

the



newsroom

nov 2014 issue 13

My Dad is almost eighty one years old. My Dad is a retired chartered accountant. He used to be very physically active. He reads and watches the news. He plays bridge. He does crossword puzzles (never sudoku, he's seen enough numbers).

About two years ago he was diagnosed with a lung condition that would require that he use oxygen for the rest of his life. Half a year later he broke his femur. He was hospitalized and in rehab for about six months in total in less than a year. He experienced a number of other severe physical and emotional challenges during this time. We didn't think we would be celebrating his eightieth birthday with him.

A teaching assistant did the visioning exercise during an ECiD with a painting I did. It was the sky in an opening in a stone wall. After our break off groups he asked me about my painting. I explained that the stone wall was symbolic to me of all the things my Dad experienced during that year and the sky of the ascension that must happen, be it good or bad. He showed me the picture he made and his words. We were both a little stunned. He totally understood what my painting meant without knowing the story. At the end of the day he gave me permission to photograph his pictures and words. I thought that, maybe, some day I might share the painting and this story with my Dad.

I almost didn't take the painting and photos when I visited my Dad. I didn't think he would be interested. But, I changed my mind. After I told him the story (a little emotionally, I'll admit), he asked questions, made observations and we talked about the ECiD program for a long time. He said that this might be an interesting thing to try (you can imagine how quickly I jumped on that). He and I recognized that he was not the same person he was before.

So.....my two daughters and my "son-in-law" went for a visit one afternoon. I turned the kitchen into a plastic studio and led them through "The Milkweed Thing". My Dad chose "Cow's Skull With Calico Roses" by Georgia O'Keefe to do the visioning exercise with. When he drew his first shape, I knew where the picture was headed (no pun intended!). He worked deliberately and took many breaks, during which he just sat and watched my kids. I think that gave him more pleasure than anything that day.

continued..

...continued

When he began his second picture I couldn't stop smiling to myself. It was working. He still took breaks to watch my kids, but that was just fine.

We put all the pictures on the floor when they finished. We talked a bit, my Dad shared his words and they all had a lot of fun. But they didn't see what I saw. The background in his first picture was light grey, thick horizontal lines. It was very symmetrical. The skull was just an outline, very ghostlike, floating in empty space. The eye sockets were empty. The nasal cavity red. My husband says it looks like it's screaming. The last thing he added was a green triangle centred on top of the skull. It was a dunce cap. On the back he wrote about things he was grateful for, among other things.

But, the second picture.....! Background filled with bright blue and magenta, marks going all directions. The skull came back. This time it was coloured in and it had eyes and no screaming nasal cavity. The dunce cap was light, bright green and sat jauntily on the skull. The skull was in such a place that it looked like an animal's head hanging through the opening in a stall door.

I had watched him draw a squiggle, take a break to watch my kids, add another mark, take a break....he took a break between every mark he added to the squiggle. Curving across the top left he drew a beautifully simple, confident image of the dump truck stuck in the Skyway Bridge with a series of half inch lines (cars!) behind it. It wasn't stiff and still. It curved with movement, even though nobody was going anywhere!

I've been looking at his pictures as I write (they all gave me their pictures) and I'm smiling to myself and a bit weepy. Two years after his troubles began, he has been given a second chance. He no longer has to use oxygen. He only uses a walker on long walks. His eyes are different, like the eyes in the pictures.

He probably won't do The Milkweed Thing again, but he did it once. We all had a great time. He shared the pastels I gave him with two little girls in his neighbourhood. I hope the magic is still in those pastels.

Louise Cordingley-Zych

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Reflection, by Louise Cordingley-Zych, pg. 1-2

The Milkweed 20th Anniversary Celebration, pg. 2-9

ECiD "Happenings" - Kre-a-tive U-Turn by Ina Puchala, pg 10

- Mississauga ECiD by Patricia McPhail, pg. 11

The Milkweed Story and excerpts, by Austin Clarkson, pg. 11-13

Algonquin Day-Tripping Excursion 2016, by Ina Puchala, pg. 14

News from Weeds, pg. 15

Member's Information, pg. 15



20th Anniversary



Back row L-R - Patricia, Luci, Ina, Kate, Jennifer, Joanna. Middle row L-R - Janine, Elaine, Beverly, Austin, Alex, Jay.
Front row L-R - Robin, Nancy, George, Dale, Sylvia

BEVERLY

The Orphan

I stuffed a sock without a partner and decorated it with rosy leaves for a high hat, a sparkly gold boa, an open mouth (this kid liked to talk), blue sequin eyes and a red button nose. She carried a modest bouquet and wore a two-toned skirt. That was the front of her. I turned her over and on the other side saw the same logo I'd seen on her front as a mouth. She had two faces, but the backside was blindfolded. That is she could see where she was going on one side and on the other, had to stumble and feel her way along with green pipe-cleaner arms.

