

the



newsroom

aug 2015 issue 16

I have been thinking about the many journeys we take during the course of a lifetime. Sometimes we're not sure about the path we're on.....did we choose the right one? In the end it's always the right one because it brings us to where we are now and who we are now. And suddenly now is gone and we continue along the path or maybe choose a different one. Sometimes the path is rough. We stumble on a rock, walk through mud, take a difficult detour.....but we get through. Sometimes the path is benign, nothing special one way or another. Just a way to get to the next one. But, sometimes the path is extraordinary. Sunlight streams in between branches, hidden birds fill the air with their songs, gentle breezes stir the leaves, an unexpected glimpse of a deer...

Sometimes we have no idea what awaits. Sometimes a familiar path holds no surprises. Sometimes an often travelled path beckons with anticipation. I have a path that I have travelled often for thirteen years. I always anticipate the first moment I can hear the creek. Sometimes when I'm halfway down the hill, sometimes when I'm right beside it. I anticipate new surprises. Rabbits, deer, hawks, goldfinches, crows. Flowers in bloom that haven't been seen for a year. This year I saw a scarlet tanager for the first time. I saw two tiny blue butterflies, no larger than my fingernail, for the first time. It has been a path of peace, comfort and discovery. The same path, new every time.

We 'Weeds have travelled many paths together; sometimes once a year, sometimes weekly. We have shared where our individual paths have taken us. For some the path has led away from Milkweed. Some return, some do not. My experiences along the Milkweed Path have been extraordinary.

Maureen submitted some images for this issue. One of a boardwalk in a forested area caught my eye and imagination immediately. It was particularly meaningful to me on the day I received it. The image lingered in my mind all day and I told Maureen. Her reply was "I love the way the light filters through the trees and seems to point the way to some place particular and special."

continued..

Robin and I have shared the path of "The Newsroom" for several years. The path has come to its end, to continue elsewhere. Robin will travel the path alone for one last issue and then her path will continue elsewhere. It has truly been a pleasure to work with Robin. I will dearly miss meeting with Austin, Patricia and Robin in preparation for an upcoming issue. Mostly, I will miss writing to people who have shared so much with me along the Milkweed Path.

None of us know where our paths will lead but I know there will always be 'Weeds along mine. I hope your light points "the way to some place particular and special" and you savour the anticipation of new and beautiful discoveries that feed the creative spirit and soul.

Peace and love to you all.
Until our paths cross again.

Louise

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THE KRE-A-TIV U-TURN APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT CULTURAL HOTSPOT WEST PARTNERSHIP WITH TORONTO CULTURE Ina Puchala, Director

The May issue of The Newsroom reported that the KUT Apprenticeship Project was under way, and we can say now that it has been a huge success. The seven young artists have formed themselves into a lively, gifted, enthusiastic and creative team. You will be amazed to explore their blog: <http://kutproject.weebly.com>, where they introduce themselves and discuss in depth their experiences of the ECiD training. It has also been wonderful to see Amy, Ina, Nancy and Robin collaborate with such skill and resourcefulness while teaching these seven artists the principles and practices of the ECiD. The training sessions, which took place in the boardroom of the Etobicoke Civic Centre, were intense, but went smoothly. The testimonials that the Apprentices gave on the last day of the two weekend intensives were incredibly moving. They said that they now understand art, the creative process and themselves as artists on a much deeper level.

The trainees picked up the program so well and quickly that we were able to turn over to them facilitation of the ECiD for two classes of children at the Neilson Park Creative Centre. Their reflections on leading the ECiD program reveal the depth of their learning and acuteness of their understanding (see below).

The Apprentices applied their many gifts and talents to leading summer arts camps for children and youth at three Etobicoke sites during July. Amy was in charge of the program at Richview Library, Nancy at Arts Etobicoke Gallery, and Robin at Mimico Library, while Ina oversaw the whole project. The camps were fully subscribed with waiting lists, and the participants produced remarkable art in many media, individually and in groups. The final show at Richview library was a dramatic journey to discover the “Land of Opposites,” while at Arts Etobicoke, the group was inspired by the murals of Islington Village and did programs in the green space around Montgomery’s Inn. The program at Mimico Library is still under way. It is a tribute to the excellence of the camps that Milkweed has been invited to provide arts programming at these sites next season.

It is enormously gratifying to witness the ECiD idea being taken up by a third generation of young artists. Their responses prove that the program provides a dimension of art education that is missing from schools, colleges and universities. As Alana said, “It is through this powerful philosophy that ECiD has changed the way children, youth, and even adults look at art.”

