

FOCUS



Bimonthly Newsletter of the American Creativity Association™...promoting a creative society

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Cook Up a New YOU

by Marilyn Schoeman Dow

Who is your Chief Life Officer —your CLO?

Red Light
Green Light



How about, just as an experiment, re-inventing yourself. Create yourself anew. Savor and celebrate all the wondrous elements you've been growing yourself with over the years. Consider what you might like to add, tweak or omit. You may discover you allowed parts into your self that, upon examination you figure, hey, I don't really want that anymore. Actually I never wanted it. I didn't think about it. I just let it be a piece of me.

How do you choose which parts to keep in the re-created you and which to leave out? One way is to weigh them on the Green Light®/Red Light scale.

For example, if you want to bake a great cake, you consider what you know about ingredients and remember chocolate, flour, sugar, butter, eggs and vanilla bean extract are good things to include. Onions, ammonia, motor oil, soap and sand won't get measured out for the batter.

Likewise, in creating an even greater new YOU, you probably want some of your favorite personal ingredients, like your passion and compassion, your creativity, sense of humor and your ability to successfully complete significant projects. You might also sprinkle in your strengths, interests, achievements, relationships, goals, dreams and aspirations—those hearty elements that renew your Self. I call these Green Light® ingredients.

What color is your style?

How do you think, feel, speak and ACT?

Green Light® Make the best of everything.

Red Light Make a bust of everything.

Old insults, grudges, arguments, embarrassments, failures and feuds won't make it to the pot of possibilities when cookin' up the new You. Sarcasm, put-downs, belligerence, dishonesty, selfishness and cruelty don't show up in the mix either. They may appear in the pity party recipe—with more pity than party. These are Red Light ingredients.

▶ *Green Light Life is a bowl of cherries.*

▶ *Red Light Life is a pile of pits.*

We can't change our history. We can change our view of it. We can't rebirth ourselves by picking new parents and a new childhood. We can, every day, rebirth ourselves by picking new viewpoints. It's a bit Red to expect to be

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President's Column

by Tara G. Coste

CREATIVE gatherings proliferate across the GLOBE



As I was firming up my travel plans for the rest of the year, I decided to do a brief review of the creativity events that will occur over the next six months. The results of this survey were quite heartening. A mere sampling of the creativity happenings around the world include:

- ✓ The Creativity European Association's CREA 2004 to be held April 21-25 in Sestri Levante, Italy.
- ✓ Creativity Development in Science, Education, and Business to take place May 18-27 at Yalta-Gurzuf in the Crimea, Ukraine.
- ✓ I.D.E.A. Frontier 2004: Industry, Design, Education, and the Arts on the Frontier of Innovation to be held June 4-6 at St. Clair College in Windsor, Canada.
- ✓ The 50th Creative Problem Solving Institute to take place June 20-25 in Buffalo, New York.
- ✓ The 5th International Conference on Creative Thinking to be held June 21-22 at the University of Malta in Malta.
- ✓ The 15th Conference on Creativity in Colleges and Universities to take place July 15-18 on the campus of Northwood University in Midland, Michigan.
- ✓ Mindcamp 2004 to be held September 29-October 3 at the Cedar Glen Discovery Campus near Toronto, Canada.
- ✓ The 10th International Creativity Conference in Africa to take place October 5-8 at Klein Kariba Hot Springs Resort in Warmbaths, South Africa.
- ✓ Women and Creativity 2004: Examining the Past, Composing the Future to be held October 13-15 at West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Clearly, the importance of the deliberate study of creativity and innovation is growing in recognition. Many events have been staged to highlight a particular tool or techniques—e.g., CPS or TRIZ. Others have been targeted at a particular field or profession—e.g., marketing or graphic design. Still others focus on a specific demographic—e.g., women or the aging.

Today, information on creativity abounds. This is quite a change from the not so distant past. When I was working on my doctorate in the early nineties, it was hard for me to identify appropriate venues to share my work. Now, the choices are seemingly endless, with creativity events being held throughout the year in a multitude of countries.

Although one must still be careful that the material being presented is based in the rich history of the study of creativity, this growth can only be good for the field. The more deliberate examination we have of this area of effort, the better we can articulate how creativity can be usefully applied by different people in various areas of endeavor in a diversity of cultures and times.

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Economy is an S. O. B. — Start Own Business —

*Hold it! Wait a moment! Before you cover your younger children's ears
listen to what I'm really saying.*

A down economy is an S.O.B. but in more important ways than the one with which we usually associate it. All the usual things do still pertain. Spending is wa-a-ay down. Job losses are at an all-time high. Morale is correspondingly at an all-time low. But I know from long experience and from following trends in the economically-dragging times that more new ventures are begun during dollar-depressions than at any other time!

