

Sisters woman authors journal

By Helen Schmidling
Correspondent

During the heart of the recession, Francesca Russo faced a major challenge and changed her life. She left her home and business after 30 years on the Oregon Coast, and with her German shepherd, Yogi, drove to Central Oregon. Circumstances that led to the move were difficult, but ultimately proved constructive.

Russo turned her life's experiences into a book, "Becoming Change: A Journal for Mind, Spirit, and Body." "I have learned that compassion for my mistakes has allowed me to forgive and love myself and has helped me love others in a deeper way," she said. That led to her vision statement, "U first love yourself for life" (uflly4life) because "the most powerful relationship you will ever have is with yourself."

In Manzanita, Russo started a gourmet deli and catering service in 1986, was featured in *Oregon Magazine*, and appeared on PM Northwest. The business evolved into Cassandra's Pizza, which was featured in Northwest Best Places for 13 years, and Cranky's Coffee Shop.

Cranial sacral massage helped Russo to recover from injuries sustained in an auto accident. In 2000, she sold the businesses, got her massage license in 2001, and studied cranial sacral with the Upledger Institute. In the next seven years, there was an amicable divorce after 21 years, the study of yoga therapy with the late Mukunda Stiles, and five inspirational days listening to the Dalai Lama. By May 2009, Russo was working seven days a week, practicing massage, teaching yoga, and mismatched with



PHOTO PROVIDED

Francesca Russo has turned life's challenges into help for others.

a business partner. She left her clients in good hands with another licensed massage therapist, and left her property with family.

In Bend, she met Shelley Hummell, and traded a place to live for barn duties under the supervision of Kim McDonald, Hummell's former ranch manager. There were times she gathered cans for gas money to drive to Shibui Spa from Bend; her earnings went toward meeting coastal debts.

"Becoming Change" took root in these challenging times. Penniless, and surrounded by generous strangers, Russo found her true self. The book is a culmination of Russo's decision to help others on their life journeys.

Russo still works as a licensed massage therapist at Shibui. She also combines her training in cranial sacral and lymphatic therapy, her intuition and training as a spiritual practitioner, and yoga to personalize private sessions with people to help them heal and empower their lives.

"Change is a natural phenomenon; how you choose to experience change is up

to you," she says. "Tears can open your heart wider, allowing room for self-love, happiness, and forgiveness. Changing old patterns allows new opportunities you never thought possible."

"Becoming Change" encourages progress. Its 365 pages are not dated, and can be followed sequentially or topically, as desired. If you make a few notes in response to each message, when you come to the end, you can go back and see how much you have changed.

Topics are wide-ranging because each person's change is different. Whether you want to eat healthier, give up a bad habit, adopt a new exercise regime, or recover from emotional trauma, the process of making a change is universal. Russo's book can be used alongside other professional resources if one desires. It is a friendly companion that you can turn to, day or night.

In Sisters, her book is available at Shibui, Three Sisters Healing Arts, Bedouin and Paulina Springs Books, and from her website, www.uflly4life.com.

Sisters sees third-warmest April

According to preliminary data received by NOAA's National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Sisters averaged warmer than normal during the month of April.

The average temperature was 48.7 degrees which was 4.7 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 65.7 degrees, which was 7.3 degrees above normal. The highest was 80 degrees on the 20th. Low temperatures averaged 31.7 degrees, which was 2.1 degrees above normal. The lowest was 22 degrees, on the 26th.

There were 14 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 0.30 inches during April, which was 0.65 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation

— at least .01 inch — was received on three days with the heaviest, 0.25 inches reported on the May 15.

Precipitation this year has reached 4.6 inches, which is 0.53 inches below normal. Since October, the water-year precipitation at Sisters has been 11.65 inches, which is 1.64 inches above normal.

The outlook for May from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above-normal temperatures and near-to-above normal precipitation. Normal highs for Sisters rise from 62.0 degrees at the start of May to 70.0 degrees at the end of May. Normal lows rise from 32.0 degrees to 38.0 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.21 inches.

This was the third-warmest April on record. The warmest was 51.2 degrees in 1987.

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