell you about the more inspiring incidents.

# *More Musings*

I am walking out of the movie theatre after watching Star Wars. Someone asks, "How was it?" Without thinking, my mouth opens, and I hear myself say, "There is life on this planet," followed immediately by thinking to myself, "and I want to find it." I enjoyed Yoda's examples of using our minds to sense energy fields and move trapped ships out of the bog. He worked with the light and knew Truth when he heard it.

I live in Terrace, BC, and the fall weather has arrived with the black clouds rolling in. Once the rain starts, I stop prepping the garden and hurry into the house, throwing myself onto the couch. I cry in a frustrated voice, "I will do anything for sunshine." A calm voice replies from the ceiling, "Sell your house when it's worth \$46,000." I remember moaning, "I will be here forever," as our house was worth about \$26,000 at the time.

The following year I am invited as a presenter to the first annual Women's Festival in Terrace. A woman has been hired to run the newly created Recreation Department, the beginning of an era where women got paid the same wage for similar work. My topic is the history of making quilts, including traditional designs. Chairs, a table and a chart stand, are set up in an open field under the trees. Ten or twelve ladies are listening to my presentation when I overhear the presenter across the way saying a few things that perk up my ears. I could hardly concentrate as her vibrations moved through me. I ended my talk early and listened to the last bits of Marilyn Waram's presentation. She was new to town and would be teaching astrology classes this fall. I ask so many questions she suggests I order a beginner's book at a store in Vancouver.

Once the book arrived, I spent part of my summer memorizing the glyphs or simplified codes that indicate each planet and zodiac sign. I attended Marilyn's night classes and learned how the planets and asteroids influence the sign or house it rules. Halfway through the term I booked a private session and learned much about myself and Rae. Marilyn explained that he had a hole in his pocket and that saving money would not be easy. I felt relieved that this was his issue and not mine.

She said he had a Yod in his chart, nicknamed the Finger of God, which brings ease into one's life. We both have our sun in Pisces, so we are sensitive, dreamy, intuitive, wanting flow in our lives but reflect it differently. The Sun Sign represents only a fraction of our personality, but the newspapers present it as a Truth. Rae has Mercury, Venus and Jupiter in Aquarius, conjoining his Sun in Pisces, giving him an attitude of "Don't worry, be happy." I have Mars on my ascendant, which pushes me to get things done, and my well-aspected Saturn exalted in Libra likes responsibility with balance. My opposing Jupiter will expand whatever I take responsibility for.

Did you know a snapshot of the universe is taken when we take our first breath? This placement of each planet and asteroid creates options for our destiny. Even the location where I now live on this whirling ball in space influences my personality; just as the moon creates the tides and affects our emotions, the various squares, trines, conjunctions and oppositions that happen at regular intervals influence our worldview daily. The Mayans predicted 26,500 years ago that our rotating galaxy would be near the Galactic Center of the Universe about now. They claimed this would be a most auspicious time as the masculine and feminine energies unite. Reality depends on our maturity level, or how many lifetimes we have learned certain traits passed down through the generations that give us specific opportunities, thanks to our family dynamics.

The fall of 1980 finds me walking slowly through downtown Terrace holding my youngest boy's hand. My head is snapped sideways by a powerful force in front of a real estate window. I stare at the image in front of me and slowly realize I am looking at a house just down the road from ours; it is worth \$46,000. I feel a surge of excitement as it vibrates through me . . . I need a plan to escape this red-neck town of loggers and miners. Real estate prices had risen quickly.

That evening I mentioned to Rae, my husband, it would be good to visit his parents for Christmas, as they had moved to Oliver, BC. His dad Barney was not doing so well, and Grandma would enjoy seeing our three boys. He shrugged in agreement, for he liked to drive long distances. Grace was happy to babysit so Rae, and I could check out the town of Summerland. I figured with a name like that; it was bound to have sunshine. It was the perfect size for raising a family, so I asked about jobs and housing and was told this area was mainly for retired people — with money.

I found a real estate window and noticed a handyman special that fit our price bracket. Since school started in a few days, the boys and I took the Greyhound bus home, and Rae stayed with his parents to figure things out. I put a classified ad in the Terrace newspaper and started packing. Many people came to look at our older, renovated home, but no one made us an offer. The following week one of the men returned and asked if he could see the attic. After an hour of looking around, he said, "If I pay cash, can you be out in two weeks?" I nodded, shook his hand and asked, "Why so fast?" He told me he had sold his house and moved to Smithers but did not like the new location and wanted a place in the part of town he loved. By coincidence, it was his former house I had seen advertised in the real estate window that turned my head.

Rae finalized buying the handyman special with his dad's support and then drove to Grand Forks and picked up my brother Donald, who borrowed David's work trailer, and together they drove North. We packed furniture and boxes into the truck and trailer for several days, and I prayed for no snow because a tarp covered our belongings. We left Terrace about 2 pm, just as the sun was setting and didn't even see snow in the mountain passes. All night I followed the glowing red truck and trailer lights and felt excited when I saw streaks of sunlight appear on the horizon as we neared Kelowna. I had loaded my car with small boxes, fragile objects, plants, and our cat. Oops, I had locked her in a cupboard to make sure I could find her and then forgot. I called the new owners, who had heard her meowing and were happy to keep her. It was a good thing I forgot, as there were many transitions to navigate before we settled.

Our next stop was Summerland, where the owner let us store our belongings in the basement for three weeks until he moved out. We stayed with Rae's parents, and I drove back and forth to school and even learned to play racquetball as the courts were nearby. Rae got a job driving a logging truck till break-up, then hung out with the local truckers learning the various routes and had a job delivering goods by the time we settled in. Our new house was close to an elementary school with a sloped yard and a few strawberry plants growing on the grassy hillside. Once the house was organized, I stopped by the pool to ask if there was any work. I was astounded to see the swimming pool was the spitting image of the one in Terrace, where I had worked for five years, built by the same contractor. The manager said,

“There is no paid work, but you could help with the grade-four school class in progress.” That teacher loved having an extra mom who was trained as a Red Cross swim instructor. Several weeks later, as I was leaving the pool, the boss lady asked, “What are you doing on Sunday?” I said, “Not much.” She replied, “Show up at 5 pm, and you have a job.” I arrived early, found the cash machine easy and figured out the rest. When she returned on Monday, she was impressed, and within a month, I was working 20 hours a week as the man who didn’t show up on Sunday wanted fewer hours. By year’s end, I was scheduled for a maximum of 30 hours per week for part-time employees. Any more than that, and the District would have to pay benefits.

I posted an ad in the newspaper to mend clothes, another skill I had. Hugh Gibbs responded, and when he came to pick up his mending, he said, “Something sure smells good.” I replied, “Home-made soup. Would you like some?” I liked his honest, hearty “YES!” as people often decline such offers thinking they are being polite. I learned that Hugh was a British pilot who fought in both World Wars and spent time in Egypt learning about the occult. He believed we all have healing abilities and invited me to weekly meetings at his house. Hugh had asked Hawayo Takata to BC in 1975 and organized her first workshop in Canada. She is widely credited as the woman who introduced the spiritual practice of Reiki to the Western World and was the third Grand Master teaching this style. His Reiki group met at his home on a different night.

Hugh’s teachings included finding lost objects, my exposure to which coincided with Rae misplacing his wallet. I sat in meditation, then did a walking meditation following the subtle guidance until I felt the energy shift. I sat on the edge of our bed and looked and looked as Hugh said it should be within three feet of where the energy stops. A hint came from the ethers. . . lift the mattress, and sure enough, there it was. Rae said he had no idea how his wallet got there. Perhaps he had had more than a soda to drink the evening before.

My boss was promoted to Recreational Director and wanted to put Summerland on the map. She created the Giant’s Head Run with 5 and 10-K routes around the mountain base to encourage kids and adults to get fit, offering free T-shirts and a few prizes. I had taken a calligraphy course and became her right-hand girl looking after many details, including overseeing the now 1,000-plus

people who came to race. When a volunteer did not show up for his job to post race times in front of the pool on a ladder, I went to make sure the job got handled. The sun was setting, and I was feeling impatient, waiting for the arrival of the next runner. Looking upwards, I told the Divine, “Please give me a job doing something I want to attend.”

Over the next few years, I sewed old-fashioned bathing suits for the annual fundraiser tea, designed and crafted three polar bear costumes for the New Year’s Polar Bear Dip and sewed large banners that hung from the pool ceiling. During a shutdown, I repainted walls, waxed gym floors and scrubbed the pool with chlorine. When Dick White, the mechanical wizard from the arena, came to fix things, he did it on my shift as he liked my handy-woman skills.

Peter was then hired as the pool manager to implement the new National Lifeguard certification standards just coming into effect. This would require faster swim times if I wanted to keep my job. I joined a lifeguard competition with two other employees, and we won third place. I was glad none of those emergencies occurred on my shift, and now I yearned for the quieter days when walking the deck meant I had time to chat with the patrons, sharing advice on alternative ideas for keeping healthy. My guarding style was watching kids as they entered the pool; it was easy to pick out the poor swimmers. If one got pulled into deeper water, I slipped in and gave them a boost back to the shallow end, no big deal.

As I entered the pool area this fine day, I could feel myself being observed and muttered, “It’s my deck, and it doesn’t need two lifeguards with ten people swimming.” As I rounded the first corner, my angel said, “Smile, Angele, smile.” “No way,” I snapped back, refusing to look in Peter’s direction. When I reached the next side, the voice screamed louder, “Smile, Angele, smile.” I wanted to cover my ears but scanned the pool floor every few minutes as the new protocol demanded. I did not like the strident sound of whistles or hand signals every few minutes, which Peter mandated. As I walked to the third side, I gave in to the voice, looked up, and smiled. Peter hand-signalled that he wanted me off the deck and proceeded to tell me I was the worst lifeguard ever and was pulling my shifts and demoting me to a cashier. I could have cared less; I mostly did cashiering, but his arrogance and lack of appreciation for the hours I spent training to improve upset me. When I mentioned my bad day to Rae, he said, “Quit.” That made me feel super-supported, but it is not my style. Instead, I chatted with my angels and told them I needed time to figure out another way to earn money. They indicated they would give me six months to figure things out. I sensed they had other things for me to do.



I read Common Ground magazine with new eyes, circling ads that offered courses that fit my next stage of life. After thinking about them carefully every few days, I crossed one off the list. I wrote or called to inquire about the cost and training time when just a few ads were left. I needed something part science, nothing too ‘woo-woo,’ but that would pay well. The Handwriting Analysis teacher said the course required two years of training, and I could do it by correspondence. Since it paid \$50 an hour, I decided to go for it. Graphology was a proven method of understanding people via each letter created and connected in the handwritten script. I learned to measure the slant, the width of each letter, depth of the imprint on the page and mailed my answers each week while continuing to work as the pool cashier. Once a month, I travelled to Vancouver for one-on-one sessions and met; new like-minded people. I collected writing samples from everyone I knew and recently found this file; what a treasure, reminders of what was important back then.

In the Spring of ‘85, I attended the Spring Festival of Awareness in Vernon, as fees were reasonable and only an hour away. Hugh passed out the festival programs as he was one of the instructors. I found the workshops most exciting and even received a free healing session where a young lady tucked in my auric field. Part of me was impressed, yet my brain wondered, “Who are these people?” In case you don’t know, our auric field is an invisible energy field that surrounds us like a cocoon and can be seen and felt by sensitives.

That summer, we put our house up for sale as I wanted to move to Penticton, knowing there would be more choices to find another kind of work. We had so few inquiries that I gave up and figured relocating was not to be. On August 15, we got an offer from Donita and quickly found the perfect house in Penticton that we could move into immediately. Gordon now had his driver’s license, so he would drive to his hockey practice, and I would drive to work, now twenty minutes down the road. Gordon’s best friend was told to leave by his mother and asked if he could live with us. We approached human resources for funds to offset the costs, which were approved. Gordon and Keith each chose a small room, and Dale and Jeff would share the larger rec room downstairs. Thank goodness there was a bathroom on each floor because soon we were asked to foster Reneta, a 17-year-old girl who would share my sewing/office space upstairs near our bedroom. She was a wild one who eventually became an aromatherapist. She had no mother and argued with her Dad, so my influence was good for her.

Life at the pool became enjoyable when Peter found a better-paying position at Prince George. Still, my internal clock was ticking, so I told my boss that my time as a lifeguard/cashier felt complete. Did she want me to train someone? She hired a few young people, then decided someone older should keep an eye on the place on the weekends. Easter was approaching, so I mentioned I would like one of these days off to spend time with the family. I had Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday shifts when the new schedule was posted. I felt anger rising from deep within as my hand pulled the schedule from under the tack. I walked into her office, threw the piece of paper on her desk and said, "I quit, as of yesterday," and burst into tears. I knew change was coming and wanted the ending to be harmonious, but I reacted instinctively. It was time!

To receive Unemployment Insurance Compensation, I had to justify quitting. The panel accepted my explanation, and the benefits flowed for a year. Each week I filled in a job search report, which was easy to accommodate since I was in a union and Penticton did not need lifeguards. Easter arrived, and I spent an hour hiding 100 foil-wrapped chocolate eggs in the front room, taping them to the back of pictures, sewing them into the curtains lining and poking them into any hole they fit. The boys found only 94 eggs, so they questioned my ability to count. Once they admitted defeat, I strolled over to the couch and pulled on the socks underneath. They groaned, "Mom, you wouldn't." Indeed I had, for I had learned to live with their mess. Cleaning is not my forte, so when guests visited, I explained that I was learning to leap over the discarded clothes on the floor as deftly as my children. I asked Gordon years later if he remembered that incident or any of the holidays we had taken. Vaguely, he conceded. It was good that I had figured out that life and friends would teach the kids what they needed to know as they grew older. Each son had a daily newspaper route and a sports practice. As they grew into manhood, they would figure out how to make money according to their talents.

I had taken over organizing the Metaphysical Society held at Leir House, where we hosted a local speaker every second Friday. Meeting many like-minded people, including Urmi, who had also attended a town meeting presented by Shaw Cable at the Leir House. We heard them say, "The government requires more Canadian content for our network, so we are asking people to sign up for free production lessons." This seemed like a fun addition to everything I had been

learning. Urmi was eager to sign up, and we could sync our TV show with the speaker events, which would draw in larger crowds. I asked my kids what they thought of the idea, and they almost shouted, “Everyone knows you are crazy, Mom, so don’t let us stop you.” After I learned to smoothly scan using the cable company’s heavy professional cameras, I shot footage of ducks in the creek using the cable company’s heavy professional cameras. Then I panned to the mountains, overlaying the title *The Holistic Networker*. Once the intro was complete, people came out of the woodwork wanting to be interviewed. Each had a similar message about waking ourselves up. I was fascinated with all the healing and paranormal experiences I listened to.

Since I had time off and two boys had won a pass to Expo 86 in Vancouver, we decided to travel in my VW Rabbit, 6 adults with our luggage on top. We had a fun time walking through the pavilions and watching the fireworks. Prince Charles and Princess Diana opened the event, drawing 22 million visitors. Mom had a friend Dixie, who let us stay in her one-bedroom apartment for the week, as it was within walking distance, making the holiday affordable.

Upon returning, I ran into Tela LaMer in downtown Penticton at the health food store. She was an astrologer that presented at the second Spring Festival of Awareness in Vernon. She mentioned the Harmonic Convergence happening August 17, 1986, at Lyn Van Ert’s home, where she was staying, near the new ski hill in Penticton. I’d wanted to meet Lyn because she had started Ironman Canada in 1983 as race director, and the sport was gaining popularity in Penticton. I was amazed to see so many condos on the mountaintop at the new ski resort. I joined 20 others gathered via word of mouth, including Wayne Still, who later became prominent in my healing journey and Urmi Sheldon, my camera buddy for our TV show.

Our crew grew in numbers, so we created a one-hour documentary to learn even more. We chose ‘Organics’ as our topic, so I asked Lee McFadyen of Cawston, grandmother of the local organic movement, for an interview. She said, “I don’t usually allow strangers in my home, but please have a seat.” After we recorded the conversation, I thanked her and said, “That wasn’t so bad, was it?” She answered, “My cat makes those decisions. She sat under your chair the whole time, so I knew my words were safe with you.” I learned pretty quickly that alternative lifestyle, people make decisions differently from how most of society does. Splicing frames

to create documentaries took lots of time, so we decided to stick with simple interviews as my life started getting very busy. I loved meeting the Hari Krishnas, soap makers, African drummers, psychics, Reiki masters, ear cndlers, and others who passed through as interview guests. The show lasted seven years before regulations changed and Shaw Cable took back their studios. I have a copy of most of the people I interviewed, and people suggest they be digitalized and put on YouTube. Hummmm!

In the summer of '87, Rae landed a job working for Peters Brothers in Revelstoke. The boys spent the summer with him: Gordon found a job as he was planning to buy a car, Dale bought a dirt bike as it was too rocky for skateboarding, and Keith kept reading books or playing games on his computer. This job provided 80% dental care, so I had many teeth fixed. A front tooth was turning black due to a root canal when I was 12. Back then, they drilled through the front gum and scraped it clean, but occasionally a pimple appeared, and the pus would ooze. I wanted a dentist that did NOT use mercury, so I phoned around. The White Pines Dental Clinic said Dr. Benthon used alternative filling materials, one of the first dentists to do so. He created a bridge to replace the blackening front tooth that still looks decent. A blessing at a price I could afford.

In November, we travelled to Jasper, AB; Donald was getting married to Holly. We helped grate chocolate for the cake and smirked the next day when his dog came into the chapel dressed in a tuxedo. The wedding cake looked like a log house, as building them is what he did for a living. Good thing his chainsaw did not work when he tried to start it up to cut the cake! He always did have a good sense of humor.

In the summer of '88, Keith picked up pop cans and beer bottles off the nearby beach early in the mornings and earned enough money to put a down payment on a double disk drive computer. As teenagers, they could choose their birthday present, and we would pay half for anything they wanted, within reason, of course. Remember, this was the very beginning-beginning of the computer era, and I initially had computers pegged as time-wasters, watching the boys play games on them. Once I realized they could be used as a typewriter without needing white-out to correct mistakes, I took time to learn to use them, saving my work on a floppy disk. This sure made my graphology assignments look professional! The Metaphysical Society bought a dot-matrix printer so I could print mail labels for our

monthly newsletter.

Samaya started a second New Age magazine in Vancouver in the summer of 1987 called Shared Vision. She also hosted The Breakfast Club, a promotional time for her many advertisers, which I attended about once a month when I was in town for some in-person graphology lessons. At one event, I learned to read auras. At another, I had my eyes read by Denny Ray Johnson, the founder of Rayid Iridology; he spoke about the four primary iris structures as indications of our past lives. I needed to Question Authority this lifetime, so I found a bumper sticker to remind me. He told us of his helicopter trips to the tops of mountains, stabilizing the earth's energies using crystals. This is where I met Peter Morris and other psychics looking to expand into the Okanagan. I booked them for our TV show, then as a Metaphysical Speaker at the Leir House. Once people heard them speak, some would pay for weekend courses. Renting the Leir House became my full-time occupation over the next few years as I learned the best spots to hang posters, register people and collect various fees. Intro talks were by donation, and there was always enough to pay the room rent.

In 1988 Peter Morris, who channelled Big Eagle, a native Indian, had people flocking to his talks. After one of these workshops, he said, "I didn't get a Spring Festival of Awareness Invite this year. Can you find out why?" I dug up an old program and called the number. When I told Peter the answer, "There is no energy left to run it," he said, "Darn, that was one of the best events ever; we can't let it die. Can you help me find a new organizer?" I called someone I thought might have the skills, but she was uninterested. Peter suggested we have lunch at Naramata Beach as he wanted to see this hamlet. The United Church of Canada owns part of Naramata. After the war, a few people joined three army buildings into the shape of a U and called it Naramata Center. The organization grew slowly, adding a gym and mess hall while building homes for their families and the pastor. They created a place for their families to gather and celebrate their connection to God, mainly during the summer. Alberta Hall was a dorm that housed women, like nurses or school teachers, who needed supervision. The Leir House was built for that exact purpose. We found Dave, the caretaker, who told us that a down payment of \$400 would hold the last weekend of May 1989. As we drove back, Peter asked, "Would you be interested?" Me? I'd organized runs and races for the Summerland Rec Centre and was interested in metaphysical topics. The Festival was something I would like to attend, but could I organize it?

I must admit my first thought was that this would allow me to attend workshops for free. Since I had just failed my graphology exam and the teacher said I had to wait six months before rewriting, I thought to myself: I will do the Festival just once, then get on with my life as planned, earning \$50 an hour as a graphologist. Feeling rested from ten years of lifeguarding, half in Terrace and half in Summerland, I wanted to give something back to society for my year off with pay, so I agreed as long as Peter would help! I called the organizers back and arranged a meeting to determine what taking over this festival would entail. They explained the long work hours and asked if we had many volunteers. We both nodded, not knowing what else to do. They said we would get \$2,000 in advance to pay for a deposit at Naramata Centre and print a program if the original hosts, Nora and Harry Jukes, agreed. In a few weeks, Nora called, asking when would be a good time to meet. When the day came, I could feel 'their coming' all the way from the Kootenays. When I spotted a gold-coloured station wagon rounding the corner, I knew it was them. We chatted for about fifteen minutes when Harry announced that the best way to know for sure was to check in with the Spirit of the Festival. . . it was time to meditate. They thought the kitchen table was perfect, so we sat down, held hands, closed our eyes and went into silence. After ten minutes, Harry said, "She has my vote." Nora took a deep breath and oozed, "The energy spiral went all the way to the heavens; she has my vote too." They left a cheque as they waved goodbye. I breathed a resounding "Wow!" So this is how New Agers make decisions! I was a happy woman, shopping and cooking for five teens, studying graphology, travelling to Vancouver to meet like-minded people and now a chance to give back to society.

As each Metaphysical Speaker meeting ended, I announced the Spring Festival of Awareness in May at Naramata. I asked, "Who wants to help." Laurel Burnham attended the Spring Festival in the Kootenays. She even taught a class in Vernon and loved the idea, adding she was a proofreader with lots of connections and would help with programming. At the next meeting, David Cursons joined; he liked kids and was an artist who cared about the environment. Soon after Judy Byers connected, she was an organized schoolteacher who enjoyed being creative. My camera pal, Urmi was the most excited of all, she was a Sannyasin, and her name meant 'divine wave.' She travelled to India at the age of 19 years and spent six years in Osho's ashram. Back in Canada, she was raising twins. Looking back, I can see how her ideas influenced my life and her bubbly personality regarding

healing ourselves.

As Christmas drew near, we had enough people to start having real meetings! Fresh-baked cookies came out of the oven each month as my home became a hive of activity. I travelled to Vernon several times to meet with Joan McIntrye and get the organizers' mail-out list which I entered on my sons' computer. Peter Morris said I was doing a great job and looked forward to the event in the spring, but he was being called elsewhere. Then, Social Services called and offered us a third foster child, Jon, a 12-year-old son of a third-generation alcoholic. The boys made room downstairs and took turns showing him by example how to behave. This extra income helped as raising teenagers is expensive, especially if they play a sport like hockey and need a goaltender's glove.

In February 1989, Laurel and I proofread the black and white copy of the 11th annual Spring Festival of Awareness program at the local printers. Naramata Centre listed how many people were allowed in each lecture room. We mailed the program to the 700 people who had previously attended. My phone got so busy my teenage kids threatened to disown me, so I had a second line installed. Then a letter arrived from Marion Walters, an elder who wrote, "I could not get through on the phone, so I am writing to let you know I used to own a trailer park, and maybe that experience could help with registering people." Some folks from the States called next and asked who was cooking. Good question! I travelled across the border to meet them and arranged for them to provide meals in the onsite three-bedroom house. There were no restaurants in the hamlet and only one corner store. Most participants purchased meals via Naramata Centre, but latecomers were out of luck. Hence, it was good that Doris Enzenspenger and her husband Joseph brought enough pots and food to feed the hungry. They were longtime Rainbow Gatherers or people who gathered to promote peace, prayer and appreciation for Mother Nature. 2022 was the 50th annual held in Colorado's Routt National Forest. This inexpensive non-alcohol week-long campout is held at a different national forest each year to encourage families to attend and listen to spiritually-inspired workshop leaders.

Many Reiki Masters were my next saving grace; Joan Smith, Vicky Allen, Holly Biggar and Jane Hill-Daigle arrived with massage tables and set up the Healing House. Ten people offered healing sessions by donation. People sat in the living room waiting for the next available practitioner. Sessions took half an hour and were on a first-come, first-served basis. I was amazed at the number of people

who just sat and meditated, patiently waiting their turn. The following year I had a session with Noor-a-Nisa (Joan Smith) and discovered why people were willing to wait for a half-hour session under her magic fingers. I was aware enough by now that I could measure the degree of tiredness and stress in my body that was released during a session.

I was glad people knew what to do, and I just let it happen. When someone asked where to camp or park their trailer, Judy would jump up and return to the exact seat so I knew where to find her. Marion looked after the long line of people waiting to register at the door, and I helped when I could. David and Urmi looked after the Children's Festival; at the same time, Laurel quickly organized a store where people could buy and sell locally-made wares. My memory is blurred from all the 'busyness.' Still, I remember walking into the gym Friday night, leaning backwards and whispering to Laurel, "We should have decorated this place." The emptiness of the gym felt so stark, but at this point, there was nothing I could do.

After The Introduction of Workshop Leaders, Marilee and Duncan Goheen offered an impromptu slideshow on psychic healers as they had just returned from the Philippines. Chairs were filled to the brim, with people standing along the walls. People stayed late and attended the 6:45 am TaiChi class with Hajime Naka. I was impressed. 170 people registered, plus Nora, Harry Jukes, and Sid Tayal, the originators. 40 instructors shared their experiences in the 10 lecture rooms. The Children's Festival had some parents helping, including Mojave and Dale Jukes, who entertained us as a juggler. Dale was Harry's son and eventually became a New Age Minister who officiated at our wedding. I have also stayed connected with Mojave over the years, a wise woman who brought Heritage Seeds from her garden. Open-pollinated varieties were becoming a thing of the past as commercial companies wanted more control over food production. Thus Seedy Saturday became popular every spring, where gardeners and farmers trade seeds and give advice to inspire local food production.

As the event ended, "I heard people commenting this was the best organized Festival ever." Wow! I could think of many changes now that I knew what needed doing. I was elated but tired once it was over. Around midnight, my car, packed with extra items, drove out of the energy bubble we had created over the weekend. A feeling of overwhelm vibrated my body, so I pulled to the side of the road and



burst into tears as a bolt of lightning went through my body. I felt like an egg being cracked open. I never did manage to attend a workshop but felt blessed and connected to the flow of Tao as the grace of God filled my heart. That was worth far more than any words I could have listened to in a workshop. When the money was counted, we had made \$120 in profit, which was spent on a wrap-up event at a restaurant. I asked my crew if they would do it again, as I wanted a second chance to improve my performance and have the gym decorated. God must have been smiling, for my life changed that weekend. I knew I was no longer in control.

That summer, Jeff and Gordon graduated, and Reneta turned 18. She would be fending for herself as she was now an adult. Jon went home for a summer holiday with his grandparents. I got hired at the Summerland Arena, working part-time to look after the various summer events, including the Fall Faire. The bossman called just as we were putting the ice back in. The meter reader wanted maternity leave; could I do that job now? This was good news as I wondered how I would make ends meet as Rae did not wish to foster children anymore.

Dale, our youngest, had a friend visiting who knew Gordon's room would soon be empty. He said his older brother Jared Edis was looking to move to Penticton. Could he drop in and chat. I knew his parents; they lived in Summerland, were herbalists, and owned the print shop in Penticton where Jared had type-set the Spring Festival of Awareness pages. I told him I was thinking of organizing it again and was looking into purchasing a computer. He said he had just ordered three of them on a deal. If he sold two, he could keep the third for free, plus he had access to various fonts and publishing programs. He was willing to trade a computer loaded with programs, a green screen and lessons once a week at 10 pm for rent and some money.

I remember the first day creating boxes on the computer screen. In the morning, Rae kissed me goodbye, and when he came home, he had that look in his eyes, so I asked, "What's up?" He said, "What's for dinner?" I replied, "Ahhh . . . is that why I have to pee?" I had not moved off my chair since 8 am! The creative process captivated me. I call it a time warp, and I still lose track of time when immersed in a creative process.

Since I was in Vancouver, I stopped at the Common Ground office to pick up extra copies to share in the Okanagan. I spoke with two men, Michael Bertrand and Joseph Roberts, who started publishing it in 1982 to provide alternative information to the public. I suggested an Okanagan version with extra copies I could distribute locally regularly. They said they had tried selling advertising but had yet to succeed, so good luck and more power to me if I wanted to try. My next stop was the office of Shared Vision magazine and a chat with Samaya Ryane. During our conversation, we struck a business deal whereby I bought the wholesale centre spread. I sold a few ads, wrote a few words on my new computer, and mailed the two pages to Samaya in time for the July and August 1989 printing. The next edition had eight pages with extended editorial, articles, and ads. I titled the pages INSIDE BC. The December edition featured Mom's new book Iceberg Tea and the 12th Spring Festival, plus ads from people or companies willing to support my new endeavour. The meter reader had her baby, and I was laid off with enough hours to apply for UIC a second time.

As I was heading up a steep hill for a walk, I heard a voice say, "Start your own magazine." I looked up and said, "What would I call it?" The voice replied, "Issues." To which I muttered, "Not a good-sounding name." As I continued walking, I heard the voice a second time. It said, "You are to write a column." I looked up and said, "What would I call it?" The voice replied, "Musings." I said, "I will look that word up in the dictionary, and if it means anything, I will see what I can do."

I dropped by Webco's office, which printed the News Advertiser in Penticton, for a quote; 16 pages were their minimum. The cost was the same as I had paid for eight pages in Shared Vision! As I drove the four hours to Vancouver to pick up the 5,000 copies of the December edition, I felt terrible telling Samaya my angel's idea, fearing the worst. On the contrary, she was delighted and said she was thinking the same thing; printing 5,000 extra copies was not working out financially for her. She added, "If I can start a magazine, so can you." We hugged, and my heart sang all the way home, for I knew God was providing the resources. Now it was time to figure out the details of the next festival and publish a metaphysical magazine that was supported locally.

By then, I heard that SIDCO, the Southern Interior Department of Commerce for the Okanagan, offered a trial program to create business opportunities supported by the federal and provincial governments. You either had to be on social assistance or UI. They would pay \$946 a month if approved, and you did not have to fill in a job search report. This program is now called Community Futures. I dropped by their office in Penticton and told them I wanted to create a magazine that would support local alternative practitioners and showed them my ‘pink slip’ or the lay-off notice. The lady said, “Good timing! We just sponsored a reflexologist, and your skills will be needed.” When I returned with the paperwork the next day, she looked at my financial numbers and asked, “Can I adjust a few of these?” I said, “Of course, it’s your paperwork!” I had done my best to project what my income would be like in 5 years. She phoned two days later saying I was approved. I was ecstatic! I would receive money doing what I felt was important. I was given the freedom to change the world, and I took this opportunity seriously.

I had a better look at the Common Ground ad prices and figured out a rate for Issues Magazine, \$50 for a business card-sized ad. Since I had sold ads in Shared Vision and knew what some people were willing to pay, I came up with a two-for-one deal as I didn’t want to increase the price quickly and give advertisers a reason to stop. They would pay for the first ad, and I would reprint it for free in the following edition. Once the magazine looked good with lots of photos and articles and people picked it up and called the advertisers, I stopped the deal, which took about a year.

As the first edition was tweaked late into the night, I remembered a similar feeling or effort, giving birth to Gordon twenty years earlier in January 1970. In the morning, after that long night, I took my floppy disk to Wonderworks, who laser printed my pages for \$1 each. I took these pages home, cut boxes where the photos would be, and taped them in the grey-scale images that Webco had made earlier in the week, using my homemade light table. By noon I completed the colour separation of 8 of the 24 pages, including the front and back cover, and dropped them off with a prayer that it was done correctly.

This is a reprint of my first editorial: I looked up the word ‘muse’ in the dictionary, and it means to meditate in silence, to think deeply, and to dream. My

column will be to share with you thoughts and dreams. I feel that wholistic health is essential, but not many people are aware of the benefits. Many practitioners are very talented but don't always make a living doing what they love. I hope my skills as a promoter will entice people to give wholistic practitioners a try. I'm a networker, not a writer, so I depend on you to supply interesting articles. I'd like to thank my supporters and sponsors who made this publication a reality. I hope you enjoy and share this premiere edition of ISSUES.

Magazines usually have a declaration of intent in small print on the masthead along with a disclaimer; mine read: I dedicate Issues Magazine to YOU, the people willing to start the change of attitude needed to help Mother Earth survive. We need to find alternatives to chemicals to become aware of the toxic poisons accumulating in our food chain, poisoning our children and the Earth for generations to come. We need to take the time to rediscover the natural healing therapies using what nature provides. We must get in touch with our inner wisdom so that it may provide us with knowledge. We need to live in harmony with nature and our neighbours. We indeed create our own reality with our thoughts and our dollars. "Every dollar you spend is a vote for your beliefs." Consider thoughtfully when spending money. Issues will focus on events and individuals leading the way to a happier and healthier life.

David Cursons, a crew member for the Spring Festival, wrote about the environment and drew a cartoon. He was treasurer of the newly-formed Green Party in 1982. I loved his sense of humour and that he would drop by and type his column on my computer. I often ran free ads for the Green Party as a token of my appreciation for making others aware of environmental concerns, locally and regionally. He and his friends provided many exciting conversations.

Laurel Burnham typed her column at the Women's Centre and gave it to me on a floppy disk. It was usually from a feminine perspective and talked about Wiccan festivities. Now that she had met Daryl O'Neill, the love of her life, she was delighted to be pregnant, and her columns reflected that joy, for she had been told this was impossible. She said the change to a healthier diet must have made the difference. She was a Capricorn who took great pleasure in writing and seeing her words in print. I grinned when she said, "Writing is like masturbation for my mind." I never understood the ease these two had with writing but felt grateful they did it

without pay, unlike the Common Ground contributors.

As much as I enjoyed Common Ground's inspirational covers, I was glad not to spend time or money creating one and instead featured Mom's homesteading photos. Mom was so proud to have her pictures in print. She always wanted to be a famous photographer; in my eyes, she was. People loved the old photos, which reminded them of their childhood, and I got to write about mine. There were no digital cameras back then. Rolls of film were expensive, checking negatives was an art, and printed proofs were a specialized item. Even loading the publisher program took time, as did pressing 'Save,' but if you didn't, and the computer glitched, which it frequently did, you could lose everything created since the last Save. Once the Control Z shortcut was created for 'Undo previous change,' we all breathed a sigh of relief. So many remarkable improvements happened over the next few years.

When I delivered the first 5,000 copies, one of my clients looked at the cover and said, "What are those people doing?" I stared at her and said, "That's my dad; he's washing clothes!" It took a moment to realize that other people did not know what my dad looked like nor what he was doing. After I printed the second edition, I realized it would be a good idea to put the month and year on the cover. Some days I would poise my fingers over the keyboard and say to my angels, "Better figure out what to do next." I would press on with the layout when an idea popped into my mind. I knew so little about publishing and computers; it was only by the grace of God that I continued.

Since the 12th Spring Festival of Awareness would happen on April 1, we decided that the jester would be our theme. David did his best to draw one and then recommended a friend who illustrated professionally. What an amazing job! A few years later, Laurel was garage-saleing and found our jester engraved in a mirror with a quote around the heart that read, "The secret to life is laughter, even at oneself" for \$1; it was at the residence of this artist. Another miracle I treasure. The court jester is a universal character in the Tarot, ancient Rome, China, Russia and the Middle East. In medieval Europe, jesters used their position as a license to voice their keen insights and observations and even to mock the folly of court life and the monarch. Their satirical remarks provided insight to the peasants about power and authority. In the Lakota tradition, the Heyóka (Fool) functioned as a mirror and a teacher and could heal emotional pain. This colourful character's laughter, singing and story-telling often served as helpful advice.

A young volunteer painted a 30-foot coloured rainbow, and Laurel brought pussy willows and flowers from her garden along with some borrowed banners. There was a good mix of people, some drove expensive motorhomes or rented private rooms, and others hitch-hiked or worked 6-8 hours in exchange for free admittance. Everyone was welcome in the various workshops, mingling and sharing their love while enlightening themselves. We discovered that the early spring weather was too cool for campers and asked Naramata Centre for a later date. They agreed to the last weekend in April. As the word was spreading, everyone would know well in advance that the Festival was the place to be in the Spring.

At the wrap-up meeting, Laurel insisted the feminine should also be represented, so I hired a female artist, Joy Whitley. She chose a mirror instead of a puppet head to portray the need to see ourselves using the light (a candle). Hearts instead of the traditional diamond shape was featured, feminine vs masculine. I accepted the jester as my mascot when Urmi and her friend Didget painted four life-sized jesters in their art class. They had projected a slide image onto the bed sheets and used house paint to bring them to life. Dancing with one foot in the air would add colour to the grey walls.

Once the second Festival was over, life slowed a bit, and I had time to rewrite my graphology exam and passed with flying colours. On my next personal consultation trip to Vancouver with my teacher Darleen Simmons I asked, “What did I do wrong the first time?” She grinned and said, “I would have passed you, but a large angel appeared in my office and said, “We need another six months; please fail her.” Now that I was certified, I only needed to find clients who would pay \$50 an hour. I was so naïve and still am; thank goodness angels are real.

As agreed, I did look up the word ‘Musing’ and discovered nine muses in Greek mythology, the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who were the Goddess of Memory. These inspirational goddesses of literature, science and the arts are believed to invoke creative thought. The word museum has a similar root; a sacred place to study and where holy objects were housed. The Great Library of Alexandria in Egypt was ‘such a place.’

I also looked up the word ‘Issues,’ which is both a noun and a verb. The original meaning was ‘to put something forth.’ Today you might hear someone say, “He’s got issues,” meaning problems, usually emotional ones, but this is a new use for the word. In the Cambridge Dictionary, there are at least ten variations of what it meant, but usually, it means to provide something official, as in, ‘The government issued new stamps.’ Eventually, the magazine’s title would become Issues Magazine for Empowerment. With hindsight, I see it was the purrrfect name.

Quitting my job was like leaving Terrace; the timing was perfect. Workshop leaders became friends, and being around like-minded people filled me with love. I wrote a regular column advertising my graphology services as Issues was the perfect tool for promoting myself. Even taught night classes at the local colleges and learned more with each book I read. The only time I made money from this skill was when I was hired to help people change their signatures to shift their personalities or when I was hired to entertain the spouses of teachers for an entertaining afternoon. I taught an hour of the essential information and then asked volunteers to write one sentence using felt markers on large sheets of paper while I went for a bathroom break. I remember breathing deep, allowing spirit to flow through me as I studied the various scripts while taping them to the wall. I made statements describing what was most important to each writer, as shown by the deviations from how they were taught as children. I used the murmuring in the crowd and the nodding of heads to confirm my observations. Analyzing signatures still excites me, for it is indeed a science, and like astrology, it has many layers that need to be understood before it can provide deep, deep clarity.

In June of 1990, Diana Holland, a Transmission Meditation practitioner in the Lower Mainland, put an ad in Issues and asked if I could hang posters and find a location for her class. After the event, I showed her Issues Magazine. She said she had read it, that was how she found me. She liked what I was doing and added, “You have an interesting writing style.” I said, “I do?” Yes,” she replied, “You speak from the heart, but your truth could be better written.” “What can I do about it?” She said, “I am a professional editor. Why don’t you mail me your monthly column, and I will edit it.” Diana rearranged my thoughts so they read better and edited the first draft of this book, which I edited about eight more times before discovering Grammarly.

Rae saw how happy I was and mentioned how unhappy he was. We chatted; he wanted a change and more than just his job. I sensed his mixed feelings, and my only response was to say, "I can't make you happy; that's an inside job." He did attend a few vegetarian potlucks, which made him most uncomfortable, as did many of the speakers. He was not interested in health or knowing more about why we come to the planet.

Since I made the four-hour road trip to Vancouver every month, Gordon decided to come for the ride and buy a vehicle. He was planning to drive to Prince George and enrol in their Sports Medicine program at the University but had an accident, and the car was written off, so Dad would drive him. Rae was looking forward to connecting with his old buddies, as he had lived in that town until he was 16. A change of scenery would give him time to think about life and happiness. When Rae returned, he said, "I've been thinking . . . I really like the old you but don't like the new you. So, either you change back to the old you, or you let me find a new you!"

I went into my office, sewing and computer room, sat on my meditation cushion, and said to God, "Get your butt down here; we have an important decision to make." I explained to God that I was living life as best I could and that I did not want to die if I gave Rae a divorce. That was our marriage agreement . . . 'For better or for worse, till death do us part.' In my altered state of consciousness, this seemed a deep concern. I argued with my brain that many friends had divorced and they did not die, but I wanted confirmation. After meditation, I went to bed, and Rae followed after watching the news. A lightning bolt cracked over my head in the morning, and a loud voice said, "Karmically, it's over; the choice is yours." The voice woke me from a vivid dream, which I wrote down before elbowing Rae and saying, "You've got it." Sleepily he asked, "I've got what?" I responded, "You've got the divorce. God says I have a choice." Rae answered, "Too bad, I really like the old you." It was true; I was the one who had changed, following the inner sensations of lightness, doing and learning things I enjoyed.

