

YOUR NORTH SHORE GUIDE to ACTIVE LIVING

LIVE

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AROUND THE CORNER
Columnist
Dave Norona gets pumped up for the Olympics and other upcoming events and encourages you to get in on the fun.
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NEWS photo Paul McGrath

DESIGNER and illustrator John Belisle has created the artwork for a campaign and website entitled Leafalegacy. ca. Visitors who make a donation to the B.C. Cancer Foundation receive a virtual leaf, which they can use to honour an individual who is fighting cancer or who has passed away from the disease.

NV illustrator makes his mark

Erin McPhee

emcphee@nsnews.com

WITH their 25th anniversary approaching, the team at Signals Design Group wanted to do something big to mark the milestone.

Staff of the Vancouver-based creative services firm considered their options: they could throw a bash and invite their many clients, or they could send gifts to supporters. However, neither of these ideas seemed to resonate

Creates artwork for Leaf A Legacy, a website that supports cancer research

with anyone. "We all kind of agreed that maybe it would be nice to do something that involved one of our clients and that actually gave back to the community," says associate creative director John Belisle, a North Vancouver resident.

Putting their thinking caps on, the Signals team decided to create a project that would raise funds and awareness for cancer research. Recently, the firm had been rocked by deaths in staff members'

extended families due to the disease. Wanting to do something to honour those individuals, as well as in light of their working relationship with the B.C. Cancer Foundation, which supports research and care at the B.C. Cancer Agency, their project soon came into focus.

So, on their own, Signals launched Leaf A Legacy (www.leafalegacy.ca), a campaign and award-winning website intended to

support the foundation.

"Online fundraising has become an issue that all the non-profits are looking at and trying to find ways to engage audiences and get them to contribute to their organizations through their interaction on the Internet," says David Young, senior consultant, brand strategy.

Engaging a younger audience to take action has proven to be a particular challenge as well, he says.

With these issues in mind, Signals called on Belisle, an



Private wars: stay neutral to make peace

QUESTION:

My wife and our 28-year-old daughter get into some terrible arguments and they both expect me to take their side. When I try to help it doesn't work. When I try to stay out of it, they are both mad at me. I find it all very upsetting and I don't know what to do. Is there a good way to handle this?

Answer:

Yes, there is a good way to handle this but it won't necessarily get you out of their firing line anytime soon. You are in a triangle with your wife and daughter with each one of you playing a role in the intensity. It sounds like you get anxious around their anger and caught in the emotional crossfire.

Your efforts so far sound like attempts to either calm them down or block them out. Extricating yourself from this position is the best place to put your energy.

Here is what I believe will help:

■ You need to change the way you think about your responsibility to your wife and your daughter. You are working too

See Leaves page 24

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Courage and tenacity are required to make change

From page 17

hard at managing their emotions and not hard enough at managing your own. Their issues are theirs to solve and your efforts to help them or to avoid them will only get in their way.

■ The position you want to strive for is that of the emotionally neutral participant. This is a complex position. It means that you are actively engaged and interested in their exchange but emotionally neutral about the outcome. If you get caught in the intensity, your thinking and your comments will be driven by your own discomfort. Such comments are rooted in fear and smell of uncertainty. They are never useful.

■ Work on keeping your heart rate measured as the fray begins. Breathe. Think about what you are observing. When your wife or daughter ask for backup, watch your tone of voice and calmly and briefly tell them what you think. Your comments should be based on your honest appraisal of the situation and should be devoid of criticism or judgment. Simply set out your thoughts. Do not be concerned about their reception and put no effort into convincing anyone of your position.

■ Make your own decision about how much of your wife and daughter's exchange you want to stick around for. If you've heard enough of it, excuse yourself calmly despite any protest and assure them that you are confident that they will figure things out.

I saw a great commercial recently where a husband is watching TV, converter in hand, and his wife walks in wearing a new dress and asks him if he likes it. His attention barely leaving the screen, he replies that it looks great. She is not quite satisfied and asks again. He looks up and

says, "do you really want to know?" When she replies "yes," he puts down the converter, does a quick appraisal and says, "well the colour is great but given your body type the neck line is wrong, it's a little snug across the hips and it's about three inches too short." He then calmly picks up the converter and returns to his program as the camera pans to her shocked expression. I can't remember what the commercial was selling, but the humour lies in the clarity and composure of his response. In reality, we all know the courage required to voice a position when the risk in doing so is considerable.

Every change that we attempt to make in a relationship requires courage and tenacity because we can be certain that there is trouble ahead. There will be times when your wife or your daughter, or both, will be angry with you but if you can hold onto your position and set it out without fear, over time things should improve. At the very least you will find a new integrity in the face of your family and I suspect that eventually they will appreciate this, see no advantage in their efforts to manipulate your support, and be more able to sort out their own challenges.

One last point: don't make the common mistake of telling your family of your reformed approach. If you just do it, rather than talk about doing it, your efforts will hold more credibility and be less open to suspicion. Good luck and keep it real.

Margaret Anne Speak, M.A., C.C.C., works with couples, individuals and families from a Bowen Family Systems perspective at Family Services of the North Shore. Questions? Write onthecouch@family-services.bc.ca or call 604-988-5281.

health notes

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Stepparent Support Circle is a North Shore group which meets on the third Thursday of each month. Info: 604-727-3706 or www.bcstepparents.org.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly meets every Tuesday, 5 p.m., at the Lions Housing Complex, 1300 Parkgate Ave., North Vancouver. Info: Dianne at 604-929-3649.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly meets every Wednesday, 11 a.m. at St. Catherine's Church, 1058 Ridgewood Ave., North Vancouver. Info: Barbara at 604-985-4800.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly meets every Wednesday, 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at St. Martin's Anglican Church, 195 East Windsor Rd., North Vancouver. Info: Verna at 604-985-6280 or www.tops.org.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sen-

sibly meets every Thursday, 9-10:30 a.m., at West Vancouver United Church, 2062 Esquimalt Ave. Info: 604-926-1747.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly meets every Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m. at 134 West 20th St., North Vancouver. Info: Nancy at 604-990-1793.

— Compiled by Pamela Stone and Debbie Caldwell

E-mail information for your non-profit, by donation or nominal fee event to listings@nsnews.com.



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