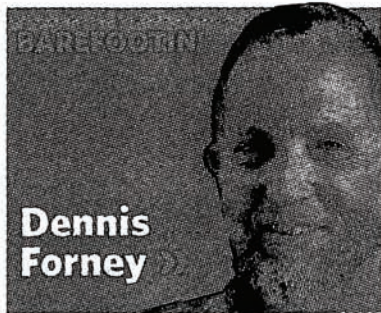


Enduring qualities of faith

Elise Seyfried, half of the dynamic Steve and Elise duo which this week began the 29th season of their Rehoboth Summer Children's Theatre, recently published a collection of easy-reading and thoughtful essays. She presents her 44 essays under the title: "Unhaling - On God, Grace and a Perfectly Imperfect Life." Using poignant and humorous moments from a rich family life including five children, Seyfried spins that simple and unavoidable fodder into a brand of gold stamped with faith, surrender and the peace that goes with them.

Don't take my "easy-reading" adjective to mean that Seyfried's work is fluffy and breezy. No less a genius than Ernest Hemingway once wrote that "easy writing makes for hard reading." It's clear from reading these essays that the author has chosen her subjects carefully and

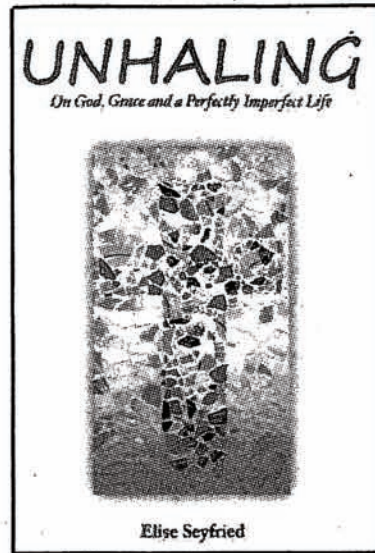


thoughtfully, and polished their presentation word by word and sentence by sentence to instill in them their own internal, compelling momentum. She wastes few words - each essay no more than two or three pages - and gives the reader a chance to pause and reflect before giving in to the itch to read another. The fact that Elise has co-authored 15 children's plays with her husband certainly shines through in these essays. Anyone who has had the pleasure of watching one of the summer

theater productions knows the stories are a whirlwind of action, surprise and revelation stuffed delightfully into short and well-crafted packages.

Seyfried dips frequently into Christianity to frame her essays but doesn't hesitate to draw as well from the wisdom of Buddha and the Tao, Kahlil Gibran, Goethe, and such literary giants as C.S. Lewis, Kurt Vonnegut and Aldous Huxley. Bits and pieces from each of these approaches to life and creation, linked with the author's realizations as she lives her life, confirm the ultimate faith which, in the face of a mystifying universe, allows us to unhale. The author, clearly, is a seeker who has found her light.

Her essay titled After the Curtis Concerts delves into the classical music world in which her son Sheridan works as a nationally acclaimed composer. She draws on a quotation from Von-



negut to begin her exploration of why classical musicians persevere despite such slim audiences for their work: "The only proof he needed for the existence of God was music." Using the analogy of musicians who heed their calling because of the fulfillment and transcendence of

their work, she discusses the followers of Christ who often find themselves swimming against the tide. "To stay committed, devoted, inspired when all around you are millions who don't, won't listen . . . is that crazy? Is there any point to being one of a small group when the world seems to have gone elsewhere? We all need to answer this for ourselves. We need to look into our hearts and souls, and nurture the love-based relationship that brought us to faith in the first place."

Seyfried writes about losing control of her children, about her marriage, about a difficult relationship with her father and about learning to live in the moment - in short, she writes about life and the questions we all ponder from time to time.

A portion of the sales of Unhaling will benefit Lutheran World relief.