As I said, I speak not only from personal observation—and sometimes personal lack—but from observing reactions in certain sectors in the down periods.

Someone once said, very pithily, that “Necessity is the mother of invention.” In my opinion “truer words were never spoken.” Oddly enough, there’s something about down times that causes the imagination to perk up. And there is something

Scribble Service we offered to write *anything anybody wanted written*. That covered slogans, headlines, newspaper stories, magazine articles, poems, children’s stories, Christmas cards, birthday greetings.

I still recall one greeting card verse I sold:

Yore birthday cums

But onct a year,

But that is quite enuf becuz

If birthdays came

Say, twict a month,

You'd soon fergit how old you wuz!

Apparently the greeting card market was a good bit less sophisticated then than now.

Austin, during this current tightening of the national belt, is seeing its share of bright business beginnings. Today’s American Statesman carries an account of a fascinating venture. Lee Mannix, a dog trainer, specializes in “aggressive behav-

or write notes well. However the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, in 1997, was impressed enough by his composing to perform a movement of his 58-minute Symphony No. 1 on a program with Tchaikovsky and Brahms. Hurwit won a standing ovation at the debut of his composition. In all truth, Hurwit’s change of directions wasn’t dictated by “want” but by “desire”—but it has come at a time when orchestras are obviously not beating the bushes for aspiring composers.

One Austin homemaker has started a “cookie baking” in her garage and apparently is finding enough cookie-eaters to keep her more than solvent. Another, an accountant, advertised her home business by painting a big ad on her garage and attracted several new accounts.

In one of our hometown’s recurring down times our second cousins—with whom we lived—decided to take in boarders for lunch. Both cousins were excellent cooks. We had not only a “groaning board” but groaning eaters who just couldn’t get enough of the super-tasty food. Every teacher in our high school sought to eat there. There wasn’t a lot of profit for the cooks but I have often wondered if the marvelous menu didn’t have *something* to do with my being valedictorian.

I’m sure any reader of this article can list numerous folks who found financial necessity “mothering” their creative brain-children. Continuing proofs that *Down Economy is an S.O.B.—Start Own Business*. We have many successful enterprises to prove it!

... there's something about down times that causes the imagination to perk up. And there is something about hunger pangs that often truly "lights a fire in the belly" and equally often produces home-based businesses. These later flourish and grow into larger and more lasting enterprises.

about hunger pangs that often truly “lights a fire in the belly” and equally often produces home-based businesses. These later flourish and grow into larger and more lasting enterprises.

My twin and I came to Austin out of college and soon discovered that our \$105 a month didn’t adequately cover even modest living expenses and unexpected “addendums” like dental bills. We had been reared in small towns where dentistry was more of a necessity than an art. And, at 90, I can still remember the financial jolt I got when I discovered that my bill for essential tooth repair would be FOUR TIMES my monthly salary! So, to stay even relatively afloat, we started a freelance-writing endeavor titled THE SCRIBBLE SERVICE. It didn’t bring eager agents out of the woodwork but it did enable us to remain solvent. Through the

ior.” He teaches owners to “see the world through the eyes of a dog...to understand why—the dog—bites and attacks.” In August of last year Mannix opened his Center for Canine Behavior, with his wife, Christina, as partner. According to the article the Center is already loaded with business generated entirely by word of mouth. The Mannixes live in nearby Hutto with six dogs of their own.

The November/December issue of AARP’s magazine—in its Real People section—has an intriguing account of how Albert Hurwit, formerly a radiologist, transformed himself in later life into the composer of a 58-minute symphony. The story recounts how Hurwit, at eight, took piano lessons but quit after three years. At Harvard he wanted to major in music but failed the music reading test. The article states that he never did learn to read music

Anne Durrum Robinson is a consultant and creativity connoisseur. She has taught workshops and given keynote speeches for business, government and academia in the U.S. and other countries. Anne serves on the ACA Advisory Board. Contact Anne Durrum Robinson at e-mail: anniecreate@hotmail.com.

Green all the time—yet it’s a good target to aim for. Practice the skill of Green Light and watch your life turn Green.

Count your blessings.

Red Light I can’t get to 1.

Green Light I’m at 101.



Often, the world gets painted Red. For example, check out the weather reports. One day it’s sunny half of the time, cloudy half of the time, with five minutes of rain—in one area. What’s the report? “It rained.” Rain is often considered Red. Red gets reported. A day ninety-five per cent Green gets reported as one hundred per cent Red. So make your own weather report—it’s an interpretation anyway. You want a Green day—rain or shine, just tune in to your Green weather report!