"Let's go!" she cried when our journey was launched. She grabbed my hand and yanked me out the door of Alex and Jay's Yoga Studio. I kind of dragged my feet, couldn't make out where she was headed. She ran holding my hand, down the street and soon we were clear out of town. A field of tall corn confronted us. No problem for her, she plowed right into it. The plants were way over our heads and we soon lost our bearings. I expressed my consternation, "Now what are we going to do? We're lost!" she said, "No problem!" and we whooshed up into the atmosphere above the town, above the field. I looked down and gulped.

continued...

BEVERLY ...continued

"We're going to fall," I cried, terrified. "Just hang on!" she yelled into the teeth of the wind. (Boy! Did I hang on! If I'd lost that little hand, I would have plummeted to my death.)

We swooped down toward the center of a huge, circular, basin-like place. Maybe an abandoned, open mine. We flew right into the dark core of it and came to rest in a pitch-black cave. I looked down - and saw a tiny, glowing, white worm. Remembering the Richard Scarry storybooks I read to the kids about "Lowly Worm,"

I said distastefully, "I don't want to be like you." But the little guy was friendly, sat up and spoke, "I know, it isn't for everyone. But you know we worms do move around in the earth, letting in air and water so plants can grow. It's good honest work." I could see his point and felt kind of bad.

Then suddenly a huge (well, maybe eight feet in diameter) amorphous being, its body emanating dark puffs of smoke, undulated before us in mid-air. "Do you hate me?" I sniveled.

"Hate, Love - it's all the same to me," the blob said in a gravelly voice. I was getting nowhere, so told my orphan to ask a question.

"Are you bad?" Her voice was way beyond spunky.

