

Stone Circle News

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Unexpected

By Salome Harasty

I am a planner. Sometimes I find as much enjoyment in planning an event as celebrating the event itself. I went into planning mode immediately after deciding to have reconstructive surgery on my left foot. I froze a few dinners, bought some easy off/on clothes and made a list of contacts.

On July 27 the surgery took place. The next day all my pre-planning became useless. I had a severe heart attack, followed in a few days by cardiac bypass surgery. I'm old enough to know that God's plans don't always coincide with mine. However, the heart attack and surgery was a bigger adjustment than, say, rain on a 4th of July picnic.

For the next two weeks my touches with reality were few and short lived. As I was gradually weaned from strong pain drugs, I became aware first of my bed, then my room, and finally my nurse and my husband. My world was very small. Life was still happening whether I was planning it or not. While being part of life, I was also an observer of many surprises.

"My" original plan was to spend two to three weeks in rehab. I am now finishing my second month, having extra time to experience more surprises. While some of those surprises led me to discouragingly say "what more?", others were grace-filled moments. There are the men and women in therapy, fighting to spread butter on bread or button a blouse, showing surprising strength and perseverance. Long-time and newly-made friends take the time for a visit just when I need a smile and hello. Mostly though, I am humbled by the compassion and caring of the rehab staff. I am overwhelmed by their kindness and dedication even when doing the most unpleasant tasks.

Yes, plans go awry. Yet I think if we look for the goodness in that change, we will find joy-filled and grace-filled surprises.

One of God's arrangements is that
after winter there should come
beautiful spring days.
It happens every year and
it happens in every life.
Father Joseph

*Women have gathered in circles
since the dawn of history
for birthing,
to share story,
at cisterns for washing,
at fires for warmth,
at wells to draw water,
in embraces of profound joy,
in prayer,
in rings of sorrow and mourning.*

*With hands grasped, we gather our
collective wisdom,
energies and strengths
binding us and
guiding us into the future.
Each woman brings her gifts,
placing herself
as a stone in the unbroken circle.*

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Life Is What Happens To You While You Are Busy Making Other Plans

by Sherri D. Finnegan

It all started with a request from an associate of mine to write down everything (yes, everything) that I did yesterday, then rate it according to like, dislike, and stress level. I won't bore you with the details of my day, but needless to say, I was exhausted after writing it all down! Days go by faster than the speed of sound; I keep waiting for the sonic boom! Of course, I am not alone in this busy day phenomena. In every magazine, there are claims for the newest stress busting vitamins, exercise plans, diets, work strategies, and shortcuts for your home life.

I have always gone with the tried and true, the authentic stress reliever. Prayer. Usually out loud, sometimes in a very out loud voice. Making a request in prayer is not enough. The follow up is Faith, the belief that the request was received and will be answered. Again, prayer and faith are not enough. Being aware of everyday graces and recognizing with Gratitude that the prayer has been answered is the last step. This process may seem to be a chore, but it is less expensive than an exercise bike!

I constantly ask for physical signs that my prayer requests are being heard. I look down at the ground and a penny appears. I walk up the sidewalk to the front of my house, two pennies on the landing. A penny on my car seat. Okay, if I pray for abundance, maybe the pennies will turn into \$100 bills! I say "thank you" for every penny and go on with my day, smiling, knowing that I am safe, protected, and loved.

Back to the exercise of writing down your activities for a day and rating them – try it, then give thanks for it, and change what you felt the most stressed about. Smile and give thanks, inhale, exhale, remember your blessings. Do this during your busy day – you will then know that Life is happening Now. Blessings to all...

AFFIRMATION CORNER

By Margie Gray

All is in Divine Order...

I am a woman of many lists. I have plans and schedules. I like to be in control. This came in handy in my career as an event producer. When my husband and I first met, I told him I am obsessive-compulsive, but I found a career that supports me in my disorder. OCD is a psychological diagnosis and, in its extreme, is debilitating. The compulsion takes over and runs the person's life. They miss out on opportunities to be spontaneous or to connect with those around them because of their focus on satisfying their compulsions. I think this is true for many of us. Maybe not all of the time or to the same degree, but how often do we miss opportunities because we have to keep working on our list or schedule? How often do we dismiss a possibility because it wasn't in our plan or maybe because it would mean letting go and trusting? Letting go and living in possibility means being fully engaged with *ALL* of my life experience, not just the parts that fit my plan. My mantra is, "All is in divine order." I move along the spectrum between OCD and Trusting in Divine Order moment to moment.