What color do you focus on?

Green Light®

Magnify the good stuff.

Minify the bad stuff.

What you have

What you want

What you want more of

What makes you smile

What makes you excited

Red Light

Magnify the bad stuff.

Minify the good stuff.

What you don’t have

What you don’t want

What you want less of

What makes you scowl

What makes you angry

Create a Green Light life. Consider it a game: how Green can you be? How quickly can you catch yourself when you tilt toward Red? How fast can you shift back to Green? How long can you maintain the shift? Just playing around with these questions lightens your spirit and makes it easier to Green up your viewpoint. With apologies to Dr. Seuss, go get some Green eggs—and ham it up. Take a swig of Green bean extract, then playfully, artfully, create your role. Act the part of a Green being. The world needs more Green beings!

Take the Green Light game a step further and view a situation as a stage production. Your life is the play. The current scene is being written. What role do you want to play? What role do you not want to play? How will you choose to play it in various situations, with various characters? Pick a scene from your recent past that didn’t go the way you wanted, where you didn’t handle it the way you prefer. Replay it in your mind. Rewrite the script the way you like, then Green up your role in the next performance.

Who is your Chief Life Officer – *your CLO? You are!*

Red Light Why I can’t

Green Light How I can

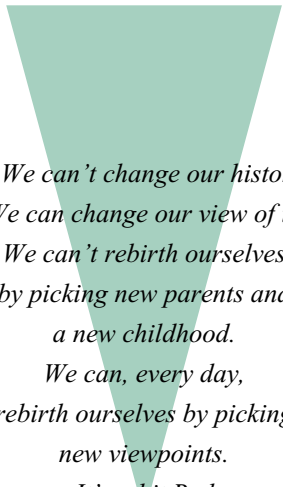
When you see life as a game, you can step back a bit. You see the things you missed when the focus was on how others disappointed you, ignored you, treated you unfairly. (Insert whatever Red Light stuff is in your life.)

To keep the game going in your favor, when you find yourself in a challenging situation, ask yourself three questions:

- 1. How does it look from a Green Light viewpoint?
- 2. How does it look from a Red Light viewpoint?
- 3. How do I want to see it?

Then decide to see the view you chose. Make a conscious choice instead of auto-piloting through life. That helps free you from being locked in old patterns and beliefs—and seeing Red.

When you feel yourself slipping back into Red Light modes, commend yourself for noticing, then just repeat the process. *Ask the questions, choose the view.* You’ll soon recognize the Red earlier in the game and shift more quickly and easily.



*We can’t change our history.
We can change our view of it.
We can’t rebirth ourselves
by picking new parents and
a new childhood.
We can, every day,
rebirth ourselves by picking
new viewpoints.
It’s a bit Red
to expect to be Green
all the time—yet it’s
a good target to aim for.*

*Who makes you grin? Who makes you frown?
 Who turns your world quite upside down?
 Who decides its ease or its strife?
 Who's in charge of you and your life?*

Be careful not to harp at yourself—it's not a pretty sound. Notice your self talk. What do you whisper so softly inside your head that you don't quite catch the words but you catch the feeling? It's the Red Light stuff—discouragement, ridicule, a nag, a doubting of your abilities.

Pitch those contaminated ingredients into the Red refuse bin—to be refused—tossed out with the rest of the trash of put-downs and deflators. Mine your experiences for the nuggets you can grasp. Keep the lessons. Lose the lectures. (Failure is just an event minus the message. If you got the lesson, it wasn't failure. It was an experiment that led to a discovery.)

Who decides?

Who decides what you think, what you feel?
 Who decides what you say, what you do?
 Who decides how you view a memory?
 Who decides how you interpret a life event?

*Happiness doesn't depend on circumstances. They change.
 Happiness depends on our decisions. We, too, can always change.*

The most intelligent life—on any planet—is Green! So—go ahead. Get the Red out. Turn yourself into a bright Green being! The Jolly Green Giant pales next to you!



Marilyn Schoeman Dow

is a creative strategist, international speaker and ACA past-president.

Creator of **BOFF-O!**® (**Brain On Fast**

Forward), the problem solving

card deck/game, her new book,

Green Light®: Your Key to Success in

Every Situation, is due in 2004.

You may contact Marilyn at 206.200.7212

and www.gogreenlight.tripod.com.



*Green Light ... The universe is conspiring to do me good.
 Red Light The universe is conspiring to do me harm.*



Choose today, at this moment, this tiny precious piece of the present, to create a Green Light being. It's as easy as that—and as challenging as that.

