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from the editor

Out of the Abyss

We work on the magazine months ahead of publication. This is our spring issue, but it's mid-January as I write, and the LA fires are still burning. I have friends who have lost homes and businesses and, like so many, have watched old haunts and treasured places of my youth destroyed. There are millions of people in Los Angeles County, but I bet most everyone knows someone who has been affected. And the older you are, the tougher it is to bounce back from a tragedy of this magnitude.

My mother was 84 in November 2018 when she drove through the flames in Paradise, California, with nothing but the clothes on her back and her kitty, Sam. She told me she could feel the heat from the flames through the car. She lost everything—her home, her photos, and all the mementos gathered over a long life. Her entire community burned to the ground and her friends, who all lost their homes, too, scattered. I wish I could say she bounced back. But it has left her permanently scarred and now, at 90, with lingering PTSD.

There are no words.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the clean-up, rebuilding, and reimagining will have begun. But

some things are irreplaceable and the deep grieving has likely only started. It will take a long time for this Phoenix to rise from the ashes, but we will.

In light of this, this issue focused on travel and expanding one's horizons may feel tone-deaf. There's nothing like a tragedy to hone our priorities, and for many travel is just not going to be one of them for a while. But a shared tragedy can also bring out the best in people and build and create community. We first interviewed Susan Feniger for our cover story before the fires broke out, but circled back when we learned that she and her team worked with World Central Kitchen to provide more than 16,000 meals to those impacted by the fires in the first five days. This very busy 71-year-old didn't hesitate to provide all the help and resources she could.

There are stories of courage and resilience in this issue, as well as strength and purpose. We will need to cultivate all these traits in the days and months ahead. I hope you find some inspiration here, and perhaps the ability to escape into a few stories of beauty and wonder as we rise together, from the abyss.



3rd Act

magazine

AGING WITH CONFIDENCE

OUR VISION

Now, more than ever, older adults are viewing their retirement as a "Third Act" in their lives: A time for reinvention, connection, and engagement. *3rd Act Magazine* is a bold, fresh, lifestyle magazine for older adults. Our stories and articles challenge the worn-out perceptions of aging and offer a dynamic new vision: Let's celebrate and embrace this stage of life, and age together with confidence.

PUBLISHER

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SOCIAL MEDIA Pat Sylvia

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COVER PHOTO

Photo courtesy of SOCALO

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3rd Act Magazine is published quarterly by Armogan Media, LLC.

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COVER: Susan Feniger, the 71-year-old celebrity chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, and radio and TV personality has traveled the world, bringing food from different cultures back to her several influential restaurants. Most recently, she and her team sprang into action to help feed firefighters and people displaced by the Los Angeles fires. Photo courtesy of SOCALO

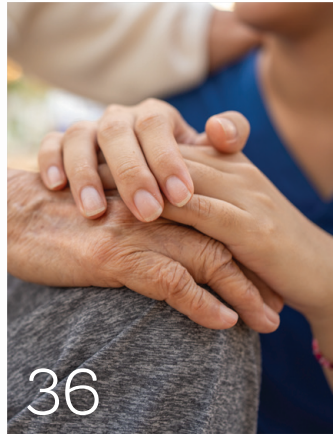
contents

FEATURES

- 17 SUSAN FENIGER KEEPS COOKING IN HER 3RD ACT**
For this 71-year-old celebrity chef, her third act looks a lot like her second.
DEBRA ECKERLING
- 22 LAUREN AND ARNE LUND'S GREAT ADVENTURE**
How re-envisioning retirement changed a couple's life.
ANN HEDREEN
- 26 CHANGING THE AGING STORY ONE PHOTOGRAPH AT A TIME** Photographing older athletes transformed her own experience of aging.
ALEX ROTAS
- 31 A JOURNEY FOR ALL AGES**
Traveling through life in the company of younger and older people will help expand your horizons.
JEANETTE LEARDI

COLUMNS

- 6 AGING WITH INTENTION**
Do you have the travel gene?
LINDA HENRY
- 8 VIEW FROM HERE**
The wisdom of living in the "now."
CATHY FIORELLO
- 10 MIND THE SPIRIT** Embrace the concept of Swedish death cleaning.
STEPHEN SINCLAIR
- 14 THE LIGHTER SIDE**
It's time to eliminate the new dirty words from our conversations.
SUZISCHULTZ GOLD
- 36 ENLIGHTENED AGING**
Excessive medical intervention can be harmful late in life.
DR. ERIC B. LARSON
- 60 ON THE TOWN**
Discover these getaways in and around Los Angeles.
DAVID NEMETZ



LIFESTYLE

34 OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Discover easy-to-join guided adventures close to home.

JIM BOGAR

40 MY PASSAGE TO INDIA: PREPARING TO FIND BUDDHA AT AGE 74

Finding the courage to travel beyond my comfort zone.

CONNIE MCDUGALL

42 VIRTUAL MUSEUM VISITS

Tour great museums of the world from the comfort of home.

ANN RANDALL

45 TWO AGING LADIES ON THE LAM TURN 100

The adventures and misadventures of two friends on a road trip.

BONNIE MCCUNE

50 SCOUTING FOR AN OUTING? IT MIGHT BE TIME FOR AN ADVENTURE

River rafting is far more accessible to older folks than many realize.

JULIA HUBBEL

54 MY THIRD ACT As former expat with a love for foreign cultures, I've changed how I travel as I've aged.
TERRY REPAK

WELLNESS

38 CARE PARTNER'S JOURNEY

A caregiver for her mother with dementia finds joy in the journey.

MARILYN RAICHLE

48 A WALKING LIFE

Living life as a journey one step at a time.

ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD

52 PLAY FOREVER

Top 10 tips to cure "airplane disease."

KEVIN R. STONE, MD

56 ROOTS, SHOOTS, AND FRUITS

Try this exercise to cultivate personal and social growth.

JEANETTE LEARDI

58 NOURISH YOUR BODY

Delicious ways to add more protein to your diet.

REBECCA CRICHTON

IN EVERY ISSUE

62 BOOKS

Travelers to Unimaginable Lands: Stories of Dementia, The Caregiver and The Human Brain

by Dasha Kiper

REVIEWED BY

VICTORIA STARR MARSHALL

64 BRAIN GAMES

Challenge yourself with these word puzzles.

NANCY LINDE

Do you Have the Travel Gene?

BY LINDA HENRY



Linda Henry writes regularly on topics related to aging, health care, and communication, and is the co-author of several books, including Transformational Eldercare from the Inside Out: Strengths-Based Strategies for Caring. She conducts workshops nationally on aging and creating caring work environments. Her volunteer emphasis is age-friendly communities.

A cousin once told me that he believes he and his father were born with a travel gene. From the extensive traveling they have done nationally and internationally over the years, he may be right. Do you also have the gene?