The dream showed Rae and me walking hand-in-hand on a lush green lawn in the mountains, with the bright moon illuminating the two men approaching with shovels. I knew what to do and started digging. Rae was still staring at his shovel



when the men returned and looked at my deep, six-foot-long hole. They exclaimed, “Wow, even her corners are mitered.” I was so ready I jumped into the hole, not waiting for the casket, which they lowered over the top of me, making the space dark. When I felt ready, I opened my eyes and saw the light at the end of the tunnel. I turned myself into a white rabbit, and down I went. When I emerged, it was warm and steamy, like the shower room at the swimming pool. There was a large desk with an officer in uniform sitting there. I looked at the Sergeant Major, who put his hand to his cap and saluted, saying, “Job well done.” I didn’t know much about dreams then, but this one seemed self-explanatory.

When we brought up the subject of divorce with the boys, they chimed in with, “It’s about time.” Rae then told me he had met Bonnie, the sister of the many brothers that were his pals when he lived in Prince George. As a teen, he had a crush on her, and they had gone to a few movies together. Bonnie was just ending a 20-year abusive relationship, as he put it. She liked eating meat and driving around in cars listening to rock and roll music, so he invited her to Penticton to meet the family. As we chatted in the semi-darkness of the hallway, my mind’s eye watched as a sword swooped through the air between us, cutting through what looked like a multicoloured electrical cord. The strands swayed from the impact and quickly dissipated.

The next day as I rushed down the split-level stairs in my house, I could feel strange sensations in my feet, so I ran back down the steps and up again, stopping to feel this tingling sensation. As I was about to head down the steps for a third time, Rae looked up from his hockey game on TV and said, “What are you doing?” I looked at my feet, my mouth opened and said, “My feet, they feel so light; there are no shackles on them.” I have no idea where that sentence came from, except whenever I drove home after a late-night shift in Summerland and saw the city lights of Penticton in the distance, I would burst into an old Negro spiritual song, “Coming for to carry me home.” I imagined I was an old Negro finishing a hard day of work in a past life. Or perhaps I had forgotten the heaviness of staying together for the kids’ sake.

Later I read that each time two people connect, a fine cord wraps around them in a figure-eight, bonding the connection. Now that our karma was complete, the cords that bound us energetically were released back into the ethers. I knew deep

inside that if Bonnie hadn't come along, Rae would not have asked to split up, so I felt grateful that my angels had made it easy for both of us. I believe all marriages are karmic, and once the initial bliss wears off, the real work starts, as our habits and beliefs are poked at to the nth degree. If you blame anyone other than yourself for the circumstances you have created, you become the victim and lose personal power.

In February, I mailed over 1500 programs to participants who attended the Festival over the years. I carried the 8-9 boxes into the post office, paying 10 cents each, as long as they were in postal code sequence. I created a subscription fee if people wanted Issues mailed with each printing. Soon Issues was 40 pages with 10,000 copies being printed. Around that time, my film crew started filming a TV series with Mark Tey on Kung Fu and the transformation of chi. We continued our regular interviews and the Friday evening speakers at the Leir House.

I tucked the Spring Festival pages into the middle of Issues. In 1992 and 1993, I put it in the back section after the directory of practitioners. In 1994 I flipped the back cover so the program's title page looked like a separate magazine. I was happy with this invention, another 2-for-1 deal. It was a win-win for the festival and people looking into New Age alternative connections. The 9th annual Rebirth of Mother Earth happened in Edgewood that summer. Many non-native supporters encouraged native elders to share their wisdom traditions, including a sweat lodge I attended. John Robbins, author of *Diet for a New America*, was lecturing in Kelowna. I attended his talk, along with 800 others, entitled *Healing Ourselves, Healing the World*. Even Dr. Masaru Emoto, a Japanese researcher of water crystals, visited Kelowna long before he and his photographs became world famous.

People were ready for this information; health and healing were becoming everyday expectations, and thus, Issues thrived. With each edition, my editorials grew longer as I figured out why I am the way I am and related it to the family homesteading cover photo. Many folks told me that the first thing they did after procuring their copy of Issues was to read my column. Men who seldom read editorials took time to tell me how much they enjoyed reading Musing.

The fourth edition of Issues was in September and October 1990 and featured nuns playing baseball on the cover. I wrote my editorial to describe my philosophy of life. The best part of Sunday was playing baseball with the nuns that came to

Rosswood every few weeks to go fishing, skating or sleighing. They always laughed and had a good time. My great-grandfather was a devout Catholic and wise, as he never preached his beliefs. I remember him saying, “Angele, learn to listen, then you will be twice as smart.” I have kept my mind open to all possibilities and enjoy Eastern philosophies. I believe the world needs more spirituality than materialism. We need to feel connected to love, know we belong, and have the right to be happy. I believe prayer comes from the heart, and God can hear you as easily in an open field as in a church. Children need to bond with love, then be given the freedom to roam to learn how to survive in nature. God gave us a brain to think, help our neighbours and respect our elders, and if we don’t start thinking for ourselves, then the Earth is in trouble. Be careful what you absorb and determine its application. The amount of information that is available is staggering. Many have been sold the easy route, using chemicals and taking pills instead of learning how the Earth or our bodies work. It’s your choice.

While waiting for a traffic light to change colour, I watched an older lady cross the street using a cane; my inner voice said, “Do something, or you will look like that.” Even while living in Terrace, I had been drawn to yoga, but watching someone on a stage asking me to duplicate what she was doing did not interest me. While distributing in Kelowna, I heard about an instructor teaching in her home studio with heated wood floors and accessories for teaching Iyengar-style yoga. I signed up for the next series. She called herself a rusted-out physiotherapist, and postural alignment was her forte. She would poke her finger into tight spots as she examined each student’s body, reminding us to engage specific muscles while deep breathing in static positions. Margaret Lunam was a fantastic teacher whom I called Sergeant General. Her crass remarks often bothered some students, but her eye for detail as she looked at my posture was the best. She could spot a lazy muscle from across the room. I found the two-hour workouts tiring, to say the least, but I persevered, and after three years, I finally ‘got it’ and understood what she was talking about when she said, ‘Yoga is an inside job.’ One needs to feel deeply into the tight spots where one doesn’t want to go. An example to help you understand this: We are doing Prayer Pose, and I have my hands behind my back at heart level. A partner adjusts my arm placement, and I feel tears rising and start to cry as memories surface. Memories of a time of fist fights with my brothers would pin my arms behind my back and call it a victory. Layer after layer slowly loosened as my neck adjusted to the new spinal curve behind my heart. Many yoga poses help create openness and length in the body.

Dr. Robert Kaplan appeared next in my life, a specialized optometrist from Vancouver who wrote *Seeing Beyond 20/20*. He wanted to grow his practice in the Okanagan and offered me a reduced fee to help him find a suitable location. Margaret, my yoga teacher, said he could use her studio for the weekend. Many people attended the free evening talk at a hotel, and six people signed up for the weekend workshop. We practiced exercises to wake ourselves up on so many levels. We were to create a five-minute skit expressing our new selves for the finale. I went through my closet and found an old tuxedo, a colourful halter-top and shorts and decided to play a song by Ann Mortifee called *I Won't Stay Silent Any Longer*. Leaning on a cane, I entered the room as a hunched-over man, unworthy of love and lip-synched the words. Soon I flung my cane and jacket into the air, stripping down to the halter and shorts as the song ended. Expressing this new me was exhilarating, but I was the only one in our class who made an effort to do so. When I drove Dr. Kaplan to the airport, he said, "I guess I travelled all this way just for you."

On my next trip to Vancouver, I booked a private appointment and had several prescription changes over the next two years as he put various eyepieces on my nose to measure the improvement. During the third appointment, it felt like a hot knife was poked into my belly, and I started to laugh hysterically and said this must be my new prescription. I continued to practice the eye exercises, and over time, they did improve. Dr. Kaplan said I needed to teach my eyes to dance together, so I did Pinpoint Therapy and wore an eye patch over the good eye to force the weaker one to do its share of the seeing. I rolled my eyes and looked at the four corners of the ceiling, near than far. I paid attention to what strained my eyes and took frequent breaks from staring at the computer screen, which made them feel dry. When I renewed my driver's license in 2005, I took my test without glasses and passed. The lady behind the window said, "Do you know you are blind in one eye?" I said, "Not really; I have one eye that is far-sighted and one that is near-sighted." I read somewhere that 5% percent of the population has this combination. My short-sighted eye prefers doing paperwork and looking at details. The far-sighted one likes to see things at a distance, as in the bigger picture. I sure did enjoy not wearing them for twenty years. Now I have two pairs, one for typing, which enlarges the page and another to enhance videos at six feet. I lament that I can no longer see the eye of a needle or read fine print without a magnifying glass.

Mom always took her glasses off when being photographed, so I asked when she started wearing them. It was in Grade 4 after she had German measles. The nuns did not want her to fall back on her studies, so they forced her to read with bright lights rather than letting her eyes rest. She was unhappy living in the convent and did not want to 'see' her situation. Her glasses were the thickest they could make. Later in life, she had eye surgery but still needed glasses, just not as thick.

I figured my one eye was damaged when I was five years old when my parents burned leaves and twigs to clean the yard. My brother David discovered that branches would glow in the dark if he waved them around in large circles. Eventually, he poked me in the eye with his flaming stick, and I ran into the house, yelling for Dad. When no one answered, I lay on the couch and watched the steam swirl upwards from my eye. Once quiet, I heard Dad in the basement and yelled down the stairs. He came rushing up and took me to the hospital; I came home wearing glasses. The first time I opened the car door to step onto the sidewalk, it seemed so high I could not put my foot on solid ground. The sidewalks returned to normal as my sight adjusted over the next few days. Now I could read the blackboard from the back of the kindergarten room. Later I learned that when a prescription is too strong, distances become distorted, and the eyes weaken. Blinding myself was part of my karma as it reduced the vision in the left eye so I could survive emotionally, and the right eye took over and got good at doing things.

The Spring Festival of Awareness became a non-profit, calling ourselves the Kikwillie Festival Society, which is a native word that describes a temporary home. Our society was making money, so we rented the Big O Tire Shop in downtown Penticton. The rent was cheap as the building was for sale. We cleaned it up and started the original Farmers Market on Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm, from July to the end of October. We did not have the funds to buy the building, so it was sold that Fall. Still, it gave us time to see if other non-profit groups wanted to join in a cooperative purchase to create a storefront, alternative bookstore, craft co-operative, vegetarian restaurant, juice bar, holistic health practitioner spaces and offices for other non-profit societies. We imagined the space would be used in the evening for teen dances, family parties, little theatre, folk music concerts, a speaker series, workshops and mini-health fairs. It seems naive now, but we did meet with relators as a group and looked at various pieces of land, but land values were

pricer than our organization could afford, let alone develop. In hind-site, I can see it planted the seeds of possibilities for me as I watched people react to signing on the dotted line. Creating in our imagination is so much easier. Fifteen people showed up for the AGM, a vegetarian potluck held at Sunoka Beach in July, where we made plans to host our first Mini Health Faire at the Leir House.

Elizabeth Fortune, director of Education and Research for Integrated Balance and Creative Intelligence from Delmar, California, arrived for Environment Week and spoke in Kelowna. Since I had access to the Rec Room in Summerland, she also spoke there. She developed the Full Spectrum Learning Lab based on her research on swimming with dolphins. She said, “Looking into the eye of a whale changed my life.” Paul Watson, who co-founded Greenpeace and later the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, made the same statement. I believe this to be a fact, for I, too, have looked into the eyes of a mountain lion several times and felt the powerful peace their eyes emanate, similar to a horse or cow.

Now it was Keith’s turn to graduate, and he was on his way to Edmonton, as they were in dire need of labourers. Some companies resorted to newspaper ads offering bonuses if you worked for them. Rae and I talked about our impending divorce. He wanted to keep the house so Dale would have a place to live until he graduated. Rae used our house as collateral to buy trucks, so there was little value left, even with the rising house prices. He said that when the house sold, he would give me \$5,000. We flipped a coin for the furniture, pictures and cooking pots. Separating was more fun than the previous three years of struggling to make our marriage work. I learned a lot about being in a relationship, and now that it was complete, it felt right to discuss our past hurts. I was amazed when he told me why he never helped in the kitchen. “If I did it once, I would get stuck doing it forever.” When I asked about saving money, he said, “If I didn’t owe someone money, why would I get up in the morning?” Took a while for me to understand his point of view, for I do not like owing money, but I could resonate with the need to have a purpose in life, which he called work.

Since I am an ‘in-the-moment’ person, I didn’t think about what needed to happen next until early one morning when I woke up with the thought, “Where will I move to?” My body turned ice-cold with fear, so I breathed deep, shivered it off and asked Rae if he would look at places with me. I liked the two-bedroom

apartment on Forestbrook Avenue as I could hear the sound of the creek. I told the landlady I was a publisher and did not have time to move until Christmas. "Perfect," she responded, "that will give us time to paint and have the carpets cleaned." I signed the papers and paid the rent, relieved that that experience was over. I also needed a new vehicle since I would no longer have a husband with mechanical skills. I was told that diesel was cheaper than gas and better for the environment. A small station wagon could carry the weight of many magazines, and there just happened to be a blue one sitting on the lot, so I traded in my VW Rabbit covered with bumper stickers and drove off with a grey-blue 1990 VW diesel 4-door Golf Hatchback. I grinned happily, knowing my payments were a business expense that I could afford.

The November and December edition was next in queue for my time. Once it was off to the printers, I made invoices using a waitress's order pad with a carbon copy slip. Then mail-out, followed by a week on the road doing distribution in my new vehicle. Most people paid cash or a cheque when I dropped off their copies. The boys were home for the holidays, so I decided it was a good day to move since it was not snowing. As I was about to knock and ask for the key, the landlady told her husband, "I can't believe it; she is moving on Christmas Day!" Made sense to me, and that was what mattered. It took several loads in Rae's 3/4 ton truck to deliver my stuff across town. The furniture fit like it was made for this place; I only needed a desk. As the boys moved the furniture and boxes, Rae's back started hurting, so he did not lift anything into the truck. Then his arms began to ache, so he held the elevator button as the furniture was moved into my new place. I believe our bodies often speak louder than words, so I pay close attention to these details. For the reader, as part of your education, the back represents feelings of support, the arms give and take. Rae did not feel supported by my changing attitude towards spirituality and no longer wanting to eat animal flesh. Maybe he felt guilty as it was his request that we separate. He got over it quickly enough as Bonnie moved into our house that spring, and they were married once the divorce papers were signed.

In meditation, I asked my angels why I had to wait so long to begin my spiritual journey. They said, "We were trying to keep your head on your shoulders." I am guessing, from this statement I had died in many previous lifetimes fighting for a cause, a king, or a country. Having kids young gave me time to grow myself and understand the flow of karma. Everything must be done with LOVE and acceptance.

If not, we will repeat the situation again and again until we learn the lesson.

I'm glad everyone trusted I would do my best to lay out their ad or edit articles to fit the page. I liked seeing people's reactions and gauged my success by their facial expressions since I knew little about publishing. Most helped by distributing extra copies to their clients. I continued my lessons with the wonderful and patient folks at Webco Printing as they taught me how to look through a magnifying glass to see the dots that make up a grayscale photo, which is more real-looking than black and white images. I had not figured out the resolution correctly if the image had a smeared look. I stood in amazement, watching how quickly the pages were printed on a huge machine called an offset press. Paper is pulled over aluminum plates that imprint the data repeatedly, zipping along at miles per hour. Since I wanted the look of a magazine and not a folded newspaper, I paid extra to have the paper cut, stapled and trimmed, which took two people a whole day to get Issues strapped and ready for pickup.

Next in my life was a lady called June; she proofread for the Penticton Herald and phoned to say how much she enjoyed the articles, but the many typing errors slowed her reading. She volunteered to proofread the entire magazine for free. I was glad to spend time with her as she was a guerilla gardener planting veggies and flowers to enhance the back alleys where she lived. I blew kisses upwards, knowing that Issues would look more professional. Once I started to make money, I did pay her. After thirty-some years of grammar and spelling lessons, I finally comprehend the basics, but writing does not come easy, so I often retype most sentences several times. It was much easier to learn the complex publishing programs than it was to write a proper English sentence! When I chatted with other publishers like Joseph at Common Ground or Samaya at Shared Vision, they told me they didn't have the time or desire to learn the required computer skills, so they hired designers to do the layout. I remember asking Samaya what she did at work. "Oh, I ensure everyone has something to do, and everything gets done on time." I was one of a few publishers who sold and created the ads, handled the accounting, the distribution and recycled any magazines that were left.

Mother told me that massages were TREATments, meaning that massages were good. I agreed and learned to give her and others a back rub early in life. As an adult, I enjoyed deep massages and always signed up for the 12 free sessions the government provided as preventative medicine per year. Now the BC government



has decided to cut back on alternative services like massage and chiropractic care. My doctor suggested I take pain-killers whenever my shoulders feel tight. . . not an approach I favoured or would likely adopt, so I told BC Med to take my name off the plan, even though it was free due to my low income.

Then I met Arlene Lamarshe, a Jin Shin Do practitioner who used pressure so light I could barely feel it. Practitioners place their fingers on the meridian pulses, balancing each point to the cranium pulse of the recipient. The chi flowed into my shoulder as the various acupuncture points were pressed, and I felt the tightness ease. I was impressed and willingly agreed to trade advertising for sessions. I was too busy for my appointment one month and decided to double up the next month. I booked a two-hour session early in the day as I did not want to fall asleep. I followed her every move and knew she was finishing as she stretched over my body, touching my cranium while still holding my toes. Suddenly, I felt an intense wave of energy go through me, like a fish being whipped out of the water and into the air as if on a fishing line. On the second whip, I felt my back arch as I opened my eyes and stared into the void where new planets were being created. I screamed so loud I could hear my echo as the third whip released my body onto the table. A few minutes later, Arlene did a final brush-over, completing the session. I asked her if I had moved, and she said, “Not a muscle.” Did I scream? “Not a sound.” What an unforgettable few moments; it felt so real! Reflecting on this experience, I am guessing that my body circuits were so fully connected that the Divine was able to whip my energetic body into alignment. I was in the flow, and the universe fully supported my idealism.

I kept my expenses low and worked sixty hours a week, loving every minute. Getting to know potential instructors and advertisers did not feel like work. Once my Musing column was in the mail to Diana, I felt okay asking others to get their ads or articles in by a specific date. Ever heard the story about the parents who brought their boy to Gandhi to get him to stop eating sugar. He told the parents to bring the boy back in a month. When they did, he told the boy, “Stop eating sugar.” When the parents asked him why it took so long, he said, “Because I had to stop doing it myself.” I liked Gandhi’s idea of setting an example. Another habit I developed early in life was to do whatever I did NOT want to do first. Sometimes I delayed ‘the doing’ until after my early morning angel talk, where we figured out the best way or time to do something. If I resented doing a task, I figured out

a way not to put it on my 'to-do' list again. If I felt I had no choice because of the circumstances, I took the time to reprogram my brain and re-imagine the task from a different perspective. Work is love in action, and each job must be done with appreciation.

Laying out the magazine got easier as many advertisers repeated their ads and even referred clients. Being seen on our TV show, being an instructor at the Spring Festival of Awareness, and just showing up for the many events we hosted helped the energy flow and thus, Issues thrived. Off-set magazines are printed in 8-page sections; I noted that just the right number of ads and articles were usually submitted to create an exciting edition. If I had an empty space, I would fill it with a free ad to some deserving business or feature some New Age Advice. When a last-minute change was requested, I would always say yes and start to shift things around, even if I didn't feel like doing it. Each time this happened, I realized that the magazine looked more balanced. I always took a few extra moments when I picked up the first copy to double-check the pages, savouring the completed edition. Then I took a few deep breaths and went through it a second time; if I noticed a mistake, I told myself I had done my best and started to load several thousand copies into my vehicle. The first trip was North, the second load South, then East through Oliver, Osoyoos, Grand Forks and every small town along the way.

My final load was delivered to the Lower Mainland, where I took our son Gordon out to dinner, for he was studying pharmacology at the University of British Columbia. Banyen Books and the Naam restaurant were my primary locations, but I found many more in time. Each bundle weighed between ten and fifteen pounds, depending on the festival program's inclusion. The numbers of copies printed increased gradually over time, as did the places I delivered them to. One day a man pointed to my tires and explained they were tilting because of the weight. I knew my vehicle could carry only so much weight but reasoned that the magazines got unloaded relatively quickly. My mechanic said it was good for shocks to have a workout! Over time I learned to take better care of my many vehicles.

Advertisers often had a spare room and were happy to share stories and time. I travelled with my pillow and sheets and put them over theirs so no one had to make my bed or wash sheets. Sometimes, first-time hosts would protest as hospitality habits die hard, but once they realized the effort I saved them, they began to value

my wisdom. One of my early distributors was Moreen Reed, an astrologer living in Kamloops who taught me how to Surf the Net while I was at her place. I thought it was a waste of time, but little did I know how profoundly computers would change the world. When Moreen moved out of Kamloops, I had to learn her route. It was a complex city, but with practice, I felt less stressed when I took a wrong turn. Another friend, Anita, so loved Issues that she transported copies around Calgary. Navigating to her place was scary, and when I got out unscathed, it felt like a miracle. Many times I breathed through the fear of being hit on these fast city lanes as I slowed, looking for my turn-off. Eventually, I could have bought a gizmo with a compass, but I decided it was not worth \$400. In the last years of doing delivery, Keith gifted me with a used iPhone, and Dale installed a program called Navmii, which I still use, but understanding how to set locations is another learning curve I have yet to master. Paper maps are just so practical and accessible. These routes took 5 days initially but eventually increased to 8-10 days as I expanded into Alberta, and the number of drop-offs increased. Thank you, angels, for taking such good care of me; it sure wasn't my driving skills that saved me more than once, as I like to multitask when I drive long stretches.

Vicki Allen was a Reiki Master who travelled from the Kootenays to Penticton to spread the word about this ancient healing technique. When she asked me to put up posters, I said, "Of course." Laurel had taken Reiki with the great Hawayo Takata in Victoria many years earlier and was enthused enough to share the Women's Centre for Vicki's free introduction on January 18, 1989. My friend Carol, who owned The Caravan Metaphysical Bookstore, and a man who was a regular at the Metaphysical Society meetings were eager to take Level 1. Still, Vicki needed three people to make it happen, so I reluctantly agreed. The cost was \$150 per person. I didn't understand why our natural healing energies had to be 'initiated.' When Vicki put her hands on my head, it felt like mice running through my hair and tickling my scalp, the same sensations I feel when I meditate. She was surprised at how strong the visceral feelings were under her hands and said, "Wow, I've never felt this strong of a reaction before." In retrospect, I think my spirit was ready; my mind wanted proof.

Why angels feel certain things are important is only a guess, so I shall tell a story about how they plan things. Jan Stickney was the neighbour who lived kitty-corner to our house, and Gordon delivered their newspaper. I would do his

route when he had an early morning hockey practice. Jan's house was the last on his route, so I often leaned my bike against the fence and breathed the fragrances deep into my belly while staring into the vibrant colours. Once in a while, I would pinch off a bloom to continue to smell the perfume during my day. One morning the side door opened, and I heard someone yell, "Take two; they're free." I smiled and thought, "It must be time to connect." We chatted about our kids, her dogs and family troubles. She had watched several of our TV shows and was interested in attending Vicki's presentations, hoping it would help her back pain from some recent surgery. It did, and Jan became a practitioner sooner than I did. Her two dogs would crowd under the massage table when she treated someone, proving that animals can sense positive or negative energy. Sometimes we used her Reiki Room for overnight accommodations for the Metaphysical Society speakers. We became good friends, and Saturday mornings often found us checking out the garage sales.

I grew to like Vicki; she set up and managed the Reiki House at the Festivals and gave ever-so-relaxing sessions. Each time I listened to her introductory talk, I heard different information even though the talks were similar. Tonight was another Introduction to Reiki at the Leir House, so I continued to type articles awaiting her arrival. Suddenly, my computer's orange screen blinked 'Fatal Error' and darkened. My teeth started to chatter as an ice-cold feeling crept through my body. I phoned my computer guru, but there was nothing he could do. I called Jan, "Can you take over welcoming people to the Reiki talk?" Finally, I submerged myself in a tub of hot water, telling my mind this was not the end of the world. I could print a week later but would attend tonight's intro. It took half an hour before my body stopped shivering, and I asked myself, "Why did I go into shock? And why was I so looking forward to Vicki's arrival?"

Arriving late, I noticed about twenty people in attendance as I slid into the back row. The stuffed chairs were so relaxing that my head nodded backwards, and my eyes closed; it had been a long, exhausting day. I listened to Vicki's soothing voice as she talked about the various Reiki Masters and how the practice came to be. When she started explaining what would happen if I took the 2nd degree, my body sat straight up. I quizzed my mind, "You want to take Level 2?" My body almost jumped out of the seat, so I opened my eyes and listened to the details. I wasn't convinced it was worth the cost, so I would wait before mentioning my reaction to her.

When Vicki called with the dates for her next ad, Level 1 was February 19, and Level 2 was February 20 and 21, 1992. I breathed deeply and shared my story of taking Level 2 as a birthday present to myself. She asked if I could phone the previous participants to see who wanted to take Level 2 and reminded me that whoever hosted the class got a discount, plus she would deduct rent for using my apartment. Two people were eager, and I would make the third, enough to hold a class. I am grateful Vicki made it reasonably affordable, for I was starting to make money but spend \$500 on energy medicine! Now I know Reiki works on an energetic level where other drugs cannot. Science is just beginning to grasp the various levels of energetic healing.

My computer got fixed, and the publishing program was not affected; lots of the layout was there, and thanks to a volunteer retyping articles, the magazine did go to print on time. When my Reiki Certificates arrived, I framed them, something I don't usually spend money on. They hung in my office for years, and in the latest move, I even found the little booklet that details the various Grand Masters. The Reiki Initiation is a sacred ceremony connecting us to the Divine Spirit, which will relieve pain if the deeper cause is unearthed and transformed. Thirty years later, every second person I meet has taken Reiki; many have become Masters. Reiki now has several lineages and a variety of styles. Some people say it can't be learned in a weekend, but who knows how many lifetimes people have spent practicing compassion with tolerance or sharing their loving thoughts with another. Reiki is a tool that can help move negative energy that gets stuck when something challenges us that we cannot process at the time.

Reiki changed me on levels I don't really understand. When people ask if I still practice, I tell them, "I walk it," for it enhances my energy field and allows situations I get myself into, to be taken more lightly. I smile when I reflect on my resistance to these training sessions and appreciate my angel's encouragement to try them. The following is a variation on a Reiki prayer written by its founder, Dr. Usui Sensi, that students often post on their walls as a reminder:

Just for today, I will not worry.  
Just for today, I will not anger.  
I will do my work honestly and diligently,  
I will be kind to all living creatures, and

I will show gratitude for everything.

Now I would like to introduce you to Lee Pulos, assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of BC, who asked if I would organize a presentation at the library in June 1991. I learned he was educated and trained in psychology and worked for Team Canada and the Commonwealth Games while interviewing him for the TV show. He shared how he became interested in styles of healing beyond the conventional. Hence, he travelled to Africa, Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines and told us, “What I saw with my own eyes was technically impossible, so I wanted to understand how they could do it or denounce them as fakes.” After spending time with a young woman who went over her procedure step-by-step, going into a trance and into the patient’s pores to take out stuck material, like cholesterol, in the bloodstream, she discovered she could no longer heal. By explaining the miracle, she could no longer perform them. According to his book, *Miracles and Other Realities*, once she returned to her forest home in the mountains, she eventually regained these skills. Mother Nature has a way of healing that is not explainable!

Dale graduated in the spring of 1991 and signed up for a two-year training at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) as an Automotive Mechanic Technician. After graduation from BCIT, he found a job at a mechanical shop in Penticton and stayed with me as Rae had sold the house. He hurt his back mountain biking, and while recovering, realized he did not like lying on his back near a cold floor, hands smeared with oil and found a job as a pool repairman. One day a travelling Skydive Camp came to Penticton; Dale and his friend were hooked, spending what cash they had at the Vernon skydive drop zone most weekends. In the fall of ‘93, he joined his brother Keith who was doing well as a machinist using his computer skills to reproduce parts for the oil industry. Dale landed a job at John Crane Canada, where he used his mechanical skills to fix pumps and eventually moved on to Lily Dale Foods, where he kept track of the giant machines that produce foods while developing a talent for finding parts worldwide.

It would have been nice if Rae had told me he was selling the house and that Bonnie did not want anything of mine. He gave me the \$5,000 as promised, which I spent on the boys, for I had promised them graduation gifts I could not afford at the time. Each of my sons did receive a quilt in the colours they liked before leaving home, which they gave back, worn out and needing mending once they

met their ladies, who provided a different kind of love, rather than a motherly love. The one thing I did not get when Rae and I flipped the coin to divide our stuff was my 'almost new' Filter Queen vacuum cleaner. While visiting Jared in his new apartment, I commented that his vacuum looked just like mine. He said, "Rae made me take it since I was setting up in a new place." Jared was glad to give it back along with the rest of my cooking pots, including Mom's copper-bottomed one that I used to polish as a kid and still use.

That summer, my brother Donald was injured while fixing a bridge near Rosswood and died on Labour Day. What a sad year it had been, but Holly was grateful to give birth to Adam, going Don always lived an adventurous life, almost drowning while canoeing in the deep wild rivers of the north. As much as I wanted to be at his funeral, my mom and her mom were there to support her, so instead, I sent up some good vibrations and chatted with him via the ethers while keeping busy getting the next edition distributed. Travelling to the annual Health Expo in Calgary kept me in touch with his family over the years.

Since I hadn't celebrated my birthday in a long time, I rented the Leir House and had my favourite baker cover a carrot cake in whipping cream, blueberries and strawberries. I glowed enthusiastically, always smiling, loving the freedom of being single. I asked guests to read poems or sing songs; no presents were needed. Even made a collage as a reminder of the excellent time we had. The first year, we used a Sweet Sixteen theme because I had young children and missed being a juvenile. The following year it felt like I was 5 years old and starting over again, so Jan gifted me with a delightful rocking horse as we regularly worked together. My brothers, the boys, the crew and friends found the time to travel and join in.

Jan was helping Marion with festival registrations, and today she was phoning the Natural 'Yellow Pages' advertisers to ask if they would continue for another year. She reminded me there was still one empty page to fill, and cold calls were not her forte. A lady who had phoned several times in the past week and was seriously considering suicide. Jan handed the phone to me and said, "I have work to do." I spent an hour focusing on her problem until we came up with a solution. When she felt complete, she hung up, and moments later, a man called. Did we have a full page left to sell his jewellery? By now, Jan and I both knew the universe provides if one can focus on what is needed most in the moment. We grinned from ear to

ear as we put another edition of Issues to bed. We also had an opportunity to create another TV series with Nateshvar, who had moved from Ontario and was offering Joy Yoga at the United Church. Thanks to Shaw Cable, people could now follow along and do yoga at home.

This year the Spring Festival offered 68 workshops with 52 leading-edge instructors like Yellow Bear, Glen Douglas and Peter Duryeau, who created the Guiding Hands Recreation Society. Young children/families and teens could have an enlightening experience with their highly trained facilitators at their wilderness camps and I created a few ads to promote them. At the Spring Festival, we increased festival fees: \$75 for the weekend if you pre-registered; admission for teens was \$40 and for children, \$25. Selecting from a choice of ten workshops was overwhelming for most people, but that was why they came, to fine-tune precisely what did interest them. Many folks spent a week circling their choices in their program, then changed their mind after hearing the intros. The universe ensured people listened to what they needed to hear, which was only sometimes what they wanted. “When the student is ready, the teacher appears,” was repeated many times during those Festivals. So much talent was being shared. People said they came because they could feel the vibrations they usually just read about.

Mom showed up and brought pots of highly-scented orchids from Vancouver that filled the stage. Women were thrilled to take home the single blooms in unique water holders. Sure made the celebration magical and memorable. Mom had visited the greenhouses that grew orchids near Delta, BC and talked them out of a few precious plants that I eventually returned as I did not have the environment to keep them happy. I have never seen those giant orchids or smelt that delightful fragrance since. I see miniature versions in stores, which we bought for the altars.

I was happy learning to slow my mind and focus on the latest meditation technique while listening to the subtle sensations in my body. Keith came for a visit while I was putting these ideas into practice. I remember stopping at a red light as we drove up Government Street. The light changed to green, and Keith said, “Mom, let’s go.” I said, “I can’t; my knee doesn’t want to move.” At that very moment, a car whizzed through the intersection on a red light and would have killed the lady in the car behind us. My angels whispered, “It is not her time.” Meaning I would not have been hit, but she might have been. Another time I heard the voice say



'keys' as I was about to leave my apartment. I mumbled, "They are in my purse," and shut the door. Then that feeling came over me, so I checked, and sure enough, I did not have my keys. Searching for a ladder took over an hour and got me back into my second-story apartment. That evening I had a long chat with my angels and agreed to take notes on how many times they gave me guidance and how many times I did anything about it. I kept another clipboard to jot down reminders of what needed doing as thoughts would surface as my mind slowed. Once my 'to-do list' was written down, my mind could relax, and my hands and arms could go numb as my scalp tingled and I drifted into the ethers. I assume my crown chakra was being overhauled as the new me was being created. I even started noticing when my mind switched gears from alpha to theta waves, and sometimes I could feel the drift into delta as I fell asleep.

Some native ladies from the North attended the Spring Festival and said we needed shields to represent the four directions. They liked Laurel's ceremony to honour the ancestors and claimed these shields would enhance that energetic vibe. They were willing to paint them for the following year's event in exchange for passes, adding they would add life to those bleak, boring walls. Indeed, that original thought just kept expanding. We now paid an extra day's rent to decorate, and I learned the importance of setting 'the tone' for a weekend experience.

That summer, I got to know Mom better when we visited her brother in Oregon. We saw her old hangouts and where she skated as a teen. I wore her skates when I was a teen and loved the wooden skate guards, as by now, most were made of plastic. My brother Mike still has the metal carrying case she carried when she competed. It has a totem pole and the word Alaska painted across it. When we arrived home, she asked if I would travel to Vancouver Island, for she had found an Iridologist/healthcare practitioner who could give her a colon cleanse. When the printing and distribution were complete, off we went. This specialist gave me a similar product with clay in it. I was to fast for several days, stir liquid into his product, and drink the thick goo. Six hours later, I pooped an intact version of the inside of my colon as the goo morphed into jelly. I scooped the 5-or 6-foot-long jelly roll onto a cookie tray to examine it more closely. One portion looked dry and twisted as it went around a corner. I wondered how easily food moved, or didn't, through this kink. I wish I had taken a picture, but I did save the photo used for my eye analysis and have had others taken over the years. One day I will look at all

three images and see if the theory is true: that our eyes reflect the state of our health.

A year later, during a breath session with Josey Slater, I felt some kinked energy release as another emotional pattern took leave, and I assumed it was from this kinked area of the colon. She was a courageous midwife who continued to work during the great change, making midwifery legal. Having a baby is not a sickness. We need to create Birthing Centers where moms have better opportunities to learn about the emotional programming children feel in utero and before they learn to speak. The birth process impacts us because those feelings can get repeated during stress. Breathing slowly and deeply when situations overwhelm us is the best way I know to overcome these feelings that Stan Grof wrote about in the '60s. I define stress as "facing a situation we don't think we can handle." Since I enjoy a challenge, I seldom feel stressed, except when it happens because I didn't slow down and read the instructions. Losing precious time can be so annoying.

That summer, Clayoquot Sound had a call to action, hoping to preserve the ancient rainforests on the coast. Norma Cowie hosted a large Psychic Fair in Vancouver, and Sally Scales in Salmon Arm had her bioenergetic feedback machine taken away by the RCMP. The world of opposite opinions increased as our voices grew louder and the government listened less. As fall approached, I got an angel message, "Find property on the creek." I kept my eyes open, looking at real estate listings and "For sale" signs. I had never noticed the many bridges allowing water to flow through the city. What did my angels have in mind? The Spring Festival was doing well, so we passed along the \$2000 seed money to the Kamloops meditation group, and they hosted a Fall Festival, which happened September 17-19 in Sorrento, BC.

Jan and I were returning the light and sound equipment after the 1994 Spring Festival when I felt the shivers of knowingness as I walked through their door. My inner voice whispered, "This is it." I repeated the message to Jan, who scanned the black walls and said, "No way." As I paid for the rental, I told the young man, "I saw a For Rent sign. Are you moving?" He muttered something about the stupid landlord and that they had found a better location. I wrote down the phone number and tucked it in with my receipt. While all this was happening, I asked my astrologer to look at Jan and my birth chart. She said, "Your charts are compatible, and you will help each other if you two can reconcile the speed at which you prefer to get things done. You, Angele, have a fast-moving moon, and Jan has a slow-

moving moon.”

I called the owner, the cost was \$700 per month, and he would include two months' free rent giving us time to renovate. The 254 Ellis St. building was kitty-corner to the Bus Depot, downtown Penticton, with a creek flowing in the back. He scribbled the deal on a piece of paper, we shook hands, and I found a carpenter that could start immediately. Time to do some serious garage sailing! After collecting the newspapers, I mapped out the addresses, then meditated for a few minutes, asking which end of town to start, focusing on what was needed most — like building Jan a desk. I found some thick, prepainted, pressed-wood sheets that cost \$10 each in a lovely greeny-blue shade. This amazed my carpenter, whose positive nature and funny comments made renovating the 1,800-square-foot building most enjoyable.

Jan's bad back got exponentially better with all the hammering, pulling of nails and laughter. Several more women friends helped create magic beyond anything I could have imagined. Each massage room had a theme with a door painted to match the colours, and Jan's desk had unicorns and animals living in the magical meadows. I focused on the 8' x 8' kitchen, doing my best to level the floor with scrap plywood before moving in a used stove and fridge. There was a long hallway between the kitchen and bathroom, so I asked the carpenter if he could put the stairs 'out-of-the-way.' He installed a counterweight with hinges and pulleys so that with the smallest effort, the stairs floated downwards, and I had access to the 4-foot high area above Jan's desk. The previous renter had planked that section so they could sleep upstairs, and I wanted to use it for storage. We found overhead doors in the ceiling above the second entrance and were told this place was originally a mechanical shop that fixed logging trucks. This explained the high ceilings and uneven concrete floors. Like the rising phoenix, miracle after miracle created our new Health Centre out of the ashes of the Sound Centre. We even held a hilarious ribbon-cutting ceremony when we installed the 'new' used toilet above the cement floor.

The Holistic Health Centre's Grand Opening happened on September 10 and 11. Many people showed, including an older man who was into Metaphysics and wanted Reiki for Michael Kruger, his nephew. Mike limped over to Jan's desk using a cane, and his energy improved when he looked at her. I hoped this exchange would be short-lived as Jan and I had much work to do, but that was not the case.

When I went to the back door to ask a question, the two were smoking, and I could see golden sparkles dancing between them. I knew I had better get to like Mike, and I did. His sister was a Reiki master, and with encouragement from both, he became a Reiki practitioner. He also learned ear candling and soon had a steady clientele for both services. He worked the cameras for our ongoing TV shows and soon did my laundry. Dick, the head maintenance man at the arena, had called and said one of his ice cleaners had had a heart attack. Could I cover until he got well? I asked about the hours; 4 pm to 12:30 am. The job would be for two months, and I would get his wage of \$20 an hour. "If you show up tomorrow," offered Dick, "I will retrain you on the Zamboni." I could use the extra money since the renovations cost more than planned. I knew the arena routines as our boys played hockey for years, and Rae enjoyed being a referee.

Life got very full. People stepped forward to help, but I had to do the magazine layout. I worked from 8 am to 3:30 pm at our newly-renovated building, then drove thirty minutes to Summerland. I used a putty knife to get years of bubble gum off the stands, polished the foyer until it shone and hosed down the change rooms after each group. Every 45 minutes, I would jump on the Zamboni, clean the ice, and then take a break. I made notes about the noisy machines that ran in the background so that when Dick came in the following day, he could fix the problem. Eventually, and during my break time, I used the hardwood floor upstairs in the banquet room to cut fabric for a 30-foot rainbow, bringing my sewing machine from home. A year earlier, musician David Thiaw was drumming on the main stage when the paper rainbow started to rip. I breathed deeply, said a prayer, and it stopped. Later, as I applied tape to bind it together, I thought it was time for a more permanent version. Garage-saleing that summer produced four rolls of heavy-duty fabric in colours of the rainbow for a low price, so I only had to buy blue, purple and the background colour. Adding Urmi's painted jesters to both ends made it come alive. Now a crew of four could hang it in minutes using three six-foot hollow curtain rods inserted between bamboo poles. As always, the timing was perfect, and twenty years later, it still looks new as we fold and store it in plastic bins.

Christmas was approaching fast; it had been three months of working two jobs, and I felt tired. I called the recreational director and said, "I need to talk." He said, "Good timing, I need to talk to you too; see you at 3 pm." When I arrived, he said, "I'll start. The man you replaced is better and wants his job back." I jumped

out of my chair and danced around his desk. He thought I was acting strange, but that wasn't anything unusual. There was a joke among the men that I flew around on a broomstick; how else could anyone get so much done in one night? "Now, what was it you wanted to talk about?" "I am so tired I need to quit." He responded, "Better yet, I will lay you off, just in case you want UI." I chose not to, as I had money in the bank and did not need to look for another job.

Gratitude oozed from every pore, and I gave thanks for my experience of hosting speakers at the Leir house, which could now increase to once a week in our spacious new room with much better parking. People loved our annual Health Fairs and the many practitioners we shared our profits with. I applied for a government wage subsidy that would pay six months of training for Jan before becoming a full-time employee. Jan liked answering questions and booking appointments for practitioners who enjoyed having a 'real' downtown office. I announced that we would start printing ten magazines a year, along with a rate increase. Combining the months of July and August allowed us time for a summer holiday. Combining December and January allowed us time to celebrate the Solstice while catching up with paperwork and filing taxes.

