

Colouring books now a gift for all ages



Some of the members of the adult colouring group work at the Bancroft Library: Dominic Nadeau, Samantha Ruddy, Kerry Leslie, Joe Minnie, Sharayah Woodcock, and Amanda Woodburn. TONY PEARSON Special to This Week

By Tony Pearson

This Christmas, as always, people received colouring books as presents. However, this year a number of the recipients were adults. The adult colouring craze, which started in France, hit this country this year, and propelled four colouring books into the top 10 bestsellers list. And it shows no sign of letting up. Colouring books like the Secret Garden series have been a top seller on Amazon for months.

As to why, the main reason given is that it's a great stress reliever. People become immersed in their creations, and push aside their worries for the moment.

Mental health experts claim that because the designs in adult colouring books are more complex, they require a lot of concentration and focus, which in turn deflects your attention from problems that may otherwise dominate your thoughts. Working through the patterns one after the other brings balance, they contend, and centres the person doing the colouring.

Louise Villeneuve, who leads an adult colouring group at the Bancroft Public Library, puts it in simpler terms: 'It's just very relaxing?' a great way to unwind. She explains that once you get going, you get absorbed by the intricacy of the work, and stress melts away. For its calming effect, some participants compare it to taking a long hot shower.

'In addition,' notes Villeneuve, 'it's an activity that families can do together, parents colouring with their children.' She says that the activity lets you get more in touch with yourself, and lets you access your 'inner child' and its sense of innocent joy.

Asked why the library became involved in the program, she points out that colouring offers adults a creative outlet for their artistic side, without demanding that the person be an artist. The group runs every Thursday from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Participants range in age from their 20s to their 70s. It's free, and anyone can attend.

As for books and supplies, these are widely available. In Bancroft, Stedman's and the pharmacies carry them, as does Ashlie's Bookstore. Ashlie's also sells Zen Tangle drawings on behalf of Home Again, the animal adoption agency. Incidentally, Villeneuve recommends Zen Tangle drawing to those who doubt their artistic ability: 'It will show you your hidden talent.'