Traveling is fun, but more than that, it is vital for our mental health, says Kathleen Cameron, senior director of the National Council on Aging. For many of us, however, that becomes more difficult as we age and, as a result, we may become more isolated and less inclined to do so, even though the urge may be present. Some 30 percent of older adults 65+ have mobility issues including arthritis or respiratory problems. Although physical limitations may limit travel to some degree, there are ways to make it more feasible, say travel experts. Whether traveling nationally or internationally, the key is to plan ahead and to have a backup plan. Do your research and look to the travel pros for advice.

To consider:

- Follow public health guidelines.
- Travel expert Rick Steves suggests purchasing travel insurance even though expensive since older adults are more likely to need it.
- Know where and if your medical insurance works if you are traveling overseas. According to Steves, since Medicare is not valid outside the U.S. except in very limited circumstances, check your supplemental insurance coverage. He also recommends considering evacuation insurance, which covers the substantial expense of transportation for medical care in case of an emergency, especially if it is not possible to fly commercially.
- Pay attention to your medication needs and make certain that your vaccines are current. Carry medications with you in their original containers since filling a prescription can be time-consuming in another country and may not be available in the same form. Learn TSA rules about carrying on medications including anything liquid, pumps, or IV bags. Bring spare batteries if you wear hearing aids.
- Whether traveling near or far, learn about the lodging where you are staying. Are bathrooms handicapped accessible? Are there steps or ramps? What kind of transit is available for sightseeing?
- Look for tour groups that are designed to meet your needs.

The list goes on. Although traveling is possible with sufficient planning, many of us are so sensitive to our limitations and the need for assistance that we may be reluctant to let family and friends know the extent of our actual and perceived constraints. Have you missed opportunities to be with family or friends because of such concerns only later to regret not looking for ways to make it possible?

You may find it easier than you think to take the plunge back into the travel arena. Search for local groups that provide short travel excursions that can accommodate special needs. Look for a travel buddy who has special needs and travels.

So, how strong is your gene and how badly do you want to travel? Yes, it takes courage to travel with limitations. But aren't the rewards worth it? 🌍



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I was raised by a mother who taught us to save things “for good.” That included everything we didn’t need to survive the current day. I carried that mantra through much of my life—not using china I loved except for a special occasion, not wearing that new outfit today because I might receive an invitation to lunch tomorrow, keeping the last tube of a lipstick whose shade has been discontinued for “special” occasions, instead of joyfully wearing it when I have coffee alone at Starbucks.

Going through my mother’s things when she died, I found gifts my siblings and I had given her over the years—scarves, gloves, jewelry—still in their boxes, wrapped in yellowing tissue, waiting for an occasion important enough to wear them.

Erma Bombeck, the humorist who wrote about suburban home life, did this, too. When she was diagnosed with a fatal illness, she wrote a column titled, *If I Had My Life to Live Over*, listing what she would do differently if she was granted the chance to do it all over again. The last item on the list is a valuable life lesson, learned too late by many:

“Mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute ... really see it ... live it.”

I, too, have regrets about things that could have been and never will be, things I put off using and doing. There are clothes hanging in my closet that I have outgrown without ever having worn. There are delicacies in my kitchen cupboard past their expiration date that I have to discard without ever having tasted. Unlike Bombeck, I survived my cancer, I have been given a second chance. But after a lifetime of making tomorrow more important than today, I sometimes have to force myself to take that

chance. My mother is in part responsible for this. Never underestimate the tenacity of a mother’s teachings. I’ve outlived my mother by many years, I’ve surpassed her in formal learning, I function in a technology-driven world that she never could have coped with. Yet, her simple lessons and cautions still influence my every day.

Cooking for my family is one of my great joys. My grandchildren delight especially in the appetizers I serve. A Mother’s Day note from my grandson listed three reasons he loved me. I don’t remember the first or the second, but I’ll never forget the third: “You make the best hors d’oeuvres.” One holiday I surprised them with Japanese Rumaki. Whole water chestnuts are wrapped in bacon that has been spread with brown sugar on one side and whole grain dijon mustard on the other. The bacon is secured with a toothpick and the wraps are baked until the bacon is crisp. Everyone liked them, but my granddaughter Jenna loved them. “Nana, promise you’ll make them again!”

“Next occasion,” I promised.

Jenna didn’t have a next occasion. The can of water chestnuts I bought and saved just for her sits in my cupboard. I will never use it. It’s there to remind me that life itself is a special occasion.

As my life winds down, I find myself following Bombeck’s advice. When I am tempted to save for tomorrow something that will make me happy today, I tell myself, “Use the good stuff!” Don’t wait for that perfect moment. It’s now. 🍷

Cathy Fiorello is a freelance writer based in San Francisco. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, Still Point Arts Quarterly, and Scholastic Magazine. She is the author of the recently published Paris: Sharing the Magic, an ode to the city on the Seine.

BY CATHY
FIORELLO

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Death Cleaning

BY STEPHEN SINCLAIR

The concept of Swedish death cleaning is working on eliminating unnecessary items from your home before you die to make it easier on your loved ones. But letting go of possessions—giving with warm hands—can free you as well.

At some point, we all come to the realization that our time on earth is finite. That's just how life is. For many of us, this realization is a wake-up call—a reminder to start living more fully and to experience things that we've only ever dreamed of doing.

A few years ago, before moving to the West Coast to begin what I knew would be the final chapters of my life, I noticed that all the possessions I'd accumulated in my life had become a burden and were keeping me from moving forward.

Although I've never considered myself materialistic, I was surprised by how much I owned. My belongings

ranged from keepsakes collected during travels and vacations to family heirlooms, jewelry, and gifts from loved ones. Much of it held sentimental value—artwork created by friends, treasures salvaged from dumpsters, or tokens from memorable adventures. Each item told a story, reminding me of people who had died, relationships that had ended, and journeys I had undertaken.

Having these possessions constantly reminding me of my past weighed me down. I felt burdened by my own narrative. My life story had become an encumbrance. It was like being caught in a web of memories.

I was entangled in the past and couldn't move forward. So, I decided to give away all my valuables and as many of my worldly goods as possible, leaving only those things that were necessary for day-to-day life and my work. I no longer wanted to be attached to anything that held me back or needed safeguarding. I didn't want to have to be concerned about what would happen to my precious things if I were to die unexpectedly.

Thus, I began to live as if to die. I spent the next year and half sorting through my possessions and thinking of the people whom I would want to have them. But instead of waiting to die, I shipped them to those people or gave them away in person. I was told I was crazy to give away my valuables when I could sell them and use the proceeds to pay my bills or go on vacation. Of course, that made sense, but that's not what I wanted to do. It was important to me that I give them away.

This process took time. When I told my therapist that I was "living as if to die," he became concerned that I might be planning to end my life. More than a few friends and family



members to whom I gave things also expressed this worry. For most people, having property and things of value is a sign of success, or, at the very least, evidence of having lived well. For me to no longer want my things was a cause for alarm.