Austin Clarkson

ECiD INTENSIVE TRAINING , May 23-24 and 30-31st.

The seven Emerging Artists (EAs) went through a 30-hour round of intensive training in the ECiD program over two weekends at the Etobicoke Civic Centre. Austin provided make-up sessions for both Lisa and Evan, who were unable to attend the Saturday training days. Denise Dickin, Senior Arts Consultant, Arts Services, City of Toronto dropped by to witness the goings on.

FEEDBACK from EAs during ECiD INTENSIVE TRAINING:

Excerpts from <http://kutproject.weebly.com/blog/category/ecid-training> where the seven emerging artists introduce themselves and reflect on their training.

On how to formulate questions:

Ksenia Vendrova: “One thing we were asked to focus on (and that which proved deceptively simple) is asking open-ended questions....Two important things to realize are that everyone in the group is in the position to add something to the discussion, and I don’t have to drive the conversation or discussion to a conclusion I like - it doesn’t have a right way to end....Conversations usually converge on some decision, or end abruptly when both parties realize they have nothing more to say. So leaving a conversation open is a very strange experience...it feels a bit like leaving earth and going out into open space. It almost feels like writing this blog... Another thing that’s hard about asking open-ended questions is that I have to listen to myself and be aware of what I’m saying and how I’m saying it. Mentally I’m checking in with myself - am I making a remark, asking a question or stating a fact? Also, when am I saying it...am I asking a question when further elucidation is needed? Am I refraining from asking a question, probing too deeply, when the artist is looking uncomfortable? Maybe now I should ask the artist to speak a bit about their work themselves?....Speaking openly, heart to heart is an art form and one that thankfully doing ECiD gave the KUT team a chance to explore.”

On the KUT team:

Khadija Aziz: During a “mini unofficial meeting.... where each of the Emerging Artists discussed everybody’s strengths and weaknesses, then assigned appropriate roles. I felt that displayed a strong group structure and communication asset that deems to be very valuable in long-term group projects.”

On the creative process:

Evan Tingle: “I stop myself from diving deeper into my imagination once I begin to not understand what is happening anymore. How will I ever find something truly new, when I constantly tell myself to stop at the same point in creativity? The more and more I allow my creativity to not be understood by myself, the more and more deep I can dig into what I am truly looking for creatively. All this time I was looking for my type of art outside of myself, what a waste of time that was.”

Claudia di Nucci: “I came to realize the phases of my creative process through the cycle of the T'ai Chi. There was a moment during my experience of the visioning exercise when I could not identify the image I wanted to express (de-integration phase). I developed a feeling of frustration, and later, anxiety. My ability to recognize and find comfort in these feelings inspired new ideas of how I could move forward (re-integration phase). While my ideas were never fully formed in this drawing, I was happy to see The Cycle realized in my 3rd picture.”

On the ECiD:

Alana Staszczyszyn: “It is through this powerful philosophy that ECiD has changed the way children, youth, and even adults look at art; it teaches them that there is no “wrong” in their imagination, that their art is neither better nor worse than another piece of art, but rather different. Finally, it teaches them to have confidence in their own ventures, to appreciate the ideas and projects of fellow peers, and that a “good” piece of artwork does not have to look like anything in particular or match any other sort of criteria.”

ECiD PRACTICE SESSIONS WITH CLASSES OF SCHOOL CHILDREN, June 16 and 17th

Following the intensive training the EAs were ready to lead a five-hr ECiD program for two classes from James Culnan Catholic School. Held at Neilson Park Creative Centre, Teacher Darlene Allen brought students from Grades 4, 5 and 6 over a two-day period. The EAs were divided into groups of 5 and assigned a Mentor (Dale, Nancy, Robin, Amy, Ina).

FEEDBACK from EAs to do with ECiD PRACTICE WITH SCHOOL

Some excerpts from <http://kutproject.weebly.com/blog/category/ecid-facilitation> where one can read further reflections on this segment of training

On sharing:

Alana : “The idea of sharing also becomes very apparent in these discussions. Of course, the purpose is for talking about the pictures made in the ECiD is to share – share the perceptions of others, while also sharing the expression of the self. Through this mutual exchange students become teachers, and teachers become students – there is an equal ground where learning is achieved through sharing. The mutual student-teacher relationship is profound, and mirrors the crossing-over of undiscovered territory between academia and art. What if the two were shared, like in the student-teacher relationship?”

On transformation:

Ksenia: “The difference between the two artworks - one from the morning and one from the afternoon shows the therapeutic element of ECiD. The trauma in the artwork resolved in the second one. It was difficult for me as a beginner ECiD facilitator to find the right words to respond to the trauma. However, understanding the transformation inherent in the creative process within the participant allowed me to continue working on and finding the responses that elicited the most meaningful discussion around this and other participant’s artwork.”

