

November 2020

OWL Café

Optimism,
Wisdom,
and **L**aughter

usOWLs.com

*Project of Michele Jackman
Enterprises and Adventures*



The café is open to share inspiring stories, catch a healthy laugh, or experience an insight that helps you cope with things not going so well.



**NOVEMBER IS USUALLY ABOUT THANKSGIVING &
GIVING THANKS**

LET'S MAKE THIS NOVEMBER MORE ABOUT GLADNESS

When I started to write this edition, somewhat blocked, I grabbed my cup of yogi tea, and laughed out loud. There was a perfect message—"An attitude of gratitude brings opportunities." That is our theme. Things we are **GLAD** about and grateful for. Time to pause and reflect, to lift the mask!

THREE WORDS MARK THIS BEGINNING OF A HOLIDAY SEASON—

GRATITUDE, THANKFUL, GLAD—2020 Almost over...it's time to remind ourselves...

What's the difference in these words? "Getting to Glad" is a better do-it-yourself emotional choice, competing with other groups of *emotional soup* in three other general categories:

1. MAD/Anger,
2. SAD/sick and tired and
3. FEAR, panic or worry.

Getting to GLAD! Just asking yourself, "Why am I glad about this?"... calms a rattled person. There is always something to be thankful or glad about to offset what we are experiencing. It remains an important juggling, balancing act and words do work!

Upon leaving England for the last time to fight in foreign wars, poet Lord Byron wrote some lines in the 19th Century:

*When Albion's lessening could grieve or **glad mine eye** . . . (paint a different view)*

And life's enchanted cup but sparkles still the brim.



WHINING WITH HONESTY is still essential to health. Why Wednesday?

We usually need a break from being nice, after camouflaging real opinions or feelings. Monday, Tuesday presents some moments, but we move on. It gets harder by Wednesday to "bite our tongues", maybe where we get the term's crabby (pinchers out) "grumpy", etc..

Even if we had some respite from COVID in the garden, with masked friends, or just relaxing we can have rapid frustration *build-up*. By Wednesday, something is bound to dampen OWL Optimism, and dry up humor reserves given our new normal.

When I was leading intensive 5-day therapy groups for the Army, we called it "Killer Wednesday". After two days of being careful, not taking things personally, minor conflicts became personal and dangerous leading to explosions of emotion—no more being nice guy or gal. Couples experience this in 24-hour COVID proximity. But truth emerged and could be fixed next day. There was even improvement in honesty overall. It was because of the need to camouflage our feelings and avoiding appropriate "feedback". Because we called had a sign NO WHINING, then WHINING WEDNESDAY—it became FUN. People vented stored up emotions and the group helped with a solution—we were teaching appropriate feedback and not aggression. When I consider my own technology woes these days, after a Monday-Tuesday adventure—I am worn down, frustrated, and depressed about how much time it stole from me! This is one reason we hold our OWL Café on Wednesday! We can be ourselves—still with empathy for others.

Getting to GLAD means "seeing the light" at the end of the long, long tunnel in our battles with safety and health. But there is still a very dark tunnel ahead at times. Coping starts with acknowledging what we are NOT GLAD about, in order to covert them as opportunities. And take action to overcome these emotions. Then, we have replaced *whining* with real wine, or a beverage and toast to self!

I still have to convert these:

- I am not glad about the sustained COVID lockdown in so many areas of life work or fun.
- I am not glad I have to rethink/redesign my business until COVID fear ends, if it does.
- I am not glad COVID could abduct my *sense of humor* and I must stay on my toes and fight back.
- However, I am glad this horrid election cycle, the recent fires, floods, and other disasters are over for now, and the light at the end is tunnel gets bigger and brighter.

AND I am still GLAD to be alive. I still possess some "emotional fortitude", a rebellion against fear, a sense of humor on call to cheer me on. I seek creative alternatives to the usual Thanksgiving month's activity (eating too much), but I will not lose the joy in it, colors, smells, memories of a table of love, laughter and sharing. Things I CAN do to offset "NOTs" and knots!

**AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT OF OPTIMISM,
HAVE MORE FUN ON WEDNESDAY!**

**Mother Goose: "WEDNESDAY'S Child is full of woe..."
In other versions it is Friday—maybe why we created happy hour?**



**AT USOWLS.COM WE ARE GLAD ABOUT THESE TRENDS:
Before the mask and after it is necessary...**

One can extend one's license and no tests until after COVID says the Governor of California. Workers both old and young are getting to go back to work, stay at-home work is allowed more often for all ages and best for us, kids are going back to school in hybrid modes. This is also a time to review Social Security options for better health plans. We are GLAD we will have to buy gas again when we can go places again. We are getting prepared for any surge of virus without unnecessary anger and fear and using good sense in outings. I am GLAD a hospital is 5 minutes away for me should I get sick. But I pray for others who would have to go or wait several hours should they get sick. I am GLAD TELE-MED is a growing option for OWLs and caregivers. New service helps family members in rural areas and avoids long drives or visits in waiting rooms. ZOOM, is an easy (yes) excellent way to remain connected and cheer others on.

