

# Sensory Delights

## Get Real by Brooke Bessesen



### Cold convinces columnist to curtail case load (kind of)

I'm afraid I am accidentally going to blow my brains out. I have emptied two boxes of tissues and yet a tickle behind my left eye brings on sneezes with the precision of an egg timer – exactly two every three minutes.

Propped up in bed, amidst soggy snowballs of crumpled tissues, I rest ... miserably. Even my hair hurts. Here in this linen purgatory between my office and the ICU, I am forced to deliberate the waywardness of my hectic life.

Of course, I play the victim,

the hapless inhabitant of a germ-infested world, who inadvertently touched the wrong phone or “caught a chill” when the weather turned.

But inside I know the truth: I was acting invincible. Snubbing my nose at dangerous microbes, even as the season's latest strain started taking hostages.

With too many long days and energy-crushing commitments, I careened toward an implacable collision with a Karmic Law – the one that states specifically, “If you

don't take care of yourself, you'll get sick.”

As it turns out, the universe requires us to take personal well-being days. If these allocated days are not spent fostering mental and physical health through joyful activities such as riding bikes, laughing with friends, or reading a good book, the cosmic human relations department automatically rolls them into mandatory sick-leave.

Thus, by refusing to set aside quality time for ourselves, we schedule our own infirmity. Sadly enough, even under the brutal threat of daytime TV, few of us ever grasp this profound, yet simple concept.

We have all fought the battle. Working at warp speed, we suddenly notice the first sign of infiltration: that tiny scratch in the tender folds of the throat.

Next, an enemy ranger establishes camp at the esophagus-trachea interchange, painfully demanding a cease-and-desist order on all throat activities, particularly swallowing.

At this point, the brain

explodes with fear that the viral opponent might overtake us before we can fulfill our duties for the upcoming business trip, arriving house guests, or Little League play-offs.

With determination to hold the fort, we shoot vitamin C-tipped arrows, even as fever seeps under the bridge. Sometimes, with the right artillery, we can sustain ourselves through several all-important obligations, but inevitably, we succumb to ... The Crud.

Weak and helpless, our only recourse is to supply the immune system with weapons from our mothers' armament: cool washcloth compresses, greasy VapoRub and chicken soup.

Now I am crawling through the wasteland of recovery, though the buzzards of relapse circle overhead. Empty medicine bottles and cold cups of tea litter the landscape and I still feel terrible.

But my mind is clear, my spirits high, for I have been to see the Oracle (I chose the red cold capsule). She told me that I am the one; the one who decides how and where my personal well-being days are spent. And she revealed the fact that, despite very savvy advertising, humans aren't supposed to endure annual NyQuil-induced comas. She also reminded me that I must be strong when the Matrix pressures me to over-pack my calendar, work harder and do more.

So, at last, with the light of wisdom to guide me, I prepare to make some life changes and inject more fun into my schedule. I intend to slow

down and use the slogan, “just say no,” even at the risk of sounding like a dork.

And I promise to find beauty in small things – such as tiny dust-bunnies and dirty socks – which are both bound to collect in large numbers when I go to the Jacuzzi instead of cleaning the house.

Yes, as of this minute, life is going to be richer. I'm going to plan a vacation and buy tickets to the theatre. I'm going to invite friends over to play a rowdy game of Cranium. I'm going to take salsa lessons and plant an indoor herb garden. I'm going to ... I'm going to ... Sneeze! Twice!

Perhaps I should take this one tissue at a time. After all, I cannot even stand upright for several minutes without getting woozy.

Besides, my more immediate aspirations are far less complicated: lose the T-shirt I've been living in, eat dinner at the table and, frankly – shave my legs. Hopefully tomorrow.

After that, I absolutely have to get back to work and catch up from being sick. Maybe I can do something fun next Saturday. No, Saturday doesn't work. Maybe Sunday. The next weekend for sure. Certainly by ... well, let's just say ... soon. Very soon.

*Scottsdale resident Brooke Bessesen is the author and illustrator of the children's book Look Who Lives in the Desert!, a humorous-but-educational look at desert wildlife. It's available at all book retailers, including Gridleys of Fountain Hills.*

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### NEELY'S DINER

by Crawford



### 12 masterpieces at Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum, at 1625 N. Central Ave. in downtown Phoenix, is hosting an engagement featuring 12 exceptional paintings by the Impressionist masters and some of the most familiar names in art – Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, and Edouard Manet.

Collecting the Impressionists: Masterpieces from the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, is on view

at Phoenix Art Museum until March 12.

For more information about Phoenix Art Museum and the exhibition, visit the Web site at [www.phxart.org](http://www.phxart.org) or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

Admission costs \$9 for adults; \$7 for senior citizens (65+) and full-time students; \$3 for children 6-17; and free for Museum members and children under age 6. The Museum general admission is free to all on Thursdays.