On leading a small group discussion:

Evan: “I was trying so hard to find intellectual meanings to the work, that I completely forgot why I myself love art! It was then I realized that I can only be the artist that I am and hope that the children that love art for the same reasons I do, will obtain the confidence they need simply from getting to know me. This changed my second try at the discussion, it became a chat with friends about art. All of the children were completely engaged, even some that at first were entirely disengaged before, did a complete 180, however; I believe that was because they saw the change in me. When you boil down all the training, the ECiD program is just a chance for artists to meet artists, skipping the generation gap to discover truly moving artwork.”

On the KUT project:

Alana: “There is so much value in the way that Kreativ-U-Turn is multifaceted; it is not only opening the doorway to artistic expression for children, but also teaching valuable concepts and skills to the young adult emerging artists. I’m certain that all of the emerging artists on this project have felt the profound effects of learning about the ECiD as well as how to facilitate it. This is the kind of experience that can be carried on by us throughout our next artistic ventures. Here we will learn how to facilitate artistic expression and develop identities as well as how to be both a student and a teacher: a skill that the current educational system certainly does not know how to teach.”

SUMMER LESSON PLANNING and VENUE ORIENTATION SESSION, June 18-19th

An orientation with staff at each of the three respective venues (Richview Library, Arts Etobicoke Gallery and Mimico Centennial Library) launches the day. EAs along with their assigned Mentors (Nancy, Amy, Robin) spend the remainder of the day developing and planning the summer arts program with consideration to age group, venue layout, particular features and equipment available.

SUMMER ARTS CAMP, held in July

EAs were formed into two teams for leading the arts camp at Richview Library and Arts Etobicoke. Both these sites offered a 5-day, 3hrs per day, program from Monday to Friday. All seven collaborated and led the Mimico activities which ran 5 consecutive Thursdays. Due to overlaps in scheduling for EAs and irregularities in participation by children and youth registered for the site, EAs had to deliver flexible daily programming.

Richview Library: July 6-10

Directed by Amy Capern and facilitated by KUT Emerging Artists Alana Staszczyszyn, Khadija Aziz, Evan Tingle, and Lisa Alves, this program is the very first full-week program that the KUT project has run. Participants (8-12yrs) were led through a week of engaging creative activities. The first two days focused on delivering the Exploring Creativity in Depth (ECiD) program. Using the drawings produced from the ECiD, participants were prompted to create stories, using their pictures and puppets. On the third day, participants turned their stories into one large collaborative story, which was then turned into a dramatic performance piece. The participants created the set and script for their story together. On Friday, a performance of the play for parents and guests concluded the program. Parents and participants alike were delighted with the program. Due to the program's huge success, Richview library has extended an invitation to offer programming during Christmas, March Break and summer 2016. Elton D'Costa the acting Senior Branch Head at Richview has recently been transferred to Albion Library and he is extending programming opportunities there.

Report from Amy, Richview Library, July 8:

"Great progress today. The kids are excited about what they are creating. It is chaotic but full of excitement and 20 imaginations bursting out into set design and play creation. The library is very happy with what we are creating and have said they could do this 4 times over and still fill every spot as parents are calling and coming in daily to ask about how their kids can be involved. We are also managing parents knocking on the door daily asking for their kids to join as it looks like so much fun. A challenge when working in a glass room. The EA's are getting great experience and handling challenging situations and behaviours with patience and kindness. Very proud to be working with them."

Arts Etobicoke: July 13-17th

Mentored by Nancy Newton, the KRE-A-TIV U-TURN (KUT) team at Arts Etobicoke offered its campers (8-12yrs) programming dedicated to the creative process and to expanding the imagination. Claudia, Tijana and Ksenia facilitated the program in the Gallery space of Arts Etobicoke and surrounding community of Islington Village.

The first two days of camp introduced campers to the Exploring Creativity in Depth™ program. Children created pastel drawings, witnessed a Show n' Tell by emerging artists and discussed their work while offering insight and inspiration for opening creative abilities. Campers were led on a Mural Tour and become acquainted with historic stories of the Islington area. They then focused on learning about themselves through several listening and sharing activities to create a self portrait.

On the final 2 days of camp, campers participated in a nature solo on Montgomery Inn grounds, where they were led through an outdoor sculpture making session. Using their sculptures, campers explored movement and theatre as they created a group story and performance. At the end of each day, campers contributed to a Visual Journal through images and words.

