



Thank you to everyone who submitted their incredible stories of friendship and sisterhood. Your united friendships amaze me by bridging us all together! The judges had such a difficult time deciding or should I say agreeing on winners. I am very pleased to release their stories to you. Kathy

2015 Writing Competition 1st Place Winner

Just a Sip of Wine #522
By Martha M., Toronto ON

A tale of four women; Josée the bilingual ring leader from Ottawa, Martha, the anglophone from Toronto, and Lulu and Francine, the two francophones from Quebec City. It took more than a sip of wine to ease our language barriers but it took *Just a Sip of Wine* to cement our friendship.

Josée was the conduit in all of this. She is the bilingual francophone who lives and works in Ottawa. She has friends in Ontario and friends in Quebec. Josée holds friendship in high regard. On a previous trip to Cobourg, Ontario, Josée spotted a ceramic tile imprinted with the *Just a Sip of Wine* image on it. It both beckoned and spoke to Josée. She bought it immediately and when she returned to Ottawa she started googling and making inquiries as to how to buy three more of the tiles. This was all in aid for a holiday she was planning.

Josée and Francine had planned a trip to Rimouski, Quebec with the aforementioned gaggle of girlfriends. They had booked a chalet for September 2-5, 2014 at the Refuge du Vieux Loup de Mer, located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. Josée was planning a theme night to celebrate friendship at the chalet. The *Just a Sip of Wine* said it all. If only she could purchase one tile for each of us. Alas, this was not to be.

So Josée did what she does best. She improvised. She photographed the tile and purchased three blank cards. On



each card she pasted the image of *Just a Sip of Wine* and on the inside of the cards she wrote to each of us, from her heart, on how much our friendship meant to her. We were each individually honoured and valued. She explained to us, after the presentation of the cards, how she had found the image of *Just a Sip of Wine* and how she had so wanted to share it with us but was not able to purchase more tiles, hence our copies of the picture of the

picture of the *Just a Sip of Wine*. She then ended her presentation by telling us how there are so many songs about love, but a dearth of songs on friendship. And she then presented us each with a Françoise Hardy CD containing a song about friendship, entitled L'amitié. Together we listened to the song as we identified which image suited which one of us from the four ladies in the *Just a Sip of Wine* picture.

It was an evening spent sipping wine, laughing, sharing our feelings, our stories, our losses and our successes. The *Just a Sip of Wine* inspired Josée to open a conversation about our friendships with our woman friends, our girlfriends that we hold so dear. And somehow, through fragmented English and French and a melange of the two, coupled with wine and inspired by the four happy women on the dock in the *Just a Sip of Wine* picture, Josée brought together her two solitudes, her English and her French friends, and gave us all a night to remember and reminisce about for years to come.

Thank you Kathy for your fun filled series of Ladies of the Lake pictures that so aptly celebrate our friendships. You have bridged the west with the east.

2015 Writing Competition 2nd Place Winner

By Nora D., 1000 Islands, ON

I worked for Bank of Montreal for over 34 years, as did many of my friends. One friend in particular was Cheryl. She was there with me from the very start of my career in 1977, even worked with me in the same branch. Over the years many of us at BMO would get together for dinners, parties and baseball games. In 2004 after having dinner we all said good-bye and that was the last day we got to enjoy with Cheryl. She suffered a major heart attack that night and passed on. The group of girls that had worked with her at the bank got together that week to celebrate her life and our friendships. Every year since then we get together in the summer, a gathering of friends called the "Cherylbration". Some years we've had as high as 20 friends and relatives all together.

We are now in our 11th year and it seems like only yesterday we laughed and cried together over dinner, yapping about work and our lives.

Every year the bunch of us girls rent a cottage or have even gone to her sister's house in South Hampton. Always reflecting on the beautiful friendship we had with Cheryl. We all miss her so much!

Your art is reminiscence of our gatherings. On the dock, drinking wine, floating around in tubes, skinny dipping, hanging out on the porch, reading under a tree, around a campfire or hanging in the kitchen. The simple and most enjoyable things in life. Moments in time not to be forgotten.

That's why it's so important to me to have your art hanging in my cottage. Every time I see them it reminds me of the weekends with the "Cherylbration" girls. The girls of every size and age. Happy and living life to the fullest! Time is coming up for another one soon and I hope again to invite everyone here to the 1000 Islands for our summer get-together in celebration of our good friend, Cheryl.

Here's to friendship and Cheryl!