

## *The Leaf-Chronicle*

**Hot or Not?** Melissa Tyndall writes about books, fashion, trends, events and vacation locations that are so smoking hot it'll burn your mouse-clicking finger.

**"What Makes One an Artist"** 12/7/2008 6:41 PM CST

Just a little over seven years ago, a friend of mine named Harry died. He was only in his 30s when he passed away, but in the short time we were friends, he inspired me.

Harry was an artist in every sense of the word. He had long hair, donned a leather jacket from the 80s and rode a motorcycle. He taught sword fighting one might see at Renaissance festivals, he drew and panted; he drank enumerable cups of coffee and he played the guitar. In fact, he was playing when my first, long-term boyfriend kissed me; like most artists, he ignored us and let young love blossom. What inspired me most, however, was that Harry was a writer – just like I wanted to be. Even though I was only 19, Harry treated me as an adult. We could talk about anything and I never felt like I was being judged. The last time I saw him, I had gone over to his apartment after my morning creative writing class ended at Austin Peay. He made us both of bowl of cereal and apologized that he didn't have anything warmer to eat considering the cool, October weather. I didn't mind. After I had a few bites of cereal, he dug out the beginnings of a vampire story he was writing. I was one of two people to read it (the other being his long-time girlfriend).

As not to give away his plot, I will simply say that the story was about a vampire couple who would meet at a playground at night. They were good vampires, and I am sorry that their story never played out. Two weeks later, Harry was dead.

I don't write about this because I want sympathy or emails of condolence. I write this to honor his memory and what he left behind. As this column was written, I sat at my desk looking at a stack of vampire books I inherited from him as well as my own unfinished vampire story (if Anne Rice and Stephenie Meyer can do it, so can I). What I got from him, however, is much more than a stack of books can supply.

Harry once told me it was not the successes that made the artist, but the failures. He did not mean it to be cynical or negative, but the exact opposite. That man collected his failures. He collected things such as rejection letters because it showed that he tried. So, I pass along the same to you.

It is not the successes that made the artist, but the failures, because it shows that you tried. At least if you try, you will never regret or look back and wonder what might have been.

People in your life might have told you to give up your pipe dream. They said you should act like an adult and stop living a fantasy. I say the opposite. Tell someone your dream— push it to them from across the table at breakfast. You will find

someone to support you and that will hold you accountable when it comes to finishing what you started.

The book I am writing now might be so terrible that my ex-professors will pretend they never taught me. My parents may be the only people on the planet that will buy my book. But for now, I have people urging me on. Friends randomly text message me to see how it's going and others are eager to help if I need them to help. Even if I fail, I will have tried, and that is all that anyone can ask for.

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**"Hot Must-Haves for Spring 2008"** 3/24/2008 7:53 PM CDT

**In your hair:** Sunsilk Waves of Envy Gel & Cream Twist. The great thing about this product is that it gives you beach babe waves (or curls) without that crunchy-hair look. Plus, it's pretty inexpensive.

**On your skin:** Jergens Ultra Healing Moisturizing Lotion and 24-Hour Moisture Advanced Therapy Lotion are the best if you have dry skin. Enough said.

**In your closet:** Thanks to my awesome friend A.C., a Nashville pro and cool cat, I found The Hip Zipper – a well-organized, clean vintage clothing store on Forrest Avenue. The prices were great and ranged from about \$20 to \$50 for shirts, pants, dresses, coats and more. The owner even has a "free-for-all" bin full of freebies that turned out not to be vintage or had minor flaws – this proves that she is out to please customers and is honest about her product. For more information, hit <http://www.hipzipper.com/>. The store will take your e-mail as well, that way the owner can hit you up when your style of stuff comes in (she's putting out the Spring and Summer stuff soon!).

**In your CD player:** Grace Potter and the Nocturnals. This band has songs that range from a updated Janis Joplin sound to more mellow tunes reminiscent of Nora Jones. The website <http://www.gracepotter.com/> calls them an "organic brand of American rock & roll," but you can find out for yourself at the Rites of Spring Music Festival in Nashville in mid-April. Tickets are \$50-\$60 for the weekend after taxes.

**On your bookshelf:** The best, inspiring, and non-judgmental Christian book for women out there is *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul* by John and Stasi Eldredge. It explains the role of women, the desires of women and why women are sometimes in need of things other than God to fill them because of insecurities of Biblical proportions. Basically, it says, "every woman in her heart longs for three things: to be romanced, to play an irreplaceable role in a great adventure, and to unveil beauty. That's what makes a woman come alive." Great book with a version for men called *Wild at Heart*.

**At your fingertips:** The Cool People Care Website boasts that it saves the world five minutes at a time. While the website covers a vast number of cities across the nation, Nashville is also included. Events on this website are cool, but for a good cause. For example, the April 8 Paul Mitchell Nashville Gathering will be raising 25,000.00 to be contributed to four charities that deal with energy and the environment to food for Africa. Visit <http://www.coolpeoplecare.org/> for more information.