Giving away my valuables freed me from my past.

Without the weight of possessions laden with memories and emotions, I felt unexpectedly lighter. Freed from their pull, I found myself more grounded in the present, no longer distracted by the past. This newfound presence compelled me to confront reality head-on—an experience that was often challenging or even painful, but ultimately transformative.

My life story was no longer my yesterday, but rather, my today.

These days, I no longer hold onto the past, grasping at either the sadness or the joy as an excuse for not living in the now. By letting go of my narrative and the objects that represented it, I created space for something deeper. In the absence of distractions, I'm more attuned to the unseen sources that sustain life and animate all of creation. The less I have, the easier it is for me to sense the greater reality and the clearer my sense of purpose becomes.

This journey wasn't instantaneous or easy. It took time and is still ongoing. But now, I live each day with a renewed sense of clarity and presence.

When the end of my life does come, I hope to leave this world with nothing—unburdened, unattached, and fully aware of where I'm going. 



Stephen Sinclair holds a Master of Divinity from Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago and is an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister. He's been a pastor and chaplain in numbers of churches and hospitals in the U.S. and has worked with the homeless.



There are 25 terrific articles in this issue of 3rd Act Magazine.

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AGING WITH CONFIDENCE

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Traveling Solo

BY MARILEE CLARKE

Four years after the death of my husband and travel partner, I've embraced traveling on my own.

By next summer I will have traveled to more than 100 countries. Many of these trips were with my late husband, but for the last four years I have traveled solo and learned many lessons along the way. He and I saw travel as much more than ticking off boxes on a bucket list and more about developing a world perspective. We can learn so much from other countries and the world is often smaller than it seems.

My husband used to devour historical fiction books about the destination to which we were headed. I, on the other hand, have found I enjoy reading similar works once I have returned home and can mentally see the places I've been. After a recent trip to South Africa, James Michener's saga *The Covenant* was a wonderful read, albeit incredibly long!

I like to get off the beaten track and enjoy wandering through a new city stopping at a local cafe (preferably sitting outside) to watch that particular world go by. This allows me an opportunity to engage with the locals, which can be far more enlightening than a headphone bus tour. If you prefer group tours, ask lots of questions of the guide. It is amazing how much you can learn about local customs and mores. On a recent trip to Oman, our guide gave us an in-depth look at the wedding engagement process in his country. This included a tutorial on the dowry process, which sadly meant he had to wait

several years before he had enough money to propose marriage.

I have learned the importance of respecting the religious and cultural traditions of the country you are visiting, especially in places of worship. Once home, I take some time to write down all I have gleaned from my trip—focusing on things that were different, things that were the same, and what made the greatest impression on me.

It's taken time, but I have learned to enjoy traveling alone. I often join tour groups and am always pleasantly surprised at how many other single travelers there are. I have met some wonderful new travel companions and now am coordinating future adventures with several of them.

Taking solitary weekend road trips to beautiful historic inns or weeklong art workshops in the U.S. and abroad is one of my favorite pastimes. I have come to appreciate how freeing and empowering this can be. As much as I miss my favorite travel companion, sometimes it is nice to go wherever I want, whenever I want. Even eating alone—the biggest solo traveler hurdle—can become a pleasure. My trick, when possible, is to choose a seat that looks out on something. Just try it once and it won't ever seem as daunting.

There is life after the death of a loved one. It takes time, but when you are ready the key is to activate your curiosity, embrace new things, and open your mind! 🌀



After losing her husband in 2021, Marilee Clarke began writing her book on navigating grief. Excerpts from the book (still in progress) often appear in this magazine. Her passions include mixed media creations and traveling the world every chance she gets. She currently splits her time between Issaquah and the California desert, enjoying the best of two very different and beautiful locales.



DIRTY W*ARDS!

BY SUZI SCHULTZ GOLD

"Shit," I shrieked, as the stemmed goblet hit the tile floor and shattered, spreading the rich red Pinot Noir under the fragments and shards of glass. This was the antithesis of my usual routine upon arriving home from a full day managing 7-year-olds while teaching them to share, read, and control their emotions. I was in my 20s, enjoying my first teaching position, and the independence that comes with self-sufficiency.

My standard practice on a weekday was to savor the silence as I crawled through the snail-paced traffic of Los Angeles to my cozy one-bedroom apartment. Upon arriving, I pulled into my

designated parking space, retrieved the mail, and dropped my purse, jacket, and stack of schoolwork on the entry table. I would grasp the open bottle of my favorite wine on the kitchen counter and pour a more than half-full glass as I dropped down to the faux leather sofa. I was exhausted.

Unfortunately, this day was different. After the mishap caused by juggling a handful of solicitations and the glass of fermented grapes, my emotions got the best of me. I was having a tough time practicing what I preached to those bright-eyed children.

Early evening was my favorite time of the day. The calm and quiet was welcome after keeping order in the classroom of 30 wiggling bodies. But now, as the wine flowed into the grout, I mumbled more expletives and grabbed a wet towel to clean up the mess. “Damn it! F**k!”

I never thought much about my use of unacceptable words said in anger, frustration, or humor. Didn’t we all do that? Years later when I became a mother, I tempered my use of profanity. No one wants to hear a five-year-old swear like a sailor, mimicking his parents.

An occasional slip of the tongue by my husband or me in front of the children was always followed by, “Daddy (or Mommy) is bad! That’s a bad word. We shouldn’t say those words.” And when the kids occasionally slipped, they were reprimanded with, “You know you are not supposed to say that. Sit here by yourself for a bit and think about it.”

Outside influences by other kids, on TV shows and social media countered all parental teaching by spouting those “dirty words” without hesitation. It took a conscientious effort to ensure the kids avoided watching profanity-filled shows then blurting out something inappropriate on the playground—or to their parents.

Now that the kids have left the sheltered conversations of their youth and are adults, we are free to say whatever we are comfortable expressing and in whatever company. We have friends and acquaintances whose natural conversation is peppered with vulgarity. Then there are those who righteously declare, “I never swear.”

Who cares? I say, chill. If it is not a

**Now that the kids
have left the
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expressing and in
whatever company.**

personal slight, or offensive toward any religion, race, ethnic group, disability, or provokes violence, then “Save it for the important things” as my mom used to say.

In my seasoned years, when the bloom on the flowers is fading, I find myself reacting to different offensive words. My definition of senior profanity includes different “dirty words.” Forget the F word, the C word, the B word, and all the others designated by letters of the alphabet.

When we get together with friends, the conversation always heads down a path to gloominess. All roads seem to lead to physical health, or lack of it. There is no escaping. A simple question, “How was your trip?” can quickly segue into, “My stomach didn’t agree with the food and I had diarrhea the entire time. I couldn’t wait to get home.” An equally friendly inquiry such as, “How is the golf game going?” might result in a description of an injury, physical therapy, aches and pains, and medication. There is no safe topic for us oldies that does not lead to

the dark side.