Report from Nancy, Arts Etobicoke, July 15:

Skylar our thirteen year old camper came early this morning as the EA's and I were sitting around the cedar circle. Immediately he remarked that we were having a ritual and asked me if he could take some cedar home. He knew about the benefits of cedar as his Mum is an herbalist. I think he has some aboriginal heritage? I gave it all to him and thought he would make tea for homeless people. This young person has quite a bit of wisdom for his age and has been an interesting addition to the group. Tomorrow we are doing the Nature and Imagination behind Montgomery's Inn, followed by sculpting clay on the picnic tables by the side door. Good chance we will be back at Montgomery's Inn on Friday.....weather permitting.

Mimico Centennial Library: July 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30th

(this site continues to develop on a weekly basis)

Mentored by Robin McPhail-Dempsey and facilitated by all seven EAs, the Arts Camp is offered to youth and children 10-15yrs. old. All 5 sessions are at capacity. The ECiD program is introduced during the first two days followed by a range of activities from visual arts, sound, storytelling and movement. The following three sessions explore the visual journal, mask-making, storytelling and performance. Each day culminates with a presentation of the day's activities to which parents/ guardians are invited

Report from Robin, Mimico Library, July 16:

I just wanted to send a note to say what a great job you all did today! You arrived at Mimico in that place of not knowing and together, you found your way through! The mask making was very successful, and if they hadn't needed to dry, I'm sure the campers could have kept going with the process for the whole session! Their level of engagement was on par with that of an ECiD and you were right there with them all the way. It was really great to witness! Thank you!

I'm looking forward to where these masks are going to take everyone and I'll bet they are too.



May Intensive Training, Etobicoke Civic Centre



**Richview Library,
Summer Arts Camp**



Arts Etobicoke, Summer Arts Camp



**Mimico Centennial Library,
Summer Arts Camp**



NEWS from 'WEEDS

ALEX BOVKIS

Meditation PRACTICE. And the rest...

Practice shows up as provocation – to my mind and to my heart – I swing like a pendulum from clarity, that is crystal, bright, filled with HOPE, to anxiety, foginess and RESISTANCE.

I feel broken by this resistance. But I go on, 'cause beneath me is a blanket and above me is a blanket, and both of them cuddle me and give me this message: TRUST. And so, one step, heavy, draggy, after the other – I walk on this path.

But then, out of nowhere, my inner pendulum swings, and I fly on the wings of a happy dragon, high up above the clouds, where my sight is as sharp as that of an eagle, and the sheer joy of living, being, breathing - are overwhelming. In these moments I reach out, talk to people, take care of business. I put out the image of my being as supreme joy. I actually feel it, but I also know about the pendulum. I don't share about that. I go home, and wait for it to swing the other way, alone.

Is this honest? Yeah, it is. I feel that it is, not because I choose to engage or not engage, according to my up or downswings, but that my choices come from an aware place. And that I have enough compassion towards myself to make these choices without guilt, or fear. When I am on the downswing – I am on the downswing – and there is no reason for me to be otherwise. Nor share it with anyone.

I am understanding acceptance in a new way lately. It is, in its own way, complete within itself. Acceptance of small, or baby steps. Acceptance of bad moods. Acceptance of knowing that Jay's (my business partner) sister was just diagnosed with ALS. And that my good friend just died of it. Acceptance that ALS is indeed a horrible disease, and that I will once more have to live as a witness to it.

As I was hanging my laundry outside, a gust of wind moved the wires and my fingers slid over an old wooden laundry clip, leaving a nasty long splinter right in my index finger. I could see its tip, sticking right out. It looked long, and went deep. As carefully as I could I pulled at the sticking-out part, - and it broke off. Aha, I thought.

I got a needle, burned its tip, sterilized it, and tried to get the deeper part of the splinter out. The blood prevented me from seeing clearly, and it was beginning to hurt more and more. I called Jay. I told him I was coming to his place, for him to help me. He tried, digging deeper with the needle, using tweezers, to no avail. We decided that it is best we leave it alone and LET IT FESTER, at which point, it will be easier to get it out.

Instead of festering – the skin healed over it, with the sliver of wood underneath.

continued..

Each time I feel the bump, each time I avoid using the finger in a usual way – I am reminded that underneath the perfectly healed skin, sits a little sliver. A little devil. A little part that can be scared, anxious, unjust. I take it as a reminder to be honest. It holds me accountable for my thoughts when I want to pass on blame for my own insecurity. Or an excuse for why I did not complete my work. Or, that I was just about to embellish my story to make it sound better than it is. It reminds me not to speak, when it is better not to speak. This, in itself, is a major awareness for me, as speech seems to be very liquid in my mouth, and spills out with no effort what-so-ever. I am also a good story teller. The lure to speak, to tell stories, to share teachings that move me, whether I am asked to do so or not – is a big one.