That winter, I designed a rainbow on my computer with jesters at both ends and printed off 100 copies. Our crew, which included Urmi's pre-teen twins, hand-coloured posters that we taped in store windows and tacked on bulletin boards to remind people of the upcoming Spring Festival of Awareness. While on a road trip to Vernon with Laurel, as we were both Western Canada Wilderness Committee members, she started demeaning men. I disagreed as I found men easy to work with, but the tears flowed as I remembered when my dad whipped me into submission because I refused to wash the dishes. After this incident, I met Dr. Peter Nunn, whom I interviewed for *The Holistic Networker*. He was a surgeon who operated on patients with back pain and wondered why half of his patients got well, and half did not heal after surgery and wrote a book titled; *Paradox and Healing* with some explanations. He offered me a free session, so that evening, I lay on the floor with a Reiki Master, holding my head on her lap while he put acupuncture needles into both feet. When I felt the jab, I thought I was passing out but instead found myself watching a movie play out in my mind. "If I just bite off his leg," I found myself thinking, "he will never kick my dog again." The 'he' was my dad, and I was the small child, drooling as I bit into his knee. His knee did the automatic

jerk, which sent me flying over his head, crunching my neck as I hit the wall. Fifty years later, I phoned Mom to see if this memory was real. Mom told me she had asked Dad to keep an eye on me but guessed he had fallen asleep; thus, he had no explanation for why I was crying. Dr. Nunn emphasizes that we must be willing to let go of our concept of reality and be without expectations if we are to change. Experiencing healing is much different than feeling we are in a power struggle with pain. Relaxation of expectations was the paradox, and thus, life flowed as more healers showed up, providing my readers with interesting editorials over the next few years.

I also noticed that I had more energy when I ate less food, so semi-fasting became a routine. My original fast happened in Edmonton when I visited a natural doctor as someone recommended he could help. Whenever I ran or played tennis as a teen, I would get a stitch-in-my-side that would force me to stop. This natural doctor said I should drink several quarts of apple juice daily with warm water for three days. On day four, just before bed, I swallowed half a cup of olive and sesame oil with some orange juice. I also sucked on a slice of orange until that feeling of wanting to throw up diminished. I don't remember how many stones passed out of my gallbladder the next day, but I sure did have more energy, and the side stitches disappeared forever.

Twenty years later, I found a book on the same topic and decided to repeat the experience. After gulping down the oil and lemon juice, I lay with a hot water bottle over my gut, figuring the extra heat would keep the process moving easier. In the morning, I pooped out a cup of gallstones that I showed to anyone interested. Another photo I wish I had taken as the little green stones quickly dissolve back into oil. Since I had already fasted for three days, I did the olive oil treatment again to ensure I had gotten all the stones out. The following day my ribs ached, so I rubbed my solar plexus and breathed deep as I typed the next Musing feeling the pain moving westward. When I had a bowel movement, I was rewarded with a gallstone the size of my thumb; it looked like three popcorn kernels glued together.

Since I like synchronistic happenings, I want to share another detail. Across the road from our house in Summerland lived a woman slightly older than me who had done the same cleanse as I did in Edmonton years ago. She felt poorly afterwards, so her doctor ordered x-rays and found gallstones stuck in the bile

channels outside the gallbladder, which required surgery to remove. As with everything, please research and decide for yourself what will work. As a side note to my experience, I noticed that a large brown spot on my face faded after I did that cleanse, which got me thinking about liver spots; maybe they are related to gallbladder dysfunctions.

This year's Spring Festival program now includes 57 workshops, including Peter Nunn, Yarrow Alpine and Arnold Porter. If you wish to see those schedules or the instructors, these old programs are online. We bought a small tipi to give the Children's Festival extra space while the bigger kids took turns rolling a giant Earth ball down the lawn. Amazing adults created a special weekend of puppets, songs and skits. After about ten years, it morphed into a teen festival as the children of my crew grew older, and other parents did not want to miss 'their' workshops, so fewer participated as helpers.

Jan was an avid reader, wrote book reviews, updated the Natural Yellow Pages, and eventually wrote a regular column. Once Jan's divorce was finalized, we chatted about purchasing the building since we had put so much effort into fixing our two sections. When the owner collected the rent, I asked if he would be open to selling. Over the next few months, he showed us the rooms on the other side of the wall, which included a photocopier repair shop and a place that made surveyors' sticks. The owner had grown fond of us during the renovations and poured the concrete pad for the back door when we punched a hole through it, allowing easy access to the creek. He wanted \$20,000 down and \$1,000 a month. He jotted down the deal on two slips of paper, which we signed, grinning happily. His easy-going and trusting nature was indeed another miracle.

That winter, my brother David came for a visit with his wife Linda and decided to stay the night in one of the healing rooms. I woke up in the morning to hear creaking; when David came into the kitchen, he heard it too. We both looked at the roof and saw something move. He said, "Do you have any wood?" I found some 2' x 4's under the lean-to porch, and he grabbed a hammer and started banging them together to make a 4 x 4-12-foot post. As soon as it was ready, he jammed it upwards as the roof heaved a sigh and settled on the new support. The carpenter had broken several drill bits putting an anchor into the large beam to lift the magical staircase in the hallway, he guessed that time had crystallized the fir beam, and with the added weight of the snow, a large knot cracked. If David hadn't been there, the

roof might have collapsed and taken part of the building with it.

Another incident that could have closed our doors occurred after I fell asleep with the back door open because it had been a hot day, and I wanted to feel the breeze off the creek. City Hall said it was legal to sleep in my building, so I built a fold-up bed in the yoga studio. Now I was awakened by the shrill sounds of sirens. The renter in the upstairs apartment that overlooked our building heard suspicious movement and called the police. When the crooks heard the sirens, they left our unhooked computer and screen on the doorstep and ran. There were no laptops back then! I am not sure I could have continued if I had lost my working files for the magazine and the festival. I imagine the renter's angels and mine must have had a conference call to pull that off.

In late 1995 Marcel Campbell started to learn computer programming as a prerequisite for joining us as a business partner. In February 1996, we featured a photo of the three of us announcing we had incorporated, calling our business Visions Unlimited Network Inc. I chose that name because highway signs say Vision Limited. I did not appreciate this repeated message. Our company would have shares so others could join our venture to print Issues Magazine and host the many events. After nine years of organizing the Spring Festival as a non-profit, I felt I was not compensated for doing the lion's share of the work. In fact, I was receiving the same stipend as those who worked only the weekend. The magazine got paid for the twenty pages of the program, but this did not begin to cover the hours I spent connecting with instructors, organizing the schedule and developing the program while coordinating the Healing House and the Children's Festival. Marcel's other concern was that we were overspending on the Children's Festival, which generated very little income. As the tension grew, I made a proposal to the group giving them a choice: keep the non-profit status and carry on without me or cancel the non-profit and allow the Spring Festival income to accrue to the new corporation, which would pay wages for work done. It provoked a heated discussion, and a few members quit once the non-profit status was revoked.

I appreciated Marcel's common-sense approach and excellent money management skills. She really enjoyed looking after the bookkeeping side of the business. She also proofed articles and was slowly learning to do ad layouts on our new 486-DX 2-66 computer that had a floppy drive and CD ROM. I felt like I was flying high and dreamt one night that I was on a toboggan with my crew seated



behind me. We raced down the hill picking up speed for lift-off. As we started our ascent, I noticed rubber boots in the tree-tops where people with a weaker trust in their divine destination failed. I sensed that all I had to do was shift my hip the slightest, and our toboggan would be steered in a different direction. Even now, I can feel the drag when I work with others who have less faith in the eternal Tao. Some people create so much resistance that getting any project off the ground seems impossible and usually fizzles out.

I bought magazine racks as my print run increased to 22,000 copies, but free magazines were beginning to proliferate due to the growing ease of desk-top publishing. Now I had to compete for shelf space and negotiate how many copies I could leave, which left me feeling discouraged, especially when I had to go looking for a rack that got moved and half the time, it was never found.

Gary Schneider, a newly-graduated Rolf practitioner living in Kamloops, showed up at the Centre and announced he was here to heal me. He had offered mini-sessions at the last Health Fair which attracted a few clients and if I found him enough clients for a two-day stint, he would show up every three weeks. Some of my yoga and meditation students signed up and even Jan softened her attitude and did 10 sessions after listening to me rave about the changes I felt. Some days it felt like Ida Rolf herself was working on me. She was the woman who had developed this technique and her students were often nicknamed Rolfers. The first five of the ten-set release specific muscles in a sequence, and the last five put you back in balance with gravity so your body uses less energy when standing and walking. The fourth session adjusts muscles in the front of the body. As Gary pushed on my lower ribs, I gasped for air, and my hand started to fan my mouth. Could he smell what I was smelling? It was the unmistakable odour of Ether. Was it coming from me? How could that be? When I chatted with Mom, she told me that doctors gave Ether to women who wanted relief from the pain of giving birth. She mentioned she had begged her doctor not to use forceps to pull me out as she heard that some children had been brain injured utilizing this procedure. Ether was also involved when they removed my tonsils in 1957. I assume this chemical was trapped in the tissues under my ribs and after several weeks of tenderness, my breathing naturally deepened as my lungs filled with more air than I usually sucked in!

Getting rolfed is painful but in a good way. Do you remember the generational

quote, “Big boys don’t cry and good girls don’t get mad”? Following such rules creates confusion in the mind, and the resulting frustrations get stored in the body. As I released this old, stale energy back into the Ethers, I became more aware of my thoughts and feelings. After one excruciating session, I headed to the shower to warm up and release residual energy. As I passed a mirror, I was drawn to look into my eyes and could feel so much love and appreciation from my angels for my willingness to endure my journey back to wellness. I cried and smiled at the same time. Walking in a balanced way is a gift from spirit that I never take for granted. Having had over 100 Rolf sessions with Ida’s students, my body has been renewed, almost returning to its original state and giving me the energy to complete the tasks I was born to do. When I walk I sense a balance from deep within that feels so precious.

After six years of being single and loving every minute, I heard my voice say, “It is time to meet a man.” To which I replied, “I am ever so-o-o busy, but if you have someone in mind, drop him in my lap.” In the spring of 1996, a young man called Gerry Parent registered for my vegetarian cooking classes and afterwards offered to help with the Spring Festival of Awareness. He made name tags and helped on-site as we were filled to the max with over 300 attendees. At our wrap-up meeting, the crew decided we should offer a Fall Festival of Awareness, hoping to curb the overwhelm on the septic system at Naramata by splitting the attendance. Gerry then left for Chile to work as a road engineer.

After some intense bodywork and being a Saturday, I decided to take the day off as I felt like I was coming down with a cold. Some Vitamin C would help, and the health food store was just across the street. I snivelled my way there and through the check-out counter to pay for my purchase. As I headed back, I looked up to see the colour of the traffic light, and my eyes focused on a small ‘For Sale’ sign in the window of the building next door. My snivelling stopped, so I wondered, “What does this mean?” I seldom saw people entering or leaving the building in the year we had been there, so I thought, “I will pay closer attention.” Sometime later, I saw a man wandering around the building and knew he must be the owner, so I inquired about the sign. He told me he had just listed the building with a real estate firm. I pointed to the Holistic Centre, letting him know I was the owner and could keep an eye on his building.

Months later, he dropped by to say no one had even inquired. Land values had dropped, and his two partners wanted their money from the investment. I asked what he was asking, and he showed me the listing for \$350,000. He had nervous energy as he explained that Jan's Electrolysis was in the front and the dental lab was in the back, and they both had leases. He wanted to know if I wanted to rent his empty office space, adding that the upstairs had three apartments. We continued talking for a while, as I am a curious soul. Later he suggested a lease-to-own contract at a reduced price for the building. That would give me time to get a down payment together, which is 25% of the value of a commercial building. I did some calculations and concluded that if I paid \$30,000 down and gave him all the rent, I would be ready for a bank loan in three years. Hmmmm! Marcel had paid cash for her shares, so I called my brother David, and he loaned me the other half. Since I believe that owning land is more beneficial than stashing money in the bank, I signed, letting go of my hope that Jan, Marcel or numerous others would join in this cooperative venture. I have found most people like to talk more than they do. Action requires commitment and effort. My angels said they would help. This arrangement would give Jan and Mike an apartment right next door as they were now a couple.

The 272 building on Ellis Street had one large and one small space that was not being rented. I no longer had my desk, as Marcel used it during the daytime. In amazement, I watched her file every piece of paper, then arrange the stapler and pens before leaving for the night. Later I would finish whatever she was working on. It felt like it was time to expand when I noticed several wooden office desks at a garage sale. I arranged them in the large unused office in the front of the building. Michael and a few friends transported Jan's homemade desk / counter down the sidewalk. She said she wasn't moving without it. Marcel complained that the new office space was dark, so I replaced the fluorescent lighting with full-spectrum, which helped. I traded some of the new Mutual Exchange Trade Dollars for six telephones that connected the desks and upstairs apartment. My crew was content as long as the dental clinic did not turn on the air conditioning; when that happened, the stench of chemicals from manufacturing teeth was so overpowering we could hardly breathe.

We had only twenty paid participants as the 1996 Fall Festival drew near. Jan asked, "Should we cancel." My angels said, "This one is for you." I cut expenses where I could and decided to enjoy the event. With larger crowds, I seldom attended workshops or had long conversations. Usually, I jot down information about each workshop, take a picture of the group and notice if I had correctly anticipated how many participants were in attendance. There was always a variety of cushions as some preferred sitting on the floor, but if there was standing room only, we took a few minutes and moved chairs from another room. I enjoyed this challenge as the other option would be for everyone to pre-register for each class which would take out the spontaneity and certainly not my organizing style.

I usually listened to 10 minutes of a workshop and discovered that most instructors said the same thing: get to know and love yourself, and here are the tools that worked for me! This year I actually attended an entire workshop that I had chosen carefully. At last, my original thought when I agreed to host the festivals seven years ago came to fruition. I also enjoyed time in the Healing Oasis as many healers and readers were not busy due to low attendance. After several readings, I lay on the floor for a sound session as two didgeridoo players vibrated their instruments over my body. Unique sounds came out of what looked like a sizeable hollow branch. This ancient instrument is from Australia and was used by the Aboriginals to evoke mystery and magic.

At the closing ceremony, Laurel had us chanting in a call-and-response style, in a language I didn't know, as we walked slowly in a circle. After the third round of chanting, I felt a familiar feeling coming over me as tears welled up and my legs grew weak. I hobbled to the corner of the room and cried for a long time, watching the small group close the circle of energy that had been opened the preceding Friday. Once people left, I asked Laurel, "What were you chanting?" She said, "I was asking QuanYin to return to Earth." I asked, "Who is QuanYin?" and she filled me in. "An Eastern goddess equivalent to Mother Mary, a representation of the Divine Feminine." Many of Laurel's articles in Issues outlined 'female' values that demonstrated partnership rather than domination.

Laurel hosted many vegetarian potlucks at her house and invited Gerry this time. He had returned from Chile saying he did not enjoy the work and hoped they

would not call him back. He had driven into Penticton with his truck instead of bicycling and asked if I could navigate us to her place, as it was out of town. After enjoying a delicious fun feast, he dropped me back at the yoga studio where my bed was. I asked, “Are you taking a break from volunteering tomorrow?” I hoped he would say ‘yes’ as it takes time, and I thought to keep another person busy. He replied, “We’ll see how I feel in the morning.” At about 10 am, I hear his truck pull in beside the building, for I am still in bed and start to laugh. My eyes roll upwards, and I say, “Thanks, angels; now I know what it means to have someone dropped in my lap.” The first thing Gerry decided to do was to paint the new office’s long, bleak brick wall with clouds that people commented about ... how real they looked. Then he tackled the computer program I had bought years earlier called FileMaker Pro. It was supposed to keep track of people and invoices if I could figure out the instructions.

He mentioned he hoped to see more of BC as he was from Ontario. I shared that Mom wanted to come for a visit at Christmas. Would he be willing to drive her motorhome from Terrace to Penticton? Oh, and did he like dogs, as she had quite a few? When we went for long walks, Gerry saw cats everywhere – on the windowsill, near the door, hiding in the bushes. We chatted about him having been a dog in many past lives, whereas I believe I’ve lived more lifetimes as a cat. For one thing, I have strong fingers that claw when I go into defence mode. I believe animals come here to teach us to be more compassionate. Many say they are lower beings, but I beg to differ. Many videos are circulating that show animals have strong emotions. Ever listen to a cow mooing when you take away her calf? I also believe that if someone mistreats an animal, they may spend a lifetime being that animal to feel what that feels like.

Gerry took the Greyhound bus to Terrace and became Mom’s hero, driving her 30-foot motor home painted with large and colourful environmental quotes and ten dogs back to the Okanagan, about a twenty-hour drive. Mom stayed with me that Winter and left in the Spring to continue her presentations at various schools in BC, selling her book *Iceberg Tea*. By now, I had gotten Gerry’s birth time and asked my astrologer to check him out. The reading showed many common interests with hardly any negative aspects considering our age difference – I was 44, and he was 22. Moreen said this is a sister/brother relationship.

In the spring of 1997, I refused to renew the dental clinic's lease as the smell was unhealthy, and he moved out that summer. Since Mike was an electrical contractor, we got busy renovating the 272 building and divided the larger room into three smaller ones, each with a window. I posted an ad looking for a Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner, thinking this would add credibility. Dr. Alex Mazurin, a chiropractor and TCM doctor who advertised for years, told me I was the main topic of discussion when his professional group met. He mentioned they were not to rub elbows with health practitioners who were not officially certified. Another learning curve as BC was creating policies to control the various alternative health schools that were popping up. The many alternative practitioners working at the 254 building agreed to a monthly rental fee at the 272 building as these rooms were larger and brighter. Many helped out by answering the phones one day a week.

The next big event – which did not feel like one at the time – was a private reading from Prince Hirindra Singh from India. He was a prince who forsook the life of privilege to learn Vedic Numerology, a sure way to discern one's destiny. The woman sponsoring him assured me he was the best in the world and asked if I would trade an ad in Issues magazine for an appointment with him. He spoke at the second annual Ascending Hearts Conclave held on the Equinox in Vernon in 1997. When I arrived in Westbank for my reading, Prince Singh started by saying that the moment of birth is a mathematical formula that defines our destiny. Before coming to Earth, we have each made agreements with the Divine that we have now forgotten. He told me I was to write a book. "Who me?" I thought, but what I said was, "I publish a magazine called Issues, and I write a column; that's the best I can do." Then his head began to shake, and he said, "This is very strange . . . a lady wishes to speak to you." He listened intently and added, "You worked for her lifetimes ago." "Doing what?" I asked. "Sewing flower petals to make handkerchiefs," indicating the size with his hands about ten inches apart. I asked, "What are they for?" "People come to her for healing, and she puts them on their injuries." I asked what her name was, and he answered, "QuanYin; she says her name is QuanYin." As he came out of his trance, he added, "I believe she is a deity in China." He breathed deeply, apologized for nothing like this had ever happened before, and continued with the reading.

This was the second time I heard QuanYin's name, so when I dropped off the latest Issues at the library, I found a book entitled 1,000 Deities of China with two lines describing her as the Goddess of Compassion and gave several variations in the spelling, including GuanYin. Years later, I learned she was a masculine figure before the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE), according to the Lotus Sutra. Around the 12th century, she became associated with feminine or yin energy. Today she is exalted in Chinese folk religion, Taoism and Buddhism, with many temples around the world featuring this beloved goddess.

Our crew had a long wrap-up meeting as Laurel insisted we create a women's event. She was friends with Betty of the Amazing Grays on Vancouver Island, and they had just hosted their women-only gathering with a record number of attendees. Naramata Centre was busy in the fall but rented us half the site this year with an agreement to rent the entire site, the third weekend of September starting in 1999. We chose that date as moms needed time to get their kids settled into school, and if they were coming from the coast, they wanted it to happen before winter tires had to be installed. Many women drove over these tall mountains over the next five years to join in this unique and inspiring healing opportunity that was affordable, inspiring, and so much fun.

As the holidays approached, Gerry and I decided to fly to his parent's home in Ontario for Christmas and enjoy their annual visit to their cottage at the lake. I remember staring at a 5-foot painting of wolves that hung over the staircase and saying to his mom, "You have a Robert Bateman original?" She answered, "Noooo, that was done by Gerry in Grade 11." Gerry went on to say he copied it for an art project from another artist and noted that some of the shadows on the wolves' feet in the original were not in their proper position if you considered the sun's placement. Gerry told me that in Grade 1, his teacher asked students to paint the tree outside the window. Afterwards, she held up his paper for all to see, showing off the variations in tone and texture in his watercolour painting. Sometime after that, I had a vivid daydream that he was kind of like Van Gogh in a past life, which was why he could paint clouds whose depth made them float on the wall. One evening while chatting, we did what I call shadow scanning. Sittings in a dimly lit room, we stare intently at a friend's face, describing what we see in detail. I assume these visions are past lives we had together. I saw the two of us climbing the hills

in Tibet, growing old. Tibet was a name slowly rising in my consciousness as Margaret Lunan, the yoga teacher, had a sign in her yard and a bumper sticker on her vehicle that read FREE TIBET. I wondered why they were not free and asked people questions while reading what I could find on the topic.

In the spring of '97, Gerry attended the annual SOOPA Conference and Trade Show in Cawston, influencing him to start his own business: Garden Deliveries. Fresh local produce delivered on his bicycle. He wrote a column for Issues and painted a sign for the back entrance where the survey sticks used to be made. His rental space in Summerland ended, so he decided to sleep in the back of the building. The 254 building still offered yoga and meditation classes in the large workshop room, and we rented it to various practitioners wanting to host a workshop. Since the old Issues office was empty, a young couple signed a one-year lease to start a juice bar and gift store called Déjà Vu Do. The young couple had packed up and left by summer's end, so we juggled ideas to make the space pay. Gerry re-opened the Juicy Carrot juice bar, which grew popular serving wheatgrass and lots of carrot juice. Michael turned the original healers' rooms into the Craft Collective and did his best to entice local artists to co-create that space. I had signs painted and installed on the side of the building. Gerry and I were great business partners and had much in common besides food and long walks. He listened to a spiritual teacher whose lessons arrived every two weeks in the mail on cassette tapes. Winged Wolf, now called Wisdom Master Maticintin, made a recording for her students to learn her Buddhist program that he wasn't allowed to share. She disapproved of our relationship, so this weighed on his conscience. At times, the distance between us felt huge.

I attended Gordon's wedding in the Lower Mainland during the summer of 1998. Britta was a friend he had met in Ontario, college students selling books to make ends meet. I remember Gordon chuckling when he told me he had developed a clever but clear rejection line for ladies who smoked. "I don't kiss ashtrays." Later when the two of them were back in BC attending university, she realized she had feelings for him, so she gave up smoking. When I arrived, Gordon told me Mom was not invited to the wedding! This blew my mind! As far as I was concerned, it was tradition for family members to get an invite, and if they could make it, they would. He told me in no uncertain terms that he no longer considered Tess a Grandma, mainly because of a feud some years earlier, but I am sure it goes deeper



than that. I breathed deep as my heartfelt anguish for both of them since I feel both sides of any argument. My mind has a hard time understanding why people cannot forgive, as I know the angels always have a plan if one is willing.

My next surprise was seeing my brother Paul and his sixteen-year-old son Nehemiah there. I had heard very little from him since 1976 when he did not get the job posting as a teacher and returned to the United States. He told me their marriage was ending, and he was hired as a school teacher to work at Brother Michael's newly created Christian school in Terrace. Mike's many children needed more than home-schooling, which Patty did for years. Their group bought the old city hall building and renovated it into classrooms. It is still a Christian alternative education center twenty years later, but their kids have graduated.

Returning from the Lower Mainland, I felt exhausted; even my car reflected that same energy by getting a flat tire. Once home, I learned thieves had smashed a window and stolen a few items at The Craft Collective. It cost more to replace the glass than what they were worth!?! Once the new window was installed, I headed to Kootenays for the last drop-offs and decided to spend three days in a lean-to at the Tipi Camp and watch the waves roll in, as that was all my energy. Once rested, I attended two workshops at the Yasodhara Ashram: Straight Walk and the Dream Symposium with the best instructors and dreamers in the world. Going through that process, I could recount a vivid dream that put tradition into a new perspective. Even after twenty-some years, I still remember that dream:: a forest is on fire, and the phone lines are coming down. I know I have to drive through that forest to reach Mom. Tree after tree is being consumed as my car and I go through that burning ring of fire, a spectacular image that often surrounds Shiva, the God of Change.

Musing got more intense as feelings ebbed and flowed, and I went deeper into myself, trusting each reaction was perfect. Ken Martin, one of the early Rolfers in Canada, had shown up and stated: "I have noticed over time that if people do not deal with stuck feelings, their poor body posture returns." He said the best way to bring emotions to the surface is with fast, deep breathing, then requesting the body to sense its various parts while asking what it wants to surface. Ken preferred doing BreathWork rather than BodyWork sessions and was one of the first Rolfers to be certified. When Ken asked why I felt frustrated or mad, I often said, "It's my Dad." Ken told me repeatedly, "I need you to say 'I love you' to him." The first time I laughed hysterically, saying this was impossible; he could not hear me. Over

the subsequent few sessions, we figured out how a five-year-old could express her emotions honestly. Using my imagination, I asked my angels to put Dad to sleep and whispered the words in his ear. I always trust my first response. Some days my body just kicked its feet or pounded its fists as I screamed or cried. This is not surprising as words are often insufficient to explain pain if created before the age of speech. If given half a chance, I know the ego will do its best to maintain the status quo. After a year of once-a-month sessions, I realized I still had a long way to go on this healing journey, but at least I realized how much energy was trapped that I do not remember putting there. Memories fade, but the body never forgets.

Pain is often stored in our fascia, a network of thin, white tissue that covers our muscles and provides stability for them. Research shows that when something happens that you do not have the skills to process at the time, the memory is absorbed into the fascia, creating tightness in and around the tissues impacted by the emotional or physical trauma. Dr. Ida Rolf developed this theory in the 1960s, and today, thousands of practitioners get paid to release the damage from deep within. I learned that one cannot think pain out of the body. It must be understood with an adult mind and released with love for all involved. If not, one muscle will tighten the next until the accumulated pressure can no longer be contained, and an accident or injury occurs, allowing the old trauma to surface and the memory released back into the ethers. It doesn't matter if we don't remember the details, but since I am a curious soul, I like to spend time with my piece of the puzzle. Do you remember the classical research study about monkeys washing their food? Once one monkey 'gets it,' it is easier for others monkeys in their colony and even the ones on the mainland to start 'doing it.' This, I understand, is how humanity evolves.

By now, I have had about thirty Rolf sessions with Gary, who is leaving for France to train as a foot specialist. When he returns, he massages and manipulates my feet, then gives them a shake. This action took my breath away as my bones snapped and re-adjusted in a few seconds. My feet felt like they were laughing as I lowered myself off the table. Gary explained that the arch of the foot is like the shock absorber on a car. Each step flexes the arch; otherwise, the spine absorbs the impact, which will later be reflected as back pain once the cartridge disintegrates because there was a lack of energetic flow to those tissues for an extended time.

After another session, I walked down the hallway and felt a bump. Another

person had just walked past me, but we didn't actually touch. I stopped to ponder this sensation. What had occurred? A felt sensation with no physical touching? I went outside, where people were walking on the sidewalk and could feel people's auras walk through mine for half an hour. Seemed like three feet was the average distance, but some didn't bump at all. What did that mean? Whatever the answer, this showed me another truth: we do indeed have an invisible energy called the auric field that surrounds each of us.

Have you ever tried a session with a reflexology practitioner? Reflexologists use finger pressure feeling for crunchy spots in the foot that feels tender. These deposits happen when the blood returns to the heart carrying tissue salts. If there is more salt than the blood can carry, some of the load is dropped, and that residue increases over time which becomes painful. Some charts show the corresponding organs with different areas of the foot. Similarly, hand and ear charts depict how our body parts are connected. My slogan then was, "There are 3,000 ways to get well; take your pick." Nowadays, I would guess there are a million!

Next came the art of saying "No." A lady friend looked at me wide-eyed when I started this practice and said, "What?" when I refused to let her borrow some books. I told her to ask me again in an hour as I practiced saying "No!" My innards felt very strange, and many years later, I still feel only semi-comfortable saying "No!" I have also learned that if I am facing an important decision, I need to be alone, near a tree or sitting on a boulder while making notes of what I want. Then I return to the bargaining table and see if we can compromise. Since I was, and still am, a people-pleaser personality type who doesn't like conflict, I developed a strategy to survive in my youth that was not easy to change as an adult. This particular incident stands out as an example. Four of us, my brother, mother, and her best friend Edith, bought land as a collective while living in Terrace. I listened to Edith's reasons for wanting out of the arrangement and nodded in agreement. The next day I could feel myself starting to sizzle, and my under-the-breath mutterings grew louder and angrier as the day progressed. Soon I was articulating what I felt to some invisible entity, and by the third day, I was so upset I could hardly sleep. Once I formulated a clear opinion of my needs, I called another meeting, but by then, they decided to talk to a lawyer. That incident helped identify the delay mechanism I used as a safety valve to avoid confrontation.

My three years are now up, and it is time to talk to the Credit Union, as the owners of the 272 Ellis building want a payout. This was both terrifying and amusing. The Loan Officer was a member of one of the local churches and had watched several of the Holistic Networker TV shows since their church show was aired just before our New Age program. He had read a few Issues Magazine and jokingly talked about his intuitive hunches in approving various clients or not. He noted the money collected at the 272 building and said that if I gave him the 254 building as collateral, he would grant the mortgage! He then informed me that a new bank law was now in effect, and there were extra charges to cover bank losses if a borrower defaulted on a payment. There were also municipal and provincial taxes, plus legal fees. Where was I going to get an extra \$8,500? With that thought on my mind, I started the next distribution trip.

I drove the Vernon-to-Kamloops route backwards, planning to spend the final night with a new health practitioner living near Salmon Arm. I descended a steep hill when I saw a fast-moving red car approaching; I pulled hard on the steering wheel and headed for the bushes. Too late and smack! The driver hit the rear door, crushing that wheel and kept driving. Some men from across the road heard the crash, came running to see what had happened, and banged on my window, forcing my eyes to open. I rolled down the window and said, "I'm fine; all is good." I noticed the feeling of mice running through my hair and heard myself saying, "Breathe, Angele, breathe." My training was so ingrained I had followed through automatically, and now that my body was safe, my spirit returned through the crown chakra. Then I realized my vehicle was facing the opposite direction, spun around from the impact. The RCMP arrived, noted the details and arranged for a tow truck. I called the advertiser to pick me up as I was just a few blocks from his home. The shock kept me awake for a few hours that night as my mind whirled about what had just transpired. The next day, Gerry arrived with his truck and collected a few left bundles of magazines and me. Following the black marks from the damaged tire made it easy for the police to trace the run-away vehicle and apprehend the drunk young man driving his dad's car.

On Monday, the adjuster phoned and asked if I was hurt. He mentioned how low the mileage was considering its shape and said he would pay me more than he thought it was worth. Was I agreeable to \$8,600? I signed the papers and thanked

my honourable, trusty Golf for giving its life to my new project. My odometer had broken a few years after buying the vehicle. My mechanic advised me it was not worth fixing and that I should just calculate the distance for each trip, and once I had travelled 10,000 miles, it would be time for an oil change. I paid around \$11,000 for it in 1990.

This was the second accident, the first that happened on my way home from Grand Forks in 1994, six years earlier. It was winter, and the roads were slippery in sections. I had stayed overnight with my brother, and my mind was on other things as I passed a slow-moving sand truck. As I rounded the next corner, the road went downhill, and I started to skid. I watched wide-eyed as one semi passed another, rounding the corner. The outside driver braked hard, and we met in the middle of the yellow line, which was hard to see because of the snow and ice. My car slid under his fender, and my glasses fell off as I came to a halt under his truck. The radiator was crushed, but the motor and windshield were fine. The tow truck driver took me back to Penticton, and the vehicle was repaired rather than written off since there was no structural damage. I always do my best to stay present when I drive, especially in busy cities. Whenever I enter a freeway, I take nothing for granted and watch for signals that other drivers may be distracted. When our mind is on auto-pilot, thinking about the past or the future, the likelihood of an accident increases because our auric field is weak. Another way to say that is: when our mind is not in our body, the other driver doesn't feel our presence because we are not in the Now. Marcel fretted over the near-fatality, so I drew up a will and took the opportunity to barter with my angels: I wanted two weeks' notice if they had a job to oversee in the Great Beyond since it was their idea I make so many road trips.

Marion Walters, my original registration lady, was moving into old folk's home, so we decided to use the smaller room for our Lending Library, which was created when we were still a society. Having a downtown location would give people more accessible access to esoteric and educational material, as these were the days before the internet made information readily available. Membership fees were \$10 a year, so it did not create much income, but I reasoned the room was just sitting empty. We did use it for occasional meetings and registration for many

events.

In 1998, Naramata Centre served Tang as a juice and some tasteless cookies. I told them from now on, I would make my own refreshments instead of paying per person for that service. I bought a used swirly machine that kept drinks cold and served organic apple juice combined with either ginger or mint tea. We had already decided styrofoam was bad for the planet, so we asked everyone to bring a travelling mug. Thank goodness we had ordered Festival Mugs, as many forgot to bring theirs. Since I wouldn't compromise my food standards because of the large crowds, I gave my chocolate chip and oatmeal-raisin cookie recipes to a volunteer who baked 800 cookies using freshly ground flour in exchange for a weekend pass. I enjoyed working with the many cookie bakers over the years, creating a win-win situation as it was something participants raved about for years.

Online for '99 became our motto, so I hired someone to develop the IssuesMagazine.net website. I wanted the look of a real magazine with pages that would flip, but he could not figure that out. A few years later, the electronic publishing platform ISSUU developed this feature, so I signed up as it was free at the time, and now I pay for this service. After that festival, I was about to put some typing on Jan's desk when she looked up and said, "I don't want to read one more piece of paper." We talked, and she disclosed she was tired and the computer work was causing her to vibrate. Renovations to the second building had put a lot of stress on her, and now Mike needed to find a 'real' job to pay support for his kids, which meant they had to move. Over the years, I tried not to give Jan more work than I thought was quickly completed, but slowing down is as difficult for me as it was for her to keep up with my many ideas.

We discussed a buy-out for her investment in the building; she wanted \$30,000. I told her the best I could do was be responsible for the cleaning and repairs and give her post-dated cheques. Shortly afterwards, a revitalization focus group appeared, asking business owners for suggestions on creating a walking path alongside the creek to downtown. I liked their idea and attended several planners' meetings over the next few months. They wanted to take eight to ten feet off adjoining properties to create a paved 6-foot wide path, and they had one year to get everyone on board. I chatted with anyone who knew property values to determine fair compensation.

Dale, the man who had made the surveyors' sticks in the back of our building, just happened to drop by and suggested we check our property line. The surveyor's office was kitty-corner across the street, so I walked over and mentioned my dilemma. How much was ten feet of the property worth? He went into the back, came out with a blueprint, and laid it on the counter. His face lit up when he said, "See this? You 'own' the creek; someone forgot to do their homework in the 1900s. Nowadays, people can't own a creek or a lake." I asked, "What does this mean?" He replied, "Ask City Hall," which was another five-minute walk. I spoke with the man in charge, mentioned what the surveyor said, and added, "I need \$30,000 to buy out my partner who shares the title." It must have been a good deal because, within a few days, he dropped by with legal papers to sign. In November, when Jan left, she had two cheques in hand as Gerry bought her shares in Visions Unlimited Network Inc. I felt sad she was going; we had such great times creating The Holistic Healing Center, but grateful that the angels made her transition easy.

I applied for another training grant, a part-time position with Samarpan in mind. She had been decorating the Healing Oasis for years and assisted Jan with the on-site festival registrations. She was a natural on the computer, and her creative flair shone when she created yearly collages from the many photos taken at the festivals that we would post at the festival entrance. People enjoyed seeing themselves or friends, fond reminders of the years they attended. Christina Drummond, a Reiki-style healer, rented a room at the Holistic Centre and volunteered to answer phones the other two days a week. She booked appointments for the six practitioners now renting rooms. She was a trained typist and inputted many articles, as email was not a common way to transfer data, yet.

Renting out Jan's apartment taught me a few classical lessons about being a landlady. A woman with a baby applied was on social assistance and agreed that the apartment would not be shared. In less than three months, she had a guy living with her who had noisy friends. One day I arrived home to the blaring horns of fire trucks. The officer said they were called after a pepper spray fight had broken out in the hallway. One of the firefighters was in the creek washing out the victim's eyes. That bunch was evicted, I repainted, and the next lady was a kleptomaniac who stole my vacuum cleaner whenever I left it in the hallway! I could go on but let me not bore you with a few bad experiences. I like people; some just have more

problems than others.

Crews levelled the land abutting the creek, put in a pathway planting native shrubs to beautify the banks and encourage people to walk to town and listen to the stream. Next, the city provided a different entry to access our parking lot. Creating this new lane meant going through a land where an alternative practitioner had an office in a converted home. He occasionally advertised in *Issues*, so I had a few sessions to check him out. We became friends, and I got to know his wife and children. One day he had a stroke, so I asked his wife what would happen with the property. She promised to let me know once things were settled, and I started thinking I could also steward this property.

Here is a memory worth repeating to understand how the fascia holds our karmic patterns. It would be another busy day in the office, ending with a Rolf session with Gary at 6 pm. I prepped dinner and asked Gerry if he could turn on the oven at 5 pm because I did not want to eat late. My session was intense. As I climbed the stairs to our apartment, I could feel my muscles relax from deep within; however. . . sniff, sniff, no smell, whereas my dinner should be cooking! Gerry was sitting on the floor fixing his bike tire as I entered the apartment. I asked about dinner, and he said he had forgotten to turn on the stove and returned to looking at his tire. I could feel intense energy surging upward from my pelvic floor and noticed a knife on the counter. I even felt my hand grab it with thoughts of stabbing him! I fought with my mind forcing my fingers to release their grip on the knife. This was insane! Gerry looked up innocently and asked, "Is anything the matter?" I replied, "This has nothing to do with you!" I knew that 'this' and any other incident I could remember were unrelated, so why this explosion of anger? I hurried back down the stairs, and once outside, I threw rocks at the creek, swearing obscenities with each throw. Once I noticed my fingers were bleeding, I stopped and collapsed. The sound of rushing water always calms my mind. Then tears flowed, and once they stopped, I felt ready to go back up the stairs and turn on the oven. I was not dying of hunger, so once again, I asked myself why such a strong reaction. Was it because Gerry had not done what he had promised me he would do? Or was there some deeper cause?

I was never quite able to connect the dots to a specific trigger event, so I will guess this experience was the culmination of something in my history, a reverberation of the cosmic injunction of emotions and the letting go of some ancient family trauma. Mom told me Phillip threw sand in my eyes when I was



a baby; perhaps he was jealous? It was common practice living in the wilderness to throw rocks and an easy way for children to express anger. We thought of it as target practice, and it only became forbidden once one of my brothers almost lost an eye. Where we lived, most young men carried a knife. I also remember when Phillip got mad at Paul. Paul had gotten his hair cut before Phillip, and since he was the second-oldest child, he felt he should be second in line for a haircut. When Paul climbed out of Mom's barber chair and saw how mad Phillip was, he ran towards the nearest tree. Phillip put his knife between his teeth and started up after him. I screamed as Phillip attempted to saw off Paul's head from behind. Dad arrived, Phillip got spanked, and Paul was taken to town, where he received 17 stitches.

Communication was something my family had little training in. Mom had lived in a convent and was taught blind obedience. Dad was eight years older and had lots of common sense but couldn't figure out how to respond when she got frustrated except to joke about it. After an argument, he would say, "I just wanted to hear you holler," giving in to her wish while slapping her on the butt. This usually made her more angry, causing the fry pans or whatever was near to sprout wings. I typically slam doors when this lower energy rises, then I talk with my inner child, asking why and what memory is being triggered. Is this energy mine or humanities?

By the year 2000, full colour became reasonably priced. The best of Mom's homesteading pictures had been used, so I featured Retreat Centres around BC and Alberta for the next few years. Then the Calgary Community Natural Foods created a new policy and no longer wanted Issues in their lobby. I was mad at losing such a great distribution spot, then sad, but that city was getting busy, and data was now available online. Next, a dependable distributor in Edmonton connected, so driving to Alberta was no longer needed. I shipped instead, which cost about the same but saved me time; I just didn't get to visit the growing grandkids.

We hosted the 22nd annual Spring Festival of Awareness with the Juicy Carrot serving light lunches onsite. Naramata Centre demolished another old building and renovated the basement of McLaren Hall, making it a perfect location for the Healing Oasis since we no longer had the children's program. Marcel was delighted not to climb the Alberta Hall stairs all day, introducing practitioners to clients. Naramata Centre put out the call to build a new chapel, and volunteers created a labyrinth nearby. The campgrounds were improved, and other changes happened on

many levels. That year, David Thiaw led the Afro-Jazz Extravaganza on Saturday night in the Great Hall and taught a workshop on both days. He was very popular with students travelling from afar to be part of the action. He was a tall African man with an impressive knowledge of drumming, considered by many to be the best around. We had 44 instructors and 59 workshops with more healers and psychic readers than ever.

We hosted the fourth annual Wise Women's Festival in the fall. The two events were levelling out with about 250 people attending each. I advertised for another partner with visions of rebuilding the 254 building into three storeys. I was feeling the high that comes when one breaks through resistance. Urmi compared this sensation to putting a rocket into space: first, you need to gather the materials and gain enough knowledge to build the craft; then, the effort is required for takeoff. Now I was free-floating, just like the rocket going around the Earth. When no one responded to my ad, I crash-landed, planned a major overhaul of the 254 building, and found a carpenter who cut openings between the three sections. Now if Gerry needed assistance with the noon-hour rush, my staff could keep an eye on the store, and I would help him.