And, wouldn't you know, "Bad, good - it's all the same to me," came the Jimmy Durante rasp. Just about then, the gong rang five times - and we had to hustle back to the studio. We went exactly the way we had come.

~~~~~  
What can I say about our journey? Mainly, the last forty-five years or so I've had a habit of presenting myself as a waif. That's why I was drawn to Rilke's poem "The Song of the Waif":

*I am nobody and always will be,  
I'm almost too little to live right now . . .*

Sort of pathetic, eh? That poor inner kid of mine, that Creative Child I need so dearly, hasn't served itself very well. And I have used her as an excuse not to meet certain challenges, not to stand up against things that seem wrong to me, not to claim something I need. This new child, this hand-made Orphan, was remarkable in her directness and foresight. And what did we find? A cornfield, home of the Indian Mother Goddess; an open mine (an open mind?); a sweet, humble, unoffendable Creature that glowed with the knowledge of his own place in Creation. And the fearsome, dark, smoking, immaterial Being - a Shadow if there ever was one - its gold, a miraculous container for the opposites. What a surprise! What a relief! After all my fearing and blaming and forgiving and hiding - to find out that All of that is of a piece.

All One.

This Orphan - conscious on one side and unconscious on the other; what does that mean? Maybe she is simply saying: "Well, that's life, isn't it? Half the time you see the truth and half the time you don't. After all, you're only human, eh?"

## JOANNA

My orphan did not go on an imaginary journey, because her maker has trouble with that exercise.... her thinking function rules with a heavy hand and keeps the journey in the here and now. So I was thinking about our world, and human orphans everywhere and lo and behold, the constant sound that was coming from my right morphed into whimpering and crying and moaning. Surely the sound of orphans?

## My Orphan, "Trail" AUSTIN

Orphan was already in the canoe and asked me to get in the bow. I usually take the stern, but now I'm under his command. He sets off with a strong stroke, his hair and scarf waving in the breeze.

"Where do you want to go," I ask.

"How about the Mountain."

"I'm afraid I won't be able to make the climb."

"Don't worry, I'll get you there."

We glide swiftly across the rivers and lakes in the crisp, cool autumn air. I seem to manage the portages without difficulty. We get to the lake from which the mountain rises to the North.

"Have you been here before," I ask.

"Yes, I am the Trail up the Mountain."

"May I walk up the Mountain with you."

"Very well. Would you like to go quickly or slowly? Some people run all the way up, and when they get to the summit, look around, take photos and run back down. Others take a very long time."

"I'd rather go slowly."

"Then notice how each step reveals a fresh design of leaves, moss, roots, earth and stones. Each provides a new vista -- tall spruce and spreading hemlock, fragrant balsam, healing cedar, majestic pine, elegant birch, bushy alder, the graceful ferns and sculptured fungi, flowers and grasses. When you stop for a moment the scene moves. When you move, it remains still. Listen to the whispering leaves, scolding squirrels, humming flies and singing mosquitoes. They are all companions on the way."

"Thank you, Trail. You give me courage."

"How do you feel?"

"I feel old, stiff and frail, and I'm afraid I won't make it."

"Here take my hand."

"Your arm is strong and draws me along."

We glide very slowly up the mountain and reach the summit.

"What happens now, Trail?"

"Wait and see."

I sat down on a patch of lichen. The sun was setting and the moon was rising. Then a long ribbon spiraled upward like the kundalini of the world, the chakras glowing with the rays of the setting sun. I heard the sound of a myriad voices, some shouting in fear and hatred, others singing with love and sympathy. It was as though every thing in the world was making sound. The sounds grew louder until a storm broke on the Mountain with dreadful force. Rain poured down, lightning rent the clouds, thunder shook the earth, and wind thrashed the howling trees. I was terrified and called out, "Help! What shall I do?" Trail whispered in my ear, "Stay still." At dawn, with the kestrels hunting in the glistening shrubs and the lakes far below filled with mist, Trail and I sat face to face.

"I am looking into your eyes," I said.

"What do you see?"

"I see the trails that I and the members of my family and my friends have made through our lives -- wandering, winding, crossing, backtracking, disappearing, appearing -- a maze of trails that seems to have no beginning or end or goal."

"Look again," said Trail.

I looked deeper into his eyes and the maze of trails formed into a vast wheel -- a spider's web of trails with no beginning and no end.

"Is there anywhere else you still want to go," asked Trail.

"No, I think I am where I need to stay."

"Then I'll leave you now," said Trail.

"So long," I said. "And thank you."

## LUCI

So, we were told to bring an orphan sock, which we placed around the medicine wheel. Then the Trickster (Austin) told us to choose someone else's sock. Joanna had brought a previous orphan, which she partially undressed and was planning to re-create. The orphan that I wanted to adopt was creative, imaginative energy--which I feel has been lost. I eyed Joanna's sock, convinced it carried some of her creative and life energy; but I wondered if she was very attached to it and would not let it go. As soon as she chose another sock, I went for it!

Joanna's x-orphan, had a few remaining accoutrements, which I removed. It also had arms and hands. As I felt my orphan needed all the tools to be productive. I left both arms and one hand intact. The existing hand had a bandaid around a finger. I removed the bandaid and placed it on the left shoulder, where I have pain and to acknowledge physical limitations. I put an oak leaf in that hand. A hand holding a pussy willow twig was added to the other arm. As I mentioned, my orphan needed all the tools to be productive. It needed all the senses to act like radar in search of seeds of creativity; I gave it eyes, ears, nose, mouth. It also received a large 3rd eye, like a search light and, even an eye at the back of the head. This orphan didn't want to miss a thing! It didn't want to miss an opportunity and all my little additions, feathers, a neon spiral on the belly...are meant to act like satellite dishes, attracting, gathering inspiration.