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**"The Five Laws of Craigslist/Online Sales Etiquette"** 4/17/2008 11:27 AM CDT

Recently, thanks to J&J, I have become addicted to online sales sites like Craigslist. I had never even looked at it before and now I am on it as frequently as teenagers are surfing MySpace. However, sometimes the headlines for these items are misleading as a magazine headline I read once. If the headline on the cover reads, *The New Power Couple: Smart Women and Hot Men*, the article should not be about how a woman is addicting to dating models and looking up their status on models.com.

There are certain laws of etiquette you should follow when using these websites, as some of the misleading garbage is just wasting other people's time.

**Law Number One: Just because it's old, doesn't make it vintage** – Vintage, retro and antique are often abused words on online yard sale sites like Craiglist. Just because it's old does not mean it falls into these categories.

Vintage, according to Merriam-Webster, means a "period of origin or manufacture" or "length of existence" unless you are writing about a grape harvest. Therefore, to use the word, you should post the year. Example: *Wingback Chair Vintage 1965*.

Retro means, "relating to, reviving, or being the styles and especially the fashions of the past : fashionably nostalgic or old-fashioned" and is appropriate to use if it is a 1950s, 1960s or 1970s item – as that is the common era referred to by this term.

Antique means that something is ancient, a relic or "a work of art, piece of furniture, or decorative object made at an earlier period and according to various customs laws at least 100 years ago". So, unless you have something a century old or something that mimics the style of something that old, you probably can't call it antique.

Even if you don't follow these definitions exactly, keep this in mind: Don't call something vintage, retro or antique because it's dirty, broken, old and looks like it came out of the basement of a serial killer's house.

**Law Number Two: No one wants your used undergarments** – No tags attached? Throw them out. Period.

**Law Number Three: No one wants your trash** – Charging \$30 – \$100 for your broken, fabricless, dirty stuff is not appealing. If you wouldn't buy it at a yard sale for that price, or wouldn't give it to a friend in that condition, don't post it.

**Law Number Four: Post the price already** – Everyone using these sites has had their time wasted by someone who posts something for \$1 just to open it and see they are selling a list of \$600 furniture. Be honest and don't try to fool people and waste their valuable clicking time. They could have just missed buying what they were looking for because of you.

**Law Number Five: Take five seconds to write back or update your post** – Even if the item is sold or has a pending pick-up, send an e-mail, even a mass one that says the item is no longer available. If you can't do that, take the item down or mark it sold. It's ridiculous to leave an item up for a week or two after it's gone.

Just keep these laws in mind and your buyers will appreciate it.

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**"What to Add, What to Purge"** 4/24/2008 3:15 PM CDT

Considering the weather, it's safe to say spring has arrived and it's time to put away your sweaters and begin thinking about spring and summer 2008 fashions. However, as a book I am reading about clutter (*It's All Too Much*) indicates, once something comes into your closet as a new resident, it's time to evict someone else.

**For the office:** Consider 1940s and 1950s style skirts. If you want them for a steal, try visiting consignment shops, thrift stores and used clothing stores like Goodwill. I found two great skirts at these types of places – one bright green button-up skirt and one grey skirt with striped accents. Dress up these looks with fat, plastic bracelets, beaded jewelry and costume jewelry reminiscent of the 1980s. Purge any skirts that are thigh-length, flared or don't fit so well any more. Sell jewelry you haven't worn in over a year.

**For the beach or pool:** Please allow me to re-introduce you to the one-piece. Since I was growing up, the one-piece was the staple of the older, the flabbier and the more embarrassed of their bodies. Boo to that! Back in the 1940s and 1950s, it was sexy to wear a one-piece suit – as was wearing a swimsuit with halter-style top and boy short bottoms. Marilyn Monroe and Bettie Page even did it. I foresee this style making a big comeback this year – especially if the suits are done in solid colors or polka dots. What's not hot this year are itty, bitty string bikinis and floral prints. Well, unless you're Jennifer Garner (or if the former *Alias*, butt-kicking, super spy is your personal trainer).

**For your feet** – Flats, flats, flats! Say bye-bye to those 1970s stacks. The chunky look has left the building. Instead, try sandals in funky colors like pink, green, yellow and blue.

**For nights out/dates** – The 1970s are supposedly known for bellbottoms, but let's aim a little higher. Smock tops are becoming all the rage for the female wardrobe. In fact, I've known people to buy maternity tops a size too small so they could get the look! For sleeveless 70s numbers, try the Candies line at Kohl's. Those tops will make you look like a Bond girl – but you have to give up the skin tight numbers. This spring and summer, no one wants to see you adjusting your tube top all day and trying to avoid a Janet Jackson-style costume malfunction. So, in the name of Peter Walsh, when you get the buying urge, first you must purge! Make all your too-tight, too-short (if your belly shows) and too-small tops hit Craigslist.