

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ARTIST

**JANICE E. KIRK** is a published author, illustrator, teacher, and musician. Trained as an artist, a singer, and a writer, she writes about nature, the arts, spirituality, and related topics. She holds a B.Mus. from U. of Oregon (Eugene) and a M.Mus. in Vocal Perf/Pedagogy from U. of Colorado (Boulder). She taught music, art, and language arts in the public schools (Oregon, California), and served as Art Coordinator and Project Writer for the Language, Art & Music Project in Shasta Co. Schools (1974-77). She recently retired as Adjunct Voice Instructor at Simpson U. (Redding, California). Currently she is a member of Faith Lutheran Church, Winona, Minnesota. After many years in California, Jan and husband Don moved to Winona in the beautiful Mississippi River Valley to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

**Outdoor Experience:** With their two children Jan and Don traveled, camped, sketched, and photographed throughout the American West. In the 1960s they collected information on wild edible plants for Don's book (see below) for which Jan did 300 botanical sketches. Several summers found them on Teaching Staff at Holden Village (ELCA) on Lake Chelan in the Central Washington Cascade Mountains. Don was Village Naturalist; Jan taught watercolor classes.

In 1976-77 a year-long camping trip in the Greater Southwest provided time for study, sketching, painting, and photographing plant communities amid stunning landscapes. Jan and Don gained a new perspective on the way life systems are put together, a vision of Planet Earth as a dynamic whole. The trip triggered a spiritual renewal and sparked advocacy for earth stewardship. Living close to the elements, painting and sketching every day changed everything.

That pivotal year is the theme of *The Road to Beaver Park*. Touring with a naturalist, seeing as an artist, listening as a singer, and with a poet's instinct, Jan has woven the threads of that unique journey into this non-fiction memoir. Readers will enjoy takeaways:

**For the traveler:** A kaleidoscope of wondrous places as the family camps in 16 National Parks and Historic Sites located in the 6 Southwestern states.

**For the artist:** a field manual of art appreciation based on art principles; tips and techniques on how to draw, how to paint outdoors; discovery of flow patterns in nature; seeing order in a crowded landscape; finding unity in the natural world.

**For nature lovers:** seeing nature's grand landscape; discovering the organization inherent in nature; close observation of individual plant structures; learning nature's ways; familiarity leads to belonging; learning to live within an eco-community.

**For the seeker:** a spiritual awakening based on artist's perspective—the structural unity, functional relationships, and soul stirring beauty; descriptions of unexpected epiphanies; a gradual change of heart that leads to renewal of Christian faith.

**For the observer:** a grounding in nature lore; a new respect for nature's life systems; life-changing appreciation of the wonders of Planet Earth.

Come along and read how the artist sketches and paints *en plein air* surrounded by magnificent scenery as she plans to fry fresh-caught trout for supper. You will see nature with new eyes.

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**GOOD READING**

*The Road to Beaver Park, Painting, Perception, and Pilgrimage*, by Janice E. Kirk (Resource Publications, Wipf & Stock Pub., Inc.: 2015) Learn to paint—learn to see—change your life. A family's year-long outdoor odyssey of exploration and discovery in the Greater Southwest.

*The Christmas Redwood, A Forest Parable*, gift book written and illustrated with b/w line drawings by Janice E. Kirk (OakTara Publishers: 2007), 50 pp. A Nativity story for all ages.

*Cherish the Earth: the Environment and Scripture*, by Janice E. Kirk and Donald R. Kirk (Herald Press: 1993), illustrated by Janice, cover photo by Don, 180 pp. Answers the question: Is earth stewardship biblical?

*Wild Edible Plants of Western North America*, by Donald R. Kirk (Naturegraph: 1970), illustrated by Janice E. Kirk with 300 pen and ink botanical drawings. Throw it in your backpack when you take a hike. (100,000 copies sold and still in print)

