



Chatroom

Randy Hall

Finding purpose can change your life

Obstacles are a natural part of the human experience. Show me one person without problems or "challenges", and I'll show you someone who wouldn't fog up a mirror if you held it under their nose.

How a person reacts to adversity is more telling (usually far more) than how they handle success, or peaceful times. It's the true champions of the spirit who can find the silver lining in the darkest clouds.

Once upon a time, not so long ago I was, in a word, depressed. If I wasn't embroiled in some kind of internal strife, I was waiting for the next wave of it.

In the moments where I thought I was happy, I would temper my enthusiasm because I didn't want to be disappointed if I failed at something or when the next bad thing came along. I wouldn't set high goals for fear of ridicule if I didn't accomplish them. Suffice it to say my self-confidence left a lot to be desired.

I also used to dull my quiet desperation by watching tons of movies and avidly following sports to a ridiculous extreme. Luckily I never turned to drugs or alcohol to save myself. I did however indulge in tons of bad foods.

Like so many of you I was lost without a map. When did it turn around? When I found my purpose, or my special gift.

All my life, I'd get a little momentum going and then I'd hit a fork in the road and not know where to turn.

Unfortunately, I didn't yet have the resolve to search and fight through the obstacles yet. I was a ship without a rudder. I also had little to no energy. But most importantly, I didn't have a reason to get out of bed in the morning, other than my lousy bills and my uninspiring responsibilities.

Then one day, I discovered that I had a gift for handwriting analysis! For the first time I moved toward that light with assurance, instead of a half-hearted wishful stumble.

In January 2000, I was fired from my job with no warning. I was an administrative assistant at an accounting firm. I played a foolish joke that wound up where it shouldn't have, my supervisor's desk. I won't go into all the details, but I felt that what had been done was a relatively minor transgression. I never thought it would cost me my job!

In hindsight, I understand it better and am extremely grateful that it panned out the way it did.

While I worked there, I enjoyed my surroundings. It was a great place to work and I was very comfortable in my surroundings. And that was one of the things that had been holding me back.

Knowing the state of mind I was in, I doubt that I would've quit on my own to pursue my destiny. But I truly needed to leave to meet it.

Was my life unwittingly transformed for the better? Affirmative. Do you have to be dead to stop living? Not at all.

We've all seen people just occupying their bodies at a young age who cease to live their life with any passion or sense of expectancy. We also see sprightly seventy-five year olds dancing the finky chicken, still learning new things and continually expanding

Hills family bottles up a fine tradition

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

The Kipper family makes no wine before its time.

And when the time comes, they all have a lot of fun.

Matthew and Jennifer Kipper of Farmington Hills and their children have revived a family tradition in their home that has grown in such popularity, friends and family come from miles away for the chance to help.

And the workers usually get paid with - what else - the fruit of last year's efforts.

"We've done this for the last four years," said Matthew, while showing the beginning of stages of the process where the grapes ferment in plastic containers in the family's basement.

Two weekends are devoted to 90 percent of the process of crushing and pressing the grapes, bottling them in 6-gallon containers and then taking the 1-year-old wine for another production line.

"Our only requirement is that you drink our wine," Matthew said of family and friends who visit for the event. Last year's wines that have

spent six months in glass containers and then another six months in oak barrels are ready to be consumed or bottled, corked and labeled.

Each year, a new gadget to make the process simpler is added, the couple said.

Matthew said his father Virgil used to make wine in the family's basement in Redford Township.

"He grew up on a farm and they grew grapes," Matthew said. "It's a family tradition. As kids we always made wine."

A wine connoisseur with an impressive cellar, Matthew has bottles of the family's home brew from years gone by.

He said making wine is a relatively simple process that can be taken to highly technical levels if one prefers.

"It can get quite scientific," he said. "I'll test the acid level, but if you're buying good grapes and they're fresh, that's usually enough."

The family likes to experiment with different grapes such as a cabernet in 1999, a zinfandel in 2000 and a pinot noir in 2001.

Matthew buys the grapes

PLEASE SEE WINE, C7



Saturday afternoon production for the Kippers' family and friends is in full swing.



