
Rick's Place

Notes, Thoughts, and Random Musings on the Online Experience
by Rick Hein, AMIS web master

“And how many hours a day did you do lessons?” said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

“Ten hours the first day,” said the Mock Turtle: “nine the next, and so on.”

“What a curious plan!” exclaimed Alice.

“That's the reason they're called lessons,” the Gryphon remarked: “because they lessen from day to day.”

This was quite a new idea to Alice, and so she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. “Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?”

Lewis Carroll
Alice in Wonderland

What better way to look forward into the summer season. Our lessons recede and the wide open spaces of holiday beckon. You may be journeying back home; you may be journeying to a new home; you may be exploring corners of the world you have always dreamed about. For Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, his life was changed by a story he told while boating on the Isis to his Dean's trio of daughters, Lorina, Alice, and Edith Liddell. That story told on his 'eleventh day' journey, *Alice in Wonderland*, lives on today, almost 170 years after his birth.

“He's back to *Alice in Wonderland* again,” I hear you moan in despair. And why not? The Internet, the power of words to express, the power of calculations to describe, the role of imagination and interpretation, making sense of E-mail and organizing your web library. And the books for the quotes. “Wonderland indeed? How does it all fit together?”

Part of my 'eleventh day' journey is on the printed page. I actually do more than surf the Internet on your behalf looking for the 'fun' sites with which to entertain you. The world that we travel in books and through music is far more vast than the real world. It is also shallower in that the best book about any subject is a pale imitation of actually living the experience, just as the best recording of a work is a shadow of performing it.

How do I recommend you to spend this holiday time? Doing what gives you the most peace and rest you can gain in order to recharge your creative batteries. Many of us will be gathering in England to celebrate a special birthday for a special person this summer. Fear not! We will raise a glass to absent friends. Many of us will take the opportunity to take a course leading to a more advanced degree, or pursue the one thing we have always wanted to do but for which we have never had the time.

I would modestly recommend that you 'take' a course this summer. You are a teacher, but you must also be prepared to be the student again. You can teach yourself the technology, your students do it every day. Learn the intricacies of .mp3 files and then digitize the teaching pieces you use. Get to grips with that notation package and write out the super arrangement that you made the ditto copies of way back then and now use every year with the choir. Sequence the accompaniment to the book of etudes you use with your students so they can be accompanied by a sequencer orchestra in their exercises. You've had the idea for a song, or a short story, or a sketch. Make the time to write, draw, or paint it! Maybe you will buy a new digital camera. Go out and take pictures of everything! Relearn how to see. Use the restricting eye of the camera to increase the power of your human eye. Revisit the more unfamiliar works of your favorite composer or find the composer who your favorite composer looked up to. See a show, dance a dance, make your garden grow. Whatever it is you choose to do, seize it with both hands and experience every second of it; cherish it and burn it into your heart. It will be there to refresh you and revive you when you most need it.

What will live on from your 'eleventh day' journey this year? We cannot hope to achieve Carroll's results, but we can make sure that, for ourselves and those who we love, it has been an enjoyable trip filled with happiness, peace, and harmony.

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