So, as I swing between excitement and resistance around practicing “just sitting”, as I look forward and also dread this part of my morning – the practice of awareness, honesty, non-harming and mindful speech remains with me all day, because my finger is with me all day. The gift of the splinter! – that leads to the gift of practice.

The energy of my joyfulness is changing. It is less excitable, I seek it less. I don't need anything in particular to happen to allow me to feel joyful.

Then, when I don't feel joyful, I recognize myself in that moment, with clarity and immediate acceptance. Clearly on a downswing, or clearly flat, or tired, or de-energized. I watch these moments without much engagement and minutes later – I am aware of the upswing, of the crystal clear sparkly feeling that rests at my feet like a magic carpet. I see myself from behind, from under, from inside. And, even though I do not aim to do this – I see others this same way: from behind, from inside, from under. I see what their words rest on, not what they are saying in words. I see the suffering that I and they create with our own thinking. I am able to let go of a lot of it, the moment I see it. But not everyone can. And so, instead of helping them – I see them. Just like that. I see them. And touch my sliver in my finger.

I accept my resistance around “just sitting”. I am not meditating yet, just sitting. I am willing to continue to do this, even as I need to bring myself back to it, every minute. And if I fail to stay upright, as it happened already, and fell forward on my face, thankfully, in bed, into the soft blankets and pillows, I stay in that position, aware of myself in that crystal clarity. And like a plant that is given water, my body begins to right itself back up into sitting, craving to hear my alarm indicating the end of the 30 minutes, and joyous to hear it while I am still sitting. The practice of this – whatever it is I am doing – supports me for the rest of the day. I did it! Dreading the next morning, and knowing that I will do it again. And then being washed over with this crystal clarity, with peace.

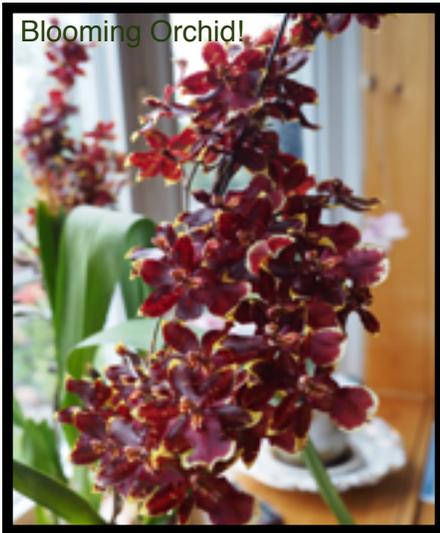
The rest does not matter. What is the rest? The rest..?

Alex Bovkis

LOUISE CORDINGLEY-ZYCH

For the past half year my path has been about creating and teaching which has led to a fresh one. I have two pieces in the annual Neilson Park Creative Centre juried exhibition, July 13 – August 7 (my husband, Stan, as well). We both were also invited to participate in “Collectively Inspired” (Part of “Cultural Hotspot”), June 29 – August 11, Etobicoke Civic Centre. I was accepted as a member in the Colour and Form Society and will participate in the New Members Exhibition, August 4 – 15, Beaux-Arts Gallery in Brampton. Stan and I will be showing in the Main Gallery at NPCC, October 20 – November 8. Please accept our invitation to join us at our opening reception on Sunday, October 25, from 1:00 – 3:00 PM.

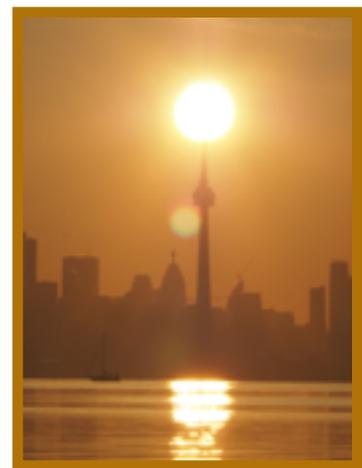
PATRICIA BYERS MCPHAIL



Patricia Byers McPhail ©2015

A year ago we were winding up the Exploring Creativity in Depth School Program. After 12 years of providing this wonderful experience to over 6000 school children, it was time to end the program gracefully - to go out on a high leaving folks wanting more. It was an emotional last day but it was also a super charged day, knowing we had touched so many young imaginations. I felt privileged and honoured to receive a beautiful orchid - the colours of which I had never seen before. The flowers lasted for well over a month and then gradually died off. I wondered then if I would see them again. To my absolute delight I found two large flower bracts in June with two more smaller ones coming out soon after. My orchid bloomed again! With a bit of luck hopefully it will bloom each year reminding me of that great program, the fabulous facilitators, the amazing students, the always helpful and very accommodating staff of Neilson Park Creative Centre, and the willing teachers who returned each year.

