



usOWLs.com *LookOut*

Loving Yourself is the Best Valentine You Can Get

My Valentine Message to You is about LOVE

Did you know it is estimated that 150 million cards and gifts are exchanged? That figure does not even capture kind words and phone calls to folks we love. This is the second most popular holiday second to Christmas and the Winter Holiday season.



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WOW . . . Bet you did not know that Owls live in groups called **Parliaments**. After eavesdropping on a discussion of mating by many birds while he was in a dream state, the poet Chaucer wrote his classic and the first Valentine's Day tribute (1382) promoting the day's association with love. Isn't it interesting that in much of the world and specifically in Australia, the use of the word mate means "friend."

In our case, our newsletter every month enables **us birds of a feather to fly together** so we can LOVE our new lease on life together and keep

our true selves refreshed, informed, and enjoying practical opportunities to keep on growing and learning from each other with new information at our fingertips.

Of course, the OWL lives in Chaucer's dream tree, with its first negative association as forewarning about death. In this case, the owl forewarns that one is already dead if not living a full life. Perhaps, Chaucer was influenced by an earlier 12th Century Sufi poem where the hoopoe bird, obviously an OWL, leads the other birds to listen to each other as they state their special significance and symbolism. In this poem, Hoopoe will guide them to a lake in which they see their own reflection, thereby LOVING themselves forever. What is interesting for our time is that in this story, each bird drops out of the journey to this lake, each having a specific fault or bad habit, and then offering an excuse. UM,

Sound familiar? The happy ending is that after seeing the errors of their ways they continue their journey; going on to see the reflection of all 30 birds plus their own, as the truth about life becomes clear. Seeing themselves as part of a larger loving and living whole is the key message for me as a founder of usowls.com

Hello—are you doing that so you see yourself as increasingly lovable and loving, living, laughing as you mature? Can you see how you are changing for the BETTER? How is your involvement with your current situation changing you and it? Quantum Physics now tells us there is an interaction. We **usowls** are not surprised.

As we reflect upon our first Valentines, hopefully we recall the simple, hand-done cards, and the candies proclaiming "BE MINE." Abraham Maslow, famed motivational expert, tells us in a hierarchical description of life (not defined as years) that life is an upward spiral from survival to ultimate interdependence, self actualization, and love is one of the critical pathways.



Image by Shelly Shapero

If we fast forward, a recent scientific book by researcher Barbara Fredrickson (LOVE2.0, 2012) calls LOVE the supreme emotion that impacts everything we feel, think, do, and become. Highly analytical and respectable, this research verifies that MORE than just seeking happiness and optimism, feelings of love (in general), can improve mental and physical health; and yes, contribute to longevity. Fredrickson seems to define LOVE as those micro-moments where we feel connected to others, and where cardio-vascular health is enhanced. When I teach leadership courses, like most others, I promote Leading others from the heart rather than the mind, which is a proven strategy for successful leadership.

Our **usowls** candy message is: Be WITH me, and ME with YOU, and this refers to the parliament of owls we are co-creating across the country—all of us yearning and seeking the most life possible with more fulfillment—moment to moment. This includes greater resilience gained from interactions with other positive folks of ALL ages.

Next month we will share our findings from a Valentine's Day First Owl Works seminar—where attendees will focus on what they see in the Lake of Life. The March theme is about giving notice and taking steps.

Michele Jackman, MSW, MA – Chief Executive Officer and Marketing Director – usOWLS



The usOWL Minute



usOWLs found a great website we think you'll enjoy. [Road Scholar](#), the not-for-profit leader in educational travel since 1975, offers 6,500 educational tours in all 50 states and 150 countries. The educational adventures are created by Elderhostel, Inc., the not-for-profit world leader in lifelong learning since 1975.

What we like about this site is how much information and travel choices it offers. If you like to travel, we think you'll find some unusual adventures here: Walking, birding, opera, painting, food & wine, and the [list](#) goes on. If you're new to travel, start out with a [small group](#) and choose the activity level that best suits your needs.

usOWLs is Loving Computers



I **love** my computers, and I can spend hours just sitting in front of them creating websites, surfing, playing games, and other activities. I sometimes forgot to get up and walk around and exercise, leading to stiff knees and backaches. Also I am not as sharp after the many hours of lack of movement except for my fingers hitting the keyboard. I forget to phone or see friends. I can become a recluse, just me and my

computers.

Why am I confessing this? Because I need to tell you how important it is to leave your chair and not let your devices rule your life. Get up from your desk, walk around the block, call a friend or have lunch with him or her. Join a club of like minded people such as Parliament clubs being created throughout the Nation. Although it is said that playing games, such as Crosswords, Sudoku, stabilizes and increases mentality agility, too much can cause stagnation of the body and mind.

So, my suggestion of this month is to limit computer time, get up from your chair, go outside, exercise, and interact with people. You may go through withdrawal, but in the end you will feel great!

Patricia Brem, MBA, MA – Chief Operations Officer – usOWLs

Love Videos?

usOWLs' Video Archives has Some Great "Movies" for You

The most watched video in the usOWLs.com archives is . . .



Rita Hayworth Is Stayin' Alive

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If you have a favorite video you want usOWLs.com to know about, email the link to ltompson@usowls.com

Lou Thompson – Director of Creative Technology – usOWLs

Coming in March

- Recap of Valentine's Eve Mixer in Santa Barbara, CA
- Take a Stand! Be passionate, share your vision, make a difference!



usOWLs.com is looking out for you . . . spiritually, mentally, and physically . . . with tips for living, working, retiring, and traveling. We hope you'll join us on the ride!

Sincerely,

Michele Jackman
Chief Executive Officer and Marketing Director

Patricia Brem
Chief Operations Officer

Lou Thompson
Director of Creative Technology

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