My orphan is kind and loving so I added a neon heart on its backside with a tail of curled ribbon--passing love farts wherever it goes.

When finished, I introduced myself and asked its name. I got no response. I couldn't tell if it was male or female. I took its hand and it led me on the wildest journey: over a small bridge across a ditch, into a pasture with an old tractor, which we drove up a hill that grew. The tractor only got part way up. We followed a stone labyrinth spiraling up the mountain. At the top was a massive oak tree, which we climbed and had lunch of boiled eggs and raisin tea biscuits with butter, while sitting in a nest. Down from the tree we jumped into a curving water slide, whooshing wildly down the mountain, shooting out into the air where we travelled in a bubble following a river way down below. Our bubble traveled into the sunset, then into the night sky. We went to Saturn and spun around its rings then played hopscotch on the stars. I noticed that it all seemed flat, 2D and realized we were at the end; at the boundary. Then a zipper appeared which my orphan opened. Black tar-like substance oozed out, turning into lava, creating steps which we followed as far down as we could go. Another end and, another zipper which opened to a new sunrise in a lovely landscape. We rung church bells together, lit candles and to my surprise, my orphan took me home, to my house. We walked my little labyrinth in the yard, flew over a brilliantly coloured woodlot to my shoreline where we sat on my favourite rocks and then went for a swim.

Throughout the journey, I was the one always hesitant, saying "I can't", "I don't know how", "but what if something goes wrong". It was always I who saw the flatness, the end, the limit. My orphan not only found openings but went forward to whole new experiences without hesitation.

Limitations. The first time that I threw the I Ching, was in "The Class", 20 years ago. I got "Limitations". Clearly, I need to adopt and embrace this orphan.

My orphan told me so much more. I couldn't determine the gender because the sex was not important. Until menopause, sexuality was my driving force. Sexual energy was so closely linked to creating. In a new stage of my life, that energy is diminished and I recognize that I must find new resources.

The large 3rd and 4th eye, tells me that introspection has its flaws, especially because it has for so long, been used as a defense. When I don't understand, when I feel uncomfortable, unsure, threatened...I disappear inside myself. My orphan encourages me to look outwards; not to disconnect.

While in the circle, listening to the others share, "Felix" popped into my mind. That's my orphan's name. Austin explained that felix in latin means faith. My orphan is my absent faith that there is an abundance of creative, imaginative energy; that there are worlds and experiences beyond every wall, every limitation that I've imposed.

Thank you Felix. I'm happy you are home with me.

## KATE

The becoming of Henriette Sisseyfuss...

There was no initial intention or plan. Driving up from Buffalo, NY to Hamilton, ON to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion of Milkweeds, it suddenly dawned on me that

I might have to do something creative. I really do NOT have a creative talent. I am not an artist and do not play an instrument, dance or write poetry. I am an audience – an appreciator of the talents of others. How will that connect with the others?

What was going to happen in the orphan's workshop? We were told to bring a sock – an orphan sock to be used for a creative imagination session. In a last minute panic before leaving, I found a single sock. Where its mate was, I haven't a clue. But this sock and I have had a history, quite a history. Okay, I thought, I can use that history in my creative imagination process. So my unease dissipated for the rest of the trip.

UNTIL we arrived and learned that we would not be using 'our' personal sock, but had to switch our sock with another one of the participants. Oh dear! So there went my plan and I was faced with another sock – much smaller, dark blue with some colorful dots on it. I looked over at a table that was filled with all sorts of goodies: sequins, bows, materials of all textures, fancy ties, etc. etc and gasped. I never even used a glue gun before and can no longer even thread a needle. So I looked at my sock, sighed and thought 'oh well, let's get on with it'.

Little by little, as I was moving my sock into a body and placing bits and pieces all over it, I noticed a lovely little creature being born...she was quite a character too – puffy hairdo decorated with a flower, a pipe cleaner hair piece to hold her hair down with the end of it rising up like a unicorn, a big smile, and wearing what could be called a clown's outfit with two red balls standing out from the dots that were already on her body. Her nose was quite large (where the heel of the sock would be) but she didn't care. Her pipe cleaner arms were stretched up in a manner as if to say 'whatever'...It was as if she created herself. It certainly was not my conscious artistry.