I offer these affirmations to support us all in being fully present to our entire life experience.

~ I am open to all possibilities NOW!

~ I trust in the divine order of my life NOW!

~ I am committed to seizing each moment NOW!

~ I celebrate my life journey NOW!

Every time I put off something I want to do in order to finish something I think I *should*, I miss an opportunity. When I am completely focused on *my* plan, it is easy to get blindsided by the unexpected. Only when I am receptive to *all* of what life has to offer, can I really receive the blessings, richness, and beauty that are beyond my own imagining. I encourage you to let go and appreciate the divine order of life.

One of the most valuable things we can do to heal one another
is listen to each other's stories.

Rebecca Falls



Please let us know the names of those you would like to have included in our prayer circle.

Calendar of Events

The women of Stone Circle meet for regularly scheduled and special events each month. Listed below are the events for the months ahead.

October 2010

15-18 Stone Circle Cruise/Retreat

16 Gathering of Women
 Church Library 9:30 AM

November 2010

5 Centering Prayer-Conf. Room 7:30 PM
 Newcomers Orientation 7:00 PM
 6 **Embracing The Feminine** 2-4 PM
 14 **Labyrinth Walk** 2:00 PM
 20 Gathering of Women
 Church Library 9:30 AM

December 2010

3 Centering Prayer-Conf. Room 7:30PM
 Newcomers Orientation 7:00PM
 18 Gathering of Women
 Church Library 9:30 AM
 19 **Winter Solstice** 7:30 PM

January 2011

7 Centering Prayer-Conf. Room 7:30 PM
 Newcomers Orientation 7:00 PM
 22 Gathering of Women
 Church Library 9:30 AM
 23 **Mini Retreat** 1-5 PM

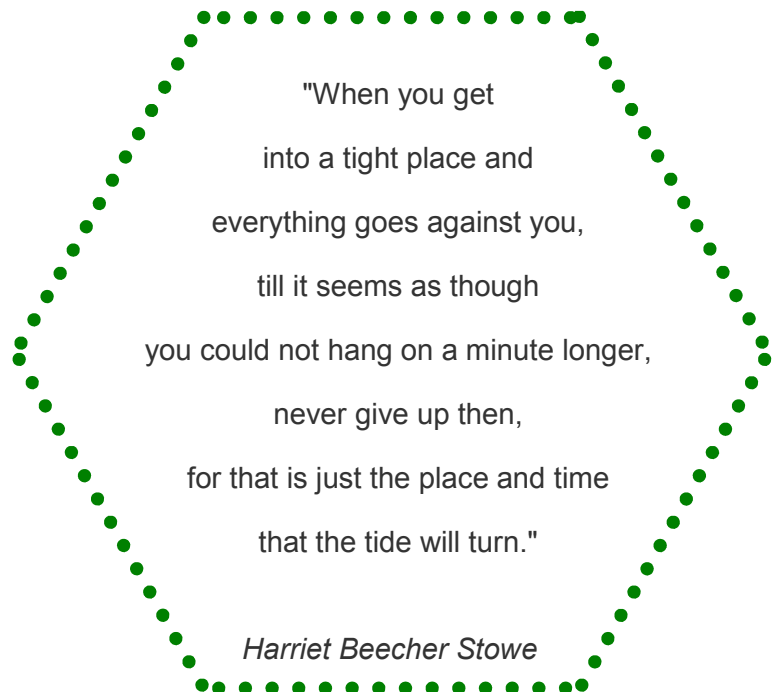
The Unplanned Changes In My Life

By Joan Macias

The quote "Life happens when you are busy making other plans" to me means that the keeper of the stars knows the plan while we are making our own plans. My life has had several of these life changing situations. The two most recent being forced retired at age 51 (not in my plan). The second being the decline in my Dad's health that made him unable to spend winters in Florida with Al and myself.

The first situation had me work a string of jobs that didn't quite live up to my 25 years with 3M Company. I had several jobs before Al decided to buy a house in Florida. Great, make sure the house is big enough for my dad. Well isn't it ironic, we have had three "big enough" houses for Dad, Al and I and now we are unable to live in any of them. Dad could no longer make the trip back and forth to Florida.