Mom dropped in with her new book *White Spirit Bear*, which I displayed in the new store. Mike had entrusted me with the commissioned Craft Collective items which got absorbed into a new venue which I called the Rainbow Connection Book and Gift Store. Gerry wanted to expand, so he moved the juice bar to the new section, giving him room for tables and chairs with his own entrance. We built a walk-in cooler to keep his expanding selection of organic produce and trays of wheatgrass cold. His menu now included soup, sandwiches and wraps. Gerry moved his Juicy Carrot sign and added a sandwich board for the sidewalk. I painted a rainbow over the display window of the new store and a new Yoga Studio sign. I moved desks back to the original location and rented the 272 office space, painting a new Issues Magazine sign.

When people raved about the delicious food, we encouraged them to sign up for once-a-week classes for a month. I had taken Ayurvedic cooking classes at the high school in the evening and had read many books while hosting various Ayurveda practitioners. I felt ready to put that style of wellness, via the food we eat, into practice. Healthy Habits Cooking Classes was an extension of inner listening,

and the second class featured making veggie burgers from leftovers. I wanted people to develop a feel for texture and ingredient combining; I wanted them to know what taste they preferred; sweet, salty or spicy. I assembled ten bowls of basic ingredients like cooked rice, veggies, various proteins, a binder, spices and oil. When the six students arrived, they watched me combine ingredients to make four patties, then it was their turn to do the same. Two men in their 70s struggled with my concept of cooking without a set recipe and were slow to decide. I checked in with the other participants, and by the time I got back to their bowl, it looked like soup, so I added ground flax seeds which didn't make much of a difference. Next, I added psyllium seed powder until the consistency became stiff and the burgers held their shape. The class was complete, so we tasted the various burgers as they came out of the oven, leaving the older men's patties to dry out sufficiently enough to dry out, which took a long time. The next day they returned to pick them up and later reported these burgers were the best-tasting Bowel Buddies they had ever eaten. Psyllium and flax are great for softening the stools while cleaning and greasing the bowel walls. Flax oil also nourishes the brain.

I enjoyed working with Harold Daradics, the new carpenter, as his sense of humour and willingness to take on any job impressed me. He charged the minimal amount, and I often heard him say, "So much for a ten-minute job," after spending two hours getting creative on how to make the adjustment work on this old building. I bought six rolls of cotton broadcloth to brighten the yoga studio and spent a day stapling the colours to the ceiling beams using a rented scaffold. When people looked up in Savasana, often called the Dead Man's Pose, they saw a rainbow of colours instead of insulated ceiling panels. Just inside the entrance door, I hung an 8-foot peacock tail fan that I hot-glued to a sheet of plywood. Mom was living next door to a peacock farm in Terrace and brought the tail as a birthday gift. We both loved the brilliant colours, and scholars often associate the peacock with QuanYin, claiming they have one thousand eyes and represent the heavenly Phoenix rising upwards.

A sales lady just back from a trip to India showed up with a collection of small brass statues of the Buddha and QuanYin. I asked how she found me. . . via Issues Magazine, of course. I was delighted to finally see statues and photos, which began my collection and now includes batiked wall hangings and four books about her life similar to Buddha's. I tell people, "I never went looking for these statues; they just

appeared as I travelled the valleys delivering magazines. Like the day when I was driving through Salmon Arm and heard my angel voice say, “Stop!” I pulled into an empty parking space in front of a pawn shop. When I got inside, I heard, “Get me out,” so I walked the aisles until I spotted a wood carving, the head of Buddha. I paid for it, and while visiting friends building a yoga and meditation temple near that town, I gave it to them. As its new custodians, they were thrilled and honoured to take good care of this prized artifact and have its blessings reverberate through their sacred space. It was exactly what was needed at that point in time.

When travelling salespeople dropped in to show their wares, it felt like Christmas as I picked through their Tupperware bins, guessing what people might buy. Gradually, I learned to budget for these visits as many items were enticing. Susan Lopatecki, the clothing designer and fabric artist who introduced me to the rainbow-coloured clothing I wore for the Festivals, was willing to add a rack of designer clothing on consignment. Her original designs were becoming popular, so promoting these unique and colourful creations at my ‘real’ store felt like a blessing. I focused on selling ‘rainbowed’ anything, beadwork from Bali, artwork, jewellery, and crystals. I even dyed the official Yoga Poses T-shirts in various rainbow designs and added yoga props to my inventory. A lady in Vancouver had created a product line that included a variety of bolsters and meditation cushions. Her business Half Moon Canada is still supplying locals with high-quality products. A similar connection was meeting Suzanne Siemens and Madeleine Shaw at an early Spring Festival, selling their reusable and washable NewMoon Menstrual Pads. Thirty years later, their company is called Aisle Products, which significantly lowers the environmental footprint compared to conventional tampons and pads. I used to make my own rags, as we called them back then because when I inserted a tampon, I would stop bleeding for as long as it was in. I figured my body could no longer tolerate bleach next to sensitive tissues. As a lifeguard, my body had become saturated. Chlorine is a similar product used to disinfect pools, and in case you don’t know, chlorine dries your skin and eats the elastic in swimsuits.

Next, I purchased Nywyn and Kestrel’s Celtic-Designed T-shirts. They were separating and needed money, so I bought their original designs. I find it hard to say no, and since I was selling their T-shirts in my store, it seemed like a fit. My learning curve increased steeply as I chose various colours and sizes to have printed. I still have a few black T-shirts left as I was told young people love that

colour and ordered more than I could sell. I would like to see these beautiful designs being admired once again, so if you are a creative, business-minded soul, connect with me.

Next, I incorporated the Lending Library into the store as a practitioner wanted to rent the room. I continued renting the videos, selling the books, and adding to the collection when Andy Schneider closed his bookstore, Other Dimensions, in Salmon Arm. I bought used books at garage sales and new books from in Vancouver wholesaler who also carried miscellaneous trinkets. It was on-the-job training managing inventory as I found new items to sell or kept moving them around to look like new stock. The back room continued with the Speaker Series on Friday nights. I taught yoga, and Richard Lausch led TaiChi twice a week. Mugs or Marion McConnel rented the room for her yoga teacher's class on the weekends when we were not hosting a Health Fair. Mugs recently published a book about her teacher Hari, Letters from the Yoga Masters. An excellent read if you want to know what these early teachers taught, using the science of breath and stretching to create flow in our chi.

I visited Sunflower Lane in Argenta twenty minutes before Johnson's Landing that summer. I wanted to find the lady who made the organic hand cream I sold in my store. Elisa Shine had attended a Spring Festival and gave out samples. The smell was irresistible and melted into my skin, and I wanted to know its secret. I missed the turn-off on the first pass, then found the windy, gravel road that headed south, back along Kootenay Lake. I stopped at the only public building in Argenta, the post office, where I got more precise directions. Phones I learned were few and far apart in that tiny hamlet. After parking my vehicle, I followed the path through the woods, over the little bridge, up the hill and around the corner. As they kept telling me, "You can't miss it." Indeed, Elisa was in her kitchen making her magical cream with her daughter pasting on labels. They showed me the tall fence around the garden and said it was to keep out the deer and bears; too bad it couldn't keep out the mosquitoes. They shared stories about bears living in the area and showed me claw marks on a neighbour's door while we carried two cases to my car. Soon I was on my way to Johnson's Landing, feeling changed in some strange way. As much as I didn't want to live in the wilderness, the familiarity of living in the wilds stirred my soul.

The next day I enjoyed a walk to the Fry Creek Canyon. Afterwards, I listened to Richard as he showed me around, proud they had created an affordable retreat centre where people could attend educational presentations with talented leaders at a reasonable price. His wife, Carol Ann, talked about the hard work required, unpaid, to run the place. She was a schoolteacher, like Richard, but preferred to have her summers off. Richard told me that being with his mother during her final month allowed him to think more deeply about life. He decided to use his parents' inheritance and life energy to create a legacy: we don't need to kill animals or have them suffer so that we may live. They serve a vegetarian menu using dairy, eggs, seeds and nuts as protein. Since hemp hearts have become the norm getting enough protein is easy. 100 grams of hemp seeds provides approx. 25 grams of protein with a sweet taste that is more easily digestible than beans. Cooking beans is a talent I did develop as soaking and sprouting helps to release gas, but that topic is for another time.

Arriving back in Penticton, I rented the 272 office space with Gerry's amazing clouds to a man who taught 'real' yoga. I called mine 'soft' yoga; it was for people who needed stretching, working with the breath, rather than a hard workout of strengthening exercises. My breath and bodywork continued to deepen, and here are a few sentences from one of my Musing columns after a session with Ken. Putting words to feelings is something I didn't learn as a child. Knowing Dad loved me didn't make the hurt less. They say tears melt the ice around the heart, and I am getting to know and love myself better as I react less to the emotions of others. I am not sure my child-self will ever understand these love/hate relationships created, but I am getting another chance to understand them better. When each relationship reaches a certain level of comfort, the heart opens so it can heal. My relationship with Gerry is now at the stage where he repeats similar patterns to what my Dad used to do. My adult self finds it easy to detach and let him be, for I also like to have my own space. Sometimes, he lives in his own world for weeks, and I feel left out with nothing to share, making me sad. I have given up thinking it was me that did something wrong. I know God gives me the people I need to heal my soul, and Gerry is wise, so I shall wait until he is ready to share.

In March of 2001, Musing stated: it is time for me to have fewer healing sessions and allow my body time to integrate them as my body feels saturated. I

knew I had moved a lot of stuck energy with so many Rolf sessions, breathwork, Reiki, dreamwork and psychic readings. One day I made a mental note of how much energy I had after a significant release and came up with a theory: for each hour of body or breathwork, yoga or tai chi practice, I get an extra minute of energy to use for a long time. Thus, after several hundred hours of being worked over by knowledgeable practitioners, I have more energy than ever.

Just after this, Mom and my niece Darcy arrived from Terrace. I felt great running up and down Penticton's many outdoor stairs and spending time with friends who loved helping and doing whatever. I just returned from a trade show in Calgary, promoting the Festival, and stayed with my sister-in-law Holly. I had another trade show in Vancouver in two weeks, then the Spring Festival at the end of April, before tackling my latest idea, a Health Fair in front of our newly-renovated businesses in July.

Little did I know that the next phase of my life was beginning...again. I didn't remember writing the following words till I re-read it recently, but Musing stated: I've always wanted to start an intentional community, a retreat where like-minded souls live and work together. Then mentioned: be careful what you ask for; you just may get it. My angels clued in before I did on what was to happen next.

I had bought new hiking boots, and while breaking them in, one of the floppy shoelace loops caught the top hook of the other boot and tied my feet together. I fell and bruised myself but got up quickly and continued on. When it happened again, I walked more slowly, crossing a bridge. Strange re-occurrence, but did I take the time to think about it? Things often happen to me in groups of three, and true to form, I fell again. I was hurrying between the two buildings this time, thinking about something someone had said. I felt and heard a 'pop' in my hip, and my body began to tremble. I could not get up. After ten minutes, a lady noticed me lying on the cement and helped me limp back into the building. I rented crutches and kept moving as the pain seemed minimal. After a week, I felt much better, enough to assist my carpenter with final renovations, hanging lights in the new walk-in cooler. In the morning, I asked Darcy to put away the Celtic Designed T-shirts from the last Health Expo, which were now sorted on the fold-up table in the yoga room. Twenty minutes before class, I checked, and the table was still in the middle of the room. Anger was rising, and my angels said, "No one is going to show." My mind

wanted everything to be ready nonetheless, so I searched for Darcy and found her in the Juicy Carrot chatting. She had forgotten and continued to chat. Somewhat miffed, I decided to pull the table to one side of the room. When I did, the table legs collapsed, pulling me slightly forward. I heard the same pop that happened a week ago and could no longer put weight on my foot. Damn, I reasoned, this is not good. I should not let my impatience rule me like this! I cancelled the upcoming trade show and rested.

I asked myself what pattern I was repeating, and a memory surfaced. It was a time many years back when I was swimming with my nine-year-old nephew Adam who announced he could hold his breath for one whole minute underwater. I said, “Really?” He shot underwater to prove it. I felt compelled to help him keep his word and held him down until the minute was up, even though he was starting to struggle. I had been a swimming teacher, so I knew there was no danger. When he surfaced, he started to cry, which surprised me, and I felt bad because I was just helping him do what he said he could do.

I told Holly what happened, and she blamed it on them Brousseau traits. She snuggled with him in the shallow water, and I became the bad auntie who almost drowned Adam! I realized that my behaviour was repeating Dad’s way of instilling in us, at a very early age, the need to keep a promise; anything we said, we must do – including staying underwater for one full minute in this instance. The need to do is so deeply carved into my psyche that it must be associated with a past life and maybe even connected to my evolution, as Saturn is highlighted in the 12th house.

If I had not pulled on the table and snapped my hip a second time, it would have healed by itself, but now the fracture had a will of its own. No one showed up for yoga, as my angels had whispered. Darcy helped me dress in the morning as I moved slowly in pain. I asked God, “What do you want from me?” The voice answered, “Slow down.” I countered, “I can’t; I have payments on two buildings.” The voice said, “Figure it out.” When Marcel and Samarpan arrived for work in the morning, I told them what the voice said. Marcel liked the idea and suggested we return to printing six times yearly. The three of us would rotate, taking two weeks off every two months without pay. Marcel liked the idea of a mini holiday where she could practice painting or catch up on other fun activities. Yes, that would allow me to slow down, but at the same time, I knew it would not take long before



expenses exceeded income.

It is now time for the April and May distribution trip, so Laurel drove my car to the various stores in the Okanagan. Getting out of the car was a painful, protracted procedure, so I instructed her where the magazines were kept at each location. Others helped deliver the bundles to the Kootenays, and I cancelled distribution to the coast. I would ask people at the festival if they would take some to Banyen Books and The Naam in Vancouver.

My son Keith called and said, "It sounds more serious than you are willing to admit, Mom." I went to bed with that thought on my mind. Around midnight, I broke into a cold sweat with water beads popping up off my skin. "Not good," I thought, followed by a body rush that meant my angels agreed. In the morning, I called BC Medical, told the lady I was in pain, and asked if a doctor could look at my leg. However, I had cancelled my coverage a few years back to protest the changes introduced into the Medicare system. She listened compassionately and said, "You are covered as of yesterday; please get yourself to the hospital." The feeling of being cared for brought tears to my eyes.

It's now Thursday morning, so I rent a wheelchair to ensure I won't damage myself further while overseeing the event. People arrived on Friday and asked, aghast, "What happened?" I felt tears well up as my angel voice became stern, "It is time to go to the hospital." I knew my crew was trained; I even had a new volunteer to look after the refreshment breaks, one of the many details I liked to handle. I drove to the hospital and checked into Emergency, where the doctor didn't understand my pain. He asked for X-rays to see if a picture would help explain what I was trying to convey. As he looked at them and said, "Your hip is disintegrating! How long has it been paining?" I repeated my story so he could understand what had happened. He took a deep breath and said, "I am booking you for surgery tomorrow morning; a nurse will take you to a room."

Rotating strikes for support staff were happening at the hospital, and the usual anesthesiologist was off. I was so against taking drugs in general that I asked if there were options. They could freeze my body's lower part, allowing me to remain semi-conscious during the operation. I smelled my flesh being seared and felt the hammer blow as the doctor pounded in the new plastic bone, jolting me from my semi-stupor. The next morning, when the doctor checked in, he asked me to stand,

found a hairline crack, and ordered another X-ray. He said, “It’s your weak bones.” “Naw,” I quipped, “It’s from you hitting me so hard with the mallet!” The doctor wanted to operate a second time and secure a clamp around the implant, giving my bones time to weave everything together. The next morning I told them to freeze my bottom half again, but this time when the surgeon made his cut, I yelled, “Ouch.” They quickly put a breathing mask over my face, and under I went, happy not to know what was happening.

It took a long, long time for the drugs to wear off, but I remember a nurse bringing warm blankets while I waited in the hallway. My leg was swollen, as were my eyelids and lymph nodes. Still, gratitude poured out via tears of thanks for having such an excellent surgeon and healthcare system. I practiced deep breathing and various relaxation techniques, so I did not need the painkillers offered by every nurse who took my pulse. A few people came to visit, including Richard and Carol Ann from Johnson’s Landing, who told me they had attended the Spring Festival as scouts looking for new talent to feature at the Retreat Center, but I was too so drugged I don’t remember much. My organs would have some detoxifying to do.

I recovered quickly, enjoying my own food at home. I cried every time the doctor looked at me and when Keith flew in. Ken was the last one to quiz me! “Why had I created this scenario?” Rereading some of the older Musing columns, I noted how often I had talked about my hips shifting. Perhaps the shift happened faster than the rest of the body could integrate. Why the long shoelaces on new boots, why two previous falls, and why were Mom and my niece here? Why do I create a life that keeps my body so busy? I don’t have all the answers, but I keep tuning into my intentions to direct my attention. My early morning angel chats show me the broader picture, and I love the one-minute ah-ha’s I get when an answer arrives out of the blue to a question I asked long ago. I have coined these various falls, ‘My ‘Universal Chiropractic Appointments.’ Angels are not attached to results; we have as many lifetimes as needed to heed these subtle voices.

Dr. Mazurin, a long-time advertising client, dropped in. He did a pulse reading and said I needed more protein, so it was two eggs a day plus some nutritional supplements that he left. Many people helped with my recovery, including Wayne, a skilled Rolf practitioner who rubbed castor oil into the scar. He aligned my joints so they would have the best chance to heal. I appreciate that Wayne upgrades his

knowledge regularly and with such humbleness. Wayne had signed up for a 10-set series with a Rolfer from England working at the Holistic Health Center. He felt such a difference that he spent the next two years travelling to Boulder, Colorado, for similar training. Marcel loved his gentler approach, and over the years, his touch became even more subtle as he tuned into the energetic body more than the physical one. He wrote a column in *Issues* for ten years describing the benefits of supporting a practitioner who can feel blockages in the fascia. He embodied common sense as old tensions were released. Wayne was one of the twenty people I had sat with for the Harmonic Convergence . . . oh so long ago, an organic apple grower in Keremeos when I first met him.

While waiting for surgery, I thought about having a partner. I looked online a few times, but it didn't feel right. I imagined a man who could fix things and help look after the two buildings, maybe someone with business experience that could help grow the business. I zeroed in on what I wanted by writing up a wish list of traits. It seemed I should give my angels some idea of my specs. In my belief system, when one person leaves, another replaces them with more skills or better-developed ones. For example, each time a volunteer quit the Festival, their replacement did a better job, leaving me with less to do. I saw myself as the energetic conductor of the symphony, orchestrating the various people and events so we could all enjoy the performance. Change, to me, was simply an improvement that just happened. A week after surgery, I was back teaching yoga classes. I used my crutch for balance and to push on a tight muscle in a student, helping them become more aware, just as my teacher taught me.

I realized my plan to create a Health Cooperative was not falling into place. A few practitioners complained their ads were no longer attracting clients. The Mini Health Fairs had diminished attendance as we saturated the market. I posted an ad to lease the entire 272 building in the April-May 2001 edition and knew change was coming. I had wanted more involvement from others as being a landlord is not my forte; I wanted to share what I was doing in a fun, productive way, and it just wasn't happening anymore!

Richard's wife, Carol Ann, dropped by for lunch at the Juicy Carrot that summer. She was a vegetarian, and ours was the only place serving organic meals. She told me she was moving back to Ontario. I wondered how Richard and the

Retreat Center would fare without her, but such is life. I also noticed that whenever I did a forward bend, it felt like my flesh was ripping on the inside, so I returned to the hospital. The surgeon vowed this couldn't be the case and sent for X-rays. When he looked, he said, "You're right," pointing to the image of the clamp, which looked like a mouse had been chewing on my bone following the edge of the clamp. That operation was scheduled three weeks before the Wise Women's event and was less invasive than the first two. Stretching was so much easier once it was removed.

As I was about to leave for Naramata to set up for the Women's event, Harold, the carpenter, arrived very excited. He had watched the news about the World Trade Center in New York being bombed. I didn't even know one existed because I don't watch TV or listen to the radio. When I arrived at the Naramata Centre office to get the master keys, I found the staff huddled in the coffee area, totally absorbed in watching a large, flat-screen TV. I watched for about five minutes as several scenes flashed over and over while the droning voice of the president repeated a few phrases. My mind reminded my body, "You have things to do," I tried to move, but my feet and legs felt strange, like glued in place. After watching the coverage for several more minutes, I had to snap myself out of a hypnotic trance and ask the staff to get the keys for me a second time. I was moving slower than usual and needed a running start before the many volunteers arrived. A few women commented that I looked tired, and, indeed, I was.

Small tangent here . . . Watching this event unfold on TV got my mind to ask, "Is mass hypnosis legal? Is mind control being attempted by our government?" The possibility piqued my interest, but I let the idea go as I was busy with more to do than seek out conspiracy theories. Then a few emails arrived in my inbox, and one, in particular, intrigued me. A scientist from across the ocean had been onsite that day and noticed orange specks in the dust from the explosion, so he scooped up several vials and pocketed them. He said it took two years of testing to identify the flecks; they turned out to be an explosive that only the US Army could access. Come spring, when it was time to pay for my building insurance, it had almost doubled, so I asked why and the rep answered, "Someone has to pay for the destruction of the Twin Towers." Soon after, a website in my feed belonged to a non-profit that collects videos, news reports, and other data about the many lies created 'for our benefit.' I followed the links as one report said the detonations sparked the beginning of Homeland Security. When I clicked on another link, a

researcher called E.P. Heidner reported he spent years following the money trail to understand The Black Eagle Trust Fund. He discovered that because of the towers' collapse, The Securities and Exchange Commission declared a national emergency and invoked its emergency powers, easing regulatory restrictions for clearing and settling security trades for the next 15 days without requiring regulatory controls or identifying ownership. He figured over \$200 billion in bonds due the day after 9/11 were laundered. I have learned when my angels connect the dots, to pay attention. Many experts have proved that a plane cannot cause a steel structure to burn and drop to the ground in just minutes. If you check the website: [www. Want-to-know.info](http://www.Want-to-know.info), you will find it was created by a man who served as a translator for three American presidents. His platform offers many scientists a place to share what they believe is the truth. My point is to illustrate the need to 'feel' truth in our bodies by listening to critical opinions and educating ourselves. I know deep within that the universe has had a plan since the beginning of time, as indicated by the swirling of the stars and planets that influence our destinies. I am okay with whatever happens – I just feel sad that humans are so slow to grow into adult-like beings.

You ask, "What does that statement mean?" To grow into adult-like beings. Bill Plotkin, who wrote *Soul Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche* said; Due to the dynamics of egocentric-dominator societies in which most humans now come of age, the majority of contemporary post-pubescent humans are stuck in the developmental life stage of early adolescence. This is not by accident but by design. Human maturity is bad for business. People now live within the confines of psychologically and socially unhealthy cultures and unconstrained corruption, rampant greed, extreme inequalities, political insanities, politician juvenility and crudity, and unrestrained eco-destruction. This is never how mature humans or even healthy adolescents treat themselves, each other, and this holy Earth. What we're facing — and must address — is a catastrophic and nearly ubiquitous failure of cultural health and human development, each being both cause and effect of the other. The problem, in short, is not an absence of mature myths and archetypes — they are plentiful and readily accessible — but rather the absence or at least rarity, of a genuinely mature lens, a truly adult or elder lens, which would enable us to understand and recognize mature myths and archetypes. More generally, such a lens is needed to support full-spectrum human development and gradually grow truly mature cultures. In short, it's not mature archetypes

we need; what we require is maturity. Since 1980, psychologist Bill Plotkin has guided seekers into the wilderness — not just the outer wilderness but their inner wilderness, the wilds of the soul that he calls soulcraft. [www.animas](http://www.animas)

This October front cover features Margaret Lunam with the Grand Opening of the Yoga House in Kelowna. At 80, my yoga teacher looked younger than when I first met her. A true inspiration of how best to use energy and money. An ad featured the Grand Re-Opening of the Juicy Carrot and The Rainbow Connection Gift Store and Yoga Studio on October 19 and 20. The place looked great and felt amazing, but soon that feeling faded as I noticed a few valuable items grew legs and walked out the door. Intuitively, I could sense when sticky fingers were in the store and even confronted a pair of shoplifters. However, getting the items out of their pockets without a police officer present posed a legal hassle, for they know the law better than I do. I reasoned it was their karma and purchased several glass showcases. Still, I wonder what happened to my heart-shaped amethyst or my favourite metal dragon painted with rainbow-coloured racing stripes. Being so trusting does have its consequences. Reminds me of the quote: Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel.

In November, I presented to the Standing Committee on Health in Kelowna as they were touring the province, asking for input on how the government could improve our healthcare system. I was delighted to be accepted as a speaker, for I had spent more than a year in meetings often held at the Holistic Health Centre with other local folks who were also concerned. They mailed me the report with my name printed on it. It seemed like a waste of money, for nothing I said made a difference. I published my speech in the following Issues, which featured a painting of the auric field around my face on the cover, as seen by psychic Beth Roszk.

Come spring, Beth had decided to move and had two heavy statues, a birthday gift from her sister. She needed money for travel expenses. Would I buy a pair of Foo Dogs? She told me her sister had them carried down a mountain by two Tibetan Sherpas after being blessed by a shaman. I discovered they are also called Snow Lions in India or China. They are often placed at the entrance of temples so no evil enters. Evil in the early languages was usually translated as not balanced, ripe or ready. This matched pair represented yin and yang, the light and dark forces that hold the earth in place. The male holds the sun in place with his right foot,

and the female pins the demon to the ground with her left paw. Their braided hair flowing down their backs and carved hearts in the front show off their excellent craftsmanship plus, inside their mouths were spherical balls that moved and did not fall out of their teeth! I mused to myself they could guard the new double-door entrance to the yoga studio. I am glad I took the opportunity when it presented itself. I found it amazing that statues could even be carved in lava stone. There was a field of lava in the Nass Valley where I lived, and the natives there did not carve it. Later I learned there are several varieties and shades of lava; thus, some statues are more pricey than others.

Musing that month stated: Beth was the third intuitive person who spoke about a Goddess who has been guiding me for years and starting to merge into me. I have read that many Goddesses want to return to the Earth plane and are looking for bodies to do their work through, so I welcome her presence if that is true. This is the time of the great transition when the patriarchal system declines, and the matriarchal system emerges until they become balanced. It will be a time of great chaos and struggle as humanity changes its belief systems and accepts the God within. God is defined as 'the totality of all the love that exists.' I believe that spirit is real, and we must use our free will to move closer to God-consciousness or divinity-made humans. Or we can choose to separate ourselves from each other and God with rational explanations of how we are right, and they are wrong -- good versus evil. As we transcend the third dimension of duality, our view of good versus evil will change to one of love or the absence of love. The 9-11 event is a wake-up call for humankind to delve deep inside, feel the truth, and see behind the lies. Each of us must speak up if we want things to be different.

Starting in the summer of 2001, at the insistence of a reader, I created a Soul Mates column for people looking for a partner who embodied their beliefs, generally in line with those espoused by Issues. We charged \$30 and forwarded letters to them. This is what people did before emailing became so easy. The first time we sold half a page of ads, the following months had less and now, no one placed an ad for the February/March edition of 2002. As Samarpan was leaving for the night, she asked what to do with the space. I replied, "I will figure it out by morning." The last page needed tweaking before sending the pages to the printer. It was about 11 pm when I sat at her computer, where those pages were stored and asked my angels, "Should I cancel the column or make up an ad?" My hands started

typing: I am interested in meeting a spiritual man who is holistically minded, aged 45-55. Hopefully, he will like to cook, live simply and enjoy meditating and yoga. Write c/o Box 2. "Good," I thought, "That section is complete; we will decide before the next edition how to best use this space."

By now, I had learned to support the weight of my 18-inch soup pot using my crutches to deliver the daily special to the Juicy Carrot, plus the four dozen cookies that sold out daily. Four months after surgery, I could carry the 10-pound bundles of Issues into the stores. If a mall needed lots, I got a shopping cart. I gave away my new boots, stretched regularly and took long walks up steep hills.

During the Easter holiday, Richard phoned; he was returning from Vancouver and asked if he could visit. I enjoy hearing people's stories and had wondered how he survived last summer without Carol Ann's help. Which retreats had enough participants, who cooked, etc.? He told me he cried for a few days, then a lady stopped in her hippie van, shook his hand and said, "Your work is being noticed and appreciated," and drove off. He told me people appeared out of nowhere wanting to help. Twenty participants had registered for Dorothy's workshop as she was one of the founding luminaries of Findhorn, an ecovillage and intentional community in Scotland that had become quite famous in the 70s. He was impressed that even she pitched in to wash dishes. Everyone who came for a retreat was fed and had a place to sleep. He was happy with how the summer had progressed and had returned to work, earning money to keep the business afloat.

Richard requested the 2002 center-fold in May and agreed to pay extra for this premium placement. He wondered if we had space for another article written by Tanis Helliwell, who wrote the book *Living with the Leprechauns*. Dorothy Mclean was also returning, plus a few new instructors. I told him it must feel good to wrap up another year of programming and looked forward to seeing the new booklet with in-depth write-ups for workshops at Johnson's Landing. A month later, he called asking for a favour. Could I pick up the printed programs at Webco, as they would be closed by the time he drove to Penticton? I called the printers, and they were happy to deliver them to the side hallway where I kept the surplus magazines. Richard arrived around 6 pm, and we loaded the programs in his vehicle, then we went out for dinner. I made a mental note of every thought and sensation. My heart felt happy and excited, my mind felt unsure.



After dinner, we walked back to my office, and once inside, he asked, “Do you have a copy of Issues?” My instant reaction was, “Duh! How many would you like?” but I didn’t say that out loud. He flipped through the magazine, looking for something, then pointed to a page and said, “Is this you?” It was the small Soul Mates ad on page 40. I went into shock and wanted to lie, but my angels said, “Speak the truth.” I answered, “Yes, but I am really busy.” He said, “I would like a date,” explaining that he meant in the future as he needed to deliver the new programs around the valley before returning to teach, in Midway, BC, on Monday.

After some thought, I asked for his birth data so my astrologer could study our compatibility chart, thinking perhaps he was the one who could help look after the two buildings. I know myself well enough not to leave this to chance, as unseen agendas will surface if the match is incompatible. First, I spoke with Phyllis Chubb, a Vedic Astrologer who said it would not be easy; perhaps I should wait till the dust settles. Me wait? I connected with Moreen, who said we had the classical chart for marriage, moon and sun opposite each other, indicating that we have spent a few lifetimes together. She made note that ALL decisions had to be 50/50 if we were to succeed. She explained we both had strong personalities and would want things done a certain way. If we fought over the steering wheel, the ship would surely sink.

During my next distribution trip to the coast, I spent an extra day with Gordon and Britta, who gave birth to Isabella in May. On the way home, I stopped to see Richard, watched him teach his shop class, and stayed the night in the small town of Midway. That summer, I spent ten days at the Retreat Center and attended a workshop with Brita Adkinson called Living with Purpose, in which I played with three other people for four days. She was an instructor at Findhorn in Scotland and taught the Transformation Game, a trained counsellor who used Angel Cards to help people accomplish goals. That fall, Richard’s school did not renew his teaching contract, so he stayed with me for the winter so we could get to know one another better. After a few dates, I remember telling Marcel, “I didn’t know men came so nice.” We went for long walks, he attended my yoga classes, and we shared the cooking. I slowed and enjoyed a little romance, knowing it doesn’t last.

After the 2003 Spring Festival, Richard said he did not like living in Penticton and was returning to the mountains. My eternal optimist was crushed; I cried, then

yelled at my angels. “Why did you arrange to buy these buildings? I thought you wanted to create a holistic community in the Okanagan.” I knew it wasn’t me who had made things happen so easily, for I believe, like Mother Theresa, I am only their instrument. There was silence in the ethers. I repeated my request wanting a clear indication of “what am I to do? Soon afterwards, a lady stopped at the 254 building and asked, “Is this place for sale?” “Why do you ask,” I replied. “This may sound strange,” she countered, “but I am looking for a place to start a health and beauty spa and every time I cross the bridge, my car drives me to the front of your building and parks itself, and I am not the metaphysical type.” She wanted a building with high ceilings, one with character. “Come back tomorrow,” I said. Raging at my angels that night, I said, “I don’t want to move to the mountains – been there, done that.”

I am a practical person and knew Gerry wanted to be near his teacher, who had bought land in Rock Creek, creating the Humuh Monastery. She taught Transcendental Logic, a path of Buddhism and needed him to co-create her dream. Marcel was considering retiring as she did not like being left in the office alone, as I had let happen the previous summer. Where would I find new business partners? It would be hard to start over. My angels were quiet, so I chatted with the building; it liked the idea of another facelift. The little people living near the creek came inside for the first time and suggested I lay on the floor, where they circled around and blessed me. They loved the new pathway with native trees and grasses growing; moving was my choice. When the lady returned, I quoted what I thought was a fair price and told her I would need the Issues section for another six months. She said no problem; it was a deal. She was in a hurry as the financing was a wedding present from the groom’s family, and the nuptials were happening soon. Two lawyers just down the street had the paperwork completed in less than a month. Gerry and I had a closing-out sale.

Next in line for my time was the 7th annual Wise Women’s Festival, which was well attended. I was glad to be my old self again with energy to spare. At the wrap-up meeting, Laurel said it was unfair that I continue to host both Festivals since I was moving. She felt it belonged to her since she had conceived the idea of a woman’s only event. Samarpan was eager to hone her promotional skills, and Urmi was now HER best friend. I was speechless. “How could they hold the energy for that many people?” I don’t like confrontation and felt the need to go to the

bathroom. Once there, I heard my angel say, "Share." I said, "Share what?" "The Festivals." "You think they can do it," I queried. The voice said, "Three years." They were thrilled when I returned and agreed with their request. The more I thought about it, the more I liked this arrangement, as I would be busy at Johnson's Landing. I mentioned to Samarpan, who was still working for me, "You know who will be doing most of that shared work, don't you?" I gave her the old IBM computer with the programs so they could continue creating the program and many decorations, including the native medicine shields. The collection of crystals and rainbowed tablecloths stayed with me.

The new owners didn't want the newly laid carpets, so Harold rolled them up, taped plastic between the sections, and removed the rainbowed ceiling. Gerry dismantled the new walk-in cooler and long countertop. Sharon Kovaks, a volunteer from Johnson's Landing, helped pad pictures and put crystals into boxes. She was the one who convinced me that Richard was serious about creating community. She brought twenty copies of every Issues Magazine I had printed for twelve years down the magical stairs. My mother taught me at a young age that we should save magazines as they may become historical documents. They are now scanned and online. Ten of the newer bookshelves found another place to be useful. Richard bought a second-hand trailer where we shovelled in five years of carrot pulp now filled with earthworms. This would energize the upper garden, now overgrown with grass and weeds. Once home, he phoned to say that Alphonse Bouchard, who sold him the Retreat Center, had called and told him, "The tenant in the lower house hasn't paid rent for some time; if you have cash, let my bank know." My lawyer transferred the money, and soon I owned a two-bedroom home with a three-bay garage on four acres at Johnson's Landing, BC. Making decisions came easy, and I would learn later that Richard needs lots of time to mull over various options before doing anything.

Richard was using an Apple computer when I met him, and I was impressed with the features, so I upgraded to a new Mac and bought InDesign as my new software. Quark and PageMaker, my old publishing programs, were becoming obsolete. Webco was upgrading, and if I wanted to continue printing with them, I needed to follow suit. These were the days before PDFs were invented. Thank goodness all publishing programs are similar. These improvements made for quicker publishing times, as did memorizing the short-cut keys. I finalized the

October/November edition of Issues and knew that Dale's wedding to Suzanne would happen in Cuba on October 3—five years to the day of their first date. We had talked earlier, but she was not about to change her mind to accommodate my 'busyness,' so I declined the invitation and continued with my regular distribution schedule. Rae, Bonnie and Keith flew, as did her family and enjoyed the catered hotel wedding experience.

Once the new owners removed the ceiling panels and garage doors above them, the spa took on a look of elegance. Greek columns stood majestically on each side of the entrance desk. By the time I left, they had almost completed renovations, putting good money into fixing the old building, which purred with contentment. They even installed floating wood panels over the warped concrete floor. Harold, the carpenter, and a truck driver friend loaded what was left of bookshelves, display cases, desks, filing cabinets, Foo dogs, and peacock tails. Even the magical staircase was packed into the 40-foot U-haul I rented, plus I still had cooking pots, dishes and furniture from my first marriage in the apartment at 272 Ellis. The trailer was stuffed to the ceiling, which is good as the many items would hold each other in place on the windy, bumpy road to my new home. While packing up, the wife of the man who had died a year ago asked if I wanted to buy their little house in the back alley. I would have loved to, but I was moving I introduced her to Harold. He liked the price and purchased it. This evened the score for the many projects he worked on for several years at such reasonable rates.

Once the truck arrived in Johnson's Landing, volunteers unloaded the furniture into the house and garage. The shelving units would hold the boxes of magazines, books and even mechanical tools, leaving one bay to fix vehicles. Part of Jan's desk fit into the Retreat Center basement providing shelves for food and canning jars. Gerry's long counter was the perfect length to sit balanced on two free-standing units holding many large olive barrels that Richard acquired from a Greek Deli for free. He used them to store grain from the mice and rats. My once-new desk fit perfectly into the room across from the kitchen, allowing me to watch activities around the stove while I worked on the magazine. I hooked up a satellite dish for wifi and chose a new phone number. I added a few shelves to the wall, two small filing cabinets and hung my Reiki certificates. I was back in publishing mode right on schedule.

I was doing well for someone who started with no money, just advice from angels and a few friends and relatives who trusted me with their money. I was a hard worker, lived simply and never bought a gift for anyone, including myself. Every dollar earned was put toward loans. I listed the 272 building with a real estate agent, and it sold after I moved. This money was invested by purchasing 15 acres above the Retreat Center outside the Agricultural Land Reserve. We eventually parked four older travel trailers that were no longer road-worthy as private lodging for summer volunteers. We re-used much of the commercial carpeting to fix up the caravans and the new Healing and Library rooms under the Group Room.

It took a while to love my new office in the wilderness as it reminded me of my childhood, but at least I had electricity, hot water and lots of sunshine. I was happy being with a man that reflected the new me even though his background was the opposite of mine. Richard never had children and was an only child raised in the suburbs of New York City by parents who adored him. He was a hippy mechanic who drove and fixed VW vans and attended the Woodstock Music Festival in New York, the same day I married Rae Rowe, August 16, 1969, in nearby Alpena, Michigan, just 12 hours away.

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The Johnson's Landing Retreat Center became a mecca for New Age Thinkers once we joined our energies. Networking was the foundation of our success. Each Spring, we attended trade shows in Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Kelowna and Vernon, promoting the Spring and Wise Women's Festivals plus Retreat Center programs. These three-day events were fun, with lots of interesting people to meet, but exhausting because of the long hours, loud noise, concrete floors, no real food or even food breaks, plus the packing and travel time. Chatting ten hours a day with

potential instructors, advertisers, or attendees does drain one's batteries. I'm glad we traded advertising for a booth, as the fees were not worth the results. I did bring home more than one treasure from those well-organized events and have stayed in contact with a few special acquaintances. Watching a small city set up in less than 10 hours is impressive; each booth brought uniqueness to make the whole more significant than the sum of the parts.

By now, I knew I was in 'School-house Earth.' The first six years in business felt like elementary school learning the basics of publishing. Once I moved downtown and had several business partners, it was more like high school with lots of friends and a heavier workload; now, I had graduated and was in university. My learning curve increased as I learned every detail about these three pieces of land and how best to steward them, as well as overseeing an average of 4 full-time volunteers, each with their own needs.

When I closed my doors, Christina opened hers. She bought a small office at the other end of Ellis Street, providing space for my foamy, which I tucked behind her couch—giving me a place to sleep while I picked up magazines at Webco. The postage scales and wrapping paper were left in her cupboards as she did the bulk mail-out to store owners in Northern BC, who now expected the magazine delivered every other month. She loved reading and wrote many great book reviews over the years. An excellent proofreader whom Richard called The Comma Police, as she was a stickler for punctuation. When June died, Marcel took over proofing the articles. I emailed Christina the PDF pages that she printed, and we reviewed the fine art of sentence structuring and spelling errors, which took two to three hours every other month. Technology was changing fast; the ink was becoming expensive, and printers were reasonably priced. I paid 2,000 dollars for my first black and white printer in 1992 that was not a dot-matrix.

Nywyn was a Celtic artist who made Rune Sets with small stones and offered readings. She gave Esscentual Touch Massages in Penticton for many years and made the backdrops for our TV show. She continued being the Festival store manager and agreed to create new decorative shields to represent The Angels of the Four Directions. Being around her giggling, sweet nature told me this was her first lifetime out of the Faery realm. The angels she designed had hair that reflected the seasons; spring, summer, fall and winter. She entwined knowledge of the Celtic

Traditions within each rainbowed oval frame. I hung beads at the bottom and sewed gold fabric on the top, making it quick to hang as the centrepiece for each altar. I still enjoy and feel the enchantment of these four angels representing the Cycles of Life.

I bought fabrics, and Christina's daughter Claire sewed new tablecloths that fit the 2 x 4-foot tables in the four season colours. I found a variety of curtains at thrift stores that added elegance and framed each angel. They surprised me with two 7-foot angels on a kaleidoscoped rainbowed background from the broadcloth I'd used for the yoga studio ceiling. Each year, the QuanYin, Buddha and Main altar decorations grew more magical, and we stored the decor in Tupperware bins keeping it looking new and stacked easily.