Austin led us in a meditation whereby we asked our 'orphan' to talk to us and take us on a journey. Almost immediately Henrietta Sisseyfuss announced her name. She was a no nonsense type who was quite confident in her style and actions even though she was quite obviously going to be 'over-the-top' in all that she said and did. And she was. Henrietta (with both male and female energies) grabbed my hand and pulled me through a deep woods and into a big city – I mean a really big city, like NY or Toronto. We went from side street to alleyway up and down the main drags meeting all sorts of interesting people – old, young, rich, poor, criminals and saints, gays and straights, every nationality and color under the sun...Henrietta was talking and engaging with all of them as if she had known them forever. She told me on the way back that this was what it was all about – the world is full of all types, sizes, shapes and beliefs and we are to connect and commune with all of them...and most of all HAVE FUN with them, enjoying all their diversity and they enjoying ours.

What did all this mean? I am still not sure. Because I think of myself as being quite open-minded and non-judgmental, I can't think that Henrietta was teaching me a lesson in those areas. All I can say, is that I have fallen in love with Henrietta. Having her sitting on my desk, facing me while I work, every time I look at her I smile...

Today I booked a flight to Europe – very spontaneously with little money and for a trip at the end of January. What, am I out of my mind?

I looked at Henrietta after I hit the click button and think I saw her laughing. It is her fault. She is pushing me on an adventure.

Don't you just love the mysteries of life?

Thank you again Austin, Beverly, Alex, Jay and the other wonderful Milkweeds for this wonderful experience and welcoming us new 'weeds' from across the border to share in your anniversary celebration.

## PATRICIA

For the first time I knew exactly how I wanted my orphan to be. She had been percolating within my consciousness for some time. But I do not have a picture of her with me as she wishes to remain invisible. During the partner sharing time, I was very grateful that my partner was my daughter, Robin. My orphan allowed Robin to see her and to hear her story but was very reluctant to reveal herself to anyone else at this point - perhaps at a later date. My orphan and I both thank Robin for her understanding and compassion. I have had several communications with my orphan since she was created - she has become a great comfort to me and hopefully will aid in my search for Self.

## SYLVIA

Upon reflection of the journey with my orphan, Jane (I'm sorry I forgot to introduce her name at our gathering), I have a better understanding of why she wants to have FUN and help me to be more flamboyant and eccentric. It's about balance. I am generally introspective, connecting with myself to gain greater understanding of the 'why' and 'how' in my life. In addition, this past year has brought many deaths - family members, friends, neighbours, pets - and led me to once again contemplate the existential questions of life. So to bring balance to the serious, Jane has come to remind me that it's okay to dance and sing and laugh and feel free to experience joy and wonder in life and express myself in colour using all the senses.

## MAUREEN

Though I couldn't come to the anniversary gathering, I have been thinking about Milkweed. It has played an important part in my life, particularly the workshop held around 2000, *The Don River Workshop: Bringing Psyche to the River in the City*. Was I already a member of the collective then? I can't remember. But that workshop began my engagement with the Don River, and led to my essay "Broken Mouth" which took me to Tasmania in 2009-2010 for almost four months.

Milkweed's workshop addressed the question of whether it was possible for urban dwellers to have a relationship with nature—was nature even visible in the city? As some of you know I have a vexed relationship with Toronto—so that question was, and continues to be, a central one for me. Over the past two or three years I've tried to answer it by expressing it somewhat differently. Because I've written very little about this city, except for my essay on the Don, I asked myself: Would I feel less alienated if I were to engage with the city deeply enough to write about it? Could I begin, through writing, to find an experience of the city that made it more like home? And so I've been working on poems about the city—views of the Don River, Joe Fafard's sculptures, the coffee shop in the Royal Conservatory building, Garrison Creek, etc. So far I've finished a dozen and have ideas for another two or three. Next fall the collection will be published as a chapbook by a small publisher, paperplates.

That's not the end of my involvement with the river. When I began writing these poems, I met Helen Mills, founder of Lost Rivers Toronto, an organization that has explored and mapped the network of buried streams that lies under the city, and that also leads walks related to those rivers. Helen invited me to join her and do a poetry walk. On September 21 five Toronto poets took a walk along the lower Don, from Riverdale Park to Corktown Common, reading poems along the way to the 25 or 30 people who joined us. Helen and John Wilson (former head of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don) were our river experts, giving context for the poems. This collaboration was such a pleasure we are now working towards a poetry walk along the Humber, some time in 2015. Our poems, with notes about them, have begun appearing on the Discover the Don website (<http://www.discoverthedon.ca/>), and we may participate in some of the conservation authority's programs next year.

Without Milkweed's workshop I might never have walked beside the Don River or been led to think about the hidden and invisible ways that nature permeates this city.

# THE ORPHANS



# ECID “HAPPENINGS”

## Kre-a-tiv U-turn

### PROJECT AND CALL FOR DONATIONS

Ina Puchala

A new chapter unfolds, as the Milkweed Collective prepares to train a generation of emerging artists (18-25 yrs.) in the core concept and technique of the ECiD program. The project **Kre-a-tiv U-turn: Firing up Imagination to Renovate+Innovate+Animate** was accepted as one of three Signature Projects to be featured during Cultural Hotspots West 2015 in Etobicoke. Cultural Hotspots is a Culture Toronto four-year project formed in response to a Creative Capital Gains report, approved by Toronto City Council 2011. The report clearly identifies the value of the richness and diversity of the City's cultural sector and states that 'greater access to arts and culture will build social cohesion, civic engagement, and safer, healthier neighbourhoods'.

