

IT'S IN THE GENES:

ARTISTIC FAMILIES Part II: The Bonnie Veblen Family



The Inimitable... Katharine Hepburn – Bronze Limited Edition – Bonnie Catherine Veblen

by Debbie L. Holmer

Little did I know when I headed out for my interview with the Veblen family at their home in Mendocino that I'd be meeting with a family of Vikings! And Vikings they are! Bonnie Catherine Veblen, mother of this marvelous clan, is a stunning beauty, and each of her sons (I didn't get to meet her oldest son Gaben) exudes that wild, tough Viking strength.

Bonnie Catherine Veblen is a sculptor, photographer, writer, designer, art consultant, teacher and a visionary. The tradition continues in Bonnie's sons, daughters-in-law and even grandchildren – each in their own way.

Bonnie was born in a small farming community in northern Minnesota. She has lived and worked in California, New York and Australia, as well as raising four sons. She has become one of the truly noteworthy contributors to the arts of her day. With bronzes in many prestigious collections, including The Smithsonian Portrait Institute, Washington, D.

C., Bonnie has become an artist of distinction. She is always challenging herself in new directions and has dedicated herself to promoting involvement in creativity, encouraging others to actively participate by expanding their potential through education and involvement in the arts.

Bonnie is very much involved in the Arts Council of Mendocino County GASP (Get Arts in the Schools) program, a program that funds artist workshops and live performances in Mendocino County schools during the school year.

Bonnie's sons: Gaben, Cody, Yorgen and Sunny.

Gaben Chancellor, Bonnie's oldest son, is an award-winning creative director and 21-year media veteran. His firm, ContentX (a cross media design and production company), was born in 1999. This design industry veteran is now a full-time resident of Mendocino. Gaben is a hands-on-cross-media designer and project director who also involves his brothers in the business.

Cody Chancellor thrives at a



An artistic door by Yorgen Kvinsland



Gabe Chancelor – CD cover for Capitol Records "On the Roof" with B.B. King

myriad of different creative expressions ranging from painting landscapes on location, contract permanent installation art (like totem poles), and interior design gigs large and small. He currently lives in Crystal Creek, Canada with his wife Jennifer. His newest painting series is focusing on our water sources and how important watershed preservation is. He has a degree in Fine Art and industrial design. Cody is also working on a book for children of all ages under the working title of *Prodigy's Ascension*. He let me peek and it's wonderful!

Cody's wife **Jennifer Norquist** is the founder of Dragonfly Designs, and has been a dedicated artist

her whole life. She studied art in Vancouver and in Argentina and her travels throughout the world have influenced her greatly. Her mosaic art designs are beautiful.

Both Cody and Jennifer are involved in public community art – involving the community in the design and fabrication process of public installations which helps empower people and encourage ownership of our local neighborhoods.



Striped Stockings – oil on canvas – Sunny Chancelor

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Yorgen Quent Kvinsland, a resident of Mendocino, focuses on creative entrances and glass work. Principal artist for ArtStruct, Yorgen formed the company with the vision to facilitate collaborations with artists in the creation of an art based door design. His background is in fine woodworking and fine art. Yorgen said to me, "Each job is a piece of art."

Yorgen's wife, **Anna Kvinsland**, business director for ArtStruct, is also the executive director for the Arts Council of Mendocino County. Anna has been involved in the arts her entire life. She has a Master of Arts degree in Arts Administration and has been gallery manager for a fine art gallery in addition to working for the Public Art Department of the San Francisco Arts Commission. Here in Mendocino County, Anna is a voice for the artists, showing us what artists can do for us and our community.

Their children, Sonje, age 5 and Knute, age 2, seem to be carrying on the tradition with their special art work already placed around the house.



Two Shrooms by Cody Chancelor



Photo by Debbie L. Holmer

Pictured, left to right, sons, Sunny, Cody and Yorgen. Seated, Cody's wife, Jennifer Norquist, with a favorite puppet, Bonnie Veblen and Yorgen's wife, Anna Kvinsland. Not pictured, son, Gaben Chancellor.

Sunny Chancellor focuses on illustration, animation and industrial design. He is studying with an architect focusing on buildings with sustainable designs, and is also moving towards helping different groups create their future visions. In addition to traveling the world connecting with different communities and cultures, Sunny is also a prolific writer.

I met with the Veblen/Chancellor/Kvinsland family on Christmas Eve at their beautiful Vikingshaven home. This is a family of artists, but also thinkers (in fact, Bonnie's grandfather was Thorstein Veblen, economist, noted for being one of America's great original minds, and her father was a famous mathematician and economist also).

Bonnie said her boys would "hang out in my ceramics studio when they were just toddlers. Their father, Ray Chancellor, was a professional graphics designer and artist. My sons look into themselves and the subject matter and find something meaningful to portray."

There is so much love and hope in the Veblen/Chancellor/Kvinsland family. They respect and honor their past, yet look toward the future, realizing that we need to know what to do with all of our technology. The Veblen family follows the philosophy that "creativity and beauty play an integral role in people's lives."

Bonnie and her sons are storytellers, deeply involved in caring about the world around them and very much into social commentary. They are poets, philosophers, and yes, artists! They all have the ability to combine their visions with their dreams.

For more information on the Veblen/Chancellor/Kvinsland family, visit the following websites:

Bonnie Veblen: www.bonnieveblen.com

Gaben Chancellor: www.contentx.com

Cody Chancellor: www.chancellor.net

Jennifer Norquist: www.chancellor.net/mosaic

Yorgen Kvinsland: www.artstruct.com

Anna Kvinsland: www.artsmendocino.org

Sunny Chancellor: www.chancellor.net/sunny

Each of the artistic families I interviewed has a sense of community and our environment, both locally and worldwide. Art is another language for these families and a way to communicate within the family and throughout their community.

Debbie Holmer has also interviewed the John Hewitt family, profiled in Summer 2009, and the Rusty and Joan Gates family, to be featured in Spring, 2010.