In 2004 Richard created a Labyrinth by levelling the land and layering landscape fabric with sawdust. Three women signed up for his workshop and loaded river rocks into his truck to create the circles. He used a rope pinned in the center to keep the stones evenly spaced. Richard said they all felt the rush of energy when they put the last rock in place, closing the circuits. I am told that all labyrinths are connected energetically, so that makes sense. The 42-foot magic circle is still viable, needs minimal maintenance, and has been well used. The basic premise is that as you walk slowly into the center, you chat with God about your concerns, and at the center, you say a prayer and feel gratitude for life. As you walk out, you listen carefully for answers.

Eleanor Staats, one of the women who created the labyrinth, became the new head decorator and brought along several friends. To create more ambience, she surprised us with extra mirrors and knick-knacks. I added homemade candle pillars in various colours found while distributing. Women walked more slowly around the Great Hall, taking photos and appreciating the uplifting energy of Nywyn's aforementioned hand-painted canvas angels. Decorations are considered a write-off in my business, so each year, I invested in a large crystal to hold the group's energy and enhance one of the altars. What an excellent investment! Since my hip no longer liked carrying weight, the heavier crystal and statues stayed at home or with friends. I enjoy talking to them just like plants. I am grateful these three women dedicated some of their life force energy to help with this transition.

In the summer of 2004, we hosted a Wise Guys' Weekend with twenty men showing up. The event was recorded for a national TV show called Wandering Canada hosted by Wiz Bryant, a balladeer living in Penticton who sang at some of the Festivals. In 2005 and 2006, Christina and I hosted several smaller women's gatherings at the Landing. Women appreciated the intimate setting once they showed, but getting them there was a challenge. Usually, the first event was relatively well attended, the second had fewer participants, and often, I didn't try a third time. Richard always advertised an array of high-calibre teachers, but many classes were cancelled because of a lack of registrations.

Since it took ten hours of travel time for people to arrive from Calgary, AB or Vancouver, BC, we developed one-week programs. We found a few meditation, yoga and tai chi teachers who brought their students with them for an extended retreat, as they believed Mother Nature would rejuvenate their souls. We are so remote that you cannot hear the buzz of traffic or sirens blaring. Every so often, we could hear a horse's whinny and a rooster's crowing as we do have neighbours.

Over the next few years, I took over creating the 24-page retreat booklet that announced the upcoming summer workshops, plus posted many ads and reminders in Issues Magazine for people to check us out. Richard wrote a column entitled Footsteps along the Path using humour to tell folks about his journey through life. Collecting and telling jokes was a favourite activity of his. At our morning meetings, we always spent a few minutes reading or telling one, and people were encouraged to find some online. My favourite is about three nuns who die and go to heaven but must answer a skill-testing question to get past the pearly gates. The nuns choose religion as the category. The first nun is asked who was the first man God created... the second nun is asked who was the first woman God created. The third nun was asked, "And what were Eve's first words to Adam? She thought, and she thought as she did not want to get this wrong; finally, she took a deep breath and said, "That is a hard one." The lights flashed, and the pearly gates opened. Ha, ha, ha. I read somewhere that it is good to memorize a joke or two, know the words to several favourite songs and have courage so we share our stories.

While doing distribution in September 2005, a hailstorm occurred in the orchards near Naramata, and the owners let me know they had insurance. For years,



I served pears for the afternoon snack at the Wise Women's event. Now I picked for free and did until my van was full. When I arrived at the Retreat Center, Daniel, a man of the cloth, had driven his motor home there, hoping to find community. He was on the verge of committing suicide and had packed the necessary hoses. I spent a week listening to his evolution away from the Church as we cut pears and loaded them into several dehydrators. Since pears ripen from the inside out, the really mushy ones were turned into pear butter, something I had not made in a very long time. Yummmm! In December, Daniel started a regular column called *A View From the End of the Road*; his reflections included a poem which attracted a few lady friends. Then his two sons came for a visit and asked if he would live with them in Calgary. He did move, but not before he hosted a workshop on cabin building, collaborated on the third and final Wise Guys' Weekend and helped Richard construct an addition to the kitchen as we were getting busier and needed more sinks. Having a back door allowed the air to flow and cooled the lodge. Installing two propane stoves on the back porch kept the heat outside. I enjoyed watching the deer and their fawns nibble on the cherry trees and grass. Even had them eating out of my hand using apples as a treat.

I wrote articles about our fledgling community. Many came, and some stayed for the summer, but many left because we did not have private accommodations and the rules were strict about not smoking, drinking, taking drugs or eating meat. It was amazing how many people showed up, having just quit one of these habits. Richard was much better at spotting these tendencies than I was. I learned that coping mechanisms come in many forms, and community was more of a summer event where they developed a skill to cope with daily living, like cooking or gardening. Endurance takes discipline, and this was not the forte of some people who arrived eager for a new life which they imagined was perfect, without deep conversations about what it is like living in a community where we live, eat and drink as one. Sometimes when they left, they blamed us for creating obstacles in finding their happiness! A few left, blaming us for creating impediments in finding their joy! Most had skills that helped us grow exponentially. I am still in contact with a few, but life is full. Connecting is easiest with FaceBook, so I will post this book there, and if past connections want to know how I lived my life, they can read and re-connect again, which always warms my heart. Each participant and volunteer taught me so much, and with the many pictures I have, it will be fun to reminisce, even if I don't remember their names. Many photos are stored on my computer's

hard drive and take so little room. Paige Freeborn and Adrian Dyck, music teachers from Vancouver, attended the Robert Beautty workshops for years and wrote and recorded a magical symphony to accompany our website collages.

On my birthday, February 2006, Richard proposed, so I consulted Phyllis Chubb, a Vedic astrologer, as Moreen had changed careers and was truck driving. Phyllis said the Labour Day weekend was an auspicious time to join our energies. It sounded good to me as I resonate with this holiday and would allow the family an extra day to drive home. In June, we travelled to Edmonton as Keith was getting married to Brenda. Rae drove over with his mom Grace; Mike and Patty arrived from Terrace with their youngest child Jewel; Dale and Susanne gave birth to Logan on June 6, four days before Keith's wedding. Keith and Dale had met their wives through a dating service; it seems that is how many people meet these days.

As the busy summer ended, family and friends arrived at the Retreat Center for our wedding. It was an open invitation to whoever wanted to be there, so even a few advertisers showed up. Most arrived on Friday and were provided perfect accommodations, filling our place to the max. My brother David and Linda loved the tree house, Dale and family stayed in the dorm as it had a private bathroom for their baby, and others enjoyed a cabin with an outhouse or stayed in the lodge. Aaron, from Mike's family, and a few neighbours and friends camped. Gordon's oldest daughter Isabella was the ring bearer. Richard's cousins Ian and Angela brought their two boys, plus Bonita and Tatiana; my grandchildren all played and danced in the Group Room, awaiting the ceremonies. A few took videos to remind me of the fun we had.

The weather was perfect for an outdoor ceremony, so Brita Adkinson, trained at Findhorn, led Circle Dances on the lawn. I bought some purple coloured Birkenstock sandals to wear with my fairy-inspired dress. Richard wore shorts and sandals along with a white shirt made of hemp. Dale Jukes was our minister and liked having Bootsie, Richard's cat sign the Wedding Registrar. They cut a beet in half and pushed his paw into the dark magenta juice marking the page with a paw stain. Bootsie was the best man and stayed dressed in a tux and a top hat for most of the ceremony. After Christina signed as a witness for me, the legalities were complete. Eleanor made three deluxe cheesecakes that were served along with various finger foods on the deck.

We asked for no gifts, but Christina, whose hobby is needlepoint, gifted us with a large angel that had our wedding day woven in. My brother David asked his employee to make us a native drum, and his wife painted our totems on it; an angel and a duck. Richard surprised me with a large angel that looked like stained glass, layers of varnish over pencil crayons and tempera paints gave depth to its wings. David Balcombe, an acquaintance of Richards, created it when they were part of a men's group. When we started dating, he took me to see it. Later I was allowed to take a photo which I featured on the front cover of Issues. It was also used for the last front cover, which shows a better colour tone, not the washed-out colours of the first time. It takes time to learn how much (K) or black ink is needed to bring a photo to life. Cyan, Yellow and Magenta are the CYMK colours. Computers use light and RGB colours to show off images. Red, Green, Blue.

Angels were everywhere as our family visited late into the night. Sunday morning, my brother David and I served homemade waffles using organic fresh ground flour served with whipping cream and freshly-thawed strawberries from our garden. I had bought four waffle irons while garage-sailing, similar to the one Mom used when we were kids. We served them often as a Sunday morning treat. It was a fun weekend with lots of drumming, dancing and merry-making. I was told by many a reader that they waited with bated breath to read the next installment and see photographs. I did not disappoint my 30,000 readers and featured a center page of photos. You can only see it if you read the ISSUU edition with photos.

In October, we flew to Vancouver and attended the Deva Premal concert, then onto Scotland for our honeymoon. We paid for the Experience Week Program at Findhorn, a working honeymoon holiday. This community was started in 1962 by Eileen and Peter Cady and their meditation buddy Dorothy Maclean who was now living in the US and was an instructor at Johnson's Landing. I wanted to discover how they became the largest intentional community in the world, welcoming 30,000 visitors a year and why people paid to have a holiday! When I asked Dorothy why she was not living there now. She said, "It is not easy for two queen bees to live in the same hive." So much for my idealism about community, which still interests me.

The man who was our tour guide kept track of participants using the latest FileMaker Pro program. I found that interesting because it was the same program

Gerry helped me to understand and use for the same purpose. He explained they had been using a hodge-podge system for their three different departments until a man from Italy showed up for Experience Week, just like us. He was the developer of FileMaker Pro and created the program so each department could easily track and figure out any requirement with the click of a few keys. I am awed that every question I think about is answered in good time. The second week I helped out in the Living Earth Machine, the sewer system for the community, so I could understand how they recycle poop, something else that interests me. I had read Joseph Jenkins' book titled *The Humanure Handbook*. Mother nature knows how to recycle better than we do. He also wrote a novel which examines the global implications of a society on the brink of both planetary destruction and a spiritual revolution. *Balance Point* provides a hopeful awareness that we see the connection between the world around us and the universe within us. As a finale to our honeymoon, we took a bus ride through the countryside, looking at old castles on our way to the Isle of Iona, considered the birthplace of Celtic Christianity. A side note, which I did not know at the time, is that Rae's mother's family came from Scotland. Even read in some historical papers, the Sheriff of Devon was once his ancestor.

On our way home, we had an afternoon to spare, so we stopped at a museum in Glasgow. I enjoyed the exhibits until we entered a room displaying devices used to punish witches. As I read the description, tears came to my eyes, and I felt sick to my stomach. I said quietly to Richard, "I recognize these devices all too well; no need to see them," and exited the room. How could 'Men of the Church' who claimed to have a powerful connection to God devise such horrific devices to inflict mortal pain? Indeed, this display hailed from the very Dark Ages. When we returned to Johnson's Landing, a wise friend/teacher came for a visit. At breakfast, he said, "I had a dream about you . . . I work for the Roman government and was given orders to bring you into town. You were a famous herbalist, and I thought I was being dispatched to convince you to come and share your knowledge with the people in our city. After you arrived, however, you were jailed and put on trial." This was another confirmation that many of us may have been persecuted and put to death for our wisdom or religious beliefs. The chances of being burned at stake in a past life are almost guaranteed since thousands of women, deemed wise at the time, were silenced in that way.

After I arrived at Johnson's Landing, one of the first projects was gathering poles to fill in the cracks of the old barn as we slowly transformed that building and removed the wall upstairs, allowing more airflow. Since we did not have cows, we turned their shelter area into the Massage and Second Library Rooms because a man arrived with building skills. Richard enjoyed looking after these projects, and I reused some of the rainbow-coloured fabrics to cover the ceilings and re-used the carpets for the floor. Next, Richard designed two tree houses using metal stairs I spotted doing distribution to create two rentable rooms. This was before the ALR approved our permit to build 10 buildings, including five cabins, a dome, a solar shower, and a six-sided meditation building, which happened slowly over the next ten years.

In 2006 Ian Fraser arrived and wrote a column in Issues about his being awake experiences. On his days off, he cleared trails through the woods before a relative of Alphonse arrived, the previous owner of the Retreat Center, and together they built the six-sided meditation space. An angel had messaged these carpenters; their skills were needed. During a walk-about on the land Kootenay Joe, the last native to leave these lands showed himself energetically, so they carved his face into a log and left it sitting in the meditation space. In 2008 a lady came for a retreat and convinced Ian to join her elsewhere, so both were gone by the end of the season.

These early years were busy and fun times with regular morning meetings. Four or five volunteers showed up each year wanting to be of service while learning new skills and enjoying nature. Some were terrific cooks and even taught me new techniques. One young lady flew in from Toronto to get experience cooking for large vegetarian groups. A few had Red Seal Chef Training and enjoyed eating healthy, simple meals. Richard loved to make breakfast and created a cookbook so volunteers could follow a recipe as long as they had some cooking skills. Most just needed guidance until they gained confidence. Two people usually stayed for the winter as we turned the frozen raspberries into jam, pureed squash and pressure-cooked it for next season's pumpkin pies. Someone with a strong arm would cut the large squashes into serving sizes that we froze into slices which made yummy meals, baking them with fresh garlic and butter. We pickled or left our beets plain to serve right out of the jar. We sliced and dried pears and apples and turned our grapes into raisins. We froze plums, saskatoons and apples to make quick desserts like pies

or crumbles. I was always thinking of ways to preserve our summer bounty, making meals even faster and healthier. I was amazed how many people really enjoyed mashed potatoes and peas, served with local homemade organic tofu that I dipped in Braggs, coated with nutritional yeast and fried in hot oil. We consistently offered cooking, building and gardening workshops, which filled our days, growing the amenities that allowed more accommodations and spaces to host workshops.

Next, I was asked if I wanted a bargain? A friend of Bob Watters died, leaving an almost-new 21-inch Apple computer. My five-year-old G4 Mac, which looked like a lamp, was running slow, and the screen seemed small compared to newer models. My main concern, however, was if I bought it, how would I transfer files? Out of nowhere, Chris Born shows up; he was my Tech Man for the last four years of The Holistic Networker TV show. He was living in Nelson, and hardware was his forte. He spent several days reinstalling the publishing program and updating files. Our cook Diane Potyok introduced me to Dan Troback at about the same time, and his strong suit was computer software. He had two years of training in InDesign and PhotoShop, so we spent several days upgrading my skills and learning more shortcuts, which allowed quicker publishing times. When I had moved to the mountains, I never thought about how I would keep up with such changes; I just followed the Yellow Brick Road and assumed that if something needed to happen, it would . . . and it did. “Amazing, amazing, amazing.”

Those who needed my style of guidance found me at the end of the road, near the top of a mountain and volunteered their time to work as we exchanged tools for growing ourselves. I also got to know Nora and Harry Jukes better, as their house was the perfect driving distance for overnight stop-overs, either coming or going. They felt like my grandparents as I shared my trials and tribulations every few months while enjoying dinner at their home.

This was also the year I imagined a newly-designed Spring Festival poster, but putting it to paper was a skill I didn't have. A friend knew someone with Illustrator experience and connected us. I emailed the jesters and the rainbow-coloured woman, explaining what I imagined. This designer was better than good and made my idea come alive with an angel's trumpet blowing a second rainbow downward as the two jesters danced in a yin/yang bubble held in place by the rainbow woman. I bought this watercolour painting at a trade show in Calgary when I got that 'wow'

feeling. As I paid for it, I told Richard, “This is me.” I did wonder how I would use her, but I have learned my angels have reasons for proposing things that I don’t always ‘get’ at the time.

Over the next few years, there were many advancements in printing and online magazine production. Webco, my printer, moved their offices to Vernon and installed a program called Fetch, which uploaded my files to the big server in The Cloud. This new program could flip pages visually and produce my magazine in an hour instead of requiring a full day’s work. I gladly removed the satellite dish when high-speed wifi came to the Kootenays. I continued to print on unbleached paper, partly due to the lesser cost but mostly because I placed the remainder of the magazines around my strawberry plants, which kept the weeds down and helped to retain moisture in the soil. By spring, the earthworms had gobbled them up, enriching the soil with worm poo. People ask about the toxicity of ink; rest assured, the industry has used soybean-based ink for printing for a very long time. When I ran out of magazines, I decided to use cardboard which the baby worms prefer, for they are born smaller than a strand of hair. I assume the glue tastes like sugar to the worms. The packing tape is left in the soil, reminding me how much 7 million worms can eat in a season. In case you don’t know, when two worms tangle, they produce an egg from the membrane surrounding the body’s top portion. It rolls off like a condom and becomes an egg-shaped balloon. When the environment is right, 3 or 4 worms chew their way out to freedom. I had never paid much attention to worms, but now they became fascinating objects as I wanted a productive garden. These bulldozers of the Earth create the best compost, so I built many maternity homes to keep them happy and reproducing, or at least that is what I told people when they saw me collecting so much cardboard. When you see earthworms on the sidewalks after a heavy rain, they are drowning because they breathe through their skin. Keeping the cardboard and ground damp is essential and allows it to be broken down more quickly. Over the years, I perfected the art of laying down cardboard. Scrappy pieces first, then the medium-sized ones, and finally the larger boxes, printed side down so it looks less like a chaotic mess. The first time I placed flattened cardboard boxes on the ground, I found them the following day decorating the fence. Now I use wood or rocks to hold them down. I smile when I remember how each volunteer took on this task of recycling. My evolution to becoming a worm herder still boggles my imagination. It has been worth the journey, as my heritage strawberries are sweet and tangy. I freeze them quickly as they don’t keep

fresh for long.

In January 2008, my brother David died in an avalanche while ski-doing. I screamed when Linda gave me the news. Half of Grand Forks must have shown up at the Arena, for he was the town roofer, a volunteer for Search and Rescue and a FireFighter. I'm glad we often visited, for I did enjoy listening to his wife Linda reflect on them Brousseau traits. I appreciated that he had trusted me with his money so I could buy the second building and saved my first building from collapsing that winter morning. His Celebration of Life reminded me of things we had in common, like Ghost Riders in the Sky. That song played when we entered the Arena, followed by Big Bad John. I enjoy singing, especially when travelling, as it strengthens my vocal cords and promotes deep breathing. During a Spring Festival event, Jan, Mike, Urmi and I sang Ghost Riders; that was a hoot! Another time I sang an inspirational song that I re-wrote because some lady was moaning over a guy. It now goes like this... I love me, I love me, I love me, now and then forever, forever, forever... I will follow me; follow me wherever I may go. There isn't a mountain too high, a river too deep or too wide that can keep me from me, from me, from me.

As kids, we sang during the long trips to and from Rosswood, but Rae and the kids would howl whenever I sang in the house, so I signed up with a professional trainer in Terrace. Getting 'an ear' for musical notes was a long process, not something that came naturally. After a year of practice, I got to sing My Favorite Things at a recital primarily for kids but included a few brave adults like me. I have several favourite songstresses, including Libby Roderick, whose inspirational songs include How could anyone ever tell you were anything less than beautiful? How could anyone ever tell you, you were anything less than whole? How could anyone fail to notice that your loving is a miracle? How deeply you're connected to my soul. Written in 1988, it is now sung around the world. Even Princess Di wore a t-shirt with the lyrics printed on it.

Buffy Saint-Marie is another singer I enjoy, born in Manitoba on the same day as I; thus, I read her autobiography when someone handed it to me. Like Bob Dylan, Richard's favourite musician, she penned Universal Soldier, the definitive anti-war anthem of the 20th century. Fifty years later, she changed how the world views natives via her humanitarian efforts and indigenous leadership.



Ann Mortifee is another Canadian singer I enjoy, and I feel privileged to have attended several of her workshops when she came to Penticton. My favourite album is *Serenade at the Doorway*, written in 1991 in collaboration with David Feinstein, Ph.D., who had just written *Rituals for Living and Dying*. Later that year, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada. My favourite song is *Anger is a Fever*, but all her songs are transformational and appreciated by those seeking encouragement to just be in the moment. Her latest album is on Soundcloud, so check it out.

I also met Judy Armstrong of the Tink and Judy duet, who performed at the Heritage site in Fort Steele, BC. A soul sister from the moment I saw her from my balcony. She was joining us for the Spring Festival, and over the years, we have visited. I learned she took singing lessons at an early age. The doctor told her mom she was born with weak lungs, so she had a choice: medications for the rest of her life or learn to breathe deep. Singing lessons was the obvious answer. Gabrielle Roth recounted a similar scenario and developed her practice called the 5 Rhythms during the '70s. Today thousands of trainers encourage their students to shake off their shyness, allowing the body to express itself with utter abandonment, which creates good feelings in the body.

This was the year Richard created the Cook's Corner. He took the time to perfect one of my recipes and featured it along with a photograph explaining how to create it in detail. Minor disagreements over our different writing, editing and publishing styles began to creep in. This sharing proviso about all decisions being 50/50, as mentioned by my astrologer, took my learning curve to yet another level beyond what I could ever have imagined. I liked directing people and got along with the many volunteers and crew members who helped with the Festivals. I had three business partners with whom agreements came easily, with problems getting solved the next day. Seldom were my ideas questioned, and I was not used to waiting and thinking and re-examining all options before moving forward on a project. Richard's detailed explanations seemed trivial and used lots of precious time. I was expected to comply and do things more slowly, challenging my core values to the hilt! Overall 2008 was an excellent year with Jennifer, Doug and daughter Olivia staying with us for over 6 months. Olivia's 4-year-old antics brought new life to whatever we were doing. Since she needed to attend school

the following year, they decided not to stay, and I let my hopes for community slowly grind to a halt. I enjoyed the various musical gatherings that Richard liked to organize, including Sufi dancing and the ceremonies accompanying the changing seasons. He loved strumming his guitar and had memorized his favourite songs, and was better at telling jokes. Richard also ran the Fernie Arts Council when he taught school there. He was a great announcer for the Spring Festival and took over when Laurel left. I practiced my public speaking skills at the Wise Women's event, for I had trained with Toastmasters for a year a long time ago but making speeches is not my forte.

That summer, Richard's cat, Bootsie, exited quickly because he waited for Dorothy Mclean to return. After I filled his water bowl, he refused to drink and shook his head. I said, "Are you sure?" He nodded. "Yes." Four days later, he became delirious, so I shut him in our bedroom; he was literally on his last legs. At about 2 am, he made a growl, so I picked him up and put him on my stomach, petting him as his breathing slowed. I fell asleep and had a vision of watching him being born to a woman who wore a veil. It was like watching a TV screen as he showed me what he would look like at age 12, playing drums. Bootsie shivered, peed a tiny bit and left this realm for his next life. Our volunteers often referred to him as Swami BootsieAnanda. Ananda means loved one and usually refers to a guru. He was an enlightened cat who sat at the table in his chair and observed everything we did.

This helped me to formulate my theory about pets and people needing nine lifetimes to get good at doing anything. Ever heard the saying cats have nine lives? Nine is the number of completion, just as one is the beginning. Watching a young person belt out a song on America's Got Talent that belongs to the voice of an adult has convinced me that my theory is correct. There is no way that Elvis or Michael Jackson became famous instantly. Practice and more practice are needed to develop the skills needed to manifest a certain reality.

When a different cat of ours died, his companion cat Princess hissed into the ethers at the moment of his passing. I assume she could see his soul exiting to another level of existence. David's cat went outside the morning he left for ski-doing, something he never did, and they never returned. I also felt Truth when a psychic told me I bred panthers for the Queen of Sheba back in the day. We used

them like watch-dogs on her island home. I asked my knowingness, which I call angel talk, “Who is that Queen today?” Oprah came to my mind. Legends do live on, if only in my mind. This did explain my occasional sighting of her on TV, which I seldom watch, but I clearly remember a talk show just before leaving Terrace in 1980. Men debated whether she had what it would take to ‘make it.’ I could feel even then she would do well and feel gratitude that she continues her work helping the feminine energy return to the planet.

Animals and humans both have assistants to help get us to heaven. When my brother Don collapsed on Labour Day in 1991 from a heart seizure, his wife did CPR hoping to revive him. Their three-year-old daughter Jessica watched for a while, then pointed to the sky and said, “There goes, Daddy.” Young children see into the beyond until our culture tells them that is not possible. The pictures she drew of her family in grade one featured a large stick man with no arms. That image told me Daddy was still with her in spirit and larger than life. Three of my brothers have now died from accidents; Bill was the first in 1975 at twenty years old, riding his motorcycle and going fishing with his new pole.

I like reading books that explain reincarnation and why it was removed from biblical texts. I wanted to better understand my two evangelical brothers, Michael and Paul. I had listened to a cassette tape called *The Hidden Gospel* by Neil Douglas-Klotz, produced by Sounds True. Neil explains that people did not read or write; they listened to Jesus and sang back the short phrases. Neil describes how the Aramaic sounds have a healing vibration built into them. To illustrate he strums a guitar while chanting the Eight Beatitudes or Blessings in Aramaic that Jesus gave during his Sermon on the Mount. I bought several more of his CDs and listened to them repeatedly when I drove long distances. I love chanting; it feels intoxicating. Neil’s insight into what Jesus really taught has little to do with churches or religion. In 2005, the author was awarded the Kessler-Keener Foundation Peacemaker of the Year Award for his work in the Middle East. For more information on communities worldwide, visit the Abwoon Resource Center.

The Retreat Center became busier yearly as Richard booked several Findhorn leaders, drawing in new participants. We also created a one-week program titled Center Life, similar to Findhorn’s program, where participants paid to spend 20 hours a week working in the kitchen or garden while enjoying the aliveness of being

in the wilds. The TaiChi camp was the biggest ever, and Ted Wallace had many painters for his artist's retreat. Bob Watter did six alternative energy workshops, and Richard installed a windmill that Bob had brought back from the States.

As per my angel's words, the Wise Women event at Naramata had grown smaller, and the trio rented only half the site for 2007; now Christina tells me they hadn't paid the deposit for 2008, so I call and ask if this is true, it would be a shame to lose the prime-time spot that took me years to secure. I paid the half-deposit for 2008 and had them promise I could rent the entire site for 2009. That winter Kylie from New Zealand stayed with us. She had Illustrator training and pasted an image of QuanYin into the program and swirled the rainbow colours behind her; now, all I had to do was to change the date each year, just like I did for the Spring Festival of Awareness.

whom she said could look after the women's registrations in the fall. I reorganized my print schedule with one less edition, and now I am back to five editions a year. The February/March edition with the Spring Festival of Awareness program would be delivered the first week of February, then April and May. The June/July/August edition would promote the 11th annual Wise Women's event; this year, it was September 19-21 and featured 31 workshops. The fall edition would include September, October, November, December and January and be delivered around Halloween, just before the snow arrived. This schedule was created to avoid driving in winter conditions.

I found some light-coloured curtains and created a new backdrop for the stage by sewing a 24-foot dark purple banner with large silver letters and numbers announcing the year. This would help identify the photos taken. Richard's cousin Ian had gifted us with a Sony camera for Christmas many years ago, and I did my best to remember to preserve these precious moments in time.

We created a three-hour shift on Friday afternoon to encourage people to arrive earlier on Friday and allow healers to attend one more workshop on either Saturday or Sunday. Was that ever popular! The downstairs of McLaren Hall had been recently renovated and now had a fridge and stove, which made it easier to accommodate serving meals at various times. Christina came up with the idea of pasting an angel image and their name onto our three-inch round badges to help

identify the instructors. Hosting two events made developing an easy system to keep track of things more crucial. I even figured out how to include meal tickets on the participant's name badges. The Naramata event had a fair turnout in 2008, and on September 20, 2009, over 300 women travelled from near and far, taking advantage of extra pampering and various healing sessions.

That following weekend Richard surprised me with tickets to see the Dalai Lama in Calgary. The University of Calgary sponsored his visit at the Saddledome, where over 18,000 people gathered. Just being in his presence brought quiet tears for quite some time, and I wasn't the only one who felt his presence this deeply. He is one of the world's most influential and inspirational voices for peace and education. I still have the white scarf he gave to all who attended.

Christina decided to move to the Lower Mainland to be nearer her daughter, who had married and was expecting a baby. Marion took over scheduling the healers and arranged for another friend to oversee the Healing Oasis. Sunnaira was an excellent cook and arranged the healers' potluck and figured out ways to feed over 50 people who were now involved as volunteers or healers. I provided cheese, homemade bread from an amazing local baker and veggies from my garden, plus I bought whatever else was needed from a store.

Each time I hosted a festival, I drove to the Okanagan. I packed on Monday, drove the 6 hours on Tuesday, bought flowers for the altars on Wednesday, picked up the sound equipment, then bought food to create meals for the crew and healers who stayed onsite. Thursday, the decorating crew made the gym beautiful in the morning. Others of us moved furniture to create the foundation for the Healing Oasis so the decorators could do their magic in the afternoon. After dinner, I often returned with an extra lamp or anything else. Friday morning, participants arrived, and the site buzzed with aliveness for the next three days with lots of hugs and busyness. The festival store came alive with many vendors, and if the lady who sold the antique QuanYins from China was in attendance, I checked out her new/old treasures before we even opened the store to the public.

As Eleanor was putting away the decorations into storage containers Sunday night, she mentioned she could only show up for one event next year; which one would work best for me? I said Spring. With those words on my mind, I headed

back to Penticton in the morning. There was a new tea shop next door to Skaha Sound, where I was returning the equipment. I was supposed to take more rest breaks, so I stopped for tea. As I was looking around, I felt a magnetic pull; a woman walked in who looked familiar. I said hello and asked, “Didn’t I just see you at the Wise Women’s Festival?” She answered, “Yes, I am new to town and do energy work and attended because I want to meet like-minded people.” We chatted for a while, and then said, “I am looking for someone to decorate the Great Hall for next year’s event. Are you interested?” She loved the idea! Karen Coogan’s combination of crystals, colours and objects imparted a new expression of vitality and originality to the tables, the event and even our meetings.

Marion, I learned later, had worked as a secretary for the police force in Ontario. She was efficient and organized and could clearly communicate requirements to volunteers much better than I did, plus she had lots of time to get to know them personally. She thought we could use more volunteers and had friends willing to trade a weekend pass for eight hours’ work to help with the setting-up before each Festival or the take-down afterwards, making my job less tiring. When spring arrived, she said she was also prepared to take over Spring Festival registrations, which I enjoyed. Accommodations were fully booked within a month of posting the schedule, which I found easy to do, and I liked having time to reconnect with the regulars. The campgrounds were being filled as the Festival became an annual get-together for like-minded souls. If the two motels opened early, they were quickly filled to the brim, as B&Bs were just becoming popular. We were now the largest group that Naramata Center rented to. I reprogrammed Richard’s old laptop with the revised FileMaker Pro program to keep track of participant registrations, meal counts, healer involvement, and hours worked. I gave it to Marion, who slowly took over administration. Pulling the numbers and letting the chef know how many to cook two weeks in advance only took minutes. Using the same program twice a year increased our likelihood of remembering how to change the variables, like a price change. Men heard the Spring Festival was the place to find like-minded women and signed up in more significant numbers. One woman commented that her husband insisted she always attends as she came home with an improved attitude. People remarked about the energetic vibe that left them feeling the buzz for a month afterwards.

Sunday evening, six to eight women dismantled the magic and Monday morning we put the bins into storage as Naramata Centre was now renting us space under the stairs to store our ever-growing bounty of decorations, cash registers, sheets for the Healing Oasis, soup bowls, signs and so much more. I semi-rested before our wrap meeting and appreciation dinner on Tuesday, then shopped for supplies for the Retreat Center before heading home to Johnson's Landing on Wednesday. Many of the crystals, Quan Yin's and Buddhas were shared/stored with crew members, and my favourite pieces came home with me, filling a large shelf in the bathroom in the lodge, which now flowed into the various rooms.

Whenever I distributed Issues, I made a point of wearing my rainbow-coloured pants and sweatshirts that I so loved. People told me they could spot me a block away. I asked my crew to wear them during the Festival weekends, which they did, but none wore them just for fun. When Jan and Marcel retired, they gave me theirs, which were almost new. I had mended my raggedy outfits several times and re-dyed my coat, now wearing it only on special occasions.

Marion decided to write a regular column that soon became two, Food for Thought and Pure and Simple. She invited me to stay at her mobile home in Okanagan Falls and loved garage saleing, which we checked out whenever I came to town. The Center could always use certain items at bargain prices. She also filled the magazine racks in Penticton and Kelowna semi-monthly, so I didn't have to drive back and forth so often. The various routes changed as drop spots came and went out of existence. Eventually, she found an artist, Francis Murphy, who did pointillism, a painting style that uses tiny dots side by side. These were the best-ever name badges, with instructors' names nestled in a brilliant rainbow shape.

During the summer of 2010, Dale and Gordon brought their kids and spent a week at Johnson's Landing. A two-foot high wading pool added to the magical time kids experience in the great outdoors. Our boys like organizing these kinds of events, and I have done my best to be there over the years. Each summer had its own encounters as Rae, and I enjoyed the fruits of our labour. Generally speaking, though, he had more time to visit than I did. Dale stayed a little longer that summer, saying he and Suzanne were having difficulties, so they were giving her time to figure out life. Once back in Edmonton, he created the Super Solar Store working

long hours to get it off the ground. All three boys now had enough experience to become their bosses and preferred using their many skills and connections to create successful businesses and employment for others. Keith bought fancy machines that use complex computers to make parts for oil rigs. Gordon became a partner in a pharmacy.

The bloom of our romance was starting to fade, and the Marshall Rosenberg teachings on Nonviolent Communication became a lifesaver. We had a few one-on-one sessions with his trainers, and I learned to communicate better as I connected the dots behind the words. It took a few times listening to the Compassionate Communication CDs to better understand what was ‘really being said’ by each of us. The first time I heard the term Nonviolent Communication was when an instructor applied to teach at a festival, and since I did not understand what was being implied, I showed little interest. I sure hadn’t encountered any violence in people speaking to me! I was glad when they changed the name to Compassionate Communication, as this style is undoubtedly more understood as we each do our best to use words differently than our parents. I also learned that when I feel uncomfortable, it is a signal that I need to speak up and get clearer with what was just said. This has helped me continue growing in ways I would never have imagined. Listening to the tone, something most babies and young children learn instinctively, is the key to discerning hidden messages under layers of learned survival techniques. When I reflect deeply, I can feel that Richard is usually right in theory, but his delivery style did not make our conversations easy.

I stopped reading psychology books and tuned into astrology podcasts and videos to understand planetary influences. This seemed to suit my learning style better, likening the forces of nature to our personality type. Reflective time became more important, and improvement came with learned repetition as I slowly changed myself and, thus, the universe. The statement as above, so below reflects the eternal knowledge that people are but mirrors and with a bit of help from our friends, we can become diamonds, polished by the grit of life.

In 2004-2005 Richard and our neighbour Gerry Rogers dug up grass and erected a greenhouse on the lower property where my little house sat. The trees had been cleared long ago, allowing better sun exposure so plants grew faster and bigger. In 2008, eight people arrived for the Spring work party and erected a substantial fence to keep the deer out of the lower garden. The soil had so much



clay that the first time we planted potatoes, Richard had to dig them up using his excavator as the ground had turned rock-hard. We brought 15 tons of straw to soften the ground; when that cheap source of tillage ran out, I found that sawdust from the local mills was free and did a similar job which looked even tidier and had no weed seeds. Dale had brought many 50 barrels from Edmonton that were used for the biodiesel workshop, but since this project did not continue, I used these barrels for transporting and moving sawdust. Seven fit inside my van or truck with a dozen in the trailer, making trips to the sawmill worthwhile. I also collected barrels of maple leaves each fall as they provide nutrients and break down slowly.

We created raised beds to allow more depth for the roots, and I learned that squash plants prefer living on a mound, far away from a sprinkler, as too much wetness causes decay. I planted iris and dahlia bulbs that Gordon passed along. The upper garden grew raspberries, kale, zuccs and herbs. Our neighbour Eric Schindler gave us grape vines and six black currant bushes, Kathy Rogers planted two saskatoon bushes and Richard bought five haskap bushes while attending a bee-keeping course, as they provide the first nectar of the season for the bees. The one golden raspberry bush that Harold and Faye Naka brought to a TaiChi camp slowly took over its patch of ground, as did many herbs. Marion pruned her honeysuckle plant, and that exquisite perfume now permeates the garden entrances. The row of transplanted strawberries from the upper garden extended themselves easily, and the runners took over. I grew garlic for a few years, learning that all garlic is not the same. Like fine wine, it comes in many flavours, hard, soft and something in between. If the flower head/scape goes to seed, as does dill, fennel and even kale, it becomes a weed. The first year I broke off the scapes and dropped them on the ground, thinking they would rot. Next spring, it looked like I hadn't picked them at all. Mother Nature and gardening started influencing how I saw life, and Musing noted my reflections.

Over the years, I listened to Dorothy Mclean talk about her experiences at Findhorn and really liked this exercise: address a plant and state your intentions towards it. I chose two mullein weeds that had popped up near the garden gate and told them sternly I would be pulling them out in a day. When I came back, they were wilted, lying across the path. My heart softened just a little because I like them and often allow them to grow as nectar for the insects, but having them react as they did told me another truth, plants do listen and understand human motives. Telling

a tree that it was getting cut down the next week would often cause its leaves to fall prematurely. Dorothy told stories of talking to mice, and they stopped making noise so she could sleep. I expanded on this idea and tried it with the ants, which worked with varying degrees of success. Getting in tune with nature helps heal us, and being in the garden, digging, weeding or picking fruit gave me an insight into something that just happened. Over the years, I read the autobiographies of the founding members of Findhorn and their connection to Pan, the God of Nature, the devas, and fairies and how they dumbfounded scientists, growing 20-pound cabbages in the sand. Many authors explained the magic that happens when one talks with the plants and devas of the land.

2010 was the twentieth anniversary of Issues, and Anthony Chauvet, a Buddhist monk in training, responded to my ad asking for help with publishing. He created the sustainability pages for the next four years but did not stay with us that long. I was hoping with his help, I would be able to slow down, but that didn't quite work out. My son Dale showed up next with solar panels to help people understand this complex science of 'free energy,' which is expensive to buy. We bought 40 panels and six large batteries, so our food was kept cold when we lost power.

That was also the year a few groups joined forces to create the Natural Health Products Protection Association. Guided by lawyer Shawn Buckley, we started petitioning the government for our Charter to protect our access to Natural Health Products and Traditional Medicines by creating a separate legal category. Rather than being deemed as dangerous drugs under the Food and Drugs Act, under the charter Natural Health Products and Traditional Medicines are considered to be safe, as they are in the United States. This process started in 1984 when the Health Protection Branch sent letters to health food stores warning them that change/control was in the works. 38 years later, the manipulation continues, but I am even more determined to support natural remedies which are better for my health. [www.charterofhealthfreedom.org](http://www.charterofhealthfreedom.org)

Don Lee, a friend of Richard's, dropped in for a visit, and together they created the framework for a concrete pouring of the Winter greenhouse. Then they conspired and built a 24-foot Geodesic Dome, and seven people signed up for that workshop. The foundation and the first round of triangles were completed that summer. Various volunteers continued into the winter and each season after that until the roof had protection from the elements. My brother Michael showed up

with some New Age roofing material that we hot-glued into a protective bubble. Due to my experience with fabrics, I got involved, cutting most of the 70 triangles inside and out. I used high-quality white cotton sheets and heavier blue fabric to create a unique-looking ceiling. The dome took four years to complete, generating frustration and excitement. The greenhouse still sits, waiting for completion.

During a distribution trip, I stopped at Sacred Journeys, a new store on the East Shore; perhaps they had space for Issues. As I walked past the entrance, I noticed a sizeable hand-carved limestone statue of the Goddess Tara sitting on a table, looking ever so magnificent. I glanced at the price tag and kept moving until I spotted a hand-painted silk kimono robe featuring QuanYin on the back. While at the till, I mentioned how exquisite Tara looked and asked where she was carved. The owner just happened to be there and said she was looking for a good home for Tara. Was I interested? I told her we owned the Retreat Center and asked if I could leave some magazines. She accepted a few and then offered me a discounted price on the statue. It took three strong men to load Tara into my vehicle. When I got home, Richard created a ramp so we could slide her out of my vehicle and under the welcome sign near the lodge. The small roof would protect her from the winter weather as limestone is soft and easily crumbles if left in the rain. Before it snowed, I leaned plywood against her to protect her from the elements. In case you don't know the difference between these two deities or Goddesses, the word Tara comes from terra-cotta, the red earth and defines a slightly clad young woman rising up from the earth, full of vitality. QuanYin's name means 'She who hears the cries of the world' and represents a matronly saint, someone who has tamed her 'dragons' and developed enough grace that she can share wisdom and grant blessings. Usually, they sit on or are surrounded by lotus flowers. Which represents the need to grow ourselves... like flowers, we grow ourselves out of the muck of the earth and into our beautiful selves.

I have introduced many people to QuanYin since I learned of her name in 1997. Today I have quite a collection, including marble, crystal and wooden statues, books about her lineage, paintings and batiks. Since featuring images of QuanYin on the cover, several readers told me about their statues, and many reside in their gardens. If you want to share a few words and an image of yours, you can do so on my new website.

Over the years, I noticed small stones rolled downward when people approached the lodge because of the slight incline. Richard said he put pebbles there to keep the weeds from growing. I mentioned that a few steps would be a better idea. He wanted proper steps in this location, not the wobbly ones that volunteers had created near the peppermint patch. I was cleaning debris near the entrance in the early spring when I heard Tara say, "I want to overlook the lawn." I said, "Find me a man who can make proper steps, and I will see what I can do." I am never sure where the voice or words come from, but they are so clearly spoken that I often respond just like I would to a real person. I assume it is my connection to the Divine, who sees life from a higher perspective and gives guidance I can choose to follow.