So what drives Milkweed in the **Kre-a-tiv U-turn** project? A desire to reach out to the next generation in hopes of inspiring them with the magical workings of the creative process; that which binds the Milkweed Collective. But we're also creating an opportunity for youth mentorship and employment in the arts, providing a stipend for each of the eight emerging artists. They will gain qualifications as arts instructors and animateurs, which may open doors to future employment opportunities, as there is an urgent need for affordable creative arts programming for children and youth. And segments of the program will provide opportunities for young people (free of charge) in underserved neighbourhoods to engage in the arts, culture and a community celebration. Below, follow the OBJECTIVES for the project:

Emerging artists will learn and acquire the following transferrable skills:

*activating the creative imagination, leading warm up activities and focusing exercises; participant observer skills in facilitating small group discussions, responding to children's drawing, evoking mutuality, reciprocity and community, mentoring; management and communication skills for guiding and inspiring kids with varying abilities and needs in community arts programming; entrepreneurial skills in designing, presenting and publicizing a public collaborative, multimedia exhibition and performance.*

Providing employment and work experience for Emerging Artists by delivering summer arts programming for children and youth in underserved communities from three venues (north, central and south locations). These opportunities to work within the community will further develop and enhance self esteem, self-reliance, leadership, communication and teamwork. They will be responsible for design and implementation of an action plan taking into consideration the parameters of the particular venue and age group. Further on the subject of community animation, the Emerging Artists will apply and develop their particular expertise in designing, delivering and promoting a culminating multi-media exhibition and performance as part of Culture Days (Sept 25-27) – creating an original piece of work.

**Indeed we've undertaken an ambitious project and request your support in bridging our shortfall of funding. Any donation amount is welcome and will go towards enhancing the stipend we are offering each of the eight participating emerging artists of Kre-a-tiv U-turn.**

Arts Etobicoke accepts tax-deductible donations on behalf of the Milkweed Collective. To donate by credit card, please call Ruth Cumberbatch (Arts Etobicoke) 416-621-3378 x 222. To donate by cheque, make payable to Arts Etobicoke, memo: Milkweed Collective. Mail to Arts Etobicoke, 4893A Dundas St. W, Toronto M9A 1B2. A tax receipt will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

## MISSISSAUGA ECiD

Patricia McPhail

They say when one door closes another opens. This is certainly the case with the ECiD program. Stephen Hurley and Geordie Barnett are with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board and have been instrumental in getting a new Creative Arts Centre up and running - St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Learning Centre. Both Stephen and Geordie came and did the ECiD with us at Neilson Park. They were both very impressed with the program and wanted to see if they could incorporate it into their programming. Consequently in January 2015 we are going to be doing the program with two classes as well as running a workshop for 30 interested teachers. The seeds of creative imagination have been sown.....

---

## THE MILKWEED STORY

Austin Clarkson

It was a sunny Sunday in early May 2010. I was in the art gallery of Anten Mills viewing Joanna McEwen's show of luminous paintings and delicate lace. After other visitors had gone and Joanna and I were chatting, the subject turned to the Milkweed book that I had not managed to get published. Joanna looked me in the eye, paused, and said in measured tones, "Austin, it's your story!" I realized at once that she was right. The next day Joanna wrote me an email:

*The more I thought about our discussion, Austin, the more I became convinced that the book about the 94/95 class (Milkweed) is really the story of the genesis of a (the) teacher, which is a creative process in and of itself. It is about you. It is worth relating your story because we NEED GOOD teachers. You were moved to create the course. You were moved to develop it. You were moved to gently and not so gently encourage your students to be responsible for their own learning, their own WELLNESS and wellbeing. Lots of university profs have no interest in teaching. It is something they endure because they have to. You on the other hand wanted (or needed) to share something that you believed in with all your heart. Now we of course had a role to play. We were willing participants. Most of had to struggle in more ways than one, because you thrust the responsibility on our shoulders and just kept pushing but did not become too directive. I can show you my journals, and you'll see what you put us through. But we were willing. I say GO FOR IT!*

I replied:

*Thanks, Joanna, for putting your finger on the issue so clearly and firmly. You've tossed the challenge right back at me in a lovely act of payback. After I put you and the others in the crucible with the dreaded "box" along with other choice assignments, you are returning the favour with interest! What a wonderful playing out of the invisible partners, the dual Teacher/Student archetype. The student's inner teacher becomes the outer teacher of the teacher's inner student. That adds another dimension to the model. The invisible partners are still in a lively dance of individuation, which proves what you've been saying all along about the archetypes: They just keep rolling along!*

continued...

...continued