**THIS YEAR COOK UP SOME GLADNESS WITH MORE OPTIMISM AND CONTROL.
GET-TO GLAD AND STAY THERE!**



**ZOOM FEEDBACK FROM THE CAFÉ SESSION
OCTOBER 16,2020:
" From the Booze Of Oktoberfest to the Boos!"
and hoots we need.**

The costume most worn—"princess", but that changed into "cowgirl" for some of us wanting six-shooters, too, as a tribute to Dale Evans, Annie Oakley. And there were many others we forget about.

The conversation was about how we begin costuming ourselves for Halloween –and then "camouflaging" ourselves in costumes that represent our careers, activities to keep safe or to blend in. But now as we grow into retirement and new choices, even when still working we can overcome the need for camouflage and really explore new or emerging areas of self that were hidden from view: our earlier talents on hold, our interests, all the learning still out there for us, our important voice and wisdom, and new ways to contribute.



Next event:
Third Wednesday, November 18 @ 10 to 11 AM

Reservations:
Make sure to request an invitation.
Email your name to **Lou** at lou.thompson@sbcglobal.net.
You will get your reservation Monday, November 16 in your inbox.



The Five balloon Symbol—Longevity = getting it done, done and right, connected to others, engaged in works of love and play, and rising up to “whatever” with GLADness 100 ways!

**CENTENARIAN OF THE MONTH?
CELEBRATING MRS. PEGGY HAYES:**

I am GLAD I found her FRONT PAGE story in the paper this week. Peggy Hayes, a person I know from decades of seeing her do her stuff as a volunteer is still out there thriving. She was a docent for decades at the Santa Barbara Spanish Colonial Courthouse, a popular spot, where the art of various tileworks are displayed, and where she interpreted the giant mural depicting romantic stories from time and history in a majestic courtroom setting.

She is still “working from the home” as a volunteer archivist and has a regular gang she meets to laugh with like our OWL Café. Asked what she would tell all ages coming up: Her father told her—“Straighten Up and Fly Right.” These became lyrics in 1943.

“Straighten up and fly right! Straighten up and stay right,
Cool down papa don’t blow your top!
Ain’t no use diving (giving up), that’s just jiving (an excuse)...”

***What’s a song or message that keep you going and
GLAD when you hear it?***

READ ON... for a more amazing connection to this story...



**IN WARTIME 1943, SINGER NAT KING COLE WROTE THIS SONG
“STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT”,** a tribute to his father with the same
“twinkle in his eye” that Peggy also launches daily to cope and stay Glad.

Based on a Black folktale, Nat King Cole put this moral to music. That song was a hit and sent him rising high as the number one Black singer in the 1940s. The song was based on the *legend of a monkey clinging tightly in an unwelcome joyride, to the neck of a buzzard, who if taking him down might eat him. The monkey only jumps off when it is safe and survives.*

IT IS A METAPHOR FOR NOT LETTING any buzz, buzzards, scams or depressing thoughts get us.

Check these out on Youtube videos. *After his death, his daughter, also a singer recorded a duet with him and this song. A very touching album with her singing along. Do listen for an inspiration across time.*

Ride that buzzard and don't let them ride or consume you!



**FINAL WISDOM OF THE MONTH, THANKSGIVING:
MEET MYTHICAL COUSIN PHOENIX, ALSO A RAPTOR
IN SOME INTERNATIONALLY TOLD VERSIONS IT IS
ACENTENARIAN AFTER 100 YEARS IN THE FIRES OF LIFE**

Leaves have fallen at this time of year in reds, browns, and purples...

The Phoenix, mythical raptor rises out of a long 100 year burning fire, a hell of sorts for sure, stripping away old plumes and a useless body. Not giving up, but recreates itself, rising and creating a new self. The bird, more colorful than ever, captures the hot updrafts— and “rises up out of ashes” moving into a second wind again and again! This has become a popular metaphor for coping with COVID in many clinical circles and settings. It also works as a Thanksgiving story.

The Lesson: *We have to rise above what's happening to us. We have to adapt and create a new life for ourselves with a few important and necessary changes.*

An older population, have been thwarted, stereotyped, maybe even more now, saying we are “most at risk” based on age rather than health status. This mythical ***Phoenix*** creates a new life in a new structure of life. It is usually

portrayed in new colors, mostly red plume and purple feathers renewed. A **Phoenix** regenerates itself and creates new life forces in itself that lift into cooler zones with a clear confident and newly capable temperament.

We have to emerge from any and all fires with renewed energy, rising and not falling for attacks on us, and must navigate our own new course, keeping our moral compass intact for new adventures. For me it means **let go** of familiar rituals and create new or better versions of all my routines while hanging onto values that are not negotiable.

My final Yogi tea message:

“Let your energy be used to build and not to destroy”

**CELEBRATE IN SAFE AND CREATIVE WAYS!
YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID!**

**NEXT MONTH—OWL Mail ideas:
The gift ideas of things you could use.**



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