Each spring, we hosted an event called Opening for the Season. Usually, five to six people helped get the site ready for summer activities. One such Friday, an Italian man steps out of his red truck and says to Richard, "You folks looking for a step builder?" Richard grinned and sent someone to fetch me. By the end of the day, Generosa Panazella had found many large flat rocks that would suit his purpose. A young man with muscles, who had arrived a few days earlier, put the heavy rocks into his truck and delivered them to the front lawn. They used a pick-axe to dig the ground and adjusted the various rocks to fit. When Generosa was satisfied, he mixed a bag of concrete and solidified his creation. A work of art! On Sunday, he made Italian pizza to celebrate another amazing gift from the ethers. Then he said, "The Lady wants to move, eh?" I hadn't said anything about the statue talking! While picking out the many rocks for the steps, he had noticed a perfect pedestal for Tara to sit on; perhaps Richard could bring it up with the tractor? The four-foot oval rock that was two feet tall with one flat side did arrive and was a perfect pedestal for Tara to overlook the lawn. A roof was built to protect her from the elements. I planted snowdrops at her feet that bloom in the spring and fall crocuses. After the first good rain in late summer, a profusion of light mauve covers the mound. Generosa returned the following summer and hosted a Creating Mosaics with Stones workshop. One trainee registered and created a four-foot OM symbol together in a circle of white and salmon-coloured pebbles from the beach. Next, they connected the base of the steps to the OM using large flat rocks. The OM at the entrance was an even more amazing work of art. As he left, he said, "Make sure you keep that OM covered; otherwise, the winter water will settle into the cracks and break it

up.” Mother Nature does have a way of disintegrating things, and I was glad for the advice. I let his words sit in my awareness, knowing the angels usually have a plan. It boggles my mind how I bring things into manifestation, but somehow it happens, and afterwards, I get to be responsible for keeping it safe or alive.

After the wrap-up meeting of another Wise Women’s Festival, the subject of the feminine returning to the earth came up. Someone in the group said, “If you want to see QuanYin’s, you should check out this place in Old Langley.” I made a note about it being near the 10,000 Villages store. I thought about the note several times but already had a local distributor covering most of that area. Did I want to run the risk of getting lost just to find one more place to drop off Issues? For our Christmas holiday in 2011, Richard and I visited his cousin Ian in Langley. Some little thing went wrong with my van that needed to be looked at. The Honda dealership just happened to be close to Old Langley, and the minor problem was quickly resolved, allowing Richard and I time for a stroll on Boxing Day. When I saw the 10,000 Villages Store, my angels reminded me of the note pasted in my distribution book. I felt excited and said to Richard, “That QuanYin place must be near here.” We walked across the street, and sure enough, in the window of Roger’s Art and Gifts Store were two 4-foot-tall QuanYins. Richard said, “You don’t need any more statues and ... our van is full!”

I had never seen such superb craftsmanship. The statues beamed an aura of compassion with details of such intricacy that only a master carver could have created. They were created from a Himalayan Yellow Cedar tree pulled from the forest floor. The front is carved, and the back shows rotted wood. I chatted with the owner, who shared that he had travelled to his homeland in China three years earlier and brought back all the carvings from his village that would fit into a shipping container. The smaller ones had sold, and Roger Lee’s lease was coming up for renewal, so he was eager to move these ladies along. I took his business card and said I would think about it. My mind did not stop thinking of them, and February was approaching. I wanted something special to commemorate my 60th birthday, so I phoned to see if they were still available. I would be in nearby Surrey for an appointment with the Agricultural Land Reserve the following week, so we struck a deal for both statues. As an added bonus, a volunteer emailed asking if he could stay with us for one year. My passenger seat was empty, and with the van’s back seats removed, we could lay the two QuanYins on the floor along with his suitcases.

When my van arrived home, the carvings told me where they wanted to live. The curved indentation in the group room looked tailor-made for the wider QuanYin, whose tamed dragon wrapped itself around her feet, looking up in loving adoration. The other QuanYin liked the entrance to the dining deck a great spot for greeting visitors who entered through that door. I built small wooden platforms so my eyes would look directly at their faces. I feel such satisfaction when I connect with them. I took one to Kaslo, which now resides in our living room, and the other continues to live in the Group Room at the Retreat Center. You can see them on my website or visit the Retreat Center.

In January 2012, an avalanche cascaded down our creek bed and settled over the water box for the second time since I moved there. The men were trying to figure out why the water had turned murky under the 17 feet of ice in the creek bed. It had rained more than normal that spring and continued to rain until Thursday, July 12, 2012. I was doing distribution when I heard the news on the radio: a landslide had taken out the only road to Johnson's Landing. I had arranged for Bob Watters to pick up the Robert Beatty group at the airport as his 12-day Silent Meditation was to start on Friday. Bob heard the news while driving to the Castlegar Airport and helped rebook their workshop at the nearby Yasodhara Ashram, which luckily accommodated them. Five volunteers enjoyed a helicopter ride out as the government encouraged them to leave after declaring an emergency.

Our phone lines travel under the lake, so they are not affected. When I connected with Richard, he said he had been fielding questions from the newspaper reporters wanting details. I had already left Kamloops with my load of groceries, so that evening, I parked in a neighbour's yard where Richard fetched me in the canoe, skirting around floating trees on both sides of the bay while we loaded, then unloaded the supplies into his truck. Thank goodness we had installed solar panels a few years earlier. Workshops were cancelled until mid-August when a small group of TaiChi Summer Camp participants arrived despite the continuing governmental alerts that a new slide could happen at any moment. Mountains move steadily toward the sea, but it takes thousands of years to collect enough debris to hold water and create the dam that finally bursts from too much rain. The Regional District

maintained a fearful stance for three years, which affected our registrations.

BC Hydro arrived and cut trees to put in a new road so our neighbour Gerry could have a functioning electrical pole. An idea was brewing in my mind, so I called Michael Hollihn, one of my long-term advertisers who liked to create affordable homes using local materials that heal you and the planet. Could he build us a timber frame porch over the OM symbol? Many trees were eventually cut for firewood but some were trucked to Argenta, where a local sawmill cut and stacked the dimensional lumber to cure for a year. We announced a workshop the following September. One man signed up for the training, and the two of them worked diligently for two weeks to get the beams into place that would protect the OM from snow and ice. Richard and his friend Nick Nickolchuk rebuilt the porch roof connecting the frame to the lodge. The new entrance added elegance to the one-bedroom log cabin that had undergone many transformations since 1968. Tad Melbin, who moved from California to teach at the Friends School run by the Quakers in nearby Argenta, built the original structure. Five families left the US during the McCarthy era because they wanted to raise their children differently from what was becoming the norm. When I arrived many years later, their school was closed, but many young people continued with their musical talents, and square dances were the highlight of any gathering. Together this group published a magazine called the Small Holder for forty years, a collection of ideas for homesteading and sustainability. This alternative magazine will be uploaded to my website after I scan them.

2013 was a year of surprises. After completing the distribution of the February/March/April edition of Issues, I flew to Terrace from Penticton to spend time with Mom. She was thrilled to see me but not happy in general. She was feeling lonely and told me she wanted to die. She didn't like her new hearing aid and was frustrated that her driver's license had been revoked; she was down to just one doggie and a cat. She had never imagined living until 88 years of age and had not planned for it. Managing independently would not be viable much longer, and she refused to live in an old folks' home. She preferred to spend her money on doggie care and fancy hats with peacock feathers. At Christmas, she had purchased a case of chocolates to give away, and when I arrived in February, there were still a few left. She told me a story: when she was a young child, her mother would send her a box of cookies or chocolates to the convent, and the nuns would make her share them with other children who had less than she did. Most times, there was

not one goodie left for her to enjoy. When new shoes arrived, she quickly scuffed them up so she did not have to give them away. She mentioned that when she went home for a holiday, “There were too many Jesus’s in the convent, and she did not want to return.” Makes me ever so grateful that my Mom raised us. Moving into the wilderness was a bonus as our family learned to be self-sufficient firsthand. No peer pressure, no bullying that is so prevalent today. She told me that her mom put her in convents so she would have more skills than the average female going to Normal School, including art and music. When I was about ten, she showed me her chalk drawings. I really liked her ‘cat in a fish bowl,’ which travelled with us to Rosswood but eventually got lost in her many moves.

My son Keith gave me his older iPhone before I left, so I videotaped Mom telling me what she wanted me to do in case of a stroke. I mentioned that if she found someone to drive her to Johnson’s Landing, she could stay at the little house and finish writing her third book. I clarified that she was not to bring file cabinets filled with ideas and paperwork as she had done on the previous visits. She arrived on March 20, and we visited that night. The next day she seemed a bit out of it, perhaps I thought, because of the 20-hour drive down with little sleep. The following afternoon I found her lying on the floor, having suffered a stroke. I told the hospital, ‘No resuscitation,’ as she requested. My brother and his mostly grown-up children had time to say goodbye on the phone. I lay in her bed, cradling her frail body and whispering the many good things I liked about her. They increased her sedation over the next few days until Mom transitioned on March 25th. I am impressed that Kaslo has such an excellent combined senior care centre and hospital, allowing her dog to stay with her on the bed. Mom would reach for him often, for she loved dogs. They don’t talk back.

Mom fell in love with her first Gigi, a terrier cross, at an SPCA in Los Angeles while visiting her brother in 1980. Eventually, she added a Doberman Pinscher for safety reasons, she told me. Wherever she travelled, she visited dog shelters until she had collected an assortment of 12 dogs. When Mom toured the province in the 90s promoting her book *Iceberg Tea* she shared her idealism that she called *Caring and Sharing*: if dogs of all colours can get along, why can’t humans? She drove a fuchsia-coloured converted milk truck with her Eskimo name Ooradludpuk painted in large white letters above the windshield, which means ‘woman who talks much.’ As part of her travelling show, she featured slides of the Arctic, for she had



travelled there with Grandad taking photos and collecting data while listening to the pioneers. Another time she was a reporter for the Winter Games. I remember listening to her stories of northerners avoiding the white man's clock. The Games would start when everyone showed up. She took Dale when he was five, hoping to write a book about their adventure. She promoted an all-women caravan to drive up the Dempster Highway when it was created in 1979. She enjoyed being around Northern personalities whom she described as genuine and friendly, and loved their laughter and storytelling.

For the past fifteen years, she stayed with Michael and his wife Patty, who were delighted that their twelve children could give Mom some practice learning to be a grandmother. Our two oldest boys did not have fond memories of her when she lived with us. If you want to meet her via saved TV interviews, visit my website. The timing of Mom's passing was perfect. I attended the usual trade show in Edmonton that was booked a year ago. When the show was complete, Keith, Dale, and I drove to Terrace and hosted her Celebration of Life. I had covered an old metal cookie tin with stickies that she would have appreciated, along with her latest photo, so people would know her ashes were inside. I passed out peacock feathers so people would be reminded of her love of colour and her zest to live life to the fullest. At the end of April, I wrapped up another Spring Festival of Awareness at Naramata and changed my print schedule to three times a year. After the summer edition of Issues was printed and distributed, I drove back to Terrace, where Mike's family trekked up Ol' Goatie, the mountain behind our homestead in Rosswood, BC. Mom had requested that her ashes be released into the wind up there.

On May 8, Richard was clearing brush looking for a new route for our community waterline as we would need a more permanent solution than the black hoses laid atop the ground we had been using since the slide. He was bucking a tree on a hillside when it snapped back and hit him. A community member built a makeshift stretcher, and four men carried him out of the woods to the van and drove him to Nelson, where X-rays confirmed there was some bone damage to his spine, but he would walk. The Rolfer and long-time friend, Wayne Still, drove over from Penticton and did several Structural Integration Energy sessions to help his healing process. Richard hobbled around on crutches, slowly improving over the next few months.

Since workshops were slow to fill after the landslide, this gave me time to take a PermaCulture Training Course with Sarah Orłowski and grow the garden even bigger. That fall, we attended the Garlic Festival in New Denver, BC, and I sold over 100 pounds of garlic and many bags of frozen strawberries. Before winter Richard and I moved down to the lower house where Mom had stayed. Volunteers cut and stacked many dead-fall trees to keep three wood stoves burning, and I announced in Issues that the Retreat Center was looking for new owners.

In the Spring of 2014, I listened to disgruntled employees complain about their latest boss at the Naramata Centre. During the 25 years, I rented this space, I watched each new administrator make changes, some with more common sense than others. The employees were part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. This year the CEO of the United Church blamed CUPE for the high cost of cooking and maintenance instead of attributing responsibility where it should fall. The union struck back and took management to court, proving the staff was not the problem, and I lost my venue forever. It had been a fantastic conference centre, but it was slowly aging, the Great Hall needed a new roof and the kitchen required updating. I had seen the writing on the wall the previous year and knew it was the beginning of the end. I maintained that Naramata Centre was the only place to host these events and would have stopped organizing them immediately if it had not been for Marion and Richard.

Marion really, really enjoyed her job and wasn't willing to throw in the towel so quickly. We toured the original high school on Main Street in Penticton, now called the Shatford Centre, as a possible new venue. Jane Shaak was the administrator, a Wise Women's volunteer who stayed with the trio of Laurel, Urmi and Samarpan. She was delighted at the idea but there were issues to consider: for one thing, hotel accommodations were five to ten minutes away by car, the main conference area was half the size of the Great Hall with fewer rooms to accommodate instructors and there was no lake setting to provide the enchanting atmosphere for attendees. Richard wanted me to host a similar but smaller event at the Retreat Center, so I also tried that. Attendance was lower with complaints of the concerns, as mentioned earlier. In 2016 I did my best to promote the Spring and Women Festival in both locations, but the double schedules were confusing, so it was only semi-successful. February 2017, I decided this would be the last edition

of Issues Magazine for Empowerment. I printed programs for both locations and mentioned that if people wanted a Wise Women's festival, let me know. Around mid-March, I was told the Shatford Center chef had quit, and they were searching for another. What was I to do? Cancel and refund everyone? Marion found a crew of amazing volunteers, and I spent three days supervising the feeding of 125 people. I barely left the kitchen and decided I had had enough. I cancelled the Shatford Center contract and focused my attention on hosting a women's only Native Sweat Ceremony in Johnson's Landing in the fall. This would be an all-day event starting on Thursday, as it takes time to prepare a sweat lodge. 20 women honoured their ancestors and sweated their prayers with intention. Friday, more instructors showed up and offered 4 workshops at any given time. 30-35 women participated in the 30th and final Wise Women's event. There are similar events all over the globe bringing women together in celebration of life, so if this excites you... look on the internet or create your own with others of like-mind.

Wanting to bring the Spring Festival of Awareness to its conclusion, I sent out an invite online — announcing that May 4-6, 2018, would be the 40th and final Spring Festival of Awareness. It would be held near Johnson's Landing Retreat Center, where it originated. It was attended by Nora Jukes, one of the originators, and her friend Dorothy, the last of my cookie bakers, and our crew. Six others had registered, but each cancelled with a valid reason. When I called the instructors and told them about the lack of interest, most were delighted, their lives were busier than expected, and they were glad not to travel. Our neighbour Karen Newmoon taught a meditation class and led a plant identification walk, I taught handwriting analysis, Dania led the Opening and Closing Circles, and a Heart Math class. With gratitude and deep appreciation, we thanked the Festival Deva for its 40 years of faithful duty and released its energy into the ethers.

When I asked one of my long-time advertisers Cheryl Grismer-Forrest, why she supported me for over 25 years, she said, "I pay income tax, and you are an expense that I can write off, not to mention, afford and appreciate." Lynne Gordon-Mündel and the Three Mountain Foundation in Kamloops was another advertiser who stayed involved from day one and taught at the many Festivals. Without so many people supporting my efforts, I would have peaked long ago. As it was, I learned so much about advertising and the publishing world that I felt complete.

How wonderful is that!

Over the years, I had heard of somebody called Skeeter who organized the original festivals that Harry and Sid Tayal attended just across the US border in 1976 and 1977. While researching, I read about The World Symposium on Humanity from November 27 to December 4, 1976, in Vancouver. The organizers attempted to catalyze consciousness formation by hosting 12 speakers from various religions and disciplines. They hoped to create the buds for our emerging New Age Society on a practical level. Harry's meditation group, The Society for Self Awareness, also reflected this yearning. Since Harry worked as an instructor at Selkirk College in Castlegar, BC, he was able to use this facility to host the original Spring Festivals. Sid Tayal was a holistic health practitioner and yoga teacher and offered support by teaching classes along with 20 others who gave freely of their time. Their program stated that the event was happening because they wanted to share knowledge by exploring an expanded view of being human so we could rediscover our balance on the earth. The cost was \$4 per day if pre-registered and \$5 at the door. Meals were \$4 each. By re-reading the original festival programs and Issues Magazine, you may understand how the New Age Movement crescendoed and continues to shift as people awaken.

Skeeter was also called Michael Pilarski, the original permaculture teacher in upper Washington State. I was delighted to read about his latest endeavour, the Global Earth Repair Conference in Port Townsend, WA, in May 2019. Since then, they have created a foundation to continue getting his message out to the people, which remains the same as ever — we need to get back in touch with our true nature and connect with Mother Gaia to help our inner-self be more at the moment. Skeeter's worldly influence runs deeper than he can imagine; just knowing his good work confirms how much we each influence one another with our co-creation connections. I appreciate that he is still hosting events, communicating and co-creating with the nature spirits, devas and fairy realms. Every summer, thousands of people gather in open fields listening to world-renowned speakers and connecting with like-minded. Please check out [www.fairycongress.com](http://www.fairycongress.com) or [globalearthrepairfoundation.org](http://globalearthrepairfoundation.org).

Now I really feel the need to let the Retreat Center go, but Richard wanted to sell it to vegetarians with spiritual ideals so his legacy of not killing animals for food would continue; thus, we did not list with a realtor. A few people responded

to the ad in Issues, but none had the money or skills. Others wanted community but had little money or the training it would take to succeed. I learned much about patience as I studied the stars to determine the completion date.

In 2018 Richard was labelled with Parkinson's, so he asked the renters to move out of his house in Kaslo, giving them time to relocate, and they found the perfect place across the back alley while we flew to Mexico for a vacation. Since I no longer had to prepare a Festival program or create another magazine, I typed the outline of this book for my inner urges were getting stronger. It was time to share the angel messages and inspire others to trust their inner voice. While researching my ancestors, I realized I would like to know more about their values and how life happened for them; I just wasn't interested when I was young. Some day my children and grandkids may want to know their family legacy and will find this book fascinating.

I started moving stuff into Kaslo in 2019, Covid had hit hard and the government was doing its best to shut down most businesses. I am okay with whatever happens for I know these 40-year cycles of boom and bust separate the wheat from the chaff. But is it really for our own good? These planetary movements repeat so people have experiences as we grow past humanity's adolescent stage. Minke brought her usual group for a month, minus her international students, so at least we paid taxes and utilities. In 2020 we had a few people come for the two-week seclusion for vegetarians travelling from overseas. I used my time to expand the lower garden and modify the upper one, transplanting raspberries to a sunnier location. Two strong young men moved boulders out of the garden. Sam Ahmadi stayed for two and half years practising his musical skills and helping Logan with his when he visited during the summers. In Early 2021 we had our first serious buyer who arrived via word-of-mouth from Toronto. After renting the lodge for several months hoping to arrange financing, which didn't happen, I asked him to leave. By a quirk in fate, we did manage to find the right owners.

Usually, Richard orders sexed chicks in the spring so he doesn't have to deal with killing roosters. Since he wasn't around, I hatched eggs in my office using Karen's incubator, and half were roosters. When our neighbour Martin arrived to take some home, I started to mutter my frustrations about asking Tarek to move along. He mentioned his friend had just looked at a Retreat Center near Nelson, but

they did not buy; maybe they would be interested? On Sunday, Marco and Robyn showed up and really liked our place. It took a while to finalize that deal, but in January 2022, the lawyers wrapped up the paperwork, and two couples took on the responsibility of running retreats and fixing up the place. They also agreed to care for the larger statues I had collected over the years as I had no place to store them; surely, the guests would enjoy their presence.

We planted five walnut and hazelnut trees just after I arrived, knowing they would take fifteen years before we saw our first crop. They have just started to produce, so I assume the new owners will enjoy a few nuts if they beat the squirrels to collecting them. It feels good to pass this blessed project onto new owners, and I look forward to seeing what happens in Johnson's Landing as I do with all places that hold a piece of my heart.

This book is a labour of love that my angels say is part of my karma. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine writing it, and now . . . as in the Star Wars series . . . I shall continue with my childhood adding more insights and information on how I 'grew myself' so you can better understand why I am the way I am, perhaps realizing a thing or two about your own self. I use the phrase 'grew myself' because I liked a young girl's response when her kindergarten teacher commented, "My, you have grown." Her hands were about a foot apart when she responded, "God made this big and the rest I did myself!" We do indeed grow ourselves by the many choices we make in each circumstance presented daily. These words stuck in my mind as a truth from a program called Children Say the Darndest Things and confirmed that children do indeed come here to teach adults.

# Back to the Beginning

I am the only daughter of Marie Therèse Genevieve Tessier and Clarence Julian Brousseau, born close to midnight, February 20, 1952, in Alpena, Michigan, USA. I was told as a child I was named after my Aunt Rose's black poodle. When I was ten years old, a friend brought over a book of names and read out loud some of the meanings attributed to Angèle, Angela, Angelo; they all meant 'Messenger of God.' I remember putting my hands on my hips, nodding in agreement and said, "Yup, that's me." I knew the truth when I heard it!

When I was a teen, Mom told me that she had a girlfriend by that name, and the moment she heard it, she promised to name her first girl Angèle. Mom pronounced my name ONNgele, but others pronounced it ANNgele. A distant family member researched and discovered that in France, starting in the 1700s, there has always been an Angèle in our family tree.

Nicknamed Tess, my mother was born in a railroad town called Hudson Bay Junction, Saskatchewan, on November 30th, 1925, to George Tessier and Zoe Norman, both school teachers. She had one younger and one older brother. At the age of 12, her father drowned, and the family moved north to be with Zoe's mom, Mary, who was living in Aklavik, Northwest Territories. There Zoe met her second husband, James Myres, and the family moved to Oregon and bought a farm. He was a miner and fisherman who also drowned four years later. Tess, now sixteen, was sent to live with Uncle Dick in California, who was breeding orchids as a hobby. She often found an orchid on her dinner plate and told me these times held her fondest memories. He enrolled her in photography classes which eventually led to her being hired as an assistant to an animal researcher taking photos of the wolf cull in Alaska in the winter of 1942. While there, she visited Grandma Mary in Aklavik. She started working for a hotel roasting moose meat, boiling potatoes and brewing coffee in big enamel kettles, the diet back then, and eventually for the Alaskan Railroad. Since Tess was raised in convents most of her life, she didn't even know how to boil water but became a fine cook. Eventually, I would inherit her Joy of Cooking cookbook and a leather binder full of notes about cooking for large numbers and recipes she liked.

My father, Clarence, came into the world on February 17, 1917, the firstborn son of a family of ten children in Detroit, Michigan. Henry, his dad, was also one of ten children who immigrated from Canada to work for Ford Motors. Eventually, most of that family migrated north to Alpena, MI, where they used their carpentry skills to build homes. After WW2, Clarence hitch-hiked north, found work upgrading the buildings along the Alaskan Railway and met Tess. They dated for a year and were married on July 3, 1947, in Wasilla, Alaska. Clarence made a ring out of a nail and promised her a real one once they were back in civilization. While in Alaska, Tess bought a white husky pup that she named Chinook, which means 'Warm Wind' in the native tongue. She raised the pup inside the rail car, and Chinook was fully grown when they left. Clarence built a large cage to ferry her in the trunk of their car while they travelled south to meet the families. They were both avid photographers who loved the wilderness and dogs.

After visiting her mom in Oregon and his folks in Michigan, Tess knew she was pregnant. Clarence was glad to be near family, bought land and started to build a home. In eleven years, she gave birth to seven children. I have two older brothers and four younger ones. Tess was so happy when she saw I was a girl and felt complete, but Dad wanted a larger family, more like what he was used to.

The first words recorded in my Baby Book are: "I'm Mama's girl, and I'm mad." I knew how Mom felt about dogs, and when Dad kicked Chinook because he was having a bad day, Mom and I both got mad. When I learned to crawl, I would look for my dad's hand hanging off the couch and bite him, just like a dog, and he would bite me back. From that point on, I was, or appeared for all intents and purposes, to be a slow but determined learner. Since children have relatively few choices in expressing themselves, I decided not to talk clearly as the best way to vent my anger.

When it came time to start school, Mom took me to a speech therapist since I had refused to pronounce words properly. I remember the tall yellow house with steps I could barely climb them. As I looked into the therapist's mouth, for she showed me how to roll my tongue to pronounce certain letters, I heard my inner voice say, "Give up, Angele, they have won," meaning that adults get to kick dogs with no punishment attached. After that, Dad complained I talked too much. I did not have to go back for a second lesson.



Making sense of right and wrong, good and bad, white and black, started early in my life. Whenever I was sent to my room for punishment, I asked God or Saint Peter for clarity. I did this by opening my window, telling him to blow on the right curtain for a 'yes' and on the left for a 'no.' An easy task, one might believe for someone so powerful. One day St. Peter told me he was leaving; it was time for me to grow up. I must have looked sad because he relented slightly, adding, "I'll grant you one wish just like at your birthday parties." It was a hot summer day, so I asked for snow. He obliged by shovelling snowflakes off the sky in his red coat. I was so excited I dusted off the snow and sand and ran to tell Mom. She was chatting with the lady across the street; she hugged me and sent me off to play. This was the last time I saw my invisible friends, and playing with dolls or my tea set was not so much fun either.

When I was four years old, Dad bought us a mule for Christmas. In the spring, while teaching me to ride, two horses approached, the mule reared its hind legs, and I sailed over its head and landed in some bushes. During one of my many healing sessions, I saw myself as a young child looking deep into Dad's eyes, like when he found me in those bushes. I could see he was really concerned and did love me. Observing myself as a child and noticing how subtle yet clear my choices were in making pivotal decisions about love is most fascinating.

As I type, I can still see myself peering through the window of our station wagon, staring at kids running around the schoolyard. Mom let me take my time getting used to these strangers as I felt timid. I found lessons so easy that I completed ten pages of a workbook when I was supposed to do only two. When I heard the instructions repeated, I knew I had done something wrong and felt bad. I wished for an eraser but instead closed the workbook and prayed I wouldn't be punished. I never got into trouble that time, so I was grateful, but I still see this trait in me, forging ahead and doing things without listening to the complete instructions.

As Christmas neared, it was time to buy a small gift for another kid in the class. Dad lifted me up so I could look at the rows of toys on the store counter. I liked the silver jacks with a rubber ball and asked him for my own set. He said, "No," and felt miffed and quickly pocketed one of the small plastic bags. When dinner was called, I was so engrossed in playing that I didn't hear Mom. When Dad

opened my bedroom door, I saw a flash of anger in his eyes and realized I had done wrong. I jumped as he lunged towards me, rushing into the bathroom. I had to duck so the row of nails at eye level, where we hung our clothes, did not blind me. In his anger, he spanked me for my impulsiveness in taking what was not mine. That form of punishment is not an effective teaching tool, but let me share something I think is. I did try shop-lifting when I was a teen, pressured to be part of the group that dared me to do it without getting caught, which I did. Then I learned my lesson properly as reasons were stated that made sense. It was pretty clear I was a good girl who just wanted to belong. I vowed never to shoplift again and stopped hanging around with certain friends.

Mom did not like living in what she called The Rat Race and hated the drinking and poker playing that happened Saturday nights. When Dad bought land to build our home, Mom invested in the future. They were selling parcels of land further down the road for much less, and she knew land values would increase, so she invested in that subdivision. She kept it a secret as Dad's motto was, "If you can't pay cash, you don't buy." When they left Alaska, Dad promised they would return and build themselves a lodge at the foot of Mount McKinley. Mom never gave up her dream of living in the wilderness, so she threatened to leave again when Chinook was diagnosed with cancerous growths, where Dad kicked her. A few years earlier, we had moved in with Grandma Zoe in Oregon, but she could not afford to keep four children, and Dad promised to change. There was no support for women who left their husbands. Together, they researched various sources that listed homesteading land for sale and found some at \$2 an acre in Rosswood, BC, Canada; each adult could buy between 40 and 160 acres. Homesteaders were required to spend \$500 each year for five years to improve the land. The BC government wanted more settlers to populate these remote areas, just like Alberta did in 1901 when her grandparents left Iowa.

In preparation for this trip North, Mom sold the investment property and bought a 40-foot school bus that Dad converted into a home with 32 feet of cupboard space, table seating for nine, an icebox, a double sink, a gas stove, two sets of bunks, a large chest of drawers, chemical lavatory and last but not least, a shower with a hot water heater, as quoted in a newspaper article. The word Chinook was painted in large white letters across the front, sides and back of the bus. Looking back, I see this as a subtle reminder ~ of her love of Chinook vs

Dad's anger. This trait of naming vehicles was something she continued for the rest of her life. When we were at Findhorn, they named their wheelbarrows, kitchen equipment, and various houses, giving objects a personality. I also like to name my vehicles but don't make it public, but she has a Sagittarius sun, and mine is Pisces. Fire vs Water.

In the summer of 1958, we tested our new home on wheels and picked up Great-Grandad Vincent, who had moved to northern Alberta after Great-Grandmother Mary died at the age of 70 in Aklavik, NWT. He was Mary's third husband and fifteen years younger than her, which was confusing to us kids, so we just called him Gramps. We circled the continent to say hi and goodbye to Mom's family. While visiting California, one of our aunts paid for a family pass to Disneyland, and another paid for a visit to Marineland. I remember my brothers running around inside their large house as they had no yard to play in. These were the days before safety glass and David ran through a sliding glass door. Luckily he sustained only minor cuts, but my parents freaked over the damage done. The relatives assured us that all was okay and asked that the boys not be punished. I knew everyone was grateful, for if there had been a serious injury, that would have cast a big cloud over the fun times we were looking forward to. At least it was not me getting reamed out! However, I did have my own lesson on that trip. My family had arranged for an Eskimo girl to come on the trip with us, a friend of Granddads. My parents thought having another girl would be more fun, but she was two years older and from a different culture. Just before we visited Marineland, I could not find my glasses. I knew I had left them on the bedside table, but I searched anyway. My mind told me to bounce on our twin beds. While doing so, I could see the top of the valance, and there were my glasses! My parents chatted with her, and she admitted to hiding them, saying she was jealous, which made no sense to me. My parents then offered me the choice: I said I did not want them to adopt her as I was happy being the only girl. Now that my glasses were found, it was time to enjoy the trained seals and watch the magnificent whales splashing the crowds. This was much more fun than Disneyland, and the long line-ups listening to adults chat about how expensive everything was.

After that, we visited the California Redwoods, where I bought a pin in the shape of the letter A, made from fallen trees to raise funds to preserve other giant trees. I still have that pin and a jewellery box that was given to me for my sixth

birthday. Back then, you could drive a car through a hollowed-out giant tree! Recently I found Mom's journal account of our hike through the Grand Canyon. She wrote that the guide did not like having a pregnant woman with so many young ones in tow. I remember when the guide left and sprinted down a steep hillside and sent sand spraying in all directions. That was more exciting than staring at the landscape. We stopped to see the sea lions in Oregon and visited more relatives on our travel back to Michigan, where Grandad helped with the packing-up process. In December, Mom gave birth to Donald. In the Spring of 1959, we sold our home and packed the school bus with everything we owned inside or on the roof rack, plus we towed our car with a canoe on top. Dad wanted a freezer, and Mom wanted her piano, so his three brothers loaded both.

As we drove through Alberta, we picked up Charlie Stein, Gramp's 20-year-old adopted son, the older brother of the girl Mom wanted to adopt. Without these two men, it would have been impossible for our parents to survive living in the wilderness with so many young children and a baby. Rosswood was 40 miles north of Terrace on the way to the Nass Valley on a bumpy logging road with a gatekeeper, meaning the road could only be accessed at certain times. Our bus was so heavily loaded that we got stuck in a mud hole and had to wait for the grader to pull us out, for it had been raining for days when we arrived. My parents rented the old telegrapher's property for \$5 a month. It had neither power nor water from a faucet, so we took turns bucketing water from the creek. Gramps and Chuck chose a building on 6-foot stilts as their residence. I wondered why it looked so unusual, and in the spring, we found out the creek flooded regularly. When that happened, Dad opened the front and back doors and let the rushing water flow through. Afterwards, we swept out the gravel and put the furniture back in. Mom used the creek as a refrigerator in the warmer weather, putting food in five-gallon pails tied to a tree. The adults kept saying how tasty the water was. I can now appreciate those comments because when I was a child in Michigan, the Great Lakes became a toxic dumping ground for the industry. I still can see the small fish floating upside down when we waded in the shallow waters . . . and no one could tell us why!

Three American families were already settled in Rosswood and were happy to see us arrive because if there were 10 school-aged children in one location, the government had to provide a school with a teacher. Men transported a building into the center of our small hamlet with two rooms, each with a stove, one in the

back where the teacher slept and one in the front to keep the students warm. The teacher taught all grades. I was in the largest class, with three children in Grade 2. As the years progressed, I would help the younger students with Math or English while the teacher helped the older ones learn new material. In my class, there was a boy whose parents had arrived in Rosswood long before us. I was told his pa was unhappy that his children had to waste time attending school, but that was the law. This boy and his older brothers tried to scare the teachers into leaving, but I will spare those details. When learning is experiential, it influences how our brain works. Life just happens when living in the moment, I. We had jobs to do and we did them using common sense. All my brothers became bosses, creating jobs for others while relying on a mix of ingenuity and improvisation that is deeply instilled in people who are pioneers.

The first winter in Rosswood, Dad shot a moose near the back door, and fishing was excellent. Adults caught salmon that weighed more than us kids! We loved the long days of summer that the North is famous for and got ready for winter when Grandma Zoe arrived with a trailer loaded with winter boots and organic dates. Some store in Oregon was going out of business, and with so many feet in the family, she figured that one pair or the next would fit someone. Grandma Zoe and Great-grandad Vincent enjoyed each other's company and spent hours playing cribs and chatting.

Eventually, Dad bought some used bikes and created a house rule; "The first one out the door gets the best choice." I was quick, but I also enjoyed walking the two miles to school, which took over an hour or 20 minutes on a bike. One day while I was walking my bike up a steep hill, a baby lynx decided it wanted to play. I began to pet it when I heard Grandad's voice say, "Where there is a baby, there is a mother." I jumped back on my bike and pedalled harder. Another wildlife encounter occurred early one morning while picking raspberries on the other side of the bushes, but I paid no mind until I got to the end of the row, and there I was, nose-to-nose with a black bear! We looked at each other, and both ran in opposite directions. I ran so fast that it felt like my feet never touched the ground. There were no pies at dinner as I dropped my berry bucket.

Soon Dad cut trees, cleared stumps and created a road into our new home site. He built an A-frame shed for tools, stuff from the bus, and to dry firewood.

Mom wanted a cow because she believed milk was healthy for growing kids. Dad disagreed but built a barn anyway, as the horses needed shelter, as would the pigs. Dad told us not to name the animals as we would eat them one day. I preferred canned moose meat with thick gelatin on the top; it was tender and juicy. He built our house in a gravel pit on his acreage. A neighbour who owned a small Caterpillar Cat pushed the gravel to the sides, and once they located the low spot, they started digging a well about four feet wide with six sides. David went up and down in a bucket removing the gravel until they hit water. Using a gas-powered cement mixer, Chuck, Clarence, and Gramps poured cement, starting with the well and continuing with 10-foot sections of walls and floor until they had a 60' x 30' home that we called The Basement. They slid a McClary cook stove down a ramp into the kitchen near the well, which had its own insulated room, which was used as a fridge. He plywooded and tar-papered the roof joists, making the floor warmer and softer than the concrete by framing 2 x 4s on edge and nailing plywood down. He used pine panelling for the walls working around the small windows that gave the room a golden glow. Next was the rock fireplace in the living room with a secret door for a chute so we could drop in firewood from the outside. I had a small room, and the three younger boys slept with Gramps in the larger room in the middle of the house, which had a pot-bellied wood heater. David, Phillip and Paul inherited the bunk beds in the medium-sized room, and our parents had theirs on the side with the most light. Dad planned to build a house on top of The Basement once he decided to use logs or dimensional lumber. In the meantime, he built an 8 x 10 log washhouse where Mom placed a heavy barber's chair along with the ol' wringer washer. When the weather was good, I used that cranky ol' machine but preferred doing laundry in town, folding load after load of clothes, while Mom bought groceries and the miscellaneous items our family needed.

To prove we were not speculators, log houses were built on Mom's and Grandad's acreages. While all this building was happening, Grandad borrowed an old plough and tilled a field using horses. My brothers and I cleared the rocks and roots, helped plant potatoes, and picked them twice as the hitch broke and the potatoes flew out of the trailer. Once the horses moved onto greener pastures, Dad bought a tractor, and a man driving too fast on country roads hit Gramps, flipping the tractor and breaking his hip bone; it did heal, but he walked with a limp. Vince was always busy, splitting shakes for the roofs, cutting hay with a scythe, milking the cows, tending fires, and stacking the firewood. He built a smokehouse from an

old appliance to preserve salmon and dry moose-meat strips that we ate as jerky. We picked crab apples if the bears didn't eat them before they ripened. Crab apple jelly has a taste that is not easily forgotten. I have a photo of Gramps and four-year-old Charles in front of a huge wood pile in Aklavik, NWT. Seems like feeding fires and prepping food was a job he did most of his life.

Paul, a year younger and my dish-washing partner, told my parents it was his turn to go to town and help with the laundry. Mom said I was better at doing that job. He created a fuss and started to holler, so Dad gave him something to cry about. After spanking his butt, Dad dropped him in a mud puddle to cool off as I waved goodbye. I accepted my fate with a quietness that felt like relief when living in a family with noisy boys. Just before Christmas, with Mom running late because of the roads, and after the clothes were in the machines, she dropped me off at the only toy store in town and told me to pick out gifts for everyone, including myself. I chose a toy spinning wheel and spent an hour picking out gifts for my brothers and wrapping them.

Logging was the industry of the day, and log booms floated in the shallow waters of Kalum Lake. One day while having a fun game of tag on the logs as they bobbed up and down, Phillip pushed me so hard I fell in and almost drowned. While thrashing around, as the water was just over my head, I heard my inner voice say, "Let your feet touch the bottom, then push." I calmed down and did just that; I noticed the sun streaking in and looked for an underwater angel. When I surfaced, I yelled for help, and eventually, Mom pulled me out. Never did understand Phillip's mean streak as he was usually a good brother and had a lovely singing voice. He was reprimanded, and we were no longer allowed on the log booms.

Another incident was when a neighbour visited, and Dad began telling him about their latest hunting trip. Since I had heard Gramps and him talking about it the night before I interrupted with the truth, he back-handed my mouth and said, "Never contradict me again." I promised myself I would bite his knuckles if he ever did that again. The look on our neighbour's face spoke the truth, but nothing was said out loud. He left quickly, for Dad never did appreciate the preachings of our god-fearing Christian neighbours, as he called them.

During one of those warm summer days, when daylight continues till midnight, some girls my age came for a visit, a rare event in Rosswood. I enjoyed chatting and playing outside until dinner was ready. After we had eaten, Dad told me to do the dishes. I responded, "It is not my turn," and showed him the calendar, saying, "It is Paul's turn." He countered with, "I told YOU to do the dishes." Instead, I chose to join my girlfriends, who were going for a walk, and half an hour later, I saw Dad drive past us on the tractor. I felt something was amiss as he didn't usually garden in the evenings. As we rounded the corner, Dad stood in the road with a willow branch in his hand and said, "I told YOU to do the dishes." He whipped the back of my legs and butt all the way home. Mom was on the front porch, shrugging her shoulders as I ran past to wash the dishes. When I woke up the next morning, the house was quiet, bereft of the usual sounds of living with so many people. I wandered into the living room, put my hands on my hips and said aloud, "If they won't love me, then I will love myself." A cold bolt of lightning zapped my feet to the floor. I knew I hadn't done anything to deserve being punished. After that, I gave space to Dad for a long time. He preferred being with the boys anyway. Mom told me later they were arguing a lot, and Clarence wanted things done his way!

Some winter nights, when it got dark early, the boys would play games with Dad. He would sit on a chair with his legs apart, and they would crawl through as fast as they could, trying not to get squeezed between his legs. David, the oldest, seldom got caught, but the younger ones would cry when he squeezed them too tight. I remember standing with my hands on my hips and scolding him, "Don't you know you are supposed to let kids win once in a while, especially if you want them to play with you?"

When my Dad's dad, Henry Brousseau, came to see how his son was getting along and to check out the fishing, I played cribbage with him. In my excitement at reaching the finish line, I moved his coloured pegs by mistake, and he proclaimed, "He'd won the game." I said, "That is the last time I will ever play with you," and kept my distance. Sad, in so many ways, that Dad and his dad could only teach what they knew from their growing up. Mom's Grandad, Vincent, was different, which offered me a choice of models when I raised my boys. When they were teens, I would say, "Let me know if I start to sound like Grandma," for I did not



want to perpetuate certain fragments of her personality. Since I was so young having children, these feelings of what I liked or disliked helped me discern certain family patterns. I remember feeling perplexed when my boys were little; each was so different but raised in a similar environment. Studying astrology helped me understand their strengths and weaknesses giving me options when I reacted to situations. I would like to say I consciously choose how my boys' personalities would develop, but that process is much more subtle than words can express. I do remember, though, taking the time to teach them what I knew for sure: Life is not Fair. When one child needed a new pair of shoes, the others would cry, wanting the same, and I just let them cry. Once they calmed down, I explained that when they needed something, we would go shopping just for them, but for now, they had to wait until it was their turn.

