

THE POWER OF POSITIVE PERSISTENCE

by Laurel Pardy

What do you do when full time careers are impossible and no one will hire you? What do you do when you have taken all the courses and classes and undiluted domesticity you can tolerate?

You stop beating your head against the wall and you build yourself a door.

You forget straight line thinking and traditional methods; you divest yourself of the pigeon hole image and you do what people do best — create the means to the end.

THINK BIG

In Ottawa, an unemployed Physical Education teacher would try to find a position as a Physical Education teacher in another school, a nearby town, or another part of the country. The ingenuity would be applied to the job search technique, not to the type of job.

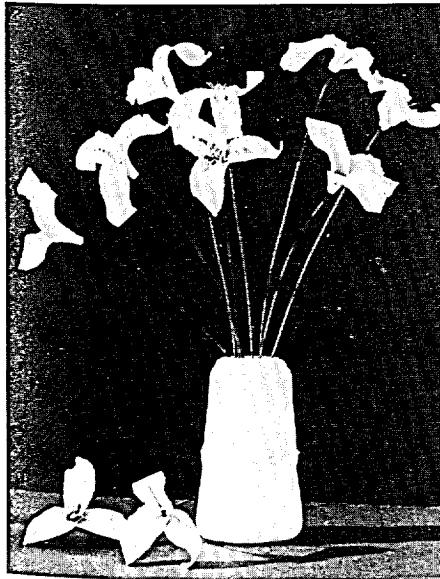
Similarly, a clothing boutique manager would search for another small retail management position; a nurse would search the medical sector for an opening.

However, if these people were to find themselves accompanying their spouses on overseas assignments, they might end up running recreation programs at tourist resorts, developing an import/export business, or classifying bones for a paleontologist.

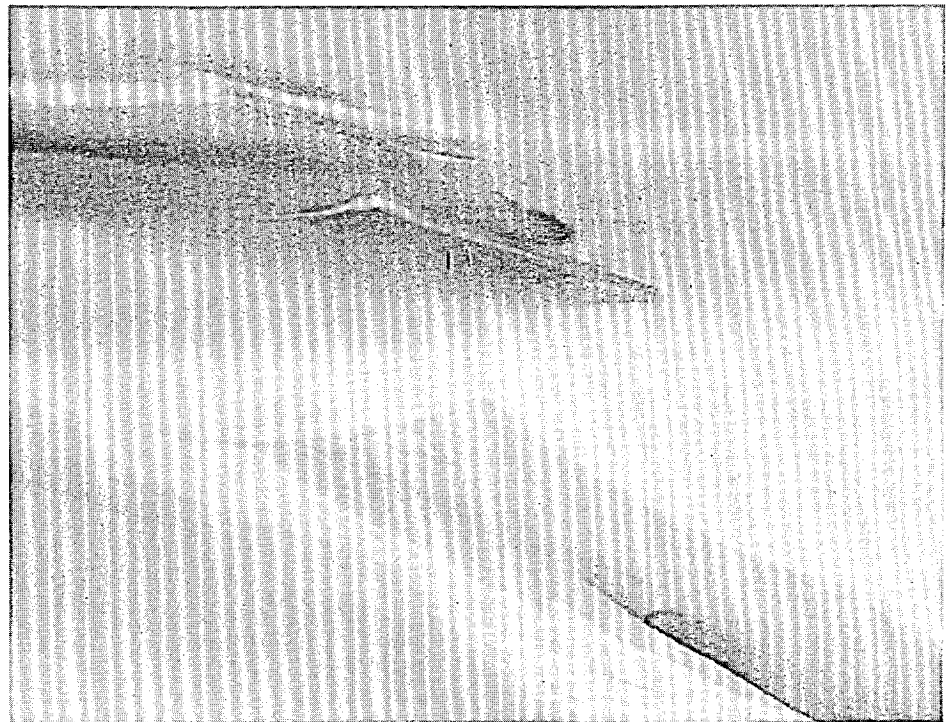
There is no denying that Lady Luck holds the joker, but persistence and expanded conceptual thinking are the keys to success.

A classroom teacher, for instance, develops program design and evaluation skills, group dynamics management skills, communication and human relations skills, presentation skills, and time management skills.

So, stop thinking, "I'm a teacher",



Pottery by Margaret Chandler



Watercolour by Marcelle Blanchette

and start thinking, "I have information transfer skills".

Remember — if the opportunity for using your skills does not exist, create the opportunity.

STRAIGHT LINE CAREERS

In general, straight line careers are the most difficult for those who accompany their partners abroad. However, specialists have the best opportunity for finding work in their field, provided there is a demand for their skills.

Pat Taylor, a viral haematologist, always managed to work in her field and build a world class professional reputation while remaining a rotational spouse. **Beth Merklinger**, an art historian, has continued to teach, study and carry out research throughout postings in Egypt, India, Washington, Rome and Ottawa.

Iize Skuja Wright, a psychotherapist, has continued to work in her field during tours in Italy, New York, Japan and Canada. As she says, "You may have to expand your boundaries into a related field. It may not always be immediate, but eventually something will become available."

On the other hand, the skilled specialist has the least opportunity for creative solutions to the job opportunity problem. **Dr. Ambrose Amissah**, for example, accompanied his spouse through several postings before finally securing a job as a veterinarian.

Sometimes chance and determination come together and provide a great oppor-

tunity. **Mary Pomeroy** trained as a lab technician, but found a job in Nairobi doing proof-reading for Richard Leakey, Director of the National Museums of Kenya. The qualification connection was her medical training and knowledge of anatomy. This experience as a research scientist's assistant lead to contracts at the Museum of Natural Science in Ottawa.

She pointed out the downside of contractual work: the lack of the security that would be offered by a full time position. On the positive side, contracts for the collection of material for ongoing research could be fulfilled while posted to both Tel Aviv and Singapore.

ARTISTS AND AUTHORS

People who are blessed with creative gifts and who choose to develop them as a career seem to find foreign service life, at worst, only a minor handicap.

Phyllis Ross continued to paint and teach throughout seven overseas postings and is still doing so after retirement from the foreign service. She is a member of the Ottawa Watercolour Society and the Canadian Pastel Society.

"One of the difficult things was to do the work necessary to recapture the finesse that had been lost over the six months or so it took to pack and unpack every time we moved.

"In some countries it was impossible to get supplies. The light changes so much, one chooses different colours.

"Perserverence is important."