

Wild Flower

GROW INSPIRED

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Gone Country

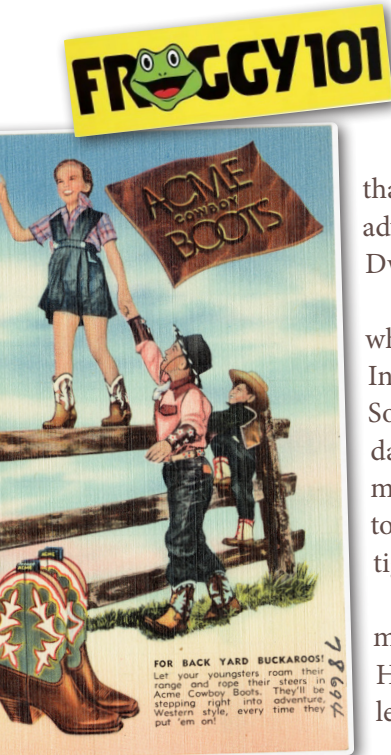
There was a period in my life —the 1990s—where I was enthralled with country music. This was back when country music was good. I'm not going to pretend to be an expert at early country music—Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, Hank Williams, etc. God bless those artists, but the truth is, I haven't listened to them enough to really *know* them. Instead, the country music that speaks to me is Brooks & Dunn, Wynona, Tim McGraw, Alan Jackson, George Strait, and Shania Twain—just to name a few. I listened to these artists pretty heavily 1993-1995, until I got to college and discovered STAR 98.7 FM. I'm Gen X, and Gen X kids, like many before us, were radio kids. The radio was a viable source of music. I loved the radio! I had all my favorite stations and knew all the names of

the various deejays. So during my country foray, I listened to a local country station, FROG 95.1 FM. It was super popular in my area—and probably the greater LA area as well. There's a memorable bumper sticker bearing the call sign and a frog's face right in the middle—a bumper sticker that became ubiquitous in Southern California. A similar one advertising an east-coast station appeared in the background of Dwight Shrute's desk in *The Office*.

There used to be a restaurant/tavern near where I grew up where kids would go to line dance in the evenings. It was called In Cahoots, and I just discovered there is an In Cahoots in OC. So if you live nearby, you can go and experience late-night line dancing! My town, Yorba Linda, also hosts a one-day country music festival every September called **Boots on Main**. If you go to either of these, be sure to wear your best **Justins** and some tight, **blingy 'Miss Me' jeans**.

With my high school years being the heyday of 90s country, most of my high school dances consisted of line dances—Sadie Hawkins or not—so that everyone could crowd the floor. It lessened the awkwardness of couple dancing.

"I wish I had relaxed more instead of worrying about where my feet were stepping."



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I went to In Cahoots one time for a boot-scoot boogie and had fun—I was maybe 22 years old. I wish I had relaxed more as I line danced, though, instead of worrying about where my feet were stepping. It was a challenge for me to try the different steps (I had not practiced enough beforehand), but I loved the music and the company, and so it's a fun memory for me.

This month I interviewed my friend Michelle Pohl who is an



amazing artist and the director of makeup for the Laguna Beach Festival of Arts' Pageant of the Masters! She has appeared in the pageant as a cast member since she was age five. Then a few years ago, she took a break from the cast and took a full-time position on staff overseeing 100 volunteers who apply makeup for the pageant's cast members! She's got some great photos to share. I really hope you enjoy my interview with her. ✂



Inspiration: Poetry

June

Henry Meade Bland

Green of the earth, blue of the sky, Flash
of the stream as it ripples by ! Bud of the
flower, song of the bird, — How can one
think an unhappy word

Smile of the child, joy of the youth,
Revel of both in the sunshine of Truth;
Stir of the wind and hum of the bee, —
Goes it not all to the 'heart of me?

Faith of the woman, strength of the
man; Flash of the rain, and the rainbow
span! Joy is out in the world at play, —
Is it not good, this new June day?

In Yosemite and Other Poems, 1920

*WildFlower is a monthly publication
featuring writing, interviews, stories,
designs, observations, recommendations,
encouragement and reflections on faith
and creativity.*

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otherwise credited.

Malaga Moments, a haiku sequence

Maeve O'Sullivan

baggage carousel turning
a young girl in pink shoes

•
silent cheerleaders in the breakfast
garden — these acacias

•
dozens of umbrellas opening light
Spanish drizzle

•
dogs gallop
in the dried-up stream — Easter
Monday

•
Crow's Rock two tides meet at its
isthmus

•
in between chapels these dry holy
water fonts — Malaga Cathedral

•
airport departures a bird flies in &
lands

Smithereens Literary Magazine, 2019

My Heart Holds A Secret

Becky Stewart

If you looked into my diary

You wouldn't find it there.

There'd be only tear-stained gapes And
vows that I did not care.