A happier memory that also influenced me was getting invited to Aunt Cathy's birthday party when I was 9 years old. Mom had two brothers, so she wasn't really our aunt but Mom's best friend who didn't want to be called Mrs. Fraser, so we called her Aunt Cathy as that is truly who she was to us. I wanted to make her a present, so I looked in a magazine and found a picture of an elephant. I traced the outline onto some blue fabric and cut the shape. I sewed eyelashes and a mouth using bright yellow thread, then stitched the two sides together while pushing in the stuffing. As the elephant made the rounds, I heard comments like, "You did this all by myself? Good work! Amazing!" Fifteen years later, when my aunt moved, I helped empty her china cabinet, and there was the blue elephant. I was so ashamed that I threw it in the trash. None of the stitches were even, the legs looked weird, and the stuffing was lumpy. In retrospect, those adoring, positive comments fueled my passion for sewing. Now I wish I had saved it; Mom would have; she saved everything.

We had a battery-powered radio that adults listened to, mainly to catch the news and weather. One day it was blaring while I was doing chores. As I listened to a love song, I felt this was not the truth, so I ran across the room and banged the radio until it switched off, yelling, "There is no such thing as love." After 18 years of marriage, Mom and Dad were splitting up, which did not feel good. I cried and felt guilty that I was not a good enough daughter as they seemed to fight over us kids and what we did. I created an anniversary card for them, promising I would be good. It still brings tears to my eyes that these two wonderful, adventuresome people could not get along, and I didn't understand why. I assume this prompted my interest in analyzing relationships and why they unfold as they do.

In the summer of 1962, Mom, Gramps and Aunt Cathy headed to California as Uncle Larry was not doing well. My grandmother Zoe was Larry's sister, and they were reminiscing about the good times they shared as siblings, for he was dying. They also stopped in Seattle, WA, to spend a day at World's Exposition, which was on Gramp's bucket list. In October, Mom's brother called Aunt Cathy in Terrace and said Zoe had died after eating a poisonous mushroom. She drove the 40 miles to tell Mom the news as there were no phones or electricity back then. Dad told Mom they didn't have the funds for her to attend formalities and reminded her she had just spent lots of time with her mother, and now that she was dead, it would not make a difference.

Mom disagreed and ordered Grandad to load Betsy, our cow, into the back of the truck. She drove to Terrace and traded Betsy in for several barrels of gas. She told me she drove all night and arrived just as they lowered her body into the grave. Mom did not get a chance to grieve and had a nervous breakdown in the spring. She spent a month in the hospital and came back a changed woman. The doctor ordered rest, but fatigue wasn't the problem; it was the power struggle with Dad that had worn her down, including their frequent disagreements about how to raise kids and treat dogs and find balance between hard work and play. The hospital staff urged her to adopt a new strategy, so she painted a three-foot orchid as therapy while mulling things over and decided to seek legal advice. In the fall of 1963, when the schoolteacher left Rosswood because it was just too remote, the School District decided to bus the children to Terrace, a one-hour journey each way. Mom decided it was time to move to town, and Dad refused.

One fine day in January 1964, we were driven into town by a lawyer in a limo. What a strange day that was! Dressed in our Sunday best and were told to go outside and play in the snow! I enjoyed finishing Grade 6 in a school with many girls my age. Dad got a job working as a faller at the Nass Camp, two hours away and stayed at the Terrace Hotel when he visited. He tried to get back in Mom's good books, but that was not to be. She even filed a court injunction limiting his visiting time. Building Tess's dream home took them about five years, and it all dissolved in a few months. Many years later, during an Authentic Movement workshop where participants tap and repeat spontaneous movements felt in the body, I found myself repeating movements made on that fateful day. The stomping of feet and

the slamming of doors brought tears to my eyes as I felt Dad's frustrations at being unable to understand this woman. In my mind's eye, I could see him slumped over on The Basement steps, not knowing what to do, and my heart melted just a little. While reproducing these old photos and inserting them into my book, my heart cried a few tears as I looked at the warm wood walls that surrounded us in our last Christmas photo with him in it. What an experience it has been — typing and looking at photos ~ at the same time; I will be glad when this job is complete and uploaded to my website.

I loved Grade 7! Our teacher taught the ancient cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia and asked us to record our version of what happened in history books. I volunteered to create the cover as a professional sign painter from England stayed in a shed near our house. He hand-painted the title on a piece of plywood, we drilled three small holes in both boards, and I varnished them. We used metal rings to make our pages look like a book. Our group got an A+ for our efforts. When I returned to that school with my firstborn, I ran into my former teacher, Mrs. Halliday. I asked if she remembered our history project, and she led me to the library, where it was on display. She said, "I often use your creation as an example of what is possible." Sure made my buttons burst. When people asked me as a child what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would always answer, "A teacher," and a teacher I am, just not in the traditional sense. I taught what came naturally — sewing, swimming, quilting and later graphology and Healthy Habits Cooking classes. Now, according to my angels, I get to teach my understanding of past lives and the flow of chi using my life as an example. How wonderful is that!

By the end of the school year, Dad had had enough of separation and negotiations and arrived at our house just after Mom left to do errands. He asked the boys if they wanted to go fishing, then pulled on my hand to come along, but I clung to the porch railing, yelling, "I'm going to tell Mom." My brothers rushed past me with their fishing poles, loaded into a vehicle, and were driven to the train station by my brother's friend. Dad and my six brothers were heading home to Michigan. I thought it was great not having noisy brothers around and washing so many dishes, but Mom cried a lot. I counselled her that she could not afford to keep the boys, but Mom didn't care about the money; she wanted my brothers back and pressed charges. Canada and the United States have different legal systems, so resolving the case took time.

Mom purchased the home in Terrace that we rented as Grandad now received a pension. Whenever the boys were not using a bedroom, she would rent them out, and I got good at screening inquiries on the phone. I seemed to have a sixth sense listening to the voice tone of prospective tenants, and generally, she took my advice. Aunt Cathy was the local newspaper's publisher of, The Omineca Herald and hired Mom as a reporter and photographer, where she earned commissioned ad sales. She also started a Driving School, bought a rubber stamp company and sold World Book Encyclopedia's. That summer, Grandad's sister was not doing well, so Aunt Cathy and Gramps joined Mom and me, and we drove to Calgary, where I met Gramp's nephew, who was a few years younger than me. We recently reconnected as we are both doing family research.

In Grade 8, my girlfriend and I would walk hand-in-hand to high school, which was on the other side of the tracks, an hour away. One day some boys jeered at us and said we could only hold hands with boys, but at that point in my life, even a 10-foot pole felt too close for such contact. I often babysat, earning 25 cents an hour. After 11 pm, sitters got paid extra. Occasionally, I was hired for an entire weekend of babysitting four kids. That lady so appreciated my cleaning and cooking skills she'd slip me an extra \$20, saying they could afford it.

That summer, Mom and I took a road trip to visit her best friends and then to Los Angeles to visit relatives. While there, we attended the Barnum and Bailey three-ring circus. Tickets were cheap as race riots were occurring in that part of town. When we stopped to visit our Great-Aunt in South Dakota, I heard them reminisce about the underground railroad, helping Negroes flee to Canada. A year later, when I travelled to Detroit to visit Dad and saw a section of town still smoking while on the bus. People told me the same riff-raff was causing these disruptions, but I didn't believe them. My knowingness told me it was more about the struggle of black people wanting their human rights to be respected. When my boys were little, I encouraged them to make friends with everyone. Colour or religion should not make a difference — well, maybe, for my mother instilled in me that certain kinds of people were much more interesting than women who only wanted to talk about their kids or house, which she considered boring. She would tell tales about the hobos riding the trains when she was younger and preferred talking to the hermits who lived in the wild woods.

In Grade 9, I joined the French Club and the Choir and made posters for the Student Council events. Wearing skirts or dresses was mandatory in high school, so I froze my legs several times until I learned to wear pants underneath and leave them in my locker while attending classes. I also remember going to a hypnosis show where the hypnotherapist tells the audience to lock their hands. Mine would not come unlocked, so I followed several others up onstage. What a strange experience, strutting around like a chicken, feeling like I had no choice except to do as I was told. Having my mind controlled was weird enough, but we had a soccer game the next day, and I had incredible energy. I never ran that fast or took as many chances, so I wondered how hypnosis affects our bodies.

Next, our town announced a historical parade to kick off our centennial year. I looked in a history book, sewed a vintage dress by looking at illustrations, and won second place. The town seamstress won first. This was the beginning of my questioning of reincarnation. Whenever I went to fabric shops looking for simple, washable fabrics, I was invariably drawn to the most luxurious of silks and fine woollens, which cost more than I could afford and were not practical for my application so I would ask myself, “Why is that and how did I learn to sew so quickly?” Answers often come to me as cold shivers when I read history books, and when that occurs, I know I was part of that era. I know I was a seamstress in more than one life, creating dresses for the rich, probably in France, since that is my heritage. Another time I saw myself as a child, hiding under the quilt rack as women chatted about life as a pioneer.

Mom was awarded my four younger brothers, and since lawyers’ fees were expensive, she needed a job that paid well, so she applied to cook at the Nass Camp and took my two youngest brothers, Don and Mike, with her. The man who was hiring insisted the boys stay with him in his large mobile home. Tess would sleep in the little trailer parked nearby, which would become her home away from home. The propane heater malfunctioned during the night, and when Mom lit a match in the morning, it exploded. She was wearing a flimsy synthetic nightgown which literally melted into her body like a snake, inflicting a deeper burn than natural fabrics would have. The door handle burned her hands as she struggled to open it before she remembered her coat, wrapped it around the handle, and got out. Her face suffered second-degree burns, and her hand’s first-degree burns, almost to the bone.

The doctor arrived by helicopter, as it was a two-hour drive to the nearest facility. Mom asked to see us before they medevacked her to the burn unit in Vancouver. Gramps commented that she looked like a cooked goose. I thought she looked like a gauze balloon; all I could see were slits where her eyes were. Her voice crackled as she asked Gramps and me to look after her boys until she got home, and she added that “she loved us.” Aunt Cathy flew to Vancouver, taking our carrot juicer with her, we always made it at home, but now Mom drank it through a straw. In case you don’t know, skin tissues grow from the bone outwards to the surface. The top layer of skin usually scabs over, so the top layer has to be scraped off to allow oxygen to reach the new tissues. Each day after this procedure, Mom would sit in a salt bath and let it sting till the healthy skin had developed enough layers to protect her from infection.

Dr. Marcelle Chiasson was one of the few women doctors in those days. She attended Tess at the explosion site, and they became best friends. The hospital director in Terrace threatened to fire Marcelle because the hospital had a newly built room for treating burns. She reminded him that too many casualties had already died there with less severe injuries than Tess, who would need a hyper-clean environment to recuperate. Marcelle eventually quit and moved to China to study ways of helping people without the stranglehold of bureaucratic red tape that happens in Western hospitals. When she returned, she bought a house in the States and set up an acupuncture clinic in the US.

While Mom was in the hospital, a few neighbours dropped by with desserts. Mom’s brother sent some money from California, and I wrote a letter every week starting with, “I have been busy . . .” and just about anything could come next: . . . the dog had puppies, . . . the trees are in bloom, . . . or the boys are doing their homework. I am grateful she saved those letters, for when I studied graphology, I could see how quickly my writing changed. My capital ‘I’ stood straight up as I took on the extra responsibilities. Grandpa made breakfast while I packed lunches and then off to our various schools. He made dinner on the nights I worked cleaning a hair salon, and because of that job, my hair looked fancy in some photos. After doing my homework, I helped the boys with theirs.

Three months later, once she was home, she told me she had died and gone to heaven; an angel greeted her and said, “It’s not your time; endure the pain and

finish raising your kids.” She told me she could see the gold and silver threads that bind us to the Divine and hung on to hers extra tight as she wanted to see us again. Mom left in early March and returned in late May, a much different-looking person after this life-threatening experience. I learned to change her bandages and helped her get dressed. She signed me up for etiquette lessons, where I walked around with a book on my head and learned to set the table properly. Even did push-ups in a corner to strengthen specific muscles but try as I might, standing up straight was nearly impossible. Even my necklace felt heavy as my head was leaning so far forward. They told Mom she would never have fingernails again, but she did; they were somewhat deformed, but fingernails they were. She claimed this was the effect of drinking so much carrot juice, which is high in vitamin C. The surgeons rebuilt Mom’s nose and cheek with skin from her thigh. Since she could still hear out of her right ear, it was left deformed. She was easier to get along with for a while, but change is not easy, and as she grew stronger, so did her defences.

By summer, Mom was so much better that I decided to travel by train to Expo ’67 in Montreal. That was where our French teacher came from and encouraged us to check out this grand event. I stayed with a relative of Maria, the Greek hairdresser that I worked for. Every day for a week, I took the fast rail to the Expo and walked until my feet were tired. I bought a camera, but my most vivid memory was leaving my purse on the Via Rail seat. The driver found it with my money still inside. I sent up prayers of gratitude and promised to be more careful.

After Montreal, I visited Dad and my brothers in Michigan. While I was there, I learned to water ski. Dad was real proud of his boat he built from a kit. After several attempts, I learned to pull myself out of the water and loved skimming along the lake’s surface. A thrill one remembers for a long time. One of Dad’s neighbours needed a babysitter for two weeks, and I learned that Greyhound was offering students summer passes for \$99. I decided I would visit relatives in California. The bus stopped at Hannibal, Missouri, where I visited Mark Twain’s Boyhood Home and Museum. Mom and Mark Twain had the same birthday, November 30, and she talked about him often. He arrived on Haley’s Comet and commented he would leave when it returned, which he did, during his 76th year following the Comet’s journey orbiting around the sun. I had read many of his books and bought one more at the museum to read on the bus. This story had a sad ending, but when I turned the page, I found a second ending, and if I didn’t like the first, the second or third, I could make one up of my own. I liked that concept . . . that we each get to create

our own endings; it is a choice, conscious or unconscious.

Mark Twain said his favourite book is the two-part one he wrote about Joan of Arc, which took him 12 years to research. When the movie, *The Messenger* came out 1999 about Joan of Arc, I saw it at the theatre with my business partner Gerry. As the movie progressed, I did a running commentary on what things must have been like in that era, for it all seemed so familiar, like a past-life déjà vu. The film ended with a close-up showing the flaming torch as Joan was about to be burned. I let out a blood-curdling scream as the credits rolled and cried while we walked back to Ellis Street. It took over an hour before I felt normal again. Whenever I watch movies about Joan, my stomach turns queasy and tears well up. Why am I so connected to this French maiden? My sister-in-law Holly actually visited the site where she was burned. I have taken the time to read some of the transcripts of her trial as they are available online, translated into English.

Dallas, Texas, was my next stop to visit a pen pal since Grade 7 who was part of a school project. We had fun at the State Fair for most of a week, then back on the bus towards Los Angeles, where I entertained three children as their mom was busy with a new baby. Mom's brother Jerry picked me up at the bus depot, and I had a grand time with my three cousins. Uncle Jerry insisted on taking me shopping for school clothes, letting me buy anything I wanted. His daughters had trained him well! I chose four dresses from the bargain rack, new shoes, and a purse. I remember feeling astounded when I looked for earrings and found a rainbow stretching the entire store length. His daughters added to the extravaganza with clothes they had outgrown. When it came time to leave, Uncle Jerry said, "It is unsafe for a young lady to travel alone!" and bought me a plane ticket. I started to sweat when going through customs, realizing how much stuff I was bringing back, including cigars for Granddad, but they did not open my boxes. This was the only time I felt homesick, peering down on the town of Terrace, nestled in the mountains, as we flew into the airport.

I started grade 10 that winter. Phillip had returned from the States as he did not like living with Dad. He introduced me to his friend Rae at the skating rink, who were the same age. Rae grabbed my hand and pulled me around the arena so fast the wind blew my hair. I was impressed, and so were a few of the other girls. Later that month, our friends went swimming at the Lakelse Hot Springs, and there was Rae again. He liked diving and showed off like most boys. He started to hang out with



us, doing whatever teenagers do. Mom knew Rae; he had been one of her students when she owned the driving school. She didn't like him then, and now that he was hanging out with us, she liked him even less. Rae's parents bought the bowling alley in Terrace to give him a better chance in life than growing up in a tough town like Prince George. He earned good money setting ten pins at the bowling alley and was an excellent five-pin bowler. The following year he bought a '56 Chevy with the money he earned and would pick up my girlfriend Cindy Coburn and me and drive us home from school.

Turning 16 in February 1968 meant taking my driver's training on winter roads. Mom needed me to run errands and drop the boys off at various activities. After I completed a perfect parallel park, one inch from the curb, the instructor directed me to back up ten feet. As in swimming, straight lines are not my forte. I could not pull away from the curb and burst into tears. The instructor said, "Have your mother give you another lesson and passed me."

By then, I had heard about these parties that were so much fun. When I got an invite, I knew I might be pressured to smoke or drink as that is what most teens equated with being cool and sure enough when I arrived, some guy offered me a smoke from his pack of cigarettes. As I reached for it, my angel voice cautioned, "Don't start; you will never make it!" I pulled my hand back and mumbled something about it being the wrong brand. Wow, I hadn't heard that voice in years! I did not enjoy the party as I watched people act weird and throw up. When I got home, I asked my angels for clarity. In a fuzzy way, they explained, "If you start smoking or drinking now, we will not be able to use you later in life." I wanted more clarity, so I opened the School's Year Book and pointed to each student's face; the ones that lit up would not influence me to drink or smoke, so I could hang out with them. Neither my Mom nor Dad smoked, and Grandpa hand-rolled one cigarette daily from a can of tobacco that lasted all month. He also liked one cup of coffee before he went for his morning walk. No kinder man ever walked the face of this Earth. He replaced my dad in many ways, answering questions and being there. I still have fond memories of the two of us chatting while he switched the cow homeward in Rosswood after she would wander off looking for greener grass. He liked to put cheddar cheese in his sock drawer. When we complained of the smell, he took his pocket knife and slowly cut the mold off and chewed on it, saying that when he lived in the Arctic, it was the only way a man could get penicillin.

As a teen, I could not sleep if my toes were cold, so I lay on my back and tucked my feet inside my knees. I remember waking up in the middle of the night feeling my groin muscles; pressure from the blankets caused them to ache from being in one position for so long. These early stretches helped my hips open, and I can still sit in full lotus and type for hours without getting stiff. I also practiced setting my internal clock using my mind's eye, watching the hands go around until the appointed hour and then saying 'stop.' My angels got creative waking me up. I remember going to bed one night with a math problem on my mind and knowing the answer in the morning, so I practiced that technique a few times. I knew my third eye was open when someone reached over my forehead at night, and the intense vibration woke me up. Sensations are something I seldom forget.

By grade 11, my money-generating activities were quite varied. Mom had bought a rubber stamp company, and I learned to typeset upside down and backwards, preparing rubber stamps for customers. Some Saturdays, I worked the front desk at Aunt Cathy's office, typing the classified ads for the newspaper. I even landed a job at Woolco, a large department store, first in the pet department, then sewing notions and finally down in the basement where I made the \$1.44 signs each week. Eventually, I was promoted to cashier and made \$1 an hour.

My friends and I played tennis in the spring and summer and decided bowling would be good in the winter. After ten weeks, I became a so-so bowler. Rae was the best around, and soon, our team qualified for the semi-final provincials in Prince George. Our team consisted of two boys and three girls, and we won third place. Afterwards, Rae offered me his school ring, which I refused, but my best friend encouraged me to try dating. Boys were slowly becoming more interesting. He asked me to marry him, but we both needed to finish high school.

One fine spring day in 1969, Rae decided to visit the future site of the ski hill and convinced me to come along for the drive. We got caught playing hooky (skipping classes), and the school made an example of us: we collected litter on the lawn for a week during our noon-hour breaks. When my period never came, I booked an appointment with a doctor. Rae had gotten amorous in the car, and we fooled around, but I don't remember much else. The doctor asked a few questions and took a blood sample before sending me home. I was glad it was me who

answered the phone when the clinic called to congratulate me on becoming a mom. Fear flushed through my body when Mom asked who it was. I told her it was the wrong number as I wanted to talk with Rae first. He was overjoyed, unlike most boys who would have dropped their girl at the speed of lightning if a pregnancy had occurred. I felt grateful that Rae was okay with the situation. I certainly knew how to raise a child, after having looked after brothers. . . now to break the news to Mom.

I slept in later that weekend, so Mom checked into my bedroom. A bottle of iron pills was sitting on the ironing board just inside my door. She picked up the bottle and asked, "What are these for?" I responded, "The doctor says women who are pregnant should take them." The blood drained from her face, and her legs grew wobbly as she quickly exited the room. A few days later, she announced I would have an abortion. My eyes widened from deep within and the voice spoke for me. "If I do, you won't have a daughter. Rae is willing to marry me; he wants to be a father. Don't you remember how often you and your friends told me what a good wife I would make? And now, you don't want me to get married?" I knew she wanted me to attend university, but neither of us could afford it. I could cut the air with a knife as she pouted over my decision. I wanted and needed to take responsibility for my actions. It was a choiceless choice that I would repeat several more times in my life as I listened to and followed through on what was being asked of me deep inside rather than doing what my mind or someone else's mind wanted. Knowingness always came easily, like the day JFK was assassinated. I was sitting between two adults who were listening to the car radio. Jeannie, the woman, started to cry, so I counselled her saying, "But that man did not kill him." I could feel Truth and knew when things did not feel right. Putting it into words was difficult, so I am glad my angels helped. As the school year ended, our sewing class had talent night. I had sewed a long blue velvet skirt and asked Rae if he would wear a shirt in a similar colour. We looked like a couple as he escorted me down the runway. I imagined it as my graduation ceremony, a completion of Grade 11.

Since I was not of legal age and Mom refused to sign the papers, I called Dad in Michigan, which I was told never to do. He loved the idea of me getting married and said it was the perfect way for a young woman to start life. Why waste time on education when you don't know what you want to do or be? Soon my brothers and I had plane tickets. Rae hitch-hiked on a transport truck from Terrace to Michigan

and surprised me by turning up at the Detroit airport with the family. Dad took me shopping and paid for six meters of white cotton fabric that I sewed into a wedding dress. I chose some party cards and sent out invitations for August 16, 1969; by then, Rae's parents had figured out what was happening and were glad to know he was safe; they even mailed us a wedding present, a Sunbeam mix-master. Rae wasn't a verbal communicator, but his forehead sweated like Niagara Falls when the ring was placed on his finger. Dad paid the \$40 fee for the Justice of the Peace, and his sister Aunt Eva was delighted to bake and decorate a wedding cake and create a bouquet of red roses. She lamented that her daughters wanted fancier weddings, so helping with mine was a real treat. It was a nice day, so we headed to the beach for a potluck reception and in the evening, my brothers arranged for friends to play music in the garage.

Rae had relatives in Quebec who offered us a cabin in the woods for our honeymoon; afterwards, we visited his grandad in Montreal, who had a spare room and was happy to have someone cook meals. Rae got a job working for an elevator company using his uncle's connections, which provided us with one pay cheque before his dad called and asked if he could please come home. They wanted him to refinish the bowling lanes and would pay for his plane ticket. He reassured me he would return, but I knew better. Two weeks later, I cried most of the night before boarding the train back to Terrace. I did not want to return, but I knew it was best as I did not speak French, and getting around this busy city was difficult.

My swollen belly got a few stares, but I overcame the stigma of not attending school. I took prenatal classes and practiced deep breathing. As my due date approached, I waddled like a duck, barely managing to cross icy streets before the light changed colour. Still, I felt happy and even had time to watch a soap opera. Late one afternoon, my legs started to cramp, so we checked into the hospital, where I walked the halls till the baby dropped. The nurse asked if I wanted less pain, so I nodded, and she gave me something. I almost fell asleep, and so did the baby. I told myself I would never let that happen again. The evening shift nurse from Belgium told me she had delivered hundreds of babies. When my doctor arrived to check dilation, he said I had lots of time, so he was going home. I started to protest, but the nurse put her fingers to her lips to signal to me not to, and several hours later, I pushed hard, feeling like I was pooping my pants as slippery goo ran down my legs. The baby cried, and soon, a healthy boy was attached to my breast,

and we dozed in the hospital bed with soft lights and soothing music. Giving birth is not for the faint of heart. Rae showed me the teeth marks I made on his arm before they gave me a wad to bite on. In those days, they kept women in the hospital for five days postpartum. It was the only time I ever read a novel because I prefer educational books. Gordon James Rowe was born on January 23, 1970. He was named Gordon, as that was his mother's maiden name. James was the Grandpa we stayed with in Montreal. I fussed that I wanted input in choosing the baby's name next time.

Mom knew where I lived as I always stayed connected with Aunt Cathy. She showed up while Rae was working and asked to see the baby. She kind of apologized and told me of her plan to go to Hawaii and get sun on her burned skin. "Would I look after the house and tenants while she and Aunt Cathy went on holiday?" Rae was not happy, but he was seldom home. His job pumping gas at the Coop and extra jobs within the trucking industry kept him busy. Not paying rent would allow me to buy a few baby things. Mom had a subscription to Prevention Magazine, so I read those and the wellness books by Dr. Bernard Jensen. Chariot of the Gods and Jeanne Dixon were popular at that time. She was the psychic who warned JFK about his assassination. Grandad moved to the back section, where he could not hear the little one fussing. Having the room with the bathroom and kitchen nearby made it easy to keep an eye on my sleeping baby.

When Mom returned a month later, she brought fresh pineapples, and I ate many slices as they were a real treat. I was awake most of that night because my baby screamed as his bottom was red. I assume it was due to the high acid in my milk from eating pineapple. I learned to play The Yellow Rose of Texas on a guitar that one of the renters had left and even practiced a little piano. Mom was a highly-skilled piano player, and we always had one in our living room. I had lessons with the nuns in Grades 7 and 8 but did not enjoy piano playing. Overall he was an easy baby to raise. I remember telling someone, 'This is the easiest thing I've done in a long time.' Sure beat looking after four brothers who talked back! Mom took a four-generations photo in February, and Grandad died of a heart attack in September. Mom made it clear that she did not like being a Grandma at 45. "Never ask me to babysit," she instructed. Grace, Rae's mom, was the opposite; she was so happy to look after Gordon. I visited often but not for long as their chain-smoking bothered me. It seemed that people who bowled liked to smoke.

Rae's mom suggested we buy a house, so we asked the bank for a loan, but we didn't have enough income to qualify. One of Grace's bowling friends was selling her farm, two acres, for \$21,000 on Graham Avenue. Grace advanced us the \$4,000 down payment with an agreement I pay her back from the earnings I would receive from the three boarders. It was an older five-bedroom home that came with a large garden, a dog and cat, chickens, ducks and geese. Rae would make the mortgage payments with an interest rate of 7%. Soon after, Rae came home early from work, saying he'd quit because he didn't like the boss. I could feel panic rising, wondering how the bank would get paid. I took a deep breath and said, "I have never gone hungry or been without a roof, and I am not going to worry now." Rae found another job that paid a little better. I fed the boarders who worked at the sawmill eggs for breakfast and made them sandwiches for lunch. Dinner and weekends were more complicated, so I did not advertise those rooms once they left, as I needed the space for my growing family.

I took 'The Pill' to not get pregnant a second time. After the second week, I felt so miserable I threw myself on the bed and pounded my fists, screaming that I would rather be pregnant than feel this lousy. I gave birth to our second son, Keith Alexander Rowe, on September 16, 1971, in the same hospital bed in the middle of the night, quicker than expected, with the same midwife. This time, Mom walked the hallways with me as Rae was driving taxi and Grace was looking after Gordon. I remember my tummy being almost black once it flattened from living on the beach much of that summer.

Keith was named after one of Grace's relatives whom I didn't know, but I got to choose his middle name. Alexander the Great came to mind as I sat with my angels, and the connection felt right. When Keith was a teen, the psychic Peter Morris did a past life reading and told him he was one of Alexander's soldiers who marched across Asia. As an adult, Keith chose to research that era of history. I figure these remembrances are why people are fascinated with famous people or professions. It would be overwhelming to know all our past lives, but when we pay attention to our likes and dislikes, we can figure some out.

In the fall, with two children and two boarders to feed, I asked Rae when he was going hunting. He looked puzzled and explained he didn't own a gun. A feeling

of panic crept in but dissipated when my brothers came to the rescue and included him in their next hunting trip. Years later, I wondered where these feelings came from and wished I had never mentioned them, but at the time, it felt critical.

I discovered our bedroom was once a garage and therefore semi-separated from the rest of the house and decided to cut an opening between the sections. After removing various layers of siding, I found newspapers and cardboard stapled inside the walls as insulation. How did that electrical wire get in the way? I turned the power off, found a kitchen knife, and began sawing through it when it knocked me onto my butt. I noticed a hole zapped in my knife and felt thankful for the wooden handle. I will be more careful next time when I turn off electrical switches.

Next, I signed up for woodworking night classes at the high school as I wanted a china cabinet we could not afford. Those fancy cutting machines were much better than the skill saw I had used to master cutting short pieces of 1 x 3's, which the lumber mill threw away. It took several weeks to create 4 - 5 foot ladders that were 18 inches deep. I cut many sheets of plywood to make both units. Now, when Rae purchases a different stereo unit, I can move the shelf to a different groove. I also bought a roll of ¼ inch-wide silver foil with glue on one side that I taped to the glass windows, making the cabinet look like an antique. When I wanted a back porch, Rae found a carpenter to build it, thank goodness! for it was way more complex than I imagined. Renovating and creating shelving is something I still enjoy doing.

Grace showed me how to plant seeds and grow vegetables to save on food costs. I sold eggs for \$2 a dozen and traded organic potatoes for salmon with the natives. I joined the organic food co-op and traded time separating the bulk delivery into individual orders. To slow having a third child, I had an IUD inserted, but by the time I walked home, the coil had fallen out, so I returned to the clinic where the doctor inserted the largest size. While walking down the hallway, I could feel it move, so I returned to the examination table. With my legs apart, the excited doctor exclaimed, "Wow, your uterine muscles are contracting so hard the coil is being pushed out." Rae and I tried the rhythm method, but soon, I was pregnant. Our third son was born July 11, 1973, around 10 am, just as the nurses changed shifts. They rushed me onto a gurney and pushed me into the operating room. I asked to be turned onto my side, so one leg could be supported in the stirrup. This baby was coming down hard against my backbone!

This delivery made me grateful for the perfect timing of the previous two. The bright lights and noisy technology made it less than ideal for a new soul entering a supposedly peaceful world. I got to choose the first name and decided on Dale, hoping for a girl; this name would work for either. I think Rae chose his middle name, Kirk, maybe after Captain Kirk of Star Trek, which was popular then. After the delivery, I could feel prickly sensations in my pubic area, which had not happened previously. I looked down past my flattened belly and asked the doctor what he was doing. He replied, "Stitching you closed as your tissues have ripped." He continued with one last pull and said, "This one is for your husband." I hope doctors are not continuing this practice of tightening the opening, especially without consent, for as the body ages, this procedure creates a tightness that should not be.

Several days after giving birth, I was walking past a door in the hospital getting some exercise when I heard a scream that sounded like my baby. I waited, and soon, my doctor came out. I asked, "Is that my baby crying?" He said, "Yes, we just finished his circumcision." "But you told me it was painless; he wouldn't feel a thing." I felt lied to. When Dale had a son, I encouraged him not to do this procedure just because we had it done to him. It was time to break the cycle of ignorance. Rae and I discussed birth control next. A woman I knew had her tubes tied and told me about her complications, so I didn't want surgery. What I really wanted was to have a girl. Rae surprised me when he came home with his cords cut, saying he had done it for me. It took a while before my maternal instinct faded, and during that time, I enquired about adopting a girl, but it was not in the cards.

A week after Dale was born, I had to go pee every half hour with an uncomfortable burning sensation when I did, so my doctor ordered tests and gave me pills, but to no avail. Finally, he just said, "There is nothing wrong with you. You have birthed three children, and your body is old." Duh! I was only 21 at the time. I complained to Mom about his ignorance, and she said, "There is a homeopathic doctor in Vancouver." I booked an appointment, and soon Dale and I were on a plane flying down to Vancouver; babies flew free as I was still nursing.

As I sat in front of Dr. Mersery, he rambled on about how sad he was as his profession was coming to an end. He was the only homeopathic doctor left on the West Coast and was retiring soon as he was 75 years old. When I mentioned having



to pee so frequently, he stared at my face and, in his British accent, said, “My dear, you have an infected uterus.” Somewhat taken aback at the certainty of his diagnosis, I asked, “How do you know?” He responded, “Those white pimples on your chin tell me so, and since you have just had a baby, I will guess your doctor used a sulphur-based medicine that your body is reacting to.” He gave me a bottle of sugar pellets. According to homeopathy, “like cures like.” These pills carried the vibration of one molecule of sulfuric acid. He directed me to put five pellets under my tongue three times a day and let them dissolve, with clear instructions not to touch them as that would contaminate their energy. The pressure diminished almost immediately, and at around the 3-week mark, I was standing in my kitchen noticing this weird feeling. It felt like I was inside a wine glass, watching bubbles float upwards. After five seconds, it went ‘poof,’ the pressure and pain was gone, never to return.

Since I had to wash so many diapers, Rae decided to buy a new washing machine that was not a Maytag. When it was delivered, I felt like a disloyal traitor. Tide detergent was next up for me to betray as Dale got a rash on his bottom, so I switched to Sunlight and felt guilty when I stopped buying the preferred brand. I made a mental note of these uncomfortable and confusing feelings as I did not want to create habits that did not make sense. Once I discerned a pattern, like moms being loyal to products based on advertising, I changed the habit.

Gordon was growing fast and wanted to help unpack the groceries. My mind said, “You can do it faster.” My angel said, “It would be good to train them young.” I handed him a large bag of brown sugar to carry up the steps, thinking it would be safe if it got dropped. He accomplished his mission and rushed his little legs back down the stairs. Helping mom became his favourite activity. He also loved sorting the lower kitchen cupboards and taught his brothers to do the same. He liked going to bed early and waking up early. One Sunday morning, Rae and I wanted some alone time, but Gordon wanted to play, so I suggested he play with his new Tonka truck. Half an hour later, it had gotten quiet, so I peeked out the bedroom door to see what was happening. In the middle of the living room rug, Gordon was excavating piles of brown sugar with his digger, loading the sweet sticky stuff into his truck. My brain said, “What a mess,” and felt like yelling at him. My angel said, “He is doing exactly what you told him to do.” I smiled at his beaming face and said, “Good boy. You have been very creative.” Gordon also liked to wander

the bleachers at the arena when Rae played hockey. He would tap on the knees of a smoker to get their attention and point to the large NO SMOKING sign. I enjoyed watching these interactions, and some people actually butted out. I assumed these exchanges reflected my angels' advice about not smoking. I know for a fact that etheric and DNA energy runs deep in most families.

As our boys grew into teens, we bribed them, offering them the same deal Rae's parents offered him: "If at the age of 18, you do not smoke, you will get \$500 cash." They were proud their son did not continue their expensive and unhealthy habit. Society has done a 180 degree on smoking being 'cool,' but advertising and peer pressure still entice many to do things that are not healthy. Did you know that cigarette companies put smokes on the Mess Hall tables for free during the war? It would help men relax after disturbing forays of killing others or being injured. Breathing deeply is an excellent way to deal with stress, and the smoke connects us directly to the divine, but when you add addictive chemicals, it creates more problems than it solves. Anything we do on a regular, long-term basis will have consequences, beneficial or not.

I heard on the radio that the college was looking for people to teach night classes, so I called and suggested sewing lessons for adults. In the 70s, if a woman worked, it reflected poorly on a man's ability to support his family, so Rae resisted, but since it was only part-time, he finally agreed. The Easy Way to a Sew Shirt was a great success. Many ladies returned the next semester to make pants, and some signed up for a class in Zipper Installations or Tuning-up a Sewing Machine. The following year I added Making Granola, then Quilting. I was paid a commission per registration and did very well.

Since I almost drowned as a child, I was delighted to take swimming lessons at the nearby Lakelse Lake Hot Springs as a teen. I loved the naturally heated pools but found it difficult to open my eyes underwater because of the burning sensation of chlorine. By the time I was 15 years old, I had stopped zigzagging the pool and swam in a straight line using goggles — much older than most of my friends who had completed the Senior Red Cross swimming certificate. I concluded that people who learn a skill easily don't necessarily make the best teachers, as they have no clue how to break down a sequence into small pieces so that I could experience success, unlike my companions who had different, better teachers.

1967 marked Canada's 100th birthday, and money flowed in from various levels of government. The people of Terrace wanted a Swimming Pool and Recreation Centre. Twenty teens fund-raised with a walkathon, collecting an agreed amount of money per mile. We jumped, sang and kept moving under the hot sun on the road to Kitimat, 40 miles away. Around midnight, six of us were driven home in a van. I remember trying to wiggle my toes the following morning, even though they felt stiff. In 1972, as completion of the pool drew near, they offered free lessons for people wishing to work at the pool; they would pay \$4 per hour, and all you needed was your Senior Red Cross badge. I trained for several months and received my Red Cross Teaching Certificate.

I taught all levels: newborns were great because they swim with open eyes, smiling and kicking. All children love water until something scares them. School kids were authentic and excitable; this was playtime, and they got a badge if they followed directions. The adult Fraidy Cat Classes became my forte, and floating became my strong point, as we learned swim-breathing while standing in the water, rotating their faces with each exhale, and eventually adding arm movements. Once life jackets became available, we practiced in the deeper water.

I was happy having a reputation, no longer being introduced as Tess's daughter or Rae's wife. Since I had money, I attended two classes a year, one for my mind and one for my body. I loved the choreographed dance classes, which made me happy since Rae didn't enjoy dancing. I took singing lessons, art history, yoga and more. Within a few years, the Canadian Union of Public Employees decided that people working at Rec Centres would come under the same umbrella as those doing general maintenance or working in offices. Our minimum pay rate doubled overnight to approximately \$8 an hour, enticing more people to get trained. After about five years and a new boss I disagreed with, I quit.

While I was broadening my field of studies, Rae's dad decided it was time for him to learn the fine art of owning a business, so we sold an acre of our land and bought two used garbage trucks. Rae loved to drive but also spent a lot of time fixing them. I answered the phones and sent out the bills. Sometimes a customer refused to pay because a dog or bear ripped the garbage bags before we picked them up as the truck was broken. I would take a deep breath, knock on their door and ask for an explanation. Usually, the ordeal was not as bad as I had imagined, and I even

became friends with a few such clients.

Since I knew the routes so well, I thought it would be good to drive the trucks when one of the drivers got sick, as long as I could find a babysitter. I took an air brakes course at the college and got my class three driver's license. I became a good recycler, carrying boxes of books and clothes to the Thrift Store. I made hundreds of dollars collecting copper and brass from discarded plumbing parts and beer bottles one year. One memorable moment that made me grin was when two older men approached as I parked the garbage truck. Their mouths dropped open as they watched me slide backwards out of the truck, using the rail for support as I was eight months pregnant. I also took a bookkeeping course to save on accounting fees which served me well over the years.

We always had a swapper or man at the back of the truck throwing in the garbage. Since it was nearing lunch and we were picking up the trash at the A & W restaurant, we ordered a teen burger with cheese. Half an hour after eating, I could barely keep my eyes open, probably a reaction to the processed cheese. After that incident, I paid more attention to my bodily reactions when I ate. In high school, I remember asking another student how she could wear her belt so tight. My tummy always felt tender. I chatted about digestion with Mom, my brothers and my friends. The detective in me started reading books about health and nutrition which I continue to this day. I bought milk from a neighbour and made my own yogurt. I bought a used Magic Mill Grain Grinder to turn whole wheat berries into flour, which I still use. When wheat germ is exposed to air, the germ goes rancid and has a strong smell. To keep vitamin E fresh, I freeze the flour immediately.

Then a banty-cross hen taught me that chickens can actually hatch eggs, unlike the moody hens who never sat long enough and whose eggs couldn't be sold as they were partially developed. The boys dragged the doghouse into the chicken run, and we placed eggs from the moody hens under her. Watching the baby chicks follow her around was so cute, learning survival skills. By fall, she had raised so many chicks, and half were roosters, so Rae decided to chop off their heads, and I was to pluck the feathers. I almost vomited from the smell of guts and wet feathers as I dipped them in hot water, rinsing them off before putting them in the freezer. I told myself, 'Never again.' I would become a vegetarian rather than kill to eat. I talked with the family and thought we agreed to two dinners a week without eating dead animals. Many books said it was much healthier. Rae made rude comments

when I served those meals which I shrugged off. He could and often did go downtown and have a burger. For my part, I replaced meat with nuts, seeds and tofu as I found beans hard to digest. I gave up most dairy products like milk and sour cream. Cheese was the hardest, as I told myself it had less lactose. I still love that delicious, oily, sweet taste even though it causes mucus in my throat and bloats my belly.

Raising a family taught me so many skills, and I learned even more when our Buying Club signed a lease for the old police station on Lazelle Avenue in Terrace as we became an organic Food Coop. We petitioned the government not to allow aspartame to become a food product; it should stay listed as a chemical. After two years, they informed us that their researchers said it was NOT dangerous to our health, so the food industry could do as they pleased. I knew WE, the people, had been sold to the highest bidder. In 2004 Cara Brackett and J.T. Waldron released a documentary called *Sweet Misery: A Poisoned World* as she connected the dots when she got sick from drinking Diet Coke. In 2017 researchers linked aspartame to behavioural and cognitive problems, including headaches, seizures, migraines, irritable moods, anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

I have come to appreciate these ‘being-in-business skills’ that came with being a volunteer and enjoyed the conversation with other Coop members. While reading a book loaned to me, I got the shivers of knowingness, so I stopped and re-read the sentence, “Children come here to teach their parents lessons.” I mentioned this to my family at dinner, thinking Rae might have a comment. Instead, Gordon sat up an inch taller with a big smile as I felt 20 pounds of weight being lifted off my shoulders. I would do my best to raise these kids but deep down, I knew the Divine would help; it was not all my responsibility.

