

Living with Grace and Passion

A Seasonal Newsletter from Peggy Patenaude
Summer 2008

Coming Up in 2008

The Couples Refresher

A Follow-up to "Keeping Your Love Alive"
Saturday, September 20, 9:30AM
to Sunday, September 21, 1:30PM
Falmouth, MA

Register by August 1 to save \$25.

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### My One Wild and Precious Life: A Women's Retreat

Friday, October 3, 7:30PM to  
Sunday, October 5, 1:00PM  
Genesis Spiritual Life Center,  
Westfield, MA  
413-562-3627

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My One Wild and Precious Life: A Women's Retreat

Friday, November 7, 7:00PM to
Sunday, November 9, 1:00PM
Sacred Hearts Retreat Center,
Wareham, MA

Register by August 1 to save \$20.

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### One Light Service

September 28 & October 26  
Peggy will be the guest speaker  
for the 10AM Service at  
One Light: A Center for Spiritual  
Transformation, W. Yarmouth.  
[www.peaceoncapecod.org](http://www.peaceoncapecod.org)

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For information & registration on all programs:

Contact Peggy at (508) 548-9149
or timeoutretreats@comcast.net

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### For Peggy's complete calendar visit her website

[www.timeoutretreats.com](http://www.timeoutretreats.com)

## Peg's Ponderings: Judge Not...

Recently I had the pleasure of going on my first Whale Watch. Though we sighted many whales, it really wasn't just 30 ton mammals that I watched that day. Let me share a story.

As our guide spotted a whale, she announced its location, and all on board quickly made their way to the side of the boat where the whale was to be seen. One time, a group of us rushed across the ship through the inside deck, only to be stopped short by a man blocking the open door to the other side as he took pictures of the whales. Needless to say, I was frustrated and angry at this apparently selfish person! Was he not oblivious to the needs of the other whale watchers! Feeling self-righteous, I piped up and said, "Could you please move so we can see too?"

Fortunately life has a way of showing us more than we bargain for. Shortly afterwards, I witnessed this same "selfish" man approach a stranger and offer his sweater for the stranger's wife. And then a bit later I watched this same "selfish man" sitting at a table so lovingly and playfully interacting with his three little daughters. What can I say, except, what a gift this whale watching experience proved to be.

Obviously, I watched more than whales that day. I watched myself quickly pass judgment and label another, and gratefully, I watched myself open my eyes to the true humanity and kindness of the same person.

I wonder how often we settle for a snapshot version of someone and fail to get the panoramic view. It's so easy to make a quick judgment based on a single incident. How we stress ourselves out with minor irritations, inflicting pain on ourselves alone! Perhaps it is human nature, but I for one would like to be more tolerant. After all, in my oblivious moments, I too have been totally unaware of the impact of my own behavior. Perhaps you have too?

How might we overcome a tendency to be quick to judge? It might help to remember the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, "There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us that it behooves all of us not to talk about the rest of us!" Jesus too had something to say about this topic: "Judge not, lest you be judged. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?" Ouch!

Let us not judge *ourselves* either for our imperfections, but let us strive to be more kind and gentle to all, including ourselves. Nobody's perfect. It's been said that the way to move out of judgment is to move into gratitude. If we look for the best in ourselves and others, there is much to be grateful for. If we keep the focus on all that is right and good, we will not succumb to the lure of negativity. May we all be blessed this summer with many opportunities to watch and learn and grow.



## Passing It On

*Stories of Awe & Abundance* by Jose Hobday

This little 1995 paperback by Native American Sr. Jose Hobday is one of my all-time favorites! Speaking as one who learns from my own life experiences, as well as from others' real life stories, I have gleaned much insight and wisdom from this first-rate storyteller. Whether it's a reflection on a childhood incident of spilled milk, her Iroquois mother's way of prayer or a flight to a conference, Hobday has a unique gift of intertwining life and spirituality which leaves the reader with a poignant message in each of her very brief vignettes.

### *The StoryBin: Stories and Parables for Positive Living*

This internet collection of stories, poems and parables is an excellent resource for motivational speakers, retreat facilitators and ministers. It can be found at [www.storybin.com](http://www.storybin.com) and is where I located the story for *A Little Soul Food* in this newsletter. StoryBin is a gold mine of topics and wisdom and even offers the opportunity to submit your own story. Check it out!

### *WalkTheTalk.Com Resources for Personal and Professional Success.*

Recently, I had the pleasure of discovering [www.walkthetalk.com](http://www.walkthetalk.com) as another valuable internet resource. Products include DVDs, CDs, books, complete training programs and more. I personally have bought two DVDs: *The Simple Truths of Service*, a very touching true story of Johnny, a bagger at a grocery store, who has down syndrome and *212 The Extra Degree*, an excellent motivational resource. Both of these can be found on the link for *Inspirational Movies*. Whether you purchase any of the products or not, it can be uplifting to just watch one of these short movies now and then in the comfort of your own computer chair!

## Recent Events

### **My One Wild and Precious Life Women's Retreat** Genesis Spiritual Life Center, Westfield, MA, May 2 - 4, 2008



A small but lively group graced Genesis with their presence in the spring. A dance at the closing ritual sent these women on their way to continue living their one, wild and precious lives.



### **Roper St. Francis Healthcare Mission Team Retreat** Johns Island, SC, May 13, 2008



Thirty-eight chaplains, CPE students, patient advocates and other members of Mission Staff from South Carolina hospitals took time out to renew their purpose and commitment to serving the sick. Each brought and shared a symbol of what his/her ministry meant to them.

### **Roper and Bon Secours St. Francis Hospitals Nurses' Retreats** Charleston, SC, May 14, 2008

Nurses from two Charleston hospitals gathered to reflect on their mission: *Healing all people with compassion, faith and excellence*. It was truly a privilege to meet such dedicated healthcare professionals and facilitate their retreats.



## A Little Soul Food

**The Cookie Thief** by Valerie Cox

A woman was waiting at an airport one night with several long hours before her flight. She hunted for a book in the airport shops, bought a bag of cookies and found a place to drop.

She was engrossed in her book, but happened to see that the man sitting beside her, as bold as could be, grabbed a cookie or two from the bag in between, which she tried to ignore to avoid a scene.

So she munched the cookies and watched the clock, as the gutsy cookie thief diminished her stock. She was getting more irritated as the minutes ticked by, thinking, "If I wasn't so nice, I would blacken his eye."

With each cookie she took, he took one too. When only one was left, she wondered what he would do. With a smile on his face, and a nervous laugh, he took the last cookie and broke it in half.

He offered her half, as he ate the other. She snatched it from him and thought, "Oh, brother. This guy has some nerve and he's also rude, why he didn't even show any gratitude!"

She had never known when she had been so galled and sighed with relief when her flight was called. She gathered her belongings and headed to the gate, refusing to look back at the thieving ingrate.

She boarded the plane, and sank in her seat. Then she sought her book, which was almost complete. As she reached in her baggage, she gasped with surprise. There was her bag of cookies, in front of her eyes.

If mine are here, she moaned in despair, the others were his, and he tried to share. Too late to apologize, she realized with grief that she was the rude one, the ingrate, the thief!