“If I Had Some Extra Time . . .”

EDITORS’ NOTE: When we contemplated how to celebrate Women’s History Month in our March issue, we had an interesting conversation. Looking at the business, government and community organizations in our area, it’s obvious that women play an important role. The question is whether this should be a cause for celebration. Have we reached the point where achievements shouldn’t be celebrated based on gender? We think so. At some point, we believe there will be no need for a Women’s History Month and we can celebrate achievements by men and women every month. In fact, that is what The Post has always tried to do.

That said, the approach we took to the March 2005 issue was very well received. Rather than publish articles on famous women in history, we asked women in our community to comment on their lives today. Philosophical considerations aside, we decided to continue in that vein this year.

While thinking about a new question for 2006, we ran across an article in North Bay Biz magazine. We read that, for the first time in American history, employees reported to the American Personnel Association that they would rather have more time off than have more pay. Many of us feel we suffer from “time poverty.” “The need for speed” has become more than just a line from “Top Gun”. It’s something we look for in every product and service we buy – in fact, in almost every choice we make.

So, we asked several dozen women this question: If you had some extra time, how would you spend it? On this and following pages, you’ll see their responses.

“If I had extra time I would read. In my 12-hour days, I fit in time for exercise and I visit with friends on the way to a lecture or the theatre. When I get home from a full day I have obligatory reading and writing, and I never get to the books and magazines I want to read.

“From age 8 on, I lived in the country and was largely by myself. My parents had a full library wall and I pulled anything off of it to read. I was generally reading way above my experience level, but that didn’t bother me. Somehow things I read became clear eventually. I learned from my 5th grade teacher to look up words I didn’t know. She would never tell us what a word meant. “Look it up in the dictionary”, she’d say.

“Reading unlocks puzzles for me. It is what I miss now.”

-- Jean Schulz, wife of the late Charles M. Schulz and President of the Board of the Schulz Museum

“I think of all the books I would read if I just had more time. I would sit in hammocks and write long letters to old friends. I would spend more time with my son and see more movies (I’ve never seen ‘Casablanca’ and it is much easier to blame time than to just admit I really have no interest in seeing it). I would listen more, laugh more and love more, wouldn’t I? To be honest, probably not. Given more time, I’d probably just watch more ‘Oprah’.

“You see, I don’t think life is about the amount of time we are given. What does matter, ultimately, is what we do with what we have. Life is about balance. Life is about knowing not to work too hard, stress too much or allow people to make you feel inferior. Life is about enjoying the little time we have because we’ll never get any more than we were meant to.

“If we had an endless amount of time, we probably wouldn’t be grateful for any of it. It is because we know our time is limited that we have more reason to walk slower, dance longer and have food fights from time to time.

“So, I think I may start reading that book now. But if I don’t, it won’t be because I don’t have time. It will be because I’d rather just watch ‘Oprah’. There. I said it.”

-- Elece Hempel, Community Resource Director, Petaluma People Services Center

Celebrating Women And “The Spirit Of Color”

This month’s cover is “The Ride” by Maggie Barnes. Here’s what Barnes says about the woman she celebrates in it:

“The inspiration for this painting was a small black and white photo I have from the 1950s. I’m originally from Omaha, Nebraska, and this is a picture of me with my Mom, my older sister Terri, and our family dog Mickey. I’m the little one. I must have been three or four years old. My Mom was a great inspiration in my life. She passed away several years ago and it was like losing my best friend. Two of my Mom’s favorite sayings were ‘Be true to yourself’ and ‘You are the company you keep.’ I try to remember those always. During the process of painting this picture, I was so engrossed that time just ceased to exist. There’s a great deal of my heart and soul in this painting and it hangs proudly in our entryway. It’s a comfort to look at it and remember my Mom.”

Maggie Barnes is on the planning committee and very involved in “The Spirit of Color” art exhibit hosted by the Bank of Marin in support of art programs in the schools and Petaluma People Services. Many of her paintings will be hanging in the show, which begins on March 29th. Through May 1st, the Bank of Marin at 799 Baywood Drive in Petaluma will be covered floor-to-ceiling with artwork. The exhibit is open to the public, free of charge, during banking hours.

A champagne reception for the artists will be held on April 6th from 6 to 8 PM. The reception will feature food and drink from Tolay at the Sheraton-Petaluma, Lagunitas Brewery, Jerome’s and PS To Go Catering. Tickets are $25 and are available from PPSC by calling 707.765.8488.

In 2004, “The Spirit of Color” was created by Carol Knies of the Bank of Marin with assistance from the Petaluma Arts Association’s JoAnn Naylor. The event has become an annual fundraiser for the Petaluma Arts Association’s grant program “The Spirit of Color”. Funds also go to the Petaluma People Services Center, which helps low income Petaluma and South County children, adults, families and seniors by providing counseling, homeless prevention, employment training, paratransit, meals-on-wheels, senior services and more.

“This is an event that benefits all parties involved,” says Bank of Marin Vice President and Manager Carol Knies. “The artists have an opportunity to display their work for sale and the local schools and non-profits receive a percentage of the sales to help them with their programs.”

“Seeing all the beautiful works of art is inspiring,” said Ron Kirtley, Executive Director of PPSC. “This is a wonderful opportunity to meet the artists, purchase art, and support your community through the Petaluma Peoples Services Center and the Petaluma Arts Association.”