I wonder if we can somehow put a curse on these curse words?

I propose that these irreverent words leading to depressing thoughts be avoided for the good of the aging. Keep the talk about surgery, obituaries, funerals, heart attacks, sleep apnea, incontinence, and any mention of doctor’s appointments OUT. Keep the pacemakers, titanium joints, and insulin patches undercover.

I am aware that it is easy and natural for us oldies to fall down this rabbit hole. During our third act of life, we all have some issues but who wants to hear them?

Can we just stick to retelling old jokes? Can we discuss the *Hunger Games* even though our friends might think these refer to the skimpy meal served at a new restaurant in town? Can we throw a handful of beaded bracelets on our wrists and pretend we are Swifties? Can we brag about seeing the *Barbie* movie and say it was KENough?

Maybe we could talk about sex, but I doubt there is anything we haven’t said in the past half-century.

If the conversation doesn’t come naturally, let’s just talk about the weather. At least then we can all agree that the forecasters usually get it wrong and we can hope for sunny days ahead. When all else fails and someone mentions one of the newly defined “dirty words,” I recommend giving them a time-out or opening another bottle of wine to share, and giving a toast to all of us for making it this far. 🍷

Suzi Schultz Gold is a native of San Diego, California, as was her father. Her entrepreneurial spirit, along with inherited restlessness, has led her down many paths. Though she has relished stints in retail, education, marketing, and travel, change is what drives her. She continues to grow and in retirement is trying to live in the moment—writing, reading, traveling, spending time with her children and grandchildren, and looking for new ventures and experiences.



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Susan Feniger Keeps Cooking in Her 3rd Act

BY DEBRA ECKERLING
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOCALO

Susan Feniger's third act looks a lot like her second. For 40 years, the 71-year-old celebrity chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, and radio and TV personality has traveled the world, bringing food from different cultures back to her several influential Los Angeles restaurants—past and present—including Ciudad, STREET, Border Grill, and SOCALO.

“When I was in college, I tried to see if I could live on three hours of sleep a night because I felt like sleep was a waste of my time,” Feniger explains. “Honestly, [now] there are many times where I feel like I’d rather stay up really late and get up really early. ... I’d rather go, go, go, go, go most of the time.”

And go she does. These days, Feniger is busier than ever. When wildfires ravaged parts of Los Angeles in January, she sprang into action.

Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken, her longtime business partner and co-host of the cooking show “Too Hot Tamales,” among other endeavors, teamed up with other Los Angeles chefs and Jose Andres’ World Central Kitchen (WCK) to provide meals to those impacted by the LA wildfires.

Working under the guidance and expertise of the amazing nonprofit WCK, the duo’s Border Grill SOCALO Truck was placed at the Pasadena Convention Center for the first five days with WCK. They then got moved to Pacific Coast Highway to feed firefighters, first responders, and the Santa Monica Police Department, before heading to the Santa Anita Racetracks.

In the first five days after the fires broke out on January 7, Feniger, Milliken, and their team served approximately 16,000 meals, not including what the other WCK Chef Corps partners provided. This was in addition to the around 3,000 meals a day their team prepares for food insecure people in Los Angeles at 10 different locations.

Plus, Feniger and Milliken appeared on a variety of shows—from morning news to late-night TV—talking about the work they were doing. (*Learn more at WorldCentralKitchen.com and RegardingHerFood.org.*)

“When you have restaurants, it

gives you a bigger opportunity to [give back],” Feniger explains. “The kids who work for us see how they can give back as they grow older and as they get more opportunities, whether it’s financially or just getting involved, so I like passing that on.”

She adds, “It’s always been a very rewarding part of my career, so I don’t have a desire to not be working.”

Fires notwithstanding, Feniger’s downtime has increased over the years. This was thanks in part to how the restaurant business changed during COVID. Plus, she and her partner, filmmaker Liz Lachman, are constantly working on projects together. Lachman captured the journey of Feniger’s first solo restaurant, STREET, in the award-winning documentary *Susan Feniger’s FORKED*: “I work more from home than I have in the past, but it still feels like I’m quite busy,” Feniger says.

Something Feniger has tried to do is find more balance, more time for hanging out with Lachman and their friends, golfing, reading, and going to the movies. This is a challenge since she loves downtime as much as work time and her natural tendency is to go to her restaurant.

Philanthropy is another one of Feniger’s passions. She is a founding board member of the Scleroderma Research Foundation and has been on the board since 1988. She is also on the board of the Los Angeles LGBT Center and has been co-chair for the last five years.

“We started a culinary program at the (center’s) Anita May Rosenstein campus in Hollywood,” she explains. “It’s part of my passion to be able to give back to the community; it also takes time commitment and work, but it’s also very rewarding.”

Feniger is also working with the West LA Veterans Medical Center to get a 15-acre garden replanted to provide food for the veterans.

As much as she loves to guide others, Feniger enjoys her own culinary adventures, whether it’s picking up techniques and tricks—since there are always new things happening in the world of cooking—or discovering new flavors or dishes, at home or around the world.

Feniger got her love of cooking from her mom. The travel bug bit her at a young age, too.

“When I was a junior in high school I spent time at a farm in Holland,” she recalls. “I remember that’s where I first started eating [and loving] mayonnaise with French fries.”

When she lived on a kibbutz in Israel for a few months, it opened her eyes to that food and culture since it was a cuisine she didn’t grow up with in Toledo, Ohio.

“I guess that sparked my interest,” she says. Once Feniger started working in kitchens to make money while attending Pitzer College, that was it. She found her passion.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in New York, Feniger joined the nearly all-male kitchen at Chicago’s Le Perroquet—the only other woman in the kitchen was Milliken. After working for Wolfgang Puck at Ma Maison in Los Angeles, she had the opportunity to work in the south of France.

“That took me to another level of food inspiration,” she says.

From there Feniger took her first trip to India, where she spent three weeks in the kitchen of an ashram, which kicked off a love for Indian food and exploring other cuisines. Working with Hispanic men and women in a Mexican kitchen piqued her interest in that cuisine, so Feniger traveled to Mexico.

“Having the ability to go to another country made me realize how expansive food could be,” she says.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)



Marinated Beef Short Ribs

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 1–1/2 to 2 pounds beef short ribs, cut in 1/2-inch slices with bones
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1/4 c. water
- 1 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. dried red pepper flakes

Marinade

- 2 T. hoisin sauce
- 1-1/2 T. plum sauce
- 1 T. oyster sauce
- 1 T. soy sauce
- 1/2 T. peanut oil
- 1/2 T. sesame oil
- 1/2 T. honey
- 1/2 T. chili paste
- 1/2 T. pureed garlic
- 1/2 T. freshly grated ginger
- 1/2 bunch cilantro, stems trimmed and roughly chopped
- 1/2 bunch scallions, finely chopped

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 F. Season ribs with salt and pepper. Lay across a rack in a roasting pan or baking sheet and bake 10 minutes. In a small bowl, combine water, lemon juice, and red pepper flakes. Brush over top side of ribs and bake an additional 10 minutes. Turn, brush and bake 10 minutes more. Set aside to cool.

