

From the Heart. . .

. . . Lifeskills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Sleeping in and Mountain Views-good for the soul & body

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 7, 2011)

Just a month ago, my sister retired after years as a physical therapy administrator for a California county hospital. One of the first things you did was sleep in for hours and sometimes days. That was her first taste of retirement. Then she went off with one of her girlfriends to a small cottage on a bay, did some girl shopping, walking the beach, and enjoying the beautiful sunsets.

Her next recreation spot was in Colorado and the Grand Teton with her hubby, at a four star resort. Not only did she relish the incredible food in their restaurant, but also soaking several times in the deep tub in her suite. Then off to Yellowstone to give camping a try. Since her hubby went for the luxury route first, she agreed to roughing it with him. At this moment in time, she is laying on a lounge chair watching a geyser do its thing as the sun sets over the mountain tops. She has been sending me pictures of each spot. And am I jealous! But so happy for my sister who needed this kind of recreation and entertainment for years.

Are you jealous yet too? What kind of recreation do you dream about right in your home, around the corner, and the world? Over the years as I have written this lifeskill byline, I have offered all kinds of resources to check out. I will offer several again this

month. For right now, I would love to hear from you. What delightful things are you about to do or have just experienced? Tell me what your dream ideas are for relaxation, vacations near and far, and just playing and having fun (email: seekreachachieve@gvtc.com). I will include your play times in the next article along with some resources to expand your horizons for yourself and family. Look forward to hearing from you. To entice you to share your fun spots, here are a couple pics my sister sent me. And by all means, include those special spots in your own back yard and community.



Sharon L. Benedict, MS, ACC, is a certified life/wellness coach-consultant, specializing in lifeskills, wellness, and creative arts development for individuals, businesses and organizations (www.harvestenterprises-sra.com). She welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com.

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Recreation - A Do Nothing Day

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 14, 2011)

“It takes a lot of time to be a genius, you have to sit around so much doing nothing, really doing nothing.” Does anyone relate to Gertrude Stein’s quick wit here from her *Everybody’s Autobiography* (1937)? Or do you feel guilty being idle because it feels like you are doing nothing worthwhile?

Activity is all around us every moment of the day. We work. We attend meetings. We go to school. We go grocery shopping. We eat. We mow the lawn. We vacuum our house. We pay the bills. We do our taxes. The “We” activities go on and on.

Floyd Dell, American author and critic (1887-1967), declared that “Idleness is not doing nothing. Idleness is being free to do anything.” Sounds good to me. So, this week I practiced it. Oops! Did I say “I practiced?” Isn’t that an activity in itself? Feels like I am in a circular pattern here! And isn’t “doing” an activity attached to “nothing” also an oxymoron?

Yet, oh what a difference a day of idleness or just “doing nothing” does for the body and soul! So who cares about the linguistic loopholes here anyway. What kind of “doing nothing” did I do for that day? First, I didn’t touch the computer all day; and that’s a wonder for me! All day long I didn’t “plan” anything; didn’t have a list in my head or on paper. And for those who know me, that’s another wonder!

I lightly drifted outside and sat in my backyard for about an hour ... first closing my eyes and even tuning out the freeway noise near my house. With a Koi pond in my backyard, I listened to the little waterfall and stream sounds flowing into the pond. Watched the Koi leisurely move around occasional leaping frog or two. Saw for the first time this Fall a vibrant-colored American Goldfinch visit our bird feeder, along with a hummingbird nearby trying out a flowering sage bush.

I then simply wandered into the house and visited the couch and very soon fell asleep. Don't know how long I slept. I woke up hungry and made myself a glass of milk with a scrumptious almond butter, banana, raisin, blueberry spread, cottage cheese, and honey sandwich on whole wheat bread. I haven't had one for a long time. Every swig of milk between each bite made me feel like an eight year old kid again!