At first I felt sorry for myself. I don't anymore. I have this resolve in my heart that I can provide the level of care my dad deserves until he no longer needs my care. Because of my faith and what faith has done for my life, I am blessed and honored to be ABLE to care for Dad in his own home for the remainder of his life.



Life Does Just Happen

by Janet Herrick

I have always admired organized people. You know them. They are our friends and sometimes relatives with orderly underwear and sock drawers, neat desks, and kitchen spices in alphabetical order. We might think that because of their innate skills in putting things in immaculate precision that they have a better chance of ordering their outer world as well. Unfortunately no amount of preparation, sorting, ordering and planning can exempt any of us from the having our best laid plans from going quite array. Yes, life does happen while we are making other plans!

I remember in my naive and idealistic youth that I had thoughts like, my real life will begin...when I leave home and am on my own...when I graduate from college...when I get married...when the kids are older...when, when, when! I also vividly remember being brought to reality by someone I admired and sought out for advice— that I was already in my life. This was it! Waiting for something else to happen just made me miss the fullness of the reality I was already experiencing. Good, bad or indifferent... this was my life. Despite current challenges, or imagined dreams of the future, I was in the midst of my unfolding life, but was not fully engaged with it, or mindful of it.

In retrospect, and perhaps with a bit of wisdom that comes from age, I have come to believe that despite our meager attempts to plan and order our lives, it is quite impossible to do anything but give it our best shot. This does not mean that we should just give up and let fate take over, that would only lead to chaos. Engaging with life means acting not reacting when things change and our best laid plans no longer fit the bill. It means being responsible for ourselves, our actions and our own happiness despite what happens around us. Looking back at all the blips in my well laid plans, I can say that all of them taught me something, presented a life lesson, and had an impact on the person I am today.

Yes, life does happen while we make other plans, but in the scheme of things, perhaps this is what LIFE is really all about...a journey full of adventures and surprises.

Labyrinth Walk

This year we will once again offer the opportunity to participate in a meditative ritual walk of the thirteen circuit Chartre Labyrinth. The Labyrinth is an ancient tool to connect our outer and inner journey, to focus on the path allowing the distractions of daily life to be momentarily put aside in order to seek clarity, renewal and openness. Participate with us on Sunday afternoon, November 14 for this unique experience. We will stop to share a simple meal at a nearby restaurant on the way home. Call Jan for more information and to be part of the adventure.

Winter Solstice 2010

The Winter Solstice is a most auspicious event that has been celebrated by countless cultures throughout history. The longest night of the year has both spiritual and natural meaning. It marks the changing of the seasons from the darkness of winter to the fullness of light as the sun makes it slow march towards summer. Layered upon this natural event, religiously this time of year marks the light of Christ coming into the world at Christmas.

Stone Circle will celebrate this Solstice event on Sunday, December 19th, in the Hunter's Creek area. We will review the things we leave behind in 2010 and open the space for newness and renewal to come in 2011. Please call Jan for further information and to make a reservation to take part in our meaningful ritual celebration.

Change In Vacation Plans

By Jean Gold

It was our first vacation driving East without the children. My husband and I would drive from Chicago to Philadelphia, visit with our family there and then go onto Baltimore's Inner Harbor to see the sights before we drove home. Our first Saturday in Philly we decided to begin the day watching our nephew play baseball and then go onto see friends in Newtown. The first event that changed our plans occurred at the ball game when a pop up fly landed on the windshield of our car, shattering the windshield on the passenger side – so now once the game was over, my husband had to take the car to have the windshield replaced. While he was taking care of that, my sister and I, with her two boys, would head back to her house in her car. At the last minute the ballplayer nephew asked if he could ride back with the coach in his pick-up truck and my sister said OK.

On the way back to her house we were in a car accident, while making a left turn a car hit the passenger side of my sister's car. The miracle of the accident was that we had just one nephew in the back seat of the car and he was sitting behind my sister. The back seat behind me was crushed by the impact. My sister suffered from seat belt bruises and my nephew a broken collarbone. The seat belt that I wore probably saved my life.

The second God-Send of the accident was that the friends that we were going to visit in Newtown that afternoon came over to the hospital and realizing that my recovery would take longer than just a hospital stay, immediately volunteered to have me come to their house until I was recovered enough to fly home to Chicago. These friends even placed a bed in their living room so that I wouldn't have to go upstairs at their home. Their kindness and generosity was a true blessing as were the prayers, cards, flowers and balloons that arrived at the hospital from Philly and Chicago friends.

