

**By Helen Molanphy**

Word – *Connections*

Shape – *Circle*

Color – *Turquoise*

Connections, connections, connections - - - the printing press exhibit brought me full circle to my sons. Brian, our middle son, ran the handset press at Colorado College during the '80s and again for a few years when he circled back home to Colorado Springs in the '90s. He also made his own paper and learned more about that skill in several papermaking circles at Soho, NYC, southern France, and Cornwall, England.

Brian got permission from Colorado College to print a book of his choosing, so he connected up with his younger brother Tom, a writer. Tom selected a piece he had written while a student in New Orleans. The story centered on the morning after Mardi Gras when the streets of New Orleans were very quiet and there were lots of turquoise colored beads rolling all over the town. The final product, showing Brian's handmade paper, his colored illuminations, containing brown, turquoise and orange colors and Tom's amusing story, is a family treasure. Our eldest son Paul was also connected to the Mardi Gras event because every year for four years he flew into New Orleans to celebrate with Tom on the day before Ash Wednesday. Since Paul's artistic talents lean towards acting and directing, he loved designing colorful turquoise and yellow costumes for himself and Tom.

As we stood in a circle around our guide, I loved listening to the unorthodox biographies of the people connected to these presses. Many really lived on the edge in order to do their art form and they lived unconnected to the emerging technological world around them. The presses themselves are a concrete symbol of resistance to mass production and represent a time when people lived at a better pace, not so encircled by our frenetic society.

I'm proud that my sons are staying connected to their talents which they exhibited in their early years, whether inventing plays and puppet shows, writing stories or designing Lego cities. I am glad that they are not caught up in the maddening consumer society and, that despite the geographical distance between them, our sons stay connected to each other and support the family circle. Seeing this press exhibit once again reminded me of how much many artists sacrifice in a material way, but also of how great is their gift to our spirits.

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