Collect the choicest Green ingredients and cook up a delicious, splendiferous new YOU—a human being Green.

A Green being. Tis the season. Tis always the season for reNEWal.

So grow your Greens!

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ANNOUNCING

Creativity's Global Correspondents — 2003

Edited by Morris I. Stein, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus Psychology, New York University

Each year Moe Stein, premier creativity researcher and an ACA Advisory Board member takes on the task of looking globally to see what is happening in the field of creativity. This is the seventh publication of the series and the report contains 29 works of 35 investigators from 16 countries around the world.

Available on ACA's website:
AmCreativityAssoc.org

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Creativity and Innovation Resources Centre Opens in Hong Kong

by Andrew Dutcher

On November 26, 2003, a special event occurred in the field of creativity. On this date, the people of Hong Kong gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the Creativity and Innovation Resources Centre located in the city hall branch of their public library.

This was the culmination of a cooperative project between the Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Creative Initiatives Foundation—a non-government organization located in Hong Kong—and the International Center for Studies in Creativity (ICSC) at Buffalo State College, State University of New York.

The idea for this Hong Kong center originated in 1997. Mr. CHUN Po-yang, the co-founder of the Creative Initiatives Foundation, wanted to create a collection of books, journals, and other materials relating to creativity and innovation. This was one way Creative Initiatives could encourage individuals and groups in Southeast Asia to use creative initiative and social entrepreneurship to solve significant problems and improve the ways in which they live, work, and play. He soon discovered that a similar library collection already existed at Buffalo State College and that the ICSC had an on-line bibliographic database called Creativity Based Information Resources or CBIR.

The Creative Studies Library is the largest, publicly available collection of creativity materials located anywhere in the world. It began as the personal collection of Dr. Sidney J. Parnes, professor emeritus and chair of the Creative Studies Department—now known as the ICSC—and in 1969 it was moved over to the E. H. Butler Library. It is a non-circulating research collection available to students and faculty. It currently contains about 6,000 books, dissertations and theses, and other materials related to the study of creativity. Additional materials by E. Paul Torrance, John

Curtis Gowan, and J. P. Guilford are also located in the College Archives. Visitors from around the world visit the campus to use this collection.

CBIR is the second creativity resource available at the college. It is a bibliographic database—a literature index—that was started in 1988. It allows students to more easily access published information about creativity. National and international researchers and scholars would regularly visit the ICSC to use CBIR. It was put onto the Internet in 1997 and continues to be searched by individuals around the world. CBIR currently contains over 12,000 bibliographic records with new records added daily. Together with the Creative Studies Library, there is a wealth of published information about creativity available in Buffalo, New York.

In the Fall of 2001, Dr. Thomas Osgood, Executive Director of Creative Initiatives Foundation, visited Buffalo State College and met with the members of the ICSC. He described the idea of this Hong Kong resource center and together we explored how to turn this idea into a reality. The ICSC later received two grants from Creative Initiatives to identify the core collection of 1,000 titles and to further develop CBIR as a research tool for the Hong Kong center.

While Creative Initiatives began to purchase these materials for their collection and to work with the Hong Kong library system to process everything, I supervised a team of graduate students to annotate their core collection for inclusion into CBIR. I also worked closely with computer programmers at the college to

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*This was one way
Creative Initiatives could
encourage individuals and groups
in Southeast Asia
to use creative initiative and
social entrepreneurship
to solve significant problems and
improve the ways in which
they live, work, and play.*



Various officials and dignitaries attending the grand opening of the Hong Kong Creativity and Innovation Resources Centre, including Dr. Thomas Osgood, Mr. CHUN Po-yang, and Andrew Dutcher—second, third, and fourth from the left.



An Itzhak Perlman Story

On November 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child, and so he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches.

To see him walk across the stage one step at a time, painfully and slowly, is an unforgettable sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play. By now, the audience is used to this ritual.

They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to his chair. They remain reverently silent when he undoes the clasps on his legs. They wait until he is ready to play. But

this time, something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap—it went off like gunfire across the room.

There was no mistaking what that sound meant. There was no mistaking what he had to do.

People who were there that night thought to themselves: “We figured that he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off stage—to either find another violin or else find another string for this one.” But he didn’t. Instead, he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again.

The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity as they had never heard before. Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, and you know that, but that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that.

Creativity and Innovation Resources Centre Opens in Hong Kong...continued from page 6

expand the database’s searching capabilities. As a result of much work, the core collection was added to CBIR and users could now limit their searches to just the Hong Kong collection.