So life took an unexpected turn while we had our plans in place for how we thought our summer would evolve. Instead, there was three weeks of recovery, a flight home and another several months before life returned to what we considered normal. Along the way we saw that the kindness and caring of friends and family were the support that we depended on to see us through each day.

2011 Calendar

January

- 7 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 22 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 23 (Sunday) Mini Retreat (1-5 PM)

February

- 4 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 7 (Monday) Decade Day (7 PM)
- 19 (Saturday) For Women Only

March

- 4 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 19 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 26 (Saturday) Spring Fling

April

- 1 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 16 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 30 (Saturday) In the Company of Trees

May

- 6 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 21 (Saturday) For Women Only

June

- 3 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 18 (Saturday) Summer Sunrise Solstice
- (Saturday) For Women Only

July

- 1 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 16 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 30 (Saturday) Workshop/Mini Retreat

August

- 5 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 20 (Saturday) For Women Only

September

- 2 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 17 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 20 to 29 Stone Circle Ireland Trip

October

- 7 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 15 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 21 to 24 Annual Cruise/Retreat

November

- 4 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 12 (Sunday) Labyrinth Walk
- 19 (Saturday) For Women Only

December

- 2 (Friday) Centering Prayer
- 17 (Saturday) For Women Only
- 18 (Sunday) Winter Solstice

We are the Lotus: Blooming where we are... Retreat Reflections By Margie Gray

The phrase came to me when I reflected on the difficult situations in life. It is easy to feel a sense of frustration, anger, loss, and even despair in what the media promotes as "the worst of times." Yet, these are the moments in which we can have our greatest personal growth. Somewhere along the way, I learned that the lotus grows best in the muck and so I felt an affinity with this beautiful blossom. This was the starting point for a journey of self-discovery.

I had been away from Florida for over a year, and returning from the Upper Midwest, felt like going home. (Although I think we should schedule the summer retreat in January rather than the end of July.) Collaborating with this group of familiar and new faces was a blessing. As we reflected on, shared about, worked with and celebrated our own individual muck, I witnessed the blooming of each spirit. We are all participants in a retreat and I am grateful for the many gifts that I received that day.

There is a saying that we can never really go back home. I disagree. If we expect it all to be the same, we will be disappointed. We are not the same, so why would home be the same. But it can always be a place of love, support, and opportunity to grow. My year plus in the Upper Midwest has taught me a lot, and it is now my home. But coming back to Florida to facilitate this retreat was an opportunity to go back home. I am grateful for my family of sisters, familiar and new, and for the blessings we share when we are gathered in the circle.



Retreat Participants-from left to right-back row: Jody Donovan, Mary Lospinoso, Jean Henry, Harriet Ryan, Angel Bucci, Ann Wlosek, Virginia Strait. Front row: Enri Coll, Margie Gray, Lucy Reba and Gladys Kelly. Photograph taken by Jan Herrick who also participated.

A decorative border of orange pumpkin icons surrounds the text. The pumpkins are arranged in a continuous line along the top, bottom, and sides of the main text area.

Embracing the Feminine

Stone Circle has begun an exciting and enriching collaboration with Nicole Georgi-Costello of New World Wellness in Kissimmee. On Saturday, November 6th, from 2 to 4 PM Nicole and Jan will co-facilitate a workshop focused on “Embracing the Feminine.” During the afternoon we will explore various aspects of our femininity and discuss the impact of modern cultural influences. Our workshop will present and encourage positive ways to achieve and maintain optimum feminine health in mind, body and spirit including light yoga, breath work and guided meditation.

New World Wellness is located at 20 W. Dakin Avenue in historic downtown Kissimmee. It offers a variety of classes, workshops, life enrichment counseling, and events designed to bring about outer and inner peace in a hectic world. Refer to their website www.wellnessdowntown for a full list of services. Nicole is a licensed mental health counselor and yoga instructor. She and Jan are sure to create an enriching experience for participants.

Please call Jan for further information and to make a reservation. Updated information will appear on our website closer to the event.

On January 23, from 1 to 5 PM a Mini-Retreat has been scheduled. Further details about the theme of the retreat and the location where it is to be held will be outlined at a later date.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stone Circle operates as a nonprofit entity whose presence seeks to enhance the feminine milieu for women of the 21st century. We truly rely on the generosity of friends and those who participate in programs.