

SENIOR SCAPE: Find Pearls in the Mire

By Christina Doyle

The other day, a new acquaintance of mine told me she envied my life.

It was a statement in response to the numerous voice work opportunities I have had.

The History and OLN and Rogers channels were glimpses of my new life. Singing professionally and speaking engagements was a road I had not chosen for myself, rather it was an avenue to survive.

My life, I thought, that has endured cancer and knocked on death's door, preparing funeral arrangements and discussing the sad outcome of my illness? you envy my life. You see, I have been working on finding pearls among life's trials and challenges. We might say the old cliché, making lemonade from lemons.

At first I was dumbfounded when she made this statement and yes for once I was at a loss for words.

How does one begin to explain that I had a choice each and every time I was presented with a challenge?

Illness is a bitter pill to swallow; for some it's too many times and some others not as much. Each time I could have become angry, bitter, and asking myself endless questions, such as: Why me? What did I do to deserve that?

However, I chose to be grateful, I chose to be well, I chose to make the best of the time I had, knowing that surviving a rare form of bone cancer, in which there were four documented cases in Canada, was enough of a mountain for me and my family to climb.

But climb we did, and through my deep faith in God, I persevered, and always thought how fortunate I am to be here, to have had the life I had always wanted: a successful career in teaching, healthy and beautiful children and a wonderful husband ? what more could anyone ask for? So, I turned my life into something that others could find respite from, to find hope through my speaking and singing career as a country music artist.

I lent my voice to the CNIB, radio and television in hopes that others would find some comfort. I developed deep roots of endless gratitude. I am still the same old girl, but broken in parts and replaced in others. Metal detectors and I get along great, especially at the airport!

I wanted to share this with you the readers, to help you understand, that we never can judge a book by its cover. There is so much to learn from each other, if we just take the time and listen and share. As I am to celebrate a birthday this month, I pray that you, the reader, take the time to continue to develop your attitude of gratitude, no matter what lies ahead.

We only have today, so why not be happy, grateful and smile, smile? May this September help you find your own pearls of joy, of laughter, of kindness. Remember you are never alone; why not open up to someone and share a part of yourself today.

Seniors' Centre News

The Evergreen Choir starts practicing again on September 7 under the direction of Dr. Richard Heinzle. New members are always welcome. It costs \$50 for the year but you don't have to pay the daily activity fee of \$1. You may register anytime at the Aurora Seniors' Association reception desk.

The Wood Shop is active throughout the year. If you are interested in learning how to carve or want to use the well-equipped wood shop to make something for your home, come out and get involved.

An Aurora Senior Breaks World Records

It's been a busy 3 months for one senior lady. In Queens, New York (April), Erlinda Biondic became the first woman (aged 75-79) in the world to run/walk in a six day race and established (pending ratification) a World Best with 428 km. It has been already accepted by ACU as a Canadian record.

In May, she vacationed by walking the Camino in Spain (800 km) carrying a backpack most of the way.

Only four days later and still jet lagged, she jogged/walked in a race on the Terry Fox Track, Ottawa. She not only smashed Canadian age records for 50 km, 50 miles, 100 km, in 12 hrs. and 24 hrs. but broke the World Best's for 100km, in 12 hrs., and 24 hrs. by significant margins (pending ratification).

Under very windy conditions (40 km gusts toppled or crushed tents) she did 106 km in 24 hrs. At the awards ceremony, Erlinda received the Hans Maier Trophy for being the most inspiring runner, as voted by runners and crews. One runner wondered if it was the performance ?for the ages.?