In the Fall of 2003, we were informed by Dr. Osgood that the Hong Kong center would be opened to the public in November. I was invited to represent the ICSC at the ceremony. I arrived a few days early to visit Hong Kong and to meet with Dr. Osgood and Mr. CHUN Po-yang. The grand opening ceremony was held in the City Hall library to a full audience. Speeches were made by both Dr. Osgood and Mr. CHUN Po-yang, and by a representative from the Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department to celebrate this valuable resource. Then, instead of a traditional ribbon cutting, balloons were popped to signify the grand opening of the Hong Kong Creativity and Innovation Resources Centre. Everyone present was very appreciative of both this new library collection and of all the work that made it possible.

Now there are three important resources available for people to use to identify materials about creativity and innovation. This was a very complex undertaking with many skilled professionals working together at different times and at different places. This was truly a unique experience for me as a librarian and as a creativity scholar. It is not often that one gets to participate in the creation of a major library research collection. My colleagues from both Creative Studies and the library community continue to be excited when I talk about this project.

If you happen to be in Hong Kong, be sure to stop by the City Hall Public Library to visit their collection. I am sure they would be happy to show you around. Similarly, if you happen to be in Buffalo, New York, stop by the college and we will be happy to introduce you to the Creative Studies Library. If you do not have the opportunity to travel, remember that you can still search CBIR on the Internet.

Andrew Dutcher, M.S., M.L.S.,

*teaches people to understand
how to locate and evaluate*

electronic resources found on the Internet.

*Trained as a reference librarian
with a background in computer systems,
he has taught library skills
to undergraduate and graduate students
around Western New York.*

*He has worked closely with the
faculty of the ICSC to develop and
maintain the Creativity Based Information
Resources (CBIR) bibliographic database
and other information resources.*

For additional information:

- Creative Initiative Foundation—<http://www.creativeinitiative.org>
- International Center for Studies in Creativity—<http://www.buffalostate.edu/centers/creativity>
- Creative Studies Library—<http://www.buffalostate.edu/library/creative>
- Creativity Based Information Resources—<http://www.buffalostate.edu/orgs/cbir>

ACA mission

The American Creativity Association (ACA) is the national organization of professionals in the field of creativity. Through its programs and services, it offers individuals and organizations opportunities for learning, professional development and networking. It is dedicated to enhancing the use of creativity throughout our society for the betterment of the human condition.

ACA vision

ACA is the virtual academy that leaders and professionals in the field of creativity turn to as the primary source of ideas and information dealing with creativity and where initiates to the field can begin their journey of discovery. To achieve its vision, the ACA provides: 1) forums to present, test and exchange ideas; 2) opportunities for networking and fellowship; 3) clearing-house services for information on the state of the art in creativity research and practice; and 4) means to link theorists and practitioners.

ACA application

Membership (Check One)

- Individual \$ 75
 - Two Year Membership 125
 - Three Year Membership 170
 - Student (full-time) 40
 - Business & Institutional 125
 - Business & Institutional 300
5 member pkg—5 copies of **FOCUS** and other mailings and 5 ACA discounts at conferences. Includes a listing on ACA web page with link to your site.
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A new way to release innovation . . .

IDEA Counseling or IDEA Consulting

by Charles H. Clark



Why can't there be hot lines for people upset by positive situations when they need someone to help them give birth to ideas that can help us all?

Recently I had the chance to talk with a community college professor initiating a new Innovation Institute on his campus.

He's full of ideas; in fact he's so turned on, he's bubbling over with ideas.

I do listening, I do active listening. I notice this calms him down, helps him better link his own thoughts together, helps him better choose the most effective next step.

I've noticed this same outcome when I've listened to others excited about their new idea, their great plan, their great insight, or new AHA.

I've also noticed the same effects upon me when someone helps me clarify some stunning new idea that has popped into my mind.

This suggests a new role of Idea Counseling or Idea Consulting to help innovators get a better handle on their new insight, concept, or invention.

The better the idea, the more likely it is to be accompanied by tremendous excitement at what one is bringing for the first time into the world. The average person

doesn't want to listen to the barrage of feelings that accompany the birth of an idea. The average person has no skill in helping deal with the elation, the excitement, and the joy that accompany such births.

Maybe some of this can be done even by telephone.

There are all sorts of hot lines for problems with drugs, alcohol, loneliness, and more—all kinds of negative conditions that upset people.

Good ideas are scarce...they are a terrible thing to waste.

Why can't there be hot lines for people upset by positive situations when they need someone to help them give birth to ideas that can help us all?

Most creators find such idea buddies by chance. But why can't this be recognized as a new social role? Progress will speed up when ideas find their encouragers faster.

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