The next month we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the spring when the members of the Foundations of Creative Imagination course decided to continue to meet. And now in November of 2014, seventeen of us gathered in Alex and Jay's beautiful Shanti Studio to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the course and the 16th anniversary of the canoe trip to Maple Mountain. During the summer I contacted those who had been on the canoe trip and asked them to send me their memories of the journey. This they did, and I compiled the Maple Mountain Log. Then I began to write an account of how I came to design the course that got Milkweed started. The result is the first installment of *The Milkweed Story*. Robin is formatting the text, as you can see in the following excerpts, which are reproduced below. Copies will be printed and available at cost early in the New Year.

## THE MILKWEED STORY (excerpts)

Austin Clarkson

*The tale begins with a couple of kindred spirits meeting and getting married. She was a composer with dominant introverted feeling and he was a music historian with extraverted thinking and thoroughly repressed feeling. They soon ran up against obstacles that caused them much grief. A kind friend pointed them to the writings of Carl Jung, which guided them onto their path. They journeyed through distant shadow lands and over steep and gnarly trails under the watchful eyes of teachers of Jung's way. Eventually they met again on the shores of a northern lake with deep and shining waters. There they discovered themselves and came to truly know each other. She is writing about her journey and he is telling his. The present chronicle begins when she went into training as a Jungian analyst and he set out on his own path through the Medicine Wheel. While on his journey he linked up with a group of travelers who called themselves the Milkweed Collective. This is how that came to pass.*

### Second Call: Outward Bound, 1983

The North called again, and I signed up with the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School near Thunder Bay. The course description said it would require strength and endurance, but didn't mention how much. We were met at Thunder Bay Airport, where a canoe van took us along gravel, potholed logging roads to the headwaters of the Kopka River. During the next seven days we paddled down the river to Lake Nipigon and then south to Black Sturgeon Lake, where COBWS has its home base. Dad had taught me canoeing when I was a kid, but portaging over hilly trails and boulder fields, navigating white water and shitting in the bush were all new hurdles. Two superb instructors also taught this old teacher that showing is better than telling.

Outward Bound proved that city folk have powers of which they haven't the slightest inkling. It also revealed the archetypal depths of the hero/heroine's journey on the river of life, and the power of the shared challenges to constellate community among the travelers. I discussed these ideas with the head of COBWS, who invited me to a conference at the OB headquarters in North Carolina. I joined a task force to produce a collection of stories that instructors could tell during



Really gnarly portage

their courses to deepen the experience of the participants. I introduced the stories to an instructors' training session at Black Sturgeon Lake the next spring. Researching and commenting on those stories got me thinking that perhaps I could design a course that produced the Outward Bound effect in a university classroom.

### **Third Call: Foundations of Creative Imagination 1984-1995**

During the 1970s I noticed that fine arts students were absorbed by critical theory but had little understanding of the creative process. Having worked with Jungian analysts and taken workshops with them that engaged the creative imagination through art making, I was moved to design a course on the deep structure of the creative process. I consulted with colleagues in dance and art therapy, sought the advice of Jungian analyst Marion Woodman and drew up a proposal for an interdisciplinary course for the college of part-time studies. Jung was not exactly at the top of the charts on our new and progressive campus. He was completely *non grata* in the Psychology Department, and only a handful of colleagues in Fine Arts and Humanities were known fellow travelers. I was delighted, though much surprised, that the proposal survived the scrutiny of the University Senate and entered the Calendar. The course was offered for the first time in 1984 and received so warmly that it ran every year or two for the next ten years. At that point I retired from active teaching, but the last cohort of students had other plans.



*FCI Marches on York Campus, Summer Solstice 1999*

### **Ninth Call: Maple Mountain with Creativity Group 1998**

When I told Beverly about my solo on Maple Mountain, she said she would like to go there with me. We knew we couldn't do it alone, so at the winter meeting of the Creativity Group we announced that we were thinking of making a trip to Maple Mountain and invited others to join us. We were delighted that so many wanted to go. We had led many workshops for Jungian groups in Toronto the U.S.A. and elsewhere in Canada, but this would be a completely new undertaking. With eight people from the group, we needed two guides and were fortunate to enlist the help of John Kilbridge, canoe builder and radical environmentalist, and Teresa Johnston, then a doctoral candidate in Environmental Studies at York University. They were experienced canoe trippers and knew the Temagami area well. A packing list and travel arrangements were made, and early on August 20, 1998, ten of us assembled on the Temagami town dock and flew to Langskib Island.

# ALGONQUIN DAY-TRIPPING EXCURSION 2016

Ina Puchala

Hi Folks,