Combine marinade ingredients in a

large bowl. Add roasted ribs and toss to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate a minimum of four hours or as long as 24 hours.

Preheat grill or broiler. Grill for two minutes per side and serve immediately with Spicy Cold Soba Noodles and Chopped Tofu with Parsley.

Baked Yams with Lime and Honey

Serves 2

- 1–2 large yams
- 1/2 c. water
- 3 T. honey
- 2 T. unsalted butter, at room temperature
- Juice of 2 limes
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- Crema, crème fraiche, or sour cream for garnish

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Wash the yams and place in a baking dish with the water. Bake until the yams are soft and the skins puffy, about 1–1/2 hours. Set aside to cool slightly (leave the oven on).

Peel the yams and place in a medium baking dish. Add honey, butter, lime juice, salt, and pepper. Stir and mash well with a potato masher. Cover with aluminum foil and return to the oven for 15–20 minutes, until heated through. Sprinkle the top with crema,

crème fraiche, or sour cream and serve hot.

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Cucumber Jalapeño Margarita

Makes 1 cocktail

- 2 slices Persian cucumber
- 2–3 slices jalapeño
- 1 ounce freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 ounce simple syrup (see recipe), to taste
- Ice, for cocktail shaker and glass
- 2 ounces Patron Silver tequila
- 1 cucumber slice and/or jalapeño slice, for garnish

In a cocktail shaker, combine cucumber, jalapeño, lime juice, and simple syrup. Using a muddler or the back of a spoon, mash the cucumber and jalapeño until they start to break up and release their juices and oils. Add ice and tequila and shake to combine. Strain into a rocks glass filled with ice and garnish with a cucumber and/or jalapeño slice. Serve immediately.

Simple Syrup

- 1/2 c. water
- 1/2 c. sugar or agave nectar

Combine water and sugar or agave in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Cool and reserve in refrigerator.

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

“And how different [it was from] the strict French training I had, but how [it was] equally as interesting and important as my time in the ashram kitchen.”

Feniger and Milliken teamed up in 1981 to open City Café, which became CITY Restaurant in Los Angeles. They have since opened multiple Border Grill locations, food trucks, full-service events, and a catering business. With locations in Los Angeles and Las Vegas’ Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Border Grill serves street food-inspired regional Mexican cuisine with a commitment to conscientiously sourced ingredients. Other restaurants include BBQ Mexicana, Pacha Mamas, SOCALO, and most recently, Alice B., a California twist on Mediterranean food in Palm Springs.

Feniger finds the most rewarding part of travel is learning about a culture through its food—something you can do without getting on an airplane.

“If you’re willing to go into different parts of your city or area, and experiment with street food, like I do when I’m traveling around the world, that gives you a glimpse into another culture,” she says. “Cooking food from dif-

ferent cultures is also an interesting way to understand [them].”

For instance, you could eat noodles in a Thai restaurant and then come home, look up Pad Thai and try to make it. Once you have tasted an authentic version, you have something to go by.

“During COVID, I taught many of my relatives how to make tortillas at home,” she says. “I think my niece was blown away that she could make homemade tortillas in Toledo.”

Another option is to get a cookbook from any country, go into one of those specialty markets and buy ingredients you’ve never seen before. Learn about them and then cook with them.

“Food is an equalizer in many ways and that’s why food trucks are always interesting to me,” Feniger says. “Street food is interesting, particularly in different cultures in the United States.”

No matter how much money you have you can always get great street food.

“You get to experience something that someone probably made in their home over and over and over again,” she says. “People get excited when someone from another culture is willing to branch out of their comfort

zone [and try their food].”

When traveling, go a little off the main area and find those tiny hole-in-the-wall places. It puts you more into someone’s life when you’re in a neighborhood spot versus a fancy restaurant. They are glad you are there and so are you.

“So much of travel is the interaction with different people,” she says. “Restaurant people, most of the time, want to talk and share stories because they’re in the hospitality business.”

Feniger’s zest for learning and travel is never going away. And that’s a good thing.

“I feel like I just want to jam as much into my life as I can and it doesn’t always have to be [just] exploring new things,” she says. “It could be simple things, like maybe I want to take piano lessons or I want to learn more Spanish so I can speak it more fluently.”

Feniger wants her world to get bigger—not smaller—as she continues her third act. **3**

Debra Eckerling is a freelance writer, goal-strategist, workshop leader, and award-winning author and podcaster. The creator of The DEB Method for Goal-Setting Simplified, Eckerling hosts the GoalChat and Taste Buds with Deb podcasts and is the author of Your Goal Guide and 52 Secrets for Goal-Setting and Goal-Getting.

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Lauren & Arne Lund's Great Adventure

BY ANN HEDREEN



ne jet-lagged winter night, I lay in bed, wide awake, and decided to count the number of countries I'd been to. I came up with 43. "Not nothing,"

I thought. But it made me wonder: How many countries do the most intrepid travelers I personally know—Lauren and Arne Lund—have on their life list?

The answer is 145. The United Nations officially recognizes 197 nations, Lauren explained to me, and a few of the countries on their personal list—Taiwan, for example—are not on the U.N.'s. Still, 145 is quite a number. But it's not Arne and Lauren's favorite number. That would be 22—the

countries in which they've spent one month or more.

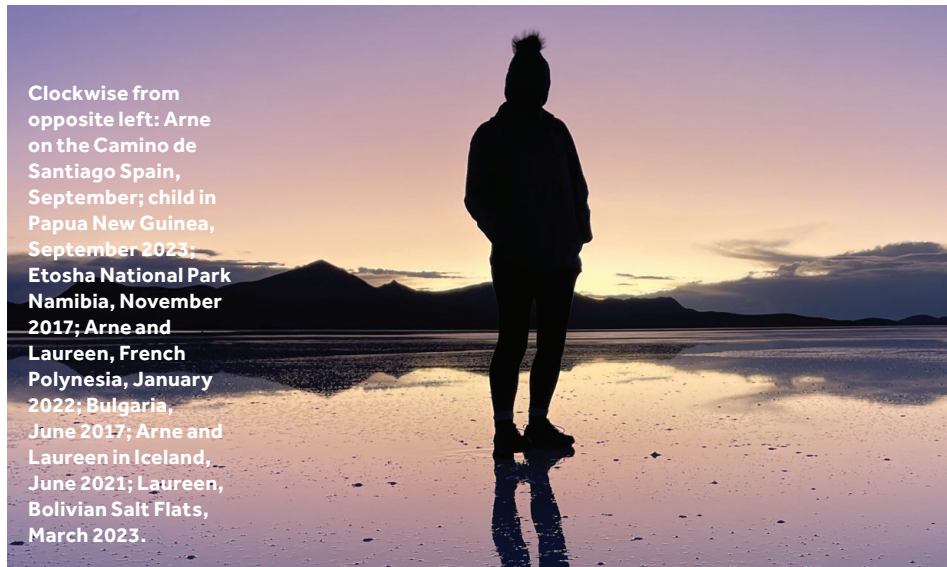
Lauren, 65, and Arne, 66, are in their ninth year of serious, long-term travel. They both retired in their mid-50s. First Lauren, who was the marketing director for the city of Gig Harbor, Wash., and three years later, Arne, who was an engineer at Boeing. Their commitment to the Grand Adventure, as they call it, did not happen overnight—nor was it their lifelong dream. It started slowly, after they just happened to watch a program about walking the 500-mile ancient pilgrims' path across Spain known as the Camino de Santiago.