What did I do next with my "do nothing" day? I turned TV on and watched four episodes in a row of the old 1980s mystery show, "Matlock." It was so much fun that I watched a fifth one! By that time, the evening sky began to shine with stars. I pattered around picking up a few clothes to put away, then a few books lying around, dusted furniture a little here and there, no more no less. Had a light dinner of leftovers, leisurely walked down to the mailbox and enjoyed the cooler evening along the way. With my day of "doing nothing" coming to an end, I fluffed up my bed pillows, got comfortable, read a few minutes, and fell fast asleep.

You are probably asking yourself right now, "How was that a do nothing day?" Good question! My day illustrates that a "do nothing" day is in the eyes of the "do nothing" person. Everyone has a different way to relax and chill. Sometimes, the do nothing day may consist of only one thing, sleep! For others, the range is infinite. What

do you consider a “do nothing” day for you? How do you share it...with yourself, spouse, friend, your child? Do nothing days can be some of the most memorable in your life when it offers you the chance to wind down and give yourself that moment to recharge your “want to”. For so many of us, we run on “shoulds” most of the time that eventually wear us out. We then risk losing sight of what is really important in our lives that offers a sense of purpose and place in everyday life.

So, if you haven’t had a “do nothing” day lately, make room for one this coming week or weekend. Here are a few more samples of “do nothing” perspectives to consider as you start your “do nothing” day.

“Don't underestimate the value of Doing Nothing, of just going along, listening to all the things you can't hear, and not bothering.” Pooh's Little Instruction Book, inspired by A. A. Milne

“You have to allow a certain amount of time in which you are doing nothing in order to have things occur to you, to let your mind think.” Mortimer Adler

“Never lose sight of this important truth, that no one can be truly great until he has gained a knowledge of himself, a knowledge which can only be acquired by occasional retirement.” Johann Georg von Zimmermann

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From the Heart...

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Help Make Boerne Their Home

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 21, 2011)

I know you probably wonder what this title is all about; and what does it have to do with this month's lifeskill, Recreation/Entertainment. Well, let me explain. I am on the board of the Hill Country Council for the Arts (HCCArts). About a year ago we took on the responsibility to bring awesome public art to the Boerne gateways and cityscape throughout our community. Since then we have written the Boerne Public Art Master Plan, received an official city resolution of support, and have established a public art committee to oversee the selection process on their behalf. HCCArts' public art committee currently has several public artworks being considered for the city of Boerne. As you can imagine, it's been quite a ride for the past couple years and still happening!

You also may have noticed two very large bronze Longhorns near the Main Plaza since August 2010. These renown Robert Summers Longhorns were generously loaned to us by the Texas Trees Foundation of Dallas, to help us bring awareness and excitement about the public art master plan; and the cultural and economic benefits of having monumental artworks for residents



and visitors to enjoy. These larger-than-life artworks have graced our Main Plaza where

hundreds, possibly thousands, of residents and visitors to Boerne have enjoyed viewing them.

While caring for the installation and landscaping, and HCCArts sponsoring a variety of public art events and programs, I witnessed hundreds of families who live here and are visiting Boerne for a fun weekend of recreation take pictures of their kids alongside these Longhorns. Many have told me they think having public art like this is absolutely wonderful. There was one gentleman who asked me how they came to Boerne. He and his wife have been considering moving to Boerne and said that seeing public art like this made their decision that day to move to our community very soon. Every comment I heard have been a great encouragement to us with all the efforts HCCArts, the city, Boerne Chamber of Commerce, and many volunteers have put into this project over the past year.

These Longhorns on loan will shortly be leaving us to go back in storage in Wyoming. In gratitude to the Texas Trees Foundation, city of Boerne, and other strategic partners, these Longhorns have significantly awakened keen interest and awareness of the cultural value and economic impact of public art in our community. According to Jeff Haberstroh, Boerne City Councilman, "We have seen throughout the longhorn's stay with us just how public art benefits our community. Public art . . .

- Identifies a community and offers a sense of place for residents and visitors.
- Beautifies, transforms city landscape and enhances quality of life.
- Personifies the unique character of our community.
- Creates dialogue and a better understanding of the importance of art.