I still continue to go out each morning to walk and take pictures - it has become a bit of an addiction, but it also feels like a morning mediation - a chance to wake up in my own way to greet the dawn. Even days that are cloudy, sometimes with no visible sun, provide a chance to capture other images that might go unnoticed in the glare of the blazing sunlight. I now know the names of many dogs who are taking their masters for a walk; I have learned to stay out of the way of the cyclists and runners who are often too focused on their task to acknowledge me; I now carry plastic bags so that I can pick up the discarded beer cans and whisky bottles left littering the parks each night, and discard coffee cups and styrofoam containers for folks that are too unaware of the recycling bins a few steps away. But it is all worth it to greet each day - every one different from the last. What a privilege to see the rotation of the earth as the sun appears to move each day.



Patricia Byers McPhail ©2015

RECONCILIATION BEGINS WITH DANCING TOGETHER

Austin and Beverly Clarkson

We attended the 26th annual Powwow of the Barrie Native Friendship Centre, June 14-15. It was held for the first time at Springwater Provincial Park, just west of Barrie to celebrate the recent agreement between the Ontario Government and Beausoleil First Nation for the co-management of the Park. Mary Louise Meiers is on the board of the BNFC and was one of the main organizers of the event, which took the theme "Wiidookdaadiwin" (Working Together and Helping One Another). She was instrumental in inviting the local Ontario Francophone, Ontario Métis Nation and other First Nations Peoples to join in renewing the spirit of Wiidookdaadiwin.

"Powwow" is derived from the Anishnabe (Ojibway) for "Medicine Man is dreaming". For many First Nations people it is an obligation to powwow as a means of personal and communal renewal, and they travel each weekend to various communities around the province. At the centre of the Powwow ground is the arbor, which is decorated with cedar boughs. Under the arbor are the "drums" that provide the songs for the dances. Each drum consists of several male singers seated around a large drum. The MC calls on the drums in turn to perform the large repertoire of traditional songs that are called for throughout the many hours of dancing. They sing in falsetto with fierce intensity. Dancers and visitors are seated on the circumference of the dance ground and enter the circle as the MC announces various dances. Outside the dance ground a sacred fire burns throughout the weekend. It is surrounded by a circle of cedar and tended by the Firekeeper. After a sage cleansing, people enter the circle to make an offering of tobacco. Vendors of food, beverages and ice cream, clothing, musical instruments and jewelry are stationed on the periphery of the Powwow ground.

The Powwow begins at noon each day with the Grand Entry. Leaders of the community enter the circle from the East carrying banners that represent various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations. The veteran who carries the Eagle Staff leads the procession, and Mary carries the Pride flag for the first time in this Powwow. After the flags are presented and mounted on the arbor, an Elder gives the invocation, reciting prayers in both Ojibway and English. The audience stands respectfully throughout the Grand Entry.

Mary arranged for us to sit under the awning reserved for Elders, which is an honour. When "intertribal" dances are announced, we enter the circle and join the dancers. Many, including young boys and girls, wear fine regalia, while others are in ordinary clothes. Toddlers in diapers dance along with seniors. While youths and young men perform whirling grass dances and women in jingle dresses dance with virtuosity, older folk step more slowly. As do we, for Austin needs both sticks to dance. During dances for people in need, young girls carry a blanket around the circle to collect donations. A group of Métis musicians and dancers alternate with First Nations dancers.

continued...

Powwow is an expression of community to which each member contributes in her or his own way. The dance can be as simple or as complex as the individual wishes. They know when to make certain gestures that go with each kind of dance and when to stop on the final beat, but within those limits there is much freedom. What is common to all is the strength of their commitment to dance.

On Saturday evening we are invited to the Feast for the dancers and Elders (Mary had much to do with organizing the Feast). When the food is announced, we get up to stand in line, but are soon greeted by Edward, the Firekeeper, with two beautiful plates of food. He explains that Elders are always served first.

During the Feast we ask one of the senior dancers to tell us the story of his regalia. He says that he comes from a community on the North Shore (north of Manitoulin Island) and that he is named "Spirit Dancer". The dazzling dances of the young men and women, and the quieter dances of the adults and seniors are not for personal display, but for seeking healing for individuals and for the community as a whole. Which is why they dance with such seriousness and intensity. Dancers can be asked to dance for those who are in need of health and wellness.

