

Profile: Wendy A. Albrecht

P E T A L U M A ARGUS 150 COURIER

Photographer and artist strives to leave 'a wake of positivism' wherever she goes

Published: Wednesday, Oct 18, 2006

Name: Wendy A. Albrecht

Age: 42

Occupation: In addition to being an artist and photographer, Albrecht's occupation is "Doing the best I can to leave a wake of positivism wherever I go. Help contribute to leaving every situation just a bit better than I found it."

Family: Albrecht's mom, Nancy Jones, and her husband, Emery, live in Novato. Her dad, William Albrecht, and his wife, Pamela, live in Georgia.

Background/Hometown: Originally from Chicago, Albrecht has lived in Arlington, Va. and Augusta, Ga. She moved from the East Coast to Petaluma a year and a half ago. "After years of being on separate coasts, circumstances permitted me to finally move to live close to my mom."

Albrecht holds a bachelor's degree in accounting, a master's in financial management and a certificate in technical communication. "In addition, I seem to almost always find something to glean from every work position I've held, every person I meet, and every experience I have."

She's worked in a number of career positions including director of financial analysis and special projects of an HMO, technical writer, computer software quality assurance tester and president and principal consultant for her own consulting firm.

"I've been fortunate to achieve in many arenas including: Being chosen to have some of my art included in the Spirit of Color — my first ever gallery exhibit, in 2006. Another huge thrill for me: Sonoma-Marin Fair 2005 winner for my artichoke cheese dip."



Terry Hankins

Wendy Albrecht discovered photography while doing art as therapy for dealing with fibromyalgia.

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Albrecht is also a member of the Petaluma Art Association. “I joined just to become familiar with the artistic energy and talent that surrounds us here. I never dreamed that I could have anything that qualified as ‘art’ much less merit space in a gallery exhibit. Truly an accomplishment for me because just a few short years ago, I was a soul solely living in my left brain.”

What do you enjoy about Petaluma? “Oh, so many things, but the most salient is the feeling that I live in a storybook hometown. Just doing your errands or visiting the doctor’s office, you can actually encounter people you know — or new people you meet — who are generally so friendly and happy to chat about anything: the latest social issue, political news, local events, or just whatever’s happening at the moment. I’m still amazed at how many people actually hold the door open for others and make way while passing you on the sidewalks. And I can usually find a parking space wherever I go. I’ve been so fortunate to meet so many caring, kind and sweet friends in the short time I’ve lived here. I hope these phenomenons can continue long into the future for others to enjoy. I am so absolutely elated and honored to call Petaluma my new hometown.”

What got you interested in photography? “Imagine such an energy that it literally compels you to stop whatever you are doing or wherever you are rushing to and revel in its beauty. You then realize with a gasp at how happy you are just to be alive to witness something so exquisite. I enjoy photographing subjects that provide evidence that something can really affect a person — mind, body, and soul. Lately, I’ve expanded my art to mixed media including acrylic paint.”

Albrecht has also had her photographs published in five books.

How did you decide to pursue art? “I live in constant pain and fatigue from a syndrome called fibromyalgia. When my symptoms permit, I do art therapy to help distract me. My symptoms have worsened.

“For more information about fibromyalgia, see:
<http://www.fmaware.org/fminfo/brochure.htm>.”

Who has inspired you? “My dear friend, Christopher. I had just moved to Petaluma, and he lives near Washington, D.C. I was dealing with quite a bit of pain and other issues, so we determined I could try to do some art therapy for the first time. For an entire week, he let me loose in his art studio with acrylic paint, brushes, and support (paper). His only two rules were to thoroughly rinse the paint from the brushes and mixing cups with water, and to be careful about keeping the paint on things where you can rinse it off. This first true artistic endeavor helped me evolve into saying, ‘I’m an artist.’ Today, every artist inspires me. Every person. Every situation — especially quotes I encounter in happenstance situations. I feel like I’m noticing life with new eyes.”

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Most important to you? “My late husband passed away just before I moved here. Having experienced that reality can put what’s truly important into perspective. People. Experiences. What you can contribute to others while you’re here on earth.”

Turning point in your life? “Even though I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia in 1997, I continued a type A life: working full-time, going to school full-time, living a loving life with my husband, doing activities with friends — just like many other people today. However, in 2003, my condition became so dire that it cost me my job. I never dreamed I’d be disabled.”

Your advice to others? “Live your bliss. I feel that life is way too short to not do what you enjoy — something that’s for your highest soul growth and that of others. And strive for balance in all areas of your life, especially for what you can control of your health — your health can become the limiting factor to every area of your life.”

Personal philosophy? “After my husband died, a wise health care provider suggested I live ‘Five Senses Bliss.’ I continue to find new ways to define that every day.”

Greatest challenge in life? “Every moment of every day walking some fine line that someone has drawn of doing enough activity in a day so that I don’t cause my body to freeze up or hurt more than it does, but not doing too much that I cause new or even more pain and fatigue.”

Favorite food/or favorite thing to cook? “I am quite the food enthusiast. Enjoying the sense of taste is one of the ‘Five Senses Bliss.’ I enjoy so many American and ethnic cuisines.”

If there was one thing in the world you could change, what would it be? “I wish people could be influenced away from causing strife to others for masochistic pleasure on a personal level, and terrorism on a global level.”

— Interviewed by Yovanna Bieberich

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