"I'd like to walk the Camino after I retire," Arne said, surprising both

of them. Lauren began to do the research. They thought maybe the trip could span a couple of months. But the more they talked about it, the more they realized there were so many other places they also wanted to go. And though they weren't wealthy, they'd saved and invested all through their working lives. And they had a house that they'd lovingly transformed from a Gig Harbor beach shack to a welcoming waterfront home. They had thought they might live there for the rest of their lives.

But if they sold the house, the rest of their lives could be dramatically different. And then a few friends, close to them in age, died suddenly. "It was eye opening," Lauren says. "We realized that now is the time." Not to sit still in their beautiful home, but to travel to all those places they'd never seen. A week before Arne retired, they sold their Gig Harbor house.

The Lunds' first trip, which began in



Clockwise from opposite left: Arne on the Camino de Santiago Spain, September; child in Papua New Guinea, September 2023; Etosha National Park Namibia, November 2017; Arne and Laureen, French Polynesia, January 2022; Bulgaria, June 2017; Arne and Laureen in Iceland, June 2021; Laureen, Bolivian Salt Flats, March 2023.

2016, stretched from six months to 18 months, and included time with their two adult sons: One was traveling on his own and the other had joined the Peace Corps and was living in Burkina Faso. Laureen began blogging about their adventures (myfabfiftieslife.com) and Arne—“the king of spreadsheets”—began keeping meticulous records of logistics and spending. Over the years, their budget has evolved and changed, but it is currently about \$280 a day, including air travel (they fly coach, but sometimes pay for extra leg room), ground travel, accommodations, meals, and everything else.

The Lunds are not full-time nomads. They spend summers in the Pacific Northwest, where their families and friends are. Six years ago, they bought a cozy, cheerful duplex in Port Orchard, so they’d have their own place to stay when they’re here. COVID, which grounded them for a year, gave them a chance to renovate their new home, where I visited them one rainy winter

morning. In their shared office, there’s a huge world map and a whiteboard on the wall. Planning for their 2025 trip—three weeks in Maui (their traditional rest-and-recharge haven), a trip to the Cook Islands, a month in Melbourne, a stopover in Singapore, nine days in Bhutan, and a month in Bordeaux, capped by stops in Lyon, Dijon, Luxembourg, and Paris—was well underway.

I’ve been following Laureen’s travel blog for years—and its offshoot, a book review blog on which she posts every Wednesday. (Last year, she introduced me to one of my favorite books of 2024, Geraldine Brooks’ *March*, a riveting fictional companion to *Little Women*.) In her writing, and in conversation, Laureen is upbeat, funny, frank—and firm about what she and Arne are doing. They are not vacationing, they are traveling. They’re not looking for high thread-count sheets and swim-up bars and daily massages. They are visitors, not tourists. They’re not trying

to cram as many sights as possible into a single day. They want to feel like they’re living in the country they’re visiting. They do sometimes worry about contributing to over-tourism in locations where that’s a concern. They like Airbnb rentals, because they love to shop for food where the locals shop and cook more often than they eat out. They make room in their suitcases for a collapsible kettle, a French press, a yoga mat that folds flat, and trekking poles. They like cooking classes and the occasional personalized tour, but mostly they prefer to be on their own and walk, walk, walk.

“I am long past being impressed by tourism kitsch, fancy restaurants or hotels, and shopping deals,” Laureen wrote in a 2022 blog post. “Travel is now about the senses and mine are more alive than at any time before in my life. The questions I like the best are when someone asks me to describe the way a place smells. Or what are the

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sounds I hear when I'm alone sipping coffee in the morning?"

In the fall of 2024, Laureen and Arne stepped outside their usual freewheeling lane and signed up with Intrepid Travel for a tour of the Central Asian "Stans"—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. It was an intense month. Rather than posting along the way, Laureen waited until she was back in Port Orchard, so that she could be more reflective and comprehensive. She and Arne also visited Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. In all of these eight countries, so seldom visited by Americans, they felt more than ever the importance of being courteous, respectful, and non-judgmental. But at the end of their eighth year of travel, they were well prepared to be, as Laureen put it, "self-appointed ambassadors for our home country."

I hesitated to ask them to name a few favorite places. How can you do that, after 145+ countries in nine years? But they were game. I'm not the only one who's asked this question. "New Zealand, for its spectacular beauty," Laureen says, without hesitating. "Guatemala. The Camino de Santiago. And Bulgaria, because it's cheap and beautiful and the people are so grateful to have you visit."

"It's like Italy but half the price," Arne adds. "Roman ruins, beautiful scenery, great food."

Other questions I couldn't resist asking: What's still on your list? Answer: Mongolia, Cuba, Greenland, and Svalbard (a Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic Ocean). And what is the advice you most like to give? Two answers: 1) Even if you don't have endless amounts of time, try staying in one place for a month instead of stuffing your itinerary with one

stop after another; and 2) Embrace uncertainty. Be open to surprises. But those are my words. What Laureen really said was, "We travel with low expectations, so we are always happy."

That night, my husband and I got busy looking up Bulgaria, which happens to be right next door to Greece, Turkey, Albania, Romania... "Now is the time," I kept thinking. "Why wait?"

As for Laureen and Arne's travel future? "We are always going to travel," Laureen says firmly. "As long as we can stand up." 🌍

Ann Hedreen is an author (*Her Beautiful Brain*), teacher of memoir writing, and filmmaker. Hedreen and her husband, Rustin Thompson, own *White Noise Productions* and have made more than 150 short films and several feature documentaries together, including *Quick Brown Fox: An Alzheimer's Story*. She is currently at work on a book of essays and is a regular contributor to *3rd Act Magazine*, writing about topics including conscious aging, retirement, mindfulness, and health.