If you looked through all my papers
You'd find nothing at all,

'Cause the pages that you're looking for,
Where lost, | don't recall.

If you had looked into my eyes

You would have found it there. The
moment for that came much too late
And now these eyes are bare.

The time has passed for you to know
My love as it was then.

My heart holds its secret well.

Microcosm, 1981

*Microcosm is the student literary publication of
Copiah-Lincoln [Mississippi] Junior College -
Humanities Division. Fall, 1981, v.9*

Spotlight on Artist Michelle Pohl

Please tell us a little about yourself.

I'm Michelle Pohl. My husband Adam and I have two kids: Hudson is finishing seventh grade, and Lorelai is finishing her junior year of high school. We've lived in Yorba Linda since 2009. Adam and I both grew up in So Cal: Adam's from Rancho Cucamonga and I grew up in Lake Forest. So Yorba Linda felt like a halfway point.



Pageant cast members depict the Depew Memorial Fountain, which is featured in Indianapolis. Michelle poses at the top!

artist, inspiration is everywhere, all the time. Most artists are sensitive, and it's two sides of a coin. On one hand, you feel everything very deeply—and that's trying—but at the same time, if you're really tapped into everything, you can find meaningful inspiration.

Where did you find inspiration for creativity when you were younger, and where do you find it now?

I've always been an outdoorsy kid—our generation is like that—always climbing trees, digging in the backyard. Nature has been a great inspiration for me, and that has continued 'til now. As you grow as an

What sorts of things inspire you in the everyday?

One example of everyday inspiration was recently when we were hiking in Sequoia. I got really into contrasting textures and colors. I was taking photos, matching things together—just finding different colors and textures. Noticing little details. It's calming to get lost in tiny details. I like to get back into nature—it's very grounding to in the outdoors, and mind-quieting to get away from the frenetic pace of life. Nature recharges my senses.

I had a moment of just feeling lucky to be a working artist. A lot of your time and effort goes into work that you're being paid to do. But to give yourself to your art allows you to draw on your creative energy. In my own practice, oil painting is my first love, but I also use many of the same artistic skills across a lot of different media. I'm inspired by these two quotes because they put to words what I feel about my art:

Helena Bonham Carter said, *"I think everything in life is art. What you do. How you dress. The way you love someone, and how you talk. Your smile and your personality. What you believe in, and all your dreams. The way you drink your tea. How you decorate your home. Or party. Your grocery list. The food you make. How your writing looks. And the way you feel. Life is art."*

And I also like the last line of *Memoirs of a Geisha*:



Michelle appears as van Gogh's 'Starry Night' thanks to her expert makeup application!

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Pepperoni Pizza Muffins, with thanks to AllRecipes

Ingredients:

Cooking spray

1 10-ounce can refrigerated buttermilk biscuit dough

10 tablespoons pizza sauce

10 slices pepperoni

10 tablespoons shredded mozzarella cheese, or as needed

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Coat a 10-cup muffin tin with cooking spray. Press biscuits, one at a time, between hands to flatten; press each into bottom and up sides of a muffin cup. Set aside for dough to settle and slightly rise, about five minutes; lightly press dough into cups if needed. Spoon one tablespoon pizza sauce into each cup, followed by one slice pepperoni, and one tablespoon mozzarella cheese. Bake in the preheated oven until lightly browned and cheese melted, about 10 minutes. Remove pizza muffins from tin; let cool on a wire rack, about five minutes.

“Whatever our struggles and triumphs, however we may suffer them, all too soon they bleed into a wash, just like watery ink on paper.”

What are some projects you’re working on currently?

I work full time on behalf of the pageant all year, and during the show’s season, July through August, I’m particularly busy. So right now is the very end of my off season. I’m experimenting with different kinds of cream-based makeup. I’ll do a makeup look on myself and go into work that way. Or, there was a recent Laguna Beach parade that I participated in where I painted myself like van Gogh’s ‘Starry Night.’ But off-season I try to go back and paint. Last year I did a series of mixed media: magazine cut outs with oil paint over the top.

I was interested in taking over the role of the pageant’s makeup director after the longtime director retired, and I asked my current boss, the pageant’s creative director, what would be helpful for me to do to prepare, and at her recommendation I took a stage makeup class. I wasn’t sure when my pageant job would start, so in the meantime I became involved in YL Arts Alliance, which exhibits artwork at the Packing House. I don’t have much time for developing pieces to show at this point, so the art that I do is for me. I’m especially inspired by the bonsai tree garden at The Huntington Gardens.

Also, I’ve always been into clothes and fashion. What you wear is an expression of yourself. It’s something I’d like to get into more, something I’d like I develop a skill set for making something when I need to.

Please tell us more about your job overseeing makeup for Pageant of the Arts!