PHOTOS BY BILL BRISLEN/OBSERVER

After the grapes are removed from any stems Tom Flemming and Matt Kipper load them into the hopper while Patrick Kipper cranks the grape crusher.



The grapes attract clouds of bees that co-exist with the winemakers.

OLS parish marked 75th anniversary on Sept. 15

Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Farmington celebrated its 75th Anniversary with a mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, Sept. 15.

Cardinal Adam Maida, Archbishop of the Detroit Catholic Archdiocese was the principal celebrant of the mass along with Monsignor Walter Hurley, Pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows and many priests who have been associated with the parish through the years.

Following the Mass, a reception was held in the family center of the parish and tours of the school and church were held for those who attended the afternoon celebration.

At the turn of the century, there were very few Catholics in the Farmington area. The nearest Catholic church was St. Mary's of Redford, approximately nine miles away. The principal method of transportation was by horse and buggy, making the trip to St. Mary's about 1 1/2 hours. Sometime around the turn of the century, the Detroit Street Railway extended its line to Farmington, and the few families living in or near the town would take the streetcar to St. Mary's.

In the fall of 1927, Bishop Michael Gallagher appointed Father Edward O'Mahoney pastor of the new parish in

Farmington. A narrow strip of land, four acres in area, running along Shiloh Road was purchased. This purchase included the "Big White House" on the corner of Power and Shiloh Road. The house was the original farmhouse of the Ely family and it served as the parish rectory for many years.

The new parish was named Our Lady of Sorrows. The first mass was celebrated on the second Sunday of September, 1927, at "The Villa" now the St. Vincent Sarah Fisher Home on 12 Mile.

In about six weeks, the men of the parish, doing the work themselves, constructed a small frame church with a seating capacity for 125 people. On the first Sunday of November, Father O'Mahoney and his parishioners celebrated the first mass in their own parish church. This building was long and affectionately remembered as the "Little White Church on the Hills."

On Sunday, Nov. 27, Father O'Mahoney performed the parish's first baptism, that of Francis Longpre. The first mission was held in 1928. It is evident that the presence of a Catholic church in Farmington was attracting new parishioners to the area. A year after the

founding of the parish, an addition to the church was constructed, which nearly doubled its seating capacity to 250 people.

During the Depression years, many families left Detroit and moved out to the suburbs to make a new start. As the parish continued its gradual growth, many parents began to express a desire for a parochial school.

An eight-acre plot of land on Grand River near Orchard Lake Road, was donated by Mrs. C.F. Smith, and a three-room school was built by her son, Henry Smith. Three Dominican sisters came from Adrian in January, 1933, to staff the school under the guidance of Sister Rose Xavier. Within two years it was necessary to enlarge the school.

The school was enlarged again in 1940 and 1941. Under the guidance of Sister Rose Xavier, the first Girl Scout troops were organized in the parish in the fall of 1942. The first Boy Scout troop in the parish was started in 1944, with Mr. Thomas Blatter as the first Scoutmaster.

In the fall of 1943, Father Thomas P. Beahan was named the fourth pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows. At this time, it was necessary to add a fifth mass to the regular Sunday schedule.

PLEASE SEE SORROWS, C7

Learn to paint landscapes with Gwen Tomkow

Artists of all skill levels can learn to paint landscapes with noted artist Gwen Tomkow, in a two-day nature-painting workshop 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 18 and Oct. 25 at the new studio classroom located in the historic stables at Heritage Park.

Tomkow's workshop will focus on the use of fresh, natural color. The park will provide the perfect setting

for students to learn to bring to life a variety of trees with different surfaces, colors, shapes and dimensions.

Tomkow is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society, and has been juried into numerous national shows. She has received awards from the National Watercolor Society, Oakland Community College's Helen Deroy Competition,

Watercolor USA, and won the Grumbacher Gold Medallion award two times.

Tomkow was named Artist in Residence by the Farmington Area Art Commission in 1988.

Students may enroll in the workshop in person at the Costick Center in Farmington Hills or by fax.

Call (248) 473-1857.



Gwen Tomkow uses fresh, natural color in her nature paintings.