Page turning adventures to do with the 1998 expedition to Maple Mountain in Temagami are contained in Austin's recent draft of the Milkweed Story. It occurred to me that what we need is an outing into the wilderness, albeit a tamed version. Jay and Alex have turned experts in navigating Algonquin's terrain and welcome leading a group either in May on the Victoria day weekend or in late August/ September 2016. (Please note: Beverley and Austin are not free to make this excursion in the spring, but would be available in the fall).

**Please let me know if you would be interested [ina.puchala@gmail.com](mailto:ina.puchala@gmail.com)**

Planning, equipment, food, costs...? **Here are some practical details...**

This is a day-tripping excursion which involves setting up a base camp for 3-4 days from which we will depart on a different day hike. Each camper will be responsible for supplying their own:

sleeping bag, personal clothing (hiking boots, rain gear, warm jackets, knee high synthetic or wool socks, hats, gloves; also sunny condition apparel), fishing gear if desired, and other belongings (flashlight – headlamp/ lantern), extra batteries, toiletries, cameras, sun lotion, mosquito spray. Gloves, ie. biking gloves are recommended for paddling to avoid blistering.

In terms of time – we normally leave Friday early, to get to Algonquin by about 1 pm, so we have plenty set up time and time for an activity, such as a hike or a paddle. We leave on Sunday around 1 pm, or, if it is a 4 day trip, then Monday around 1 pm. This gives us plenty of time to pack up, have breakfast, do our closing rituals, etc.

The cost – it is about \$12 dollars per person per night, plus the food and the firewood costs – around 300-350 dollars altogether; plus the canoe fees, which is around 30 a day. One canoe seats 2 people. Then there are incidentals, gas fees, fishing license fees, things like that. So on average it is about **\$80 per person per day**.

Jay and Alex have **all the equipment**, and have taken up to 10 people out, and fully outfitted everyone, except for the sleeping bags.

- *Gear required involves tents, ground sheets, tarps, under pads/blankets and sleeping bags – that's shelter. Jay and Alex have 3 amazing tents that can sleep 11 people. Then comes the kitchen, with the pots and pans, stoves and propane, water filters, hatchet, saw, all the cooking stuff you'd use at home – cutting board, oven mitts, knives, sieves, tongues, spatulas, etc... Oils, spices, specific food depends on the menu, fruits, snacks, drinks, etc. There is a kitchen tent, so that the cook is protected against the elements, and people get fed no matter what. This tent is large enough to serve as the dining tent, in case of rain.*

This is in short form. There is more, but it gets too detailed for now.

Jay is a wizard out there, he can work out any bugs that show up. And, Jay and Alex have developed detailed lists, so no one forgets anything.

## NEWS from 'WEEDS

Current Project Update.

My creative energies for the past 2 years have been focussed on the commemoration of the Penetanguishene Road (Highway 93/27) as a Heritage Route... from the War of 1812. (Ontario's third oldest registered road !)

With a project partner, we have been working since 2011, with 9 separate municipal agencies and 6 separate community groups. The project has 2 parts. Part one was to get the Highway marked as a Heritage Route. We were successful and the signs are up. There was a glitch, too complicated to outline here. The second part of the project is to compose and erect historical pictorial signage in each of the 6 villages. I am working with the Women's Institutes who have great insights into their communities, using their archives and the Simcoe County Archives. The signs will be double sided - 48" wide x 42" tall. Needless to say the gathering, editing and processing of all this material is mind boggling. Luci's partner Anton is our designer/ photo restorer ... we are fortunate to have his expertise at hand.

The great news is that we have been successful in garnering a Trillium Foundation Grant to pay for the signs. Needless to say, 11 double sided signs are very expensive. We are very grateful! If all goes well, we hope to have all 11 signs in the ground by next May. Come drive the historic Penetanguishene Road and learn about these unique small rural Ontario communities. .... Joanna

---

## MEMBER'S INFORMATION

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

**Happy Birthday Newsroom!!**

This issue marks the occasion of our newsletter's 4th birthday!

It also marks your  
**MILKWEED MEMBERSHIP  
renewal time!**

Please remit \$20, payable to the "Milkweed Collective" to:

Amy Capern,  
86 Haliburton Ave.  
Etobicoke, ON M9B 4Y4  
*(note new address!)*

Your membership fees go directly to the production of "The Newsroom" and we thank you for helping to make this means of communication, reflection and news possible.

### WILDFIRE 2015

Wildfire 2015 will begin in January with the Reveal tentatively scheduled for October 18, 2015.

Please watch your email inbox for further information coming soon.

### THE MILKWEED NEWSROOM CONTRIBUTIONS

**Submission Deadline for the February Issue**

As always, your personal/professional updates, upcoming events/shows and even artwork are welcome and encouraged!

**We wouldn't have a newsroom without your contributions!**

Because Louise has plans to be away sometime in January, please, for the February issue, **send your**

**submissions to Robin at**  
[thefarmhouse@sympatico.ca](mailto:thefarmhouse@sympatico.ca) **by**  
**January 9, 2014.**

---

As we approach the season of celebrations, families, friends and gratitudes, we fondly wish peace, joy and well-being to each of you and your families and hope that the new year continues to bring those gifts into your lives .

---



## THE MILKWEED NEWSROOM

Quarterly Newsletter of the Milkweed Collective

Director: Austin Clarkson

Associate Director: Patricia McPhail

Assistant Director: Ina Puchala

Treasurer: Amy Capern

Executive Committee: Amy Capern, Patricia McPhail,  
Robin McPhail-Dempsey,  
Nancy Newton, Ina Puchala

Newsroom Co-Editors: Louise Cordingley-Zych  
Robin McPhail-Dempsey

Original Milkweed Logo Design: Joanna McEwen

[www.exploringcreativity.org](http://www.exploringcreativity.org)

Copyright 2014, The Milkweed Newsroom