- Supports creative ideas and helps shape the identity of the City of Boerne and residents.
- Is freely available for viewing and appreciation.
- Reflects our Texas history .
- Invests in expanding the quality of life through public/private partnerships.”

So, before October ends and the Longhorns hit the trail, be sure to view them and say your goodbyes. And if you are excited as we are about having them make Boerne their home, you have a last chance right now to donate to the Boerne Public Art Fund at www.HCCArts.org payment center. You may wonder about their cost to purchase these renown bronzes—\$150,000. Although it’s always great to receive the big bucks, having just 1500 people donate \$100 each will easily cover the cost to keep them right in Boerne. But time has almost run out. Whether these Longhorns stay or go at the end of the next couple weeks, all donated public art funds received will be exclusively used to support bringing monumental artworks to Boerne.

And don’t forget...***If you have taken pictures of the Longhorns with your friends and family, click our Facebook page link on our website and post your pictures to celebrate the memories with all of us.*** I also encourage you to join the HCCArts (www.HCCArts.org) and subscribe to keep up-to-date on what’s happening in the arts in the Texas Hill Country.

“Public space, public art, and pedestrian scaled gateway markers should be incorporated into neighborhood designs.”
City of Boerne Master Plan Update, September 2006

Civic Campus Recommendation: “Install innovative public art that interprets history and local environment/nature.”
Rudat Report to City of Boerne, 2008

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From the Heart...

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Recreation...Weaving Through Life

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 28, 2011)

When it comes to having fun while you work, there has been one thing in my life that definitely kept me whistling while I worked. Many of you may not know, but I was a commission artist for more than 20 years and during that time managed the University California Davis Craft Center back in the 1970s. Does that date me! Those years on campus and producing artworks was one of my most treasured experiences.

What did I produce? I produced weavings and fabricated jewelry for individuals, galleries, and interior design companies...mostly in California and some in Texas. My weavings consisted of functional clothing, accessories, furnishings, linen, and two- and three-dimensional sculptures, utilizing my welding skills with metals also. One key reason I no longer produced crafted art was a major health challenge that brought me to a stop. I began a whole new journey to recover my health and life. Fast forward another 20 years, and I became a lifeskills consultant and coach, especially for aspiring and established artists.

I wanted to help people shortcut their trials and tribulations in life and particularly as a professional artist. I then wrote a lifeskills book and used it at conference, seminars, and staff development workshops. The book will soon be published. So, keep your eyes peeled at online retailers for *Celebrating Your Journey, Lifeskills in Synergy*—hopefully out there sometime in November. It's been an adventure all the way!

Another fast forward to this year brings me to what this article title is all about. I decided to get back into weaving after a very long hiatus. This was one of my fun things and recreation during this year. I actually found a floor loom in Austin that was built only six months (early 1970) after my own weaving loom was built and by the same family owned company. I went online and found the classic textbooks I used, plus some new ones; and bid and won all kinds of yarns on Ebay.

Amazingly, I then got an email from a woman in Virginia who years ago bought all my weaving studio equipment, accessories, and supplies. I had more than a dozen table, floor, and belt/inkle looms...a fully equipped studio. One floor loom was larger than a six foot couch. She wanted to keep in touch with the woman who put together a couple weaving sample notebooks of patterns I created.

When I told her I was getting back into weaving, she sent me my sample notebooks! What a time I had going down memory lane when I reviewed the patterns I used and what I had done those many years earlier. Then, to top it off, my husband, who is a very creative person, volunteered to repair parts of the looms, and build some of the expensive accessories every weaver needs for their craft. What fun we are both having working with our hands again...and away from the computer!

So, I converted my dining room into a studio. And this week I measured my “warp” out and have begun to “dress” the loom. For anyone out there who is also a weaver, these terms are a natural for you. I will soon be weaving again for the first time in over 20 years. But it’s all coming back to me with each step. I feel like I never stopped weaving throughout my life.

Is there lately something you have been thinking about, something you used to love doing but had to move on to other things in life? Well, maybe, this is your time too, to resurrect those fond, fun times again.

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