On Sunday it poured during the early morning, so we did not attend the sunrise ceremony at 5 a.m. The rain gave way to a light drizzle, and the Powwow began again with a Grand Entry. During the afternoon, Herman Robinson, a teacher of Ojibway language and culture, led a workshop on the Ojibway Creation Story. He said that the full recitation takes four days, but that he would take only one hour. During a dance for giving thanks for water, the rain began to fall more heavily. Near the end came the Circle Dance. Dozens of people linked arms and snaked around the dance ground in one long colourful line. With Beverly holding onto one of Austin's arms and a young boy holding onto the other, he just managed to keep up with the vigorous beat. After the dance we shook hands with many of the dancers, and the lead dancer, with painted face and magnificent regalia, came over to say that we had made "a good effort."

The dance circle creates a time and space for calling up and sharing in the soul-substance of all being. This time-space is not an alternate reality to everyday existence, but seamlessly interflows with it. To powwow affirms an animate life-world that is not prior to the "Enlightened" differentiation of matter, mind and spirit, nor to Colonialized divisions of humankind by tribe and gene pool. Rather, powwow serves to contain and heal the splits that afflict individuals and communities. We experience powwow as a means of evolving the consciousness that we need to meet the challenges of the everyday life-world. Powwow teaches us that Reconciliation begins with dancing together.

MAUREEN SCOTT HARRIS

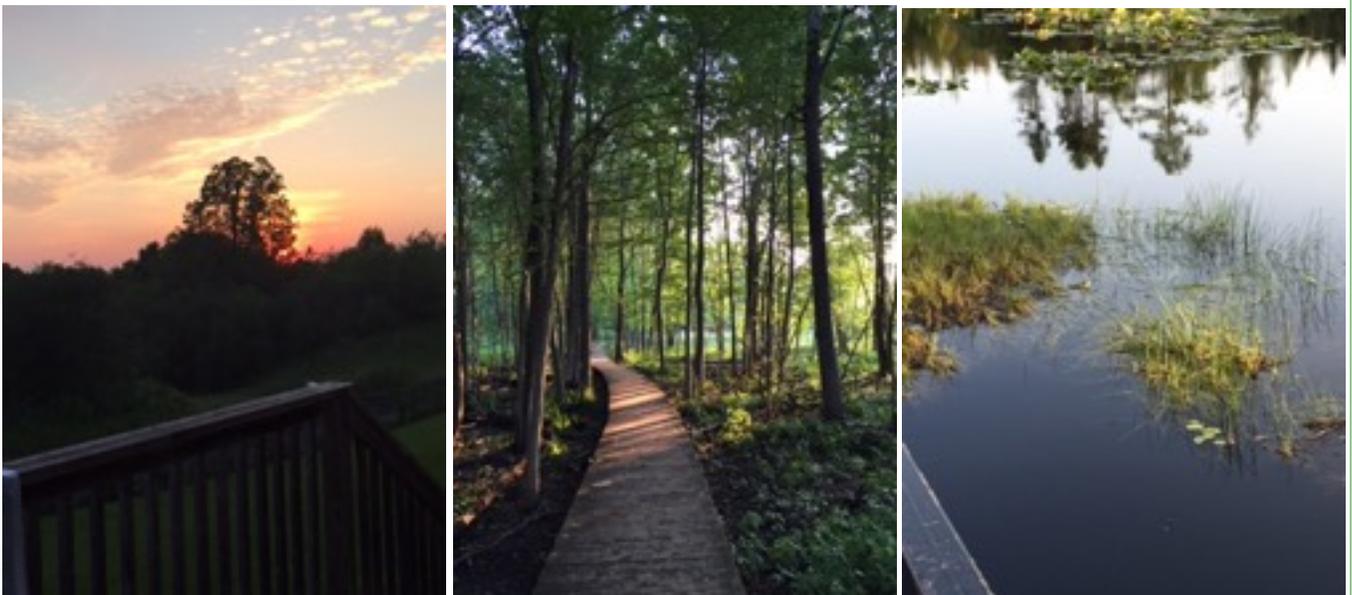
Hello to all you Milkweeds! Happy summer and happy Canada Day. I am currently happily housesitting in London, Ontario. The house (christened Bog Cottage), in a newish development, looks out on the Sifton Bog, an environmentally significant area, and I've seen rabbits, chipmunks, deer, and more birds than I can count. I'll be here until the last weekend in July, enjoying the solitude and the quiet. I'm going through several files of paper connected to my long-standing writing project about place, trying to see if there's a shape in what I've accumulated. I'm also walking a lot.