When our first baby was born, Rae told me that crying babies bothered him, so he would go to the bars to relax, watch the strippers and drink sodas. Six years and three children later, I noticed complaints piling up in my journal about his behaviour. Rae was not much of a communicator, so I told him that women have a sixth sense, “If you ever want a divorce, all you have to do is come home smoking a cigarette.” I could feel this growing tightness in my chest, and standing up straight became more difficult. My chiropractor explained that my back was developing a sway, and deep down, I knew I was unhappy. My heart was suffocated by the

weight of many felt responsibilities and his laissez-faire attitude. Rae had bought me a fancy watch and a pearl ring before we married, but only brought flowers once since then. I brought up the topic and even mentioned a few gift ideas. Rae retorted he didn't like shopping, end of discussion. I knew this for a fact: I bought his jeans and T-shirts at Woolco, and his mother always gave him socks for Christmas. He did not want gifts and, indeed, no birthday celebrations. I had grown up in a large family and was used to getting presents on special occasions and loved ones singing Happy Birthday!

When Christmas arrived, there was a fancy gift-wrapped box with my name on it. I eagerly cut the wrapping, and there was another gift box inside, then another inside that one. As the wrapped boxes grew smaller and smaller, I thought maybe they would contain some jewelry, but there was nothing in the last box. NOTHING. The look on my face caused Rae to slap his thigh and laugh uproariously. Tears welled up as I left the room in dismay. I cringed for months as he told others of his cleverness. I was glad when he finally introduced me to his conspirators, who suggested the practical joke. I knew Rae did not have a mean bone in his body and marvelled at the difficult conversations he had with his Mom and my Mom, always joking, which really irritated them. He usually joked as he did not take life seriously. I always gave him bonus points for compassion and often said, "You treat Grace like Gold." I appreciated that he seldom held a grudge or played mind games.

Marriage was supposed to be give and take, and I told myself I would not be like him. The kids and I loved searching downtown for the perfect present. One year they chose a belt buckle with his initials RR on it. He loved that belt and wore it for years, enjoying the comments about being like a Rolls Royce. I could feel his attitude soften, and later, he told me, "Go pick out what you want, and I will pay for it." But that was not what I wanted. I usually had more money in my pocket than he did. Gifts are more like treasures to be cherished because someone put thought into them. Reminders of the people in my life.

At some point, Barney, Rae's Dad, got frustrated with his son's inept attitude and lack of reliability, so they sold the garbage trucks and closed the business. Rae bought a used logging truck which created more expenses than income. By then, the angels drew my attention to a song on the radio entitled, Walk a Mile in My Shoes, and suggested I try it. I was to spend as much money as Rae did in the next

few weeks. I sweated using his credit card to buy new shoes and clothes for the kids they did not need, as I preferred Thrift Store deals. When Saturday night arrived, we hired a babysitter, and I went to the bar with him. I was glad when the drinks arrived, and mine split. I did not like the taste of alcohol, the smoke burned my eyes and throat, and the roar of loud chatter agitated my brain. When the bills arrived at the end of the month, Rae asked if we could talk. This was a good sign, for nagging never worked. He said, "We both can't spend money like this." I replied, "What do you suggest?" We worked out a plan as to who was responsible for which bills. I opened a separate bank account he could not access and applied for a credit card. I returned much of my purchase and felt grateful for the easy lesson. He became a good dad as the boys grew older. They were happy kids doing what boys do best, and I enjoyed watching them wrestle in the living room. He would bellow as they challenged his strength in rough play. I didn't care that they broke the legs off the couch or split the coffee table in half; at least now, he stayed home whenever I taught.

Next, my angels suggested visiting the library, and I found a book entitled *Ten Ways to Save Your Marriage*. I read the first nine 'ways' and had to laugh. They suggested we 'spend more time and money together,' neither of which we had to spare. The tenth might work, for I really wanted our marriage to succeed. Mom and Dad had fought so much that I had made a solemn promise to myself that when I grew up and got married, I would prove to Mom that men and women could get along. So far, it worked since Rae, and I seldom argued, but giving in was wearing thin, and my journal clearly expressed my frustration. One day he came home saying he had rolled his truck, and a log had broken through the back window, almost killing him. My inner response was, "Too bad, sure would have made my life easier." Not good, but what was I to do?? I put into practice the tenth suggestion in the book, "Say something nice to your spouse every day." I thought and thought and thought, but at the end of the day, I still could not think of one nice thing to say and stay honest with myself, something else I had promised I would always do. When Rae came home from work, he liked to have a shower, and I would scrub his back. That evening I mumbled, "You're Special." He said, "What?" I repeated, "You are Special." He asked, "How so?" I shrugged and said, "I don't know, but you are a Special Person." Over the next 21 days, I mentioned the unique things he did, paying less attention to the items or situations that bothered me. At the end of 21 days, it was me that had changed, and I burned my journals.

Still, I wanted a change of scenery; I could feel it in my bones. I wanted sunshine, for I was tired of the dreary, rainy weather and had enough relatives staying in our house because we had an empty room. I just couldn't say 'no.' I had already quit the swimming pool, my sewing classes had slowed, and most quilters were more skilled than I. I was ready on so many levels. I thank my angels for they really, really did arrange my move to the Okanagan, as mentioned at the beginning of this book, and I have done my best to keep my promise . . . doing anything for sunshine.

As radio host Paul Harvey used to say . . .

“And now you know . . . the rest of the story.”

My story is complete, but as in Star Wars, there are more philosophies and stories that I think are important to reflect on. Richard calls my storytelling *The World According to Angele* since he believes I have little proof of angels or facts and yet speak so determinedly about them like I just know it all. In my life, angels are real, and my facts. . . well . . . you figure it out for yourself.

## The World According to Angele

When Rae and I divorced, I told him I doubted he would live long enough to see his grandkids as teenagers. Walking up the slightest incline had him huffing and puffing. He ate so much pork I imagined his cholesterol was very high, often phrased as thru-the-roof. Truckers love coffee, and sugar had eaten away his front teeth; I avoided these foods to stay healthy. 30 years later, he is still working and has just slowed to a regular eight-hour job. His strong constitution helped, but there must be more to life than I understand. Rae is a good person with little desire to read books or figure life out as I do. He chooses to do only what he wants, and with his simple philosophy of Don't Worry, be Happy, his heart keeps beating happily. During our last Christmas together, he surprised me with a stainless steel wok I still use. It felt good that our time together figuring out life did have an effect on him.



I feel the years of loving Rae and Richard have created good karma. I feel gratitude for the many lessons, some I would have preferred not to learn, but since I am connected to the All That Is, I accept the challenges when they present themselves and heed the ‘choiceless choice.’” Being a purist has contributed to staying connected to my angel’s guidance. I don’t use drugs of any kind, including over-the-counter painkillers. I seldom eat at fast food outlets, and I don’t drink alcohol, coffee, black tea or even soda pop as these substances create feelings of being out-of-balance. Coffee and chocolate stimulate the adrenals as do certain herbs like ginseng, and if your energy circuits are already low. . . it is like kicking a tired horse up a hill; it will collapse when there is no chi. Then the doctors label you with a dis-ease as no energy is left in your circuits.

I figure body sensations take less angel energy than sending words through the ethers, which is why I often get goosebumps, or my hair stands on end when a Truth is spoken. We all have angels, and many of us have more than one. The universe cannot say ‘no’ to a heartfelt request, so be careful what you ask for, and have patience! The universe has a sense of humour, so your gift may not come in the form you expected. Listening to inner guidance or your heart is the first step and essential for living life to the fullest. People pay lots of money to watch sports players in action, living on the edge of intuition and logic. You, too, must learn the rules and ‘feel’ where you need to be at any moment during the game of life. Being in the right location at the right time often makes us feel connected to the divine and creates luck, a word used by those who have not taken the time to know themselves.

If you start attuning to angels, train yourself as you would train a puppy, with love and doing things repeatedly. Have you heard that Dog is God spelt backwards? No other animal is so loving. A dog forgives even if we forget to feed it. We connect to pets to teach ourselves about compassion; many animals die for that exact purpose. If animals had not died when my parents moved to the wilderness, we would not have survived. It is sad knowing factory-farmed animals are confined with no space to run as farms slowly become obsolete. Sometimes I wonder if animals agree to be eaten to give us support to survive until ‘we’ no longer need them. Albert Einstein said, “Nothing will benefit human health and increase the chances for survival on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.” Mahatma Gandhi added, “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” K.D. Lang is quoted as saying, “We

all love animals. Why do we call some ‘pets’ and others ‘dinner?’ And one last example if you still need convincing “People eat meat and think they will become strong as an ox, forgetting the ox eats grass.” This reminds me of the stories about Ann Wigmore developing wheatgrass as a cancer cure, but those thoughts are for another time.

Another suggestion for growing ourselves is to be curious about everything. If I hadn’t been curious and let Keith teach me how to use his computer in 1988, I would not have had the tools to go forward with my angel’s plan. They were expensive, nothing more than a fad, a toy my kids played on. Since I had little money or desire, buying one that had a publishing program and included training still feels like a miracle and set me up so I could do a specific job, like publishing for the next 25 years and now this book.

Figuring out magazine routes happened slowly enough, allowing my ‘Getting Lost’ tendencies to surface. Left and right still don’t make sense, so when I enter a mall, I mentally note the store I just passed so I know how to get out. Richard would laugh when I told him about the various getting-lost moments and remind me that I always found my way home, even in the wild woods. What really infuriates me is when he insinuates that we are now lost because ‘I could not follow directions.’ When that happens, I want to get out of the car, lie on the road, and have a truck run me over. He’ll be devastated, I reason, but at least he won’t have to deal with my stupidity! On a more serious note, I wonder why I experience these intense feelings when that happens. How many lifetimes ago did I kill myself or my tribe by becoming lost? I will guess the two young men who created a video game about The Titanic died on it. Why else would they spend five years creating an exact replica? Perhaps James Cameron died as well. He has spent years exploring the sinking of The Titanic. His recent documentary titled The Six explains why the Chinese survivors were never discussed due to the racist and anti-immigrant policies of the times, which still reverberate through our societies. [www.thesixdocumentary.com](http://www.thesixdocumentary.com). As a side note, I liked his Avatar series and how he uses a Mother Tree to connect with our ancestors. I enjoyed his imaginative natural homes and environments, as treacherous as they seem to people who consider themselves civilized. His idealism that nature is divine holds a special place in my heart.

Many books say the moment of death leaves a deep impression that is played

forward, creating change for the next life. When a psychic told me I worked as a nurse alongside Richard, a surgeon during The American Civil War patching up soldiers, I cried; it resonated so deeply. We have been pacifists for many lifetimes. Hypnotherapy or being regressed can help people connect to their past lives. Death is a time of going home, a time to reexamine our choices for self-actualization. Cancer and other diseases can be shortcuts home for once the body knows you are not doing what you promised, no longer fulfilling the agreement you made with your angels or Higher Self before you incarnated, certain cells proliferate, but they are always present in our bodies, just waiting for you to make a choice! Perhaps you even have tasks to do in other dimensions.

If you don't believe in past lives, ask yourself, especially allowing children, why do three-year-olds want to play with dinosaurs and a little later with swords? Where does this impulse come from? Why people are fascinated with certain events will depend on what happened to them in a past life. Same as girls wanting to play with dolls; it's instinctive. I remember Laurel telling me she caught her son making a sword and was cautious never to have these war toys around. Nehemiah, Paul's son, is a Blacksmith/Armorer recreating what people wore in Medieval times. What creates his fascination?

I've always liked this quote by Alice Miller, who says: "The truth of our childhood is stored in our body, and although we can repress it, we can never alter it. Our intellect can be deceived, our feelings manipulated, our perceptions confused, and our bodies tricked with medication. But someday, the body will present its bill, for it is incorruptible as a child who, still whole in spirit, will accept no compromise or excuses, and it will not stop tormenting us until we stop evading the truth."

Alice Miller, the Polish-Swiss psychologist, psychoanalyst and philosopher of Jewish origin, not the American novelist, explains how pain is passed through generations of children if they are not raised in a way that makes them feel empowered. She explains that felt pain, which happens before the age of speech, needs to be acted out as there are no words to describe it. Her extensive research included Hitler's upbringing, explaining his inability to feel another's pain, and the world felt this reverberation. According to astrology, people like the Queen or Hitler have birth charts that amplify or represent a section of the population. In Star Wars,

the son of this evil war machine was magnetically attracted to the force that created him. As they say, an apple never falls far from the tree, and as we mature and hit the ground, we must learn to say ‘ouch’ honestly. Asking for help is getting easier, as the stigma of being harmed or broken is the ‘new norm.’

An example of understanding this unseen energy happened during a trip to Vancouver. I was introduced to Master Pang, who did Chinese Energy Healing and did not speak English, so his wife translated. I watched him swirl his hands around my son’s face for half an hour and sensed he was complete when he let out a low-sounding sigh. I asked him, “How do I know you did anything to help him?” He said, “Hold your hand in the air,” which I did; I am about 12 feet from him. My hand was so hot within three minutes that I thought he had burned a hole through it. I said, “Fair enough and bowed goodbye.” It took a while for my son’s condition to improve, but I am grateful I took advantage of this learning opportunity and cleared this mistake out of his energetic system.

Having Richard as a spouse has given me time to get comfortable speaking my truth, and often louder than he prefers. Regular practice helps refine my feelings as I delve deeper into the original installation, which has nothing to do with him, similar to when Gerry forgot to turn the stove on. Richard likes to go slow, repeating instructions, making him a good teacher and the opposite of Speedy Gonzales, whom I call myself. If I had chosen to leave because I felt he was controlling, then I would attract another, as pain wants to be released so healing can happen for both people. That is what Alice Miller proved when she visited hardened criminals who told stories of how they acted, hoping to get caught and have the pain stop tormenting their souls. When Richard and I tangled in our different styles of doing, I threatened to leave. Once I learned that his greatest fear was to die alone, I stopped saying that and went deeper into the pain I felt. As a child, I could not escape my parents or the circumstances that created my pain. Now when feelings rise because he is pushing his point of view on me or others, I still react but with more understanding of this scenario. After the anger rises, I usually cry, frustrated because I can’t understand ‘why.’ These days it feels like it is more than ‘just my stuff.’ Perhaps it is for the collective good as we accept another version of Truth. Since we are so interconnected, practice and patience are needed if our pain body gets triggered. Understanding why we attract certain people into our lives can be enlightening. Energy is real, natural and authentic; I wish we could all see it.

Stanislav Grof's holotropic breathwork was a major discovery that suggested a radical revisioning of the materialistic paradigm in Western science, suggesting our soul consciousness will return to the larger cosmos in which we are an inseparable part if we practice deep breathing with awareness. His career spanned seven decades, and his fundamental discovery included the perinatal and transpersonal layers of the unconscious. He believed that breathwork would support humanity to overcome the destructive and self-destructive tendencies being acted out in the social and ecological worlds and help us become a more peaceful and sustainable species.

Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurvedic teachings explain how the seven main circuits get blocked due to trauma or ignorance, like poor eating or breathing habits. Learning about them excites my soul; thus, I am willing to spend time and money educating myself. Barbara Brennan, a NASA scientist, wrote a book called *Hands of Light* with many pictures showing one person's energy grabbing another's. She started a school in 1982, and now thousands are trained to help others release stagnant chi. Chris Griscom was another author who created The Light Institute in New Mexico and taught Dane Purschke, a practitioner in Penticton whom I had a few sessions with. Articles about his journey away from the church to find healing can be read online. The older *Issues Magazine* has been scanned and posted on my new website, so you may read the healing journeys shared with my readers when this trend was just starting.

About 300 years ago, our solar system entered another 2500-year cycle called the Aquarian Era, governed by Uranus, a planet known to create the unexpected and rules lightning. Each generation has outer planets in common, and they will reflect new lessons for humankind. Oken of Nylon.com writes "Since we will no longer be burdened by the servitude, martyrdom and victimhood of the Piscean era, humanity as a whole is the messiah...each individual can therefore find this light within and bring it forth to illuminate others until the entire race of man becomes enlightened." Since our galaxy is now in a section of the universe that wants freedom and is willing to share resources, it will be up to us to evolve past the traumas we have collectively created. The ancients also believed that eclipses were powerful and would force us to investigate our beliefs and get more comfortable with the opposing forces of life, as indicated by our South and North Nodes. We are

here to learn to cross through our birth chart, letting go of our south node traits in favour of the opposite or finding neutral ground if we have partners demonstrating the opposite trait. Planets give us nudges or a boot, depending on their placement in our chart. These ongoing transits force us to progress through the squares and trines that form as our Earth swirls through the heavens.

Having Sun and Mercury in Pisces in the 5th house did not make it easy to put words to my feelings in those early years, so I am thankful my angel voice spoke for me. An example of this Piscean Innocence is: I am offered a cup of coffee at age 22. I said no, and she asked why. “Coffee makes one shrink.” She laughed and said, “When did you learn that?” “My parents told me that as a child.” One of my many astrologers mentioned this trait because Neptune rules Pisces and is considered the fog machine of the universe. Understanding this Piscean trait has helped me separate Tradition from Truth. Piscean people need grounding and thus are attracted to the earthly types like Taurus, but when I am around them, it feels like they want to clip my wings, and therefore, I often resist their advice. At the same time, every insight has helped me grasp a deeper meaning of life and love.

Western astrologers are now studying more ancient techniques called Hellenistic, a time when the Romans gleaned profound insights into the archetypal patterns, closer to the Vedic readings that Phyllis Chubb offered. Vedic Astrology is very complex; that lineage goes back thousands of years. In countries like India and Tibet, parents often choose a partner for their child, depending on their birth charts. Have you watched any movies about the Dalai Lama or read his autobiography? I am guessing China invaded Tibet so that we, the Western World, could see/hear/touch this amazing soul . . . proof that compassion can exist in politics if the people behind their leaders want it. The Buddhist lamas knew the 14 incarnations had been born, so they searched the Himalayan mountains till they found him at age two. By age six, he was taken from his parent’s farm by age six to start his monastic education. His curriculum consisted of five major and five minor subjects. The major subjects included logic, fine arts, Sanskrit and medicine, but the greatest emphasis was given to Buddhist philosophy, which was further divided into further five categories: the perfection of wisdom; the philosophy of the Middle Way; monastic discipline; metaphysics; logic and epistemology, or the theory of knowledge concerning our mind’s reality and knowing how we know things. The five minor subjects included poetry, drama, astrology, composition and synonyms.

I would like to see some of that curriculum included in our Western World culture. I feel that our planet has been damaged due to the Rothschild's and Rockefeller's attitudes which did not include spiritual values or that Gaia is a living intelligence. We are told that the earth is being exploited in the name of progress and for our own good. We have all benefited from selling these natural resources in many ways, but as Greta Thunberg pointed out, we have reached the tipping point. This imbalance is being reflected back via the abrupt weather changes. With so many HAARPs (High-frequency Active Auroral Research Programs) stationed worldwide, we should feel lucky if we get rain and not too much. Humans are playing God with the weather; these scientists may wipe out more than one country with experimentation. The excessive use of Yang has damaged the environment, and now Yin, or the more intuitive side of our nature, will be needed to guide the planet forward as more women assume their role in steering us to our destiny.

We are intelligent souls, even if the world seems to be spinning in the opposite direction of what seems sane or reasonable. Knowing that our soul/body system communicates with our intuitive system will help us thrive if we stay super honest with ourselves and do not play the games our parents embedded in us, like worrying. What a waste of energy that has never benefited anyone. I refused to play that game when my boys were teens. When they borrowed the family car, I did not stay up late, like my mother; instead, I said to God, "Give me a signal if something is wrong, like a stab in my heart that wakes me up." Rae and I showed our sons by example how to be responsible; why would we NOT trust them now? When they started high school, I bought them an alarm clock and said, "If you don't wish to be educated, you don't get to live at home for free." Gordon wanted to learn carpentry and mechanics and play a sport while in grade 12, so he divided up his subjects; thus, it took him two years to graduate.

I believe loving ourselves is our only 'real' job. The 'work or play' we create are ways to express this love. Passion makes energy come alive and connects us to our ancestors and why we are alive. When certain behaviours that are NOT benefiting society are repeated in our lineage, someone in the family needs to stop the repeating pattern, whatever it may be. Family Constellations was developed in Germany by Bert Hellinger in 1978 and is offered worldwide to help those wanting to know the basics of life principles that he has termed Orders of Love. With this healing modality, you don't have to confront family members; you can energetically

release the trauma in various ways.

After healing your spirit and using your breath to create aliveness, the next most important substance is drinkable water with aliveness in it. I heard this theory many times, but since I seldom felt thirsty, why would I? I was proud that I could go for long periods without needing it. Then my angels provided several garden volunteers who took regular water breaks so I could learn by example. They would remind me to bring my water bottle, and I would comply, only to leave it near the gate, which did not seem easily accessible. I would rather keep working than take two minutes to go get it. One day my Chinese doctor did a pulse check and said, "You are dehydrated, and your kidneys are growing weak." He explained I was yin-deficient due to a strong wood constitution (Mars, in the first house, likes to get things done). My inner organs had developed 'a swamp-like condition' due to internal dampness (Scorpio is my ascendant, another water sign). After that session, I forced myself to drink several quarts of water when I woke, then waited half an hour before eating. An hour or two later, I would sip more water until I sensed a bit of hunger, then drink eight more ounces and wait half an hour before eating. Drinking lots of liquid with a meal can dilute digestive enzymes, and if undigested food goes into the intestines, it can produce gas. After dinner, I drink less; otherwise, I have to go pee more than once at night. It took most of a year to balance my system and dry up some of the dampness, but now I feel thirsty and sometimes hungry.

Since I was raised in a family of hungry boys who devoured food on the table within minutes, I had to learn to slow down, taste each bite, and make sure it was liquid before swallowing. I learned about food combining and not eating too much at once. If food gets pushed into our colon before breaking down in the stomach, the fermentation releases gas or tiny bubbles, like fine wine, as a by-product. When I get lots of gas, I examine my choices that day and promise not to repeat that experience. I look at my upper eyelids to see if they are swollen, a sure sign my small intestines are overwhelmed. I look at my tongue in the morning to see if the white coating floats. Ama or undigested food leaves a thick coating that feels slimy. TCM practitioners look at our tongue to see our current state of health: white or dark purple is a lack of circulation, and red is too much heat rising upwards. I seldom eat anything too cold or in excess, but ice cream is the exception. Memories of good times in my childhood. That sweet oily taste is so irresistible but irritable to my body. When I lived alone, I never kept ice cream or chocolate in the house, but Richard keeps them stocked in case he gets a craving, and I get to develop even



greater willpower.

While living in Terrace, I watched our neighbour eat ice cream by the gallon and take drugs prescribed by the so-called medical experts as his spine slowly folded in half because of osteoporosis. This led me to want to understand what creates or collapses a structure. I have learned that yin is stillness and yang is movement. The Moon is yin, and the Sun is yang. The front of our bodies is yang, and our back is yin. These polar opposites maintain our dualist planet. Every part of our body, the muscles in our face, the lines in our hands, and the shape of our body is created by the expansion or contraction of yang or yin. Energy is created first in our emotional field and expands to the degree we give it attention. Our daily thoughts, interactions with neighbours and family and the larger community we choose to be part of reflect our deeper intentions and thus shape our appearance after factoring in our DNA and astrological chart.

Chinese medicine does not label a person or prescribe remedies using the one size fits all Western logic. Oriental medicine checks the four pulses, then looks at our tongue and says, “You are out of balance.” They suggest ways to create balance using herbs, needles, oil massages, and cupping and may suggest some ‘down’ time. When a Chinese doctor first took my wrist pulses long ago, he told me, “Stop working so hard.” To which I replied, “I have never worked a day in my life.” To which he countered, “Then you play too hard.” The light bulb did go on, but . . . I enjoy being busy, and yes, I often bite off more than I can chew mentally, which can weaken my digestive tract, but since I am the determined type, I get a certain sense of satisfaction from all my ‘doings.’ Now in my early seventies, I am learning to pace myself and watch for signs of fatigue that I would have ignored. Having sessions with a TCM practitioner allows me to preserve what is left of my vitality so I can have ‘grace’ at the end of my life. What a great word it means: a simple refinement of divine favour.

Ever hear about Celtic Salt? This salt comes from the ocean and has trace minerals that match the umbilical fluid that we floated in until birth, proving the primordial connection of human beings to the ocean. Salt is considered a necessary element in our diet, but once the salt is refined and all the trace minerals are removed, it is just sodium. Even worse are the factory-produced salts containing additives to keep it free flowing and other by-products detrimental to our health. Watch a video on how salt gets to your table, then choose.

Back in the day, before antibiotics, everyone had a bottle of iodine for cuts. Iodine can be found in seaweed and keeps our thyroid gland healthy. I often paint a three-inch patch on my inner thigh to see how long it takes for my body to absorb it. If my body is low, it gets absorbed within hours. I also put a few drops in water and swish them around my mouth when I leave a place where people are sick, as this disinfects my throat. I like to keep a spray bottle of colloidal silver water in my vehicle for that purpose. Did you know silver was used to sanitize hospitals until cheaper chemicals were invented?

I assume you have heard that calcium can't be utilized if we don't get enough Vitamin D in the winter. We also need betaine HCL or stomach acid to digest protein, which my body does not produce much. When my kids were little, I gave them cod liver oil as recommended by the doctor, but he never told me to take it, and I was the one producing these skeletons! Maybe that was why I was so desperate to find sunshine. Our bodies are so delicately balanced; I find it amazing that we live at all. I recently read a book by a surgeon who lived with lepers so he could practice his surgical skills. He learned that once he put an afflicted person on vitamins and gave them hope, the leprosy stopped consuming them. Did you know tuberculosis and other diseases disappear when people get enough vitamins or minerals in their diet? Supplements seem to be replacing food as folks no longer have the time or land to grow food. Here in BC, most towns have a farmer's market. Supporting local food production and buying homemade soaps, hand creams, and tinctures will help these health-minded people thrive and make our world less polluted.

Smells are like honesty in a bottle and affect our olfactory nerves. Once these nerves disintegrate, like plastic left out in the sun, our brain cannot send messages via the nose into the brain so quickly. Messages we take for granted, like move my foot, will be slow to respond. Avoiding strong chemical smells is a must, but even soaps, disinfectants, and shampoos extract an inevitable toll because of constant exposure. Not being able to smell is the beginning of Parkinson's.

When I was a kid, Grandma took me to 'her' doctor when I had hay fever. He put a tube in my nose and pumped warm salt water. Mucus and water swirled into one of those dentists' sinks; when the water ran clear, they switched the tube to the

other nostril, which never took as long. I could breathe so much better for weeks. Why was this practice discontinued? You can buy a neti pot at the local drug store because yoga students order them from India, but this is a slow version of what could help people. Grandma also put one flax seed in my eye if I came home from the swimming pool with an infection, often called pinkeye. “She would pull up the eyelid, pop it under and tell me to keep my eye closed for one minute.” In the morning, the swollen seed just slipped out. This was much quicker acting than my girlfriend’s medication and didn’t cost anything. I don’t swim anymore, but I still use the flax trick when my eyes feel irritated. Ground flax seeds are a superfood that can be sprinkled into almost anything. The oil in the flax seeds benefits our brains and cleanses the colon as the fibre exits our body. Grind whole seeds in a coffee grinder every few weeks, but not in too great a quantity, as once the wheat germ is split, it goes rancid. Since flax is cheap to buy we seldom hear about this super food. Sadly, many tried and true remedies from our grandparents’ era are becoming less known. I find it annoying that companies can remove the germ and bran in flour, bleach it and sell it back to the people as Wonder Bread! When will these falsehoods stop? When people no longer support them! There are many educational websites, do research and hang around people with sensible and healthy habits; their knowledge may rub off.

The first time I met Paul Pitchford, the author of *Healing with Whole Foods*, was at a retreat in the States. I had just listened to another presenter talk about our sugar addiction. Since I was the volunteer cook, I made a cake as it was someone’s birthday, and now I wondered if anyone would touch it after listening to the talk. It was gobbled up quickly nonetheless, so I asked a man who was having seconds if he had heard the earlier talk. “Yep, and that made the cake all the more desirable.” Reminders of our childhood run deep in our psyche.

It is best to find sweetness in life that does not come from concentrated sugars, especially if they are from GMO corn, which disrupts the gut biome. Carrots, squash, rice, dairy and wheat products taste sweet. I learned that sweet taste encourages young bodies to grow tall. As adults, we must quiet our brain cravings and ask what we really want in that moment. Healthy foods reflect our desire to have vitality in our bodies. It is good to find a balance between sweet and salty, for yin/yang do influence each other. Seems to me that people who wish to indulge in chocolate, coffee or sugar should pay fair-trade prices for products that create sustainability in Third World countries.

Diet and Nutrition was another book I read while raising kids. Did you know that kids do not need bitter foods like spinach? It helped me to understand why Gordon loved grapefruits, Dale hated mushrooms, and Keith loved his baked beans and ate an apple a day. Written by Dr. Rudolph Ballentine, an expert on food combining and Ayurvedic constitutions delves deeply into the nutritional aspects of food. His latest book, Radical Healing, almost fell off the shelf when I distributed magazines in 2000. It was a publisher's clearance item, selling for \$5. After reading it, I wished I had bought several copies to give away as it explains why we are unwell. Dr. Ballentine served as president of the Himalayan Institute for 12 years, a non-profit international organization dedicated to serving humanity through educational, spiritual and humanitarian programs. Easy to find online if interested. <https://Himalayaninstitute.org>

I have tried many healing modalities, including Bach Flower Remedies, a gentle way to shift emotional states developed in Britain in the 1930s. Every region of the world now offers a similar product. Flowers, picked at prime, float in a crystal bowl filled with water and are left in the moonlight to collect the vibrational energy left in the dew. Alcohol preserves the devic forces of the mother tincture that is then put into smaller containers that we take home to use. Rescue Remedy are similar drops put under our tongue to take the 'shock' out of the body when we hurt ourselves. Homeopathy is another modality I have used many times by various practitioners. If you don't hit the nail on the head, no harm is done using these energetic medicines; you just try another remedy. Earlier in this book, I included an example of how this therapy worked when I had uterine issues following Dale's birth. Another topic is Urine Therapy practiced for millennia all over the world. Coen Van Der Kroon writes, "Drinking urine is certainly not strange; it is the foundation of our existence. Nature possesses an infallible capacity for recycling, of which urine therapy is remarkable." Think about it, we all spend nine months in the womb floating in amniotic fluid.

Another way to understand ourselves is via the Enneagram, a modern synthesis of many wisdom traditions by Oscar Ichazo of Peru that shows the relationship between Essence, Personality, and Ego. He teaches that every person is born perfect, fearless, and in loving unity with the entire cosmos; there is no conflict between head, heart, and stomach. As our egos develop, we split into nine different

personality types that influence our decisions: thinking, feeling or doing. Anger, fear or shame can be used as a control. Into that theory, Ichazo builds fall-back positions in times of stress. I am a 7, the Enthusiast. I am spontaneous, versatile and easily distracted. I can feel scattered if I don't stay focused. My lesson in this life is not to bite off more than I can chew and to take time to digest my experiences. There are many YouTube videos and books on the Enneagram if you have the time to explore.

Byron Katie developed a program called, The Work. She offers insights as to why we feel frustrated. They have many free videos so you can get a sense of the deep work needed to change our attitudes. She says, "Clinging to expectations is a sure way to feel disappointed." The minute we blame anyone else for our problems, we become the victim, giving our life force to our conquerors and relinquishing our ability to be the change we want to see in the world. The world will evolve as we each teach what we learn.

I always wear Colour Therapy and Crystal Therapy, which enhance one's thinking, for better or worse. While in Vancouver selling ads, I knocked on an apartment door that overlooked the bay to chat with a woman from Summerland who sold coloured essences from England. When I walked in, the vibe was so intense I got a headache. I looked around there were at least 20 large amethyst geodes and many quartz spheres in assorted sizes. The lady showed me her hands; every finger had been cut at the knuckle as she was afflicted with a rare disorder called Clenched Fist Syndrome. They operated on her as a child, making her condition painfully worse. She trained as a schoolteacher, but it wasn't until she started working with the colour and crystal energies that she felt alive, with her hands becoming usable. Now she teaches workshops worldwide to stabilize regions, including the bay where she lived. As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, I studied graphology which is about noticing and interpreting the art of handwriting. Loopy writing shows a person who likes to go around in circles. Rigidness creates tightness in the hand as well as the person. Flamboyant flourishes are just that, an extension of needing to show off. A long-extended tail denotes a person who loves to reach out and be helpful, but if it swings too far upward, the person might tend to get lost in an imaginary world. Small writing shows the power of concentration.

Writing shows off our personalities, similar to a messy room reflecting our comfort zone. It reflects a juggling of the many aspects of ourselves, which looks

like an EEG or lie-detector graph. In graphology, we interpret handwriting using lower, middle and upper zones. The lower zone represents the unconscious or physical needs, the middle zone reflects our everyday choices of how we use time, and the upper zone is a clue to our intellect or imagination, as shown in our t's crosses or i dots. We also divided the page from right to left. The left side of the page or the left side of each letter represents the past, the middle zone is the now and the future is shown to the right of the page or the right side of a letter.

As the hand moves the pen, we gain deeper insights into how the writer wishes to be seen. Does the writing look like a big wind blowing, or do the words dance on the page? This happens because the person feels determined to be heard, just like the wind gets our attention or if the letters dance on the page, there is rhythm in the soul. The writing of primary school teachers often has an easy-to-read look, whereas doctors could care less whether people understand them and are notorious for an illegible script. This happens because their brain thinks faster than their hand can write. I like to hold the page at arm's length and look at it as an art critic; what is the overall impression or expression of the artist? Then I stare at the page, noticing the finer details, especially repeat themes in more than one letter.

Signatures and the letters that make up your name show different lessons we will learn in life. The vowels represent communication skills; H, J and K are family letters. The capital 'I' represents the ego. Only in the English-speaking world do we have a single letter that carries so much power. There is an entire book dedicated just to that letter. The way you make your numbers show how you handle money and time. Have you ever taken time to notice what your writing really looks like? Do certain letters flow or feel awkward to you? Flowing letters represent our gifts, and the awkward ones denote traits we have yet to master.

I was taught the traditional method of handwriting analysis, which takes hours and is good for specific applications. Still, most people just want a quickie confirmation, so I created a short-cut analysis using the letters you changed the most from the alphabet you were taught. These changes show me where your brain looks for recognition as you become more of yourself or different from the herd mentality. One of my first questions is, "Has your signature changed over the years?" The second is usually, "Your thoughts when it was originally created. People's answers always amaze me. A new signature is the quickest way to change your personality

and, thus, your destiny. If the change comes easily, you have already done the work. If the change is difficult, practice and more practice is needed; similar to developing a new habit, it takes time before we can coast on autopilot. For best results, work with a trained professional and keep noticing how you feel... our mind or mental field usually does not like change.

I make a mental note whenever I notice my writing changing. For example, in 1990 my letter 'a' looked like an upside-down heart as my hand connected the script over the top instead of coming up through the bottom. I love the letter 'f' as it flows between the three zones and represents organizational abilities. That is the one letter I take extra care to make clear, flowy and larger than the rest. Writing more slowly would help me to slow down, but do I do it?

Developing this theory took several years, but it is one of the easiest ways I know to 'read' a person. Since I believe it takes nine lifetimes to get good at anything, my understanding of handwriting is advanced because of my intuition which is shown as gaps between letters, just as light shines through the gaps between your fingers when you hold your hand to the light. How big the gap shows how much you can see into the unknown, as studied by people who read Palmistry, which is a science in itself. Even the whirls on your fingertips and palms have a story to tell.

I met Hermann Mueller from Australia when he gave Richard a free reading at a trade show in Alberta. When he came to Kelowna, I signed up for his class and enjoyed his common sense approach to analyzing our faces. His right-hand lady in Canada is Carole Friesen, who taught at the festivals and has created CDs explaining the work that I listen to when I travel. Hermann died in December 2017, but the transmission of psychosomatic intelligence is carried forth at [www.psychosomatictherapycollege.com.au](http://www.psychosomatictherapycollege.com.au) or [www.thelightworkersinstitute.com](http://www.thelightworkersinstitute.com)

When doing distribution, I often wandered the aisles of health food and metaphysical bookstores. If a book fell off the shelf, I figured my angels thought I should read it. Glimpses of the Devil was Scott Peck's final book, published in 2005, nine months before he died. Interestingly, it takes nine months in utero to physically birth oneself, and nine is the number of completion. Glimpses was the last of 15 books he published but the first he ever wrote. It was about observing and

participating in exorcism. He did not want to publish it as he was a psychiatrist, educated at Harvard, and just starting his practice. Talking about the devil wouldn't attract the right crowd of clients. In the past, I had read another book of his, *The Road Less Travelled* and skimmed a few related ones. I liked his insights, which stayed in the back of my mind. His books give readers reasons to pause as he articulates what evil is like and likens it to the four stages of growth. His basics, as I understood them, are: 1) people who are unwilling to accept a will greater than their own and lack empathy are beginning their journey, which is called Stage One. 2) People who have blind faith in authority figures and see the world as divided are at Stage Two. 3) People who question logic and faith while moving away from the doctrines of fundamentalism are beginning to become aware that there is a force beyond individualism, are at Stage 3. 4) People who enjoy the mystery and beauty of nature and our existence as living in paradise while developing an understanding of good and evil, while seeking not to inflict punishment have started Stage Four, the final journey of growing themselves.

When I first heard the statement 'We are Gods in the Making,' it sounded like blasphemy but over the years and with observation and contemplation, it is making sense, so I encourage others to do the same. We must accept responsibility for all we create, keeping in mind the Earth that sustains us while engaging with others and treating them as we would like to be treated. While gardening, I realized I am a God; I choose which plants live and which die. We all make choices; thus, we are Gods, creating from the divine within us, contributing to the transformation of our society.

As I typed and reread my story, it became clear how my parents transformed humanity with their struggle over something I thought was so simple: how to treat animals and kids. Dad preferred hunting dogs trained to obey and sleep in a kennel. Mom treated her pets as family who rode inside a car and slept in the house. When Clarence built the cage to transport Chinook, that should have been a clue to the struggle that would happen once married. Understanding these worn-out tapes of right and wrong takes time as they play in the background of our lives. The clues are subtle, and like the Star War movies, it takes many episodes to weave together the reasons for our existence. The best understanding I have accepted as Truth is a tug-of-war between yin and yang, good and evil, light and dark. According to the Tao, or the All That Is, none of these qualities can exist without the other. So why does humankind prefer good over evil or light over dark? Or do we?



Many years ago, I realized that some people had to be sick so that others could heal them. Some had to die a miserable life so others could live in paradise, and of course, there is everything in-between. We take turns, lifetime after lifetime, as determined by our genetics and the actual time of birth. There is no right or wrong, just the experience of feeling our feelings, so we can do something different next time.

Use your energy to be the change you wish to see.

Grow, love, and stay connected... our ancestors and angels want t

## My Next Project

For a few years, I have also been researching family members as Mom talked about her Mom and Grandma. She saved photos and newspaper clippings and wanted help to correlate them, but I was busy with kids; now I am retired with a pension, so I have allowed this idea to grow exponentially. Actually, it seems essential because if I don't do it — who will?

My great grandparents, Mary Coffin and Clarence Norman, married in Iowa in 1894. In 1901 they travelled North with a few siblings and two small children and settled near Red Deer, Alberta. \$500 bought 40 acres of thick brush with few roads. Brutal winters burst many a bubble, but those who survived became the hardy pioneers. Due to the pandemic of 1918, she educated herself as a nurse. Mary was also semi-trained as a school teacher when her daughter Zoe trained as a school teacher from 1916-17. Mary used these skills to get a job as a stewardess on the maiden voyage of the Distributor, a paddle-wheeler designed to bring supplies to the Arctic. At age 50, she had finished raising kids and became the first white woman in the North who was not a nun or the wife of a doctor or RCMP officer. In 1927 she met Vincent Kost, the grandfather who lived with me as a child. They were married, and together they built the first hotel and second trading post in Aklavik, giving competition to the Hudson Bay Company as documented in the 1925 court case that ensued.

After selling furs in Edmonton, she spent that money buying tons of food which she shipped to Fort McMurray by rail and onto a skow or flat-bottomed boat. From there, she travelled North with whoever wanted a ride, guiding her skow up the mighty McKenzie River to Aklavik, which in actuality is a downward drift to the Arctic Ocean, a 1,500-mile trip which took several weeks. In 1937 she did the trip twice in one season, beating freeze-up by a week, as written about in the Edmonton Sun, for she was the only one to ever attempt it. And she did it wearing a skirt. She always wore long skirts, as most women did back in the day.

On September 15, 1943, Mary died in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, Canada.

Mary's story inspired Tess to homestead and enjoy the freedom that hard work provides when one is born a Sagittarian or lover of adventure. One of my great, great, great aunts was Lucretia Coffin Mott, who dedicated her life to ending slavery. A powerful and inspiring orator whose parents sailed to North America in the 1700s to escape religious persecution in France. Quakers fought for the equality of all people with a strong sense of purpose and practicality. I am the last female in a long lineage of motivated women that push society forward as a service to humankind as we evolve toward a more spiritual identity. I believe our souls come from the dark void, similar to my mind's eye vision that I related earlier when I felt like a fish being whipped around by unseen energy. The best we can do is scream into the void and settle down to do our work, whatever that may be.

