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**Media Musings**

**By Gordon Black**

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I was watching television the other night and was jolted from the commentary, which incidentally was on the World Athletics Championships in Paris, by a series of rather ill-timed commercial interruptions. It was really amazing how one minute I'd be totally engrossed by the one hundred metres and all the nonsense of the false start rulings and such and then, just as I was getting quite into the whole thing, bang! On comes some totally incongruous advert about goodness knows what, cutting right across the commentator in mid-sentence. Real class and so respectful of the athletes' years of dedication! And, as this was repeated throughout the night, I came to realize that "it's not about the sport, stupid" it's about the money and the television revenues. The sport is just something that goes in between the ads.

Anyway that's what started me off thinking over the whole question of how certain sports become absolutely essential, and the staple diet for whole countries. For example, you could be showing the Stanley Cup in Brazil and I doubt they'd raise their eyes from their game of chequers, but if that were soccer, they'd be glued to the set. Now, why is that? Is it because all the folks down there are born with a predestined disposition in favour of soccer, or is it that the media have created a national fervour for that particular sport? Or is it that a certain familiarity with a particular sport is like a safe sanctuary for certain reporters? They sort-of know the jargon for hockey or football and so, from then on, it gets shoved up front in any piece they do regardless of what sport we're talking about.

I mean it seems that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Brian Williams just can't get through a broadcast without relating some of the action to hockey (or football): he'll jump in with the most banal comparisons, trying to suggest that there are parallels to be drawn between the pole vault in athletics and the quarterback's long bomb downfield for touchdown in football.

Brian, what are you talking about!?!

Anyway this whole train of thought brought me to the coverage of the Pan American Games in Santo Domingo, and how that didn't manage to rank better than an 11:30 pm slot on the goggle box. Shoved in after the news, when everyone was basically on their way to bed, and really a token presentation of the day's events for the die-hard amateur sports fan. Bingo, there is the operative and all important word "Amateur", no limo to and from the venue, no fat endorsement cheques coming through the mail and, let's be honest here, what does Wayne Gretzky and his dad care about a sale of Ford cars!?

C'mon if you are paid in the millions to stuff wads of chewing tobacco into your mouth and scratch occasionally, then you're hot, but if you have to go it alone with subsistence funding and take on the world competition without a whole team behind you, then probably you are an amateur athlete, and boy you better watch out that you don't let the country down at the Olympics or they'll want that money back!

Gordon Black is a world-ranked Master swimmer and Canadian national record holder. A member of the British swim team in the late '60s, after thirty years out of the pool, last year Gordon returned to competitive swimming in the Masters forum. He offers an online weight loss, fitness and motivational coaching service through his web site

where his competitive comeback is

chronicled. Gordon is currently working on a book based on his own weight management and fitness system – publisher's enquiries welcome!

## **Find the Artist Within**

**By Eileen Bergen**

### **Find the Artist Within by Eileen Bergen**

Find the Artist Within  
by Eileen Bergen  
The Artful Crafter  
[www.theartfulcrafter.com](http://www.theartfulcrafter.com)

Can anyone be an artist?

People admiring my work often say, "I could never do that!" I say, "Yes, you can!"

Eight years ago, during a very difficult time in my career in finance (Downsizings, layoffs - let's not talk about it, OK?), my company sent me to a development workshop for female executives.

I came out of a particularly thought-provoking discussion group and penned the following very prophetic free verse.

Threads They Said

## Media Musings

Mimi said, "Why don't you paint again?"

I said, "There's no time. I crunch numbers now."

Carole said, "You can do it!"

I said, "No. I don't think so."

Cheryl said, "You have an artist within. Reach down. Bring it out."

I said, "My numbers ... they pay the bills.

Though, God knows, they don't feed the soul anymore!"

Martha said, "There's a strength within you."

I asked, "They why do I feel so weak, so beaten?"

Bob said, "Reach for the sky. Be your mother's daughter.

Write poetry. Perhaps the answer lies within."

I reached. I created. I wrote. I discovered.  
The threads came together.

I design tee-shirts now.  
On a glorious sunny beach.  
I write my musings in between.  
And share them with other artists  
--- like me.

I didn't really dwell on these thoughts at the time since I ended up taking early retirement and had no intention of going back to work.

"Threads They Said" got filed away with my other work files. I only unearthed it recently and was stunned to realize how it all has come true.

Except we don't live on a glorious sunny beach, we live on a mountainside overlooking a beautiful lake - close enough for me! And now you are some of the other artists I share my musings with!

I believe anyone with a creative eye can be an artist. If you know what you like when you see it, you can be an artist. If you know what someone else will like, you can be a commercial artist. You only need to find your medium or craft.

To find the artistic spirit within you:

## Media Musings

1. Think about your abilities, not your dis-abilities; what you can do, not what you can't. Maybe you're good with the computer. Think graphic arts. Maybe you wield a mean needle. Think of practical sewn items to which you can add artistic touches.

Today with the endless supply of craft materials and kits to get you started, there's something for everyone - or I should say - something for every artist.

2. Determine your bliss. I once read that if a woman thinks back to what she most enjoyed when she was between 8 and 11, she can identify her bliss. For men, it's between 10 and 14. They mature later, you know - some women would say never. If, at that age, you were always making "stuff" (doesn't matter what) and loved having your own crayons (that no one else was allowed - under penalty of death - to touch) and maybe your own set of colored pencils, art and crafting could be your bliss.

If you took particular joy in actually producing something - an end product - rather than just messing with all those neat (or should I say, messy) paints, you almost certainly have an artist within.

3. Browse a local crafts superstore or Internet crafting sites (please start by browsing around [TheArtfulCrafter.com](http://TheArtfulCrafter.com)!). Go up and down the aisles, whether virtual or real, and see what appeals to you. Purchase a few kits. [Aside: If you intend to sell what you make from the get-go, be sure to consider what will also appeal to your future customers.]

4. Don't be afraid to try something new. To me, a sub-definition of artist is "someone who is always trying something new" - new techniques, new media. You have little to lose - the cost of a kit or a few tubes of paint - and very much to gain!

by Eileen Bergen  
The Artful Crafter  
[www.theartfulcrafter.com](http://www.theartfulcrafter.com)

Ms Bergen has had a varied career, first as a special education teacher and then, after getting a MBA degree, as a vice president of a major insurance company. For the past eight years, she has been creating and selling her crafts.

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