



My rock hammer of curiosity



Melissa, you're back." I've been greeted with this statement several times since returning to the Grosse Pointe News as a staff writer. I respond, "It's nice to be back."

Time discovers truth. And the truth is I love this job and appreciate it today more than I had 16 years ago when I came on

board the first time.

My identity is connected to being a writer. Yet the joy I feel with my return is beyond the enjoyment of writing. It's largely based in my return to Lake St. Clair.

I was raised on the Eastside in a boating family. Each summer we visited ports along the shores of the Great Lakes. Lake St. Clair — the heart of the Great Lakes — has always made my heart sing. The sights of lake sunrises and sunsets, the scent and feel of fresh water on a summer day, the sounds of sea gulls and geese in flight and of wake splashing on a hull have always refreshed my

mind and soul with deep joy.

C.S. Lewis said that while pleasure is in our power, joy never is. "All Joy reminds," he wrote in "Surprised by Joy." "It is never a possession, always a desire for something longer ago or further away or still 'about to be'."

My joy is connected to who I am and what I hope for.

During the years I was caught in the pressure and time of raising four sons alone, circumstances became like a rock wall separating me from the source of what brought me joy ever since I could remember.

I followed opportunity out of my preferred industry of publishing and away from my eastside community into the auto industry and into northern Oakland County. Though I was grateful for the countless blessings that nurtured my sons' growth into thriving young men, I felt like a fish out of water while building this life away from my beloved Lake St. Clair.

While I hoped to return to this lifelong joy source one day, I sought to discover new joys as if searching for precious stones. Like the protagonist Andy Dufresne in Stephen King's

"Shawshank Redemption," I selected a tool of hope. And curiosity became my rock hammer.

Being curious opens opportunity to be delighted in any moment, to discover in real time the wonder of a place, an event or a person. In whatever role or circumstance I found myself in, I took out my rock hammer of curiosity and chiseled a path of new joy.

For example, my curiosity about automotive service and repair while I was working for Snap-on Tools led me into my training as an auto technician.

And later, while manag-

ing maintenance products for ground combat vehicles, my curiosity threw me into meaningful conversations with the service men and women and veterans I worked with.

When having four sons in ice hockey consumed my life outside of work, I chose curiosity and began playing the sport myself. I even coached youth hockey for four years.

With my rock hammer of curiosity, I made it through the rock wall that had separated me from a life I had longed for. Yet I delighted in the gems I collected during my journey back home. I'll carry them with me forever.