It’s very seasonal. The pageant is in its 94th year. We start preparing for the show by choosing a theme. This year’s theme is “Gold Coast: Treasures of California.” My job begins in January—I go back to 9 to 5 job at that time. We hold our casting call over a long weekend. We are working to cast people, but I’m also looking for my team. There are 98 individuals on my team, 10 are paid, then there are volunteers who are trained to work the show. I work to

create schedules for how makeup application will flow, and we divide the work between five makeup rooms. Once we, the department heads, have some of the logistics in place, we meet with our Creative Director who breaks everything down for us piece by piece in detail so we can begin building the show. This year we have 150 cast members. I create a design for every role in the show by studying the source statue or painting and then creating Styrofoam heads showing the makeup style. I “freeze” it in place with a spray-on fixative and type up a set of step-by-step instructions for everyone who is applying makeup—it helps guide them in application.

My job is really challenging, but also gratifying. We have two casts, so our volunteers work a schedule of seven days on, seven

days off. People associated with the show are truly phenomenal people. Having grown in the show and forming relationships there—my mom and dad, husband and kids, all the volunteers—make it a special experience. We work each night from 7 to 10 pm, and the show starts at 8:30 pm.

We have a few iconic pieces in the show that are known to be showstoppers. One is “The Dancers,” and it’s included every 10 years or so. I was in that one. And since 1940, we’ve always ended our show with Da Vinci’s The Last Supper.”

What are you reading/listening to/cooking/growing/knitting these days?

Cooking is a place I find inspiration—and interior design. We’ll be doing a home remodel, and so a lot of my energy has gone into home design. My house is uniquely styled. Almost like a dark academia, maximalist, but not overly cluttered. I don’t like a ton of tchokes, but a little nostalgia is okay. I like decor to have meaning, a story behind it—like when things come to me, I find a place for it. For example, a plant stand that’s an elephant; a travel poster from our 10th wedding anniversary in Banff; an armoire that we traded some computer work for with an artist. I also love hearty plants. I’ve had a ZZ plant for over a decade. My best friend and I share clippings. I love succulents.

Keep scrolling to read Michelle’s music and shopping recommendations!



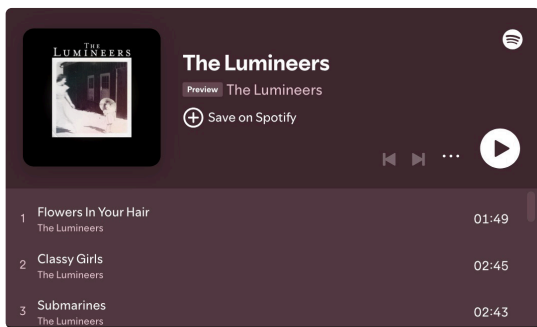
Pageant performers depict “Lewis and Clark at Three Forks” by Edgar Samuel Paxson. Michelle’s husband Adam William Clark, third from left.



An art piece by Carl Larsson depicted at the pageant. Michelle’s daughter Lorelai is second performer from the left.

Recommended Listen: The Lumineers

Michelle says she enjoys listening to The Lumineers' entire anthology—and her family members are all fans as well. So take Michelle's advice and have a listen to The Lumineers' debut album, *The Lumineers*. Michelle also likes to hear music from every genre, from rap to Neil Diamond.



“When I’m working, I like to have something interesting playing in the background,” Michelle explains. “I was working on some pieces recently and went through the entire Star Trek catalog —just the show playing in the background. I like the dialogue; it helps keep that part of my brain occupied.”

With that tip in mind, here’s some Star Trek ambiance for your next creative session. 🌿



Shopping: Anthropologie

Michelle loves Anthropologie. “If I had to choose one store, that would be it,” she says. Both of us can remember when Anthropologie, J.Crew, and other retailers would mail catalogs regularly. And both of us miss getting them! 🌿

Adornment: J. Peterman

Speaking of catalogs, remember the J. Peterman catalog? Before it was a Seinfeld joke, J. Peterman provided mail-order shopping through its catalog, which was notorious for flowery, (pretentious?) descriptions of its clothing and accessories. My high school Yearbook/Journalism teacher insisted I get on the J. Peterman mailing list just so that I could read and experience the product descriptions first hand! I did get on the mailing list, and I still have a few catalogs from that era. J. Peterman is still a company. Check out this Grecian Goddess Dress, or this Four Stones Cuff. And you know you want this Umbrella Seat Stick! 🌿



By Alvesgaspar - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0



By Original: Kriengsak Jirasirirojanakorn Derivative work: Aristeas

The End: Until Next Time



I hope you’ve enjoyed this issue of *WildFlower*. I’ll be back next month to share an interview with a longtime friend of mine, as well as some original essays, writings, and inspiration. If you’d like to submit content or ideas, please reach out to editor@wildflowerjournal.com. 🌿