

The Peace of Holden Village

October 18, 2011

Dear Friends,

I'm writing from Holden Village, a beautiful retreat center in the heart of the Cascades. It is stunningly beautiful here. Someone was stoking up the sauna, so I'll probably be in it tonight. The leaves are turning; the larch trees are golden up on the ridges. We're seeing more deer, as they come down from the snowy highlands to our warmer valley. But the snow is coming, and soon. Everyone is scurrying around like squirrels piling up nuts, getting the Village ready for the winter.

I've been given an amazing gift. I have the privilege to be here as Creative Resource Resident, and my primary job for the month is to write healing songs for singing at the bedside of those who are ill or dying. I've written 13 songs in the past few weeks. I love the rhythm of the Village. One moment I'm working on a song down by the river, and a few minutes later I'm up to my elbows in suds, scrubbing pots. I love the balance between work and prayer and rest.

I'll be here until October 30th, and will then be heading back home, where my cooking and dishes are no longer a community affair, and there are far more distractions. But I'll be bringing home the spirit of this place. I first came here in 1966, and it shaped and inspired me with a vision of community that I continue to try to live out.

I have two announcements, and I'm quite excited about both of them.

First, on **Tuesday, November 1st**, I'll be beginning a new choir, **Women with Wings**, whose purpose is to bring healing song circles into facilities in our community where people may be lonely, isolated, or ill. We may also be bringing healing to our community through songs of hope and peace. Women with Wings is also intended to be a singing circle where all women are invited to come and sing, whether or not they choose to go out into the community. ALL voices are welcome! Songbooks provided. We'll meet first and

third Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:30. Please **email** me if you would like to come and I'll let you know the location. There's no phone here at Holden.

Also, on **Thursday, November 3rd**, I'll be starting a new class based on the Artist's Way and other resources called **Art That Matters: Integrating Art, Spirit and Healing**. It's an 8-week class, 6:30 – 8:45, Nov. 3rd – Dec. 29th. We'll explore creativity in all its many forms through activities and discussion. The cost is \$160.00. You'll need to pre-register by October 30th, so again, **email** me if you have question or would like to register.

Please visit my web site, www.lindasongs.com, for more details on these events, and handy posters you can print out and share. My site has just been updated, so if you haven't been to my web pages recently, you might enjoy the archive of old newsletters and photos from the far distant past. You may not know that during the Viet Nam war, my way to be a "witness" to events there was to be a USO singer in Viet Nam and Thailand, and in hospitals in Japan. So one day I was on the Golden Gate bridge as part of a protest against the war, and the next day I was flying to Viet Nam. Quite a story.

I feel far away from the thousands of protests going on around the world. I keep remembering what Utah Phillips once said: Maybe we're winning and don't even know it. Here's a very interesting story on these events in recent article by Chris Hedges: http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/a_movement_too_big_to_fail_20111017/

Today I begin recording some of the songs I've written here, with a small volunteer choir. I want to leave songs behind for the Village to use. This morning I started dreaming about a new project –a recording of songs for healing. Cover art images were appearing in my dream, and I woke up saying "uh, oh". Every time I think I've made my last CD, I find that I still have more I want to contribute. So if anyone has an extra \$5,000.00 or so to help finance this project, please let me know! Like my last project, I would include songs from my previous recordings and then these, that I've just composed. Every recording I've ever done has depended on

angels, and I have been blessed with many through the years. They keep me doing what I do, and I am so very grateful.

Here are the lyrics to a ditty I wrote yesterday....knitting is a major activity here at Holden!

Lessons from Knitting

When you're knitting along and you reach a spot
Where something goes wrong and you're facing a knot
Don't reach for the scissors to deal with the mess
Gently untangle, that's usually the best

I'm including a Holden recipe for the fabulous borscht we had at lunch today. It's from *Lavish Simplicity*, a Holden Village cook book. The food has been terrific!

Peace –

Linda

Linda Allen, DMin

Certified Clinical Musician, Expressive Arts and Natural Voice Practitioner

Songwriter and Educator

360-734-7979

www.lindasongs.com

Borscht

Ingredients:

Vegetable stock 2 quarts
Tomatoes, skin & seeds removed 2
Tomato paste a bit
Onions, chopped 2 (1 ½ cups)
Garlic 2 cloves
Beets, raw, coarsely grated 1 lb.
Celery heart and/or leaves,
Cut into small pieces
Pickle juice, "overnight dill" 1 cup or to taste
Potatoes, chunked 1 lb
Cabbage, shredded 1 lb
Parsnip, grated 1
Carrots, chopped 4

Parsley
Zucchini, if on hand
White pepper fresh milled, to taste

In a medium-large pot, combine 1 quart stock, tomatoes, tomato paste, onions, garlic, beets, celery and pickle juice. Cook for one hour. In another pot, combine remaining quart of stock, potatoes, cabbage, carrots and parsnips and boil until tender. Use extra stock if needed.

Note: Use “overnight kosher dill” pickle juice. You can find it in the refrigerated section of your grocer y store. The key is to avoid polysorbate 80, which will affect the taste.

Assemble. Add seasoning.
Serve with dollop of sour cream.

*As always, if you wish to be removed from this mailing list, please just hit reply and put REMOVE in the subject line.