I'll be back in Toronto this coming weekend, to participate in the Pan Am Path Poetry Walk on Saturday—I sent a last-minute message out about it. I'm looking forward to the event, and to hanging around when it's over to hear and see some of Juliet Palmer's installations along the Don.

I've resurrected a project I started a few years ago now—a very small publishing venture called Fieldnotes Chapbooks. Early in the year I published a fine essay by Kelley Aitken (writer and visual artist) on the Penone tree sculpture that graced the Italian Gallery at the AGO for some while. Its departure has left that space feeling oddly empty in spite of the coffee bar now there, and Kelley's essay addresses its loss and well as the remarkable way it occupied that space. In October I will produce another chapbook, Stan Dragland's lecture on the writing of Joanne Page, a fine poet and feminist who died of cancer in February.

And speaking of chapbooks, paperplates will publish my small collection of poems, *Waters Remembered*, in the fall.

I hope the summer treats you all well, and look forward to the Wildfire unveiling in the fall.



It's Hard to Say Goodbye.....

Twenty years ago the folks who had struggled together, cried together, laughed together and celebrated together for a year together while exploring the Foundations of Creative Imagination course with Austin were gathering to move forward into the next stage of the journey. Now there were no deadlines, no essays, no presentations - just enjoying the creative process and each other. Over the next few years we met three to four times a year - always taking part in something 'creative', enjoying a pot luck meal, sharing stories of where our lives were taking us, laughing and sometimes crying together, but always feeling connected.

Time passed and we welcomed new people into our midst, swelling our numbers but always maintaining the creative process with love and laughter. Then our gatherings grew more sporadic as some folks moved further out of town; lives got busier; a couple of members passed away, leaving voids in our hearts but never forgotten. Our 20th Anniversary Reunion last November was a joyous celebration of love and remembrance. Our gatherings are now reduced to once a year when we share the Creative in our Wildfire project. We started The Newsroom a few years ago as a way to try and stay in touch with everyone's busy lives; to keep the connection with each other that started so many years before.

However, even that is now becoming stagnant - Robin and Louise have done an excellent job of putting the news together to keep us connected. But that is hard to do when there is no news to report. The Exploring Creativity in Depth program for the schools is at an end, partly due to lack of funding but also due to the changing atmosphere within the schools and threats of job actions and strikes. We no longer have collaborative art shows - again due in part to distance and the amount of work it takes to put it together. Even the Wildfire project suffers from lack of interest in the sharing process and there are many folks who no longer wish to participate in the creation process. Those that do seem to continue to enjoy being part of the Creative process, but I am sensing a time when that will become no longer of interest and it too will die.

Perhaps our 20th Reunion Party should have been a 'Farewell and Thanks for the Memories' celebration. I am already feeling disconnected from our fabulous and talented members - I don't know what you are doing, I don't know what is new in your lives, I don't know how your families are growing and what they are into now. I hesitate to write about what I am doing as I feel that nobody really cares.

I want to thank Robin and Louise for the many hours they put into making The Newsroom so attractive and readable. Although they received an honorarium from the Milkweed yearly dues, I know it did not reflect the hours they put into the task. However it has to be frustrating to send out notices for submissions, only to receive nothing back. To those folks who over the years submitted articles, I want to thank you too - it helped me maintain a visual image of you even when we were so far apart. I would love to read more.....

What is the future of The Milkweed Collective? I really don't know. All I do know is that I will miss all of you - you have been such an integral part of my life for so long. You are Family and it is hard to say goodbye.....

Patricia McPhail July 2015

MEMBER'S INFORMATION

THE MILKWEED NEWSROOM CONTRIBUTIONS

The deadline for contributions to the November issue of the Newsroom is
October 25, 2015

This last issue of The Newsroom will be slightly delayed to allow for the inclusion of images and reflections on the Wildfire Reveal. As always, though other submissions are welcome!

Please send them directly to Robin at
thefarmhouse@sympatico.ca.

WILDFIRE REVEAL 2015

The Wildfire Process is well underway! The creative journey, that began back in January, is now more than half-way through and we are rounding the bend to our reveal in the Fall.

The reveal date is set for
Sunday, October 18th, 2015.
Beverly and Austin have graciously offered to host us all once again.

Watch for details about time, etc., closer to the reveal date.



THE MILKWEED NEWSROOM

Quarterly Newsletter of the Milkweed Collective

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Associate Director: Patricia McPhail

Assistant Director: Ina Puchala

Treasurer: Amy Capern

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