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U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

2024

CHANGING THE AGING STORY ONE PHOTOGRAPH AT A TIME

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ALEX ROTAS

I take photos of active seniors. In fact, I take photos of very active seniors—elite athletes in their 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and, yes, 100s, who compete at championship national and international events.

I've been doing this for 15 years now, after despairing at the lack of positive imagery of older people in the media.

When I did an Internet search for “images of older sportsmen and women,” all that came up was image after depressing image of older men and women slumped in their chairs.

They lacked agency, they lacked movement (“sport” didn't feature at all), they lacked community, and they certainly lacked joy.

Who'd want to get old if this was what lay ahead?

And yet as a tennis playing, 60-year-old with plenty of older buddies running round

court and competing for their club or indeed their country, I knew the moribund images I was seeing were only a small part of the aging story. I bought myself a camera, found a photography tutor and set out to document the good news—the sportsmen and women who show what the aging body is capable of (a lot!) and who compete at the highest level in the sport they love.

Bad news however makes a better story than good news. Not only was there little visual evidence of these older athletes in the media but few people—on my side of the pond at least—had any idea that such championship competitions existed. When I started showing my pictures in exhibitions or presentations and talking about the people I'd photographed, I was met with incredulity. Where were these events being held? Why weren't they publicized more? How could you go and see them and even take part in them yourself? “Why don't we know about them?” I kept getting asked. Yet, everyone had gloomy stories to tell about older folk in decline, needing care, to the detriment of both family and nation. “Burden” was a word you heard all the time. There was one trajectory ahead for us as we get older, it seemed, and it was an incontrovertibly negative one.

So, by contrast, I immersed myself in the world of good news, focusing on sport-related things older people *can* do. The achievements of the elite athletes I discovered is jaw dropping: I've seen women in their 80s run 100m in just over 16 seconds and men age 80+ run it in just over 14 (for context, the Olympic world record for 100m is 10.61 seconds for women and 9.62 for men). They're fast. Trust me, when you're standing at the finish line with your camera and the gun goes off for the start, blink and it will be over. You have to get snapping fast, too.

To start with, I





thought I'd be focusing—literally and figuratively—on the physical achievements of these remarkable men and women. Like their Olympian younger counterparts, they *are* indeed remarkable. Being an elite anything makes you an outlier. But then I realised that there was a quality at all the events I went to that overshadowed the extraordinary speeds they ran, the heights and lengths they jumped, the distances they threw. This quality was joy.

The events were brimming with joy, overflowing with joy. True, they were also brimming with the blood, sweat, and tears it takes to make and break world records, whatever our age, but the joy was palpable. It was joy that went way beyond the joy of

achievement, of pushing your body to its limits and winning medals—though that was there, too. I kept trying to put my finger on it. I wanted to bottle it! Was it camaraderie? Yes, that too, but it was something more even than that. I decided it was the *joy of community*.

The American poet and writer Enuma Okuro writes about the value of “creating communities that feel safe enough for us to show up in our complicated selves, and that keep us open to giving, receiving and being transformed.” The more I’ve embedded myself in the world of older sportsmen and women—be they track & field athletes, hockey players, cyclists, swimmers or whatever—the more I realize that this is absolutely what they do. They create safe and nurturing

communities of very different people with one key common interest—their chosen sport. Each individual has a story, each one has his or her own path to being there. Even calling them “elite athletes” implies a homogeneity that simply isn’t there. It’s a messier, more complicated, and more interesting picture than that.

I used to think that these athletes I was photographing were super-human, the lucky ones who could effortlessly run, swim or cycle faster, or play their sport with a higher degree of skill and dexterity, than the rest of us lesser mortals. But they’re not. They put in the hours of training, they dedicate themselves week in, week out, to reaching their goals in the sport they

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love. But it's tough and it hurts and it takes mental as well as physical fortitude and resilience to show up time after time. Because they all appreciate that every one of them is doing this, when they meet up at competitions, there's a respect and a mutual understanding that glues them together.

They are, of course, susceptible to the same losses that hit the rest of us as we age—the cancers, the heart diseases, strokes, joint issues, and bereavements. I say “of course” but I ruefully have to admit I was disappointed to have the super-human fantasy bubble I'd built around them burst. They understand that there's no escape from “the crap life throws at us,” as one athlete put it to me, even if it's alongside medals, triumphs, and records.

So, they support each other, across national boundaries, language barriers, and different age groups. They're *there* for each other. They turn up on each other's Facebook posts and on each other's doorsteps. After 15 years alongside them, I'm only beginning to discover the extent to which they keep each other going, hold each other up.

I recently collaborated with filmmaker Danielle Sellwood to make a film that followed four British female masters athletes, ages 69 and 84, called *Younger: Looking Forward to Getting*

Older. It was this very precious and real lived experience of community that shone through above all else for us. What keeps these women coming back time and again to grueling competitions, often in terrible weather and in unglamorous, empty stadia?

Simple. “We do it for the people,” said one of them. Dorothy, our eldest participant at 84, has her tight-knit “gang,” a small group of fellow athletes who live in different parts of the UK but who phone each other daily, travel together to all the major events, and who show up at each other's houses whenever illness or injury strike. As increasingly it does.

One of the reasons I photograph older athletes is you can visually show how nuanced getting older is. It's not all bad, just as being young isn't all good. Both categories, if they even are ones, deserve more interesting scrutiny than flattening them out to reductive and simplistic clichés. Photos can reveal both wrinkles and muscles in the athletes' arms and legs, with their implications of co-existent frailty and strength. Yes, aging brings its challenges, we'd be foolish to deny this, but it also can be a time of opportunity, of growth and yes, of transformation. And the same can be said of being young. What do all of us need? Each other, that's what.

Call me a slow learner, but I'm only just appreciating—through the community I photograph—that when mishaps befall us, how we get through to the other side is by allowing ourselves to reach out to the hands that will guide us there. During these 15 years, I've had a hip replacement myself. My default setting is to catastrophize, which meant that, facing surgery, I was moaning about my fate to an athlete at an event. “Go and talk with Lucy,” she urged, indicating a woman in her 60s leaping over hurdles at that moment. “She's had both hips done within two years of each other, the last one 18 months ago. Look at her now!” I did talk with Lucy, who promptly offered to mentor me through to the other side of my surgery and rehab. Through her and her fellow athletes I'm learning to reframe my catastrophizing mentality. Old me: There's a mountain blocking my path. New me (well, almost): There's a mountain I can find a way across.

I also used to think the way to deal with the tough periods was to batten down the hatches and go it alone. Now I believe the opposite to be true. I've learned that together is how we make it through the night.

I thought I had a mission to help transform some of the lazy stereotypes that exist in our society around aging but what's happened is that the people I've been photographing have ended up transforming me. They've welcomed me into their community and we've aged together, “my” athletes and me, not that we're done yet. It's a lifelong process, aging, and I'm deeply grateful to have them alongside me for the ride. 🌍

Alex Rotas is an award-winning photographer, writer, and speaker based in Bristol, England. She is known for her images of athletes aged 60+ that dramatically challenge negative perceptions of aging. She has exhibited globally in public spaces, health care settings, and galleries, and contributed to numerous media discussions on aging and sport.

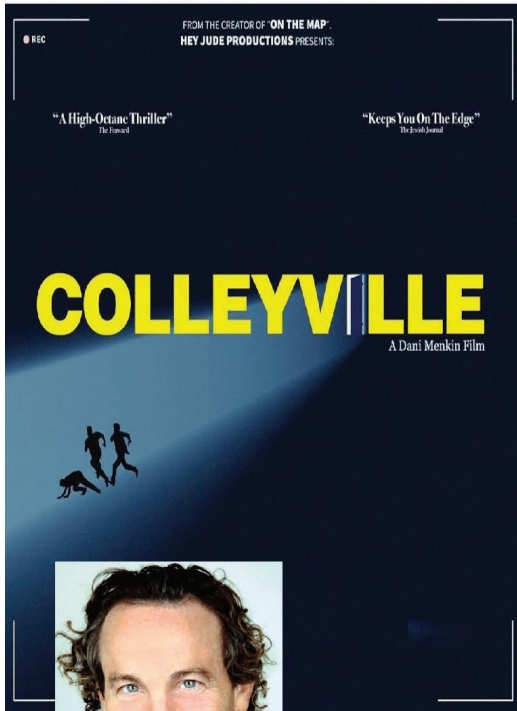
Alex Rota's film, *Younger: Looking Forward to Getting Older*, was released in cinemas across the UK in 2024. Made with British filmmaker Danielle Sellwood of Find It Film (www.finditfilm.com), this 56-minute documentary follows four female British athletes aged between 69 and 84. “It gifts its viewers, of any age, an entirely new picture of what aging looks like,” writes *Forbes* magazine, and “It is just so joyful... A powerful antidote to what the ageing process is supposed to look like,” according to BBC Radio Scotland. It will be available for rental on Prime in the U.S., and the UK in early 2025.



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Panelists following the film will include Colleyville survivors Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, Jeffrey Cohen, and Shane Woodward, who will be joined by *Colleyville* Director Dani Menkin, winner of two Israeli Academy Awards, and Natalie Marciano, producer, writer and President of Rebel Entertainment. Moderator Dr. Jennifer L. Rodgers is Director of Academic Programs at the USC Shoah Foundation.



Hostage Survivors Jeffrey Cohen, Shane Woodward, and Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, former Rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas.

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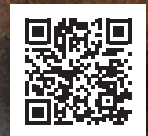
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A JOURNEY FOR ALL AGES

Looking for a great way to expand your horizons? Consider traveling through life in the company of younger and older others. BY JEANETTE LEARDI

“A journey is best measured in friends rather than miles.”

So declared travel writer Tim Cahill in his 1991 book, *Road Fever*, describing a 15,000-mile, 23½-day trip from the southernmost region of South America to Prudhoe Bay in Alaska. He believed that being with others one cares about and meeting new people can make any experience of travel richer and more memorable.

But what if getting to know someone better is a rewarding journey in itself? Isn't that non-travel activity an effective way to expand one's horizons, too? It isn't farfetched to speak about relationships in geographical terms. After all, how many of us are like islands unto ourselves, having limited our own social circle to a very small number of people who

are roughly the same age as we are?

A SEGREGATED POPULATION

Janet Oh, senior director of innovation at CoGenerate, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization enabling older and younger generations to collaborate to “solve the problems that no generation can solve alone,” describes the social situation: “We talk about the concept of ‘age apartheid’—that our society divides us by age, with youngsters in school, middle-aged people at work, and elders marginalized or in retirement communities.”

Especially since the pandemic, Americans are finding that inhibiting social relationships has created another epidemic, which U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy in a 2023 report identified as one of social isolation and loneliness.

Younger and older adults are especially and equally likely to experience significant social isolation and loneliness. As

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

10 WAYS TO FORM INTERGENERATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

Clinical psychologist Derenda Schubert, PhD, offers these tips:

Be open to conversations by initiating respectful chats with people of all ages in everyday situations.

Build relationships through shared interests that focus on hobbies (e.g., reading, hiking, cooking).

Join intergenerational groups participating in community events, clubs, or mentorship programs.

Attend workshops, classes, book clubs, or seminars that engage in cross-generational learning.

Connect on social media by following the accounts and joining intergenerational online forums of younger and older people.

Volunteer in multigenerational settings such as those involving mentoring young people or providing care to elders that involve different age groups.



Attend social get-togethers and professional networking events that often take place at conferences and through meetups or interest-based groups.

Work across generations on workplace initiatives, or seek internships and volunteer roles at nonprofit organizations.

Start, join, or lead an intergenerational project, such as a neighborhood improvement or community garden, or create family activities that encourage multi-age interaction.

Create or participate in digital experiences such as online pen-pal programs or virtual events.

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

stated by the Newport Institute, a nationwide group of evidence-based healing centers, “Loneliness peaks between the ages of 18 and 29, according to a new research review. And one in every three young adults reports feeling lonely.” The University of Michigan’s 2023 National Poll on Healthy Aging states: “In 2023, one in three adults age 50–80 (34%) reported feeling isolated from others ... in the past year.”

HARMFUL EFFECTS

While we may feel that social isolation and loneliness are conditions that certainly make life less pleasurable, we may not realize the more serious harm they do to our health, economy, and the social fabric.

The Surgeon General’s report asserts that social isolation and loneliness can lead to an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, anxiety, depression, and dementia, and a 26%–29% greater risk of premature death. They can negatively affect young students’ attendance, grades, and ultimate achievements. Moreover, they increase adult workers’ stress levels and rates of burnout, as well as work-related injuries and illnesses, all of which affect a company’s productivity and profits.

These effects are grave enough, but there’s an even more insidious social problem made worse by generational segregation—ageism, discrimination based on a person’s chronological age.

Research has shown that children as young as age 3 can begin to absorb negative feelings about old people. Another study reveals that more people have negative attitudes about young people than they do old people. Both effects can lead people whom ageism targets to develop their own internalized ageism, that is, harboring negative stereotype views of themselves as incompetent and/or unworthy of respect. Separating groups of people according to their generational ages simply adds fuel to the fire of social harm.

As clinical psychologist Derenda Schubert, PhD, explains, “By limiting interaction to one generation, there is a risk of developing stereotypes or negative assumptions about other age groups. This may increase generational divides and hinder the development of inclusive communities.”

EASILY AVAILABLE SOLUTIONS

Fortunately, innovative ways to mingle people of different ages are springing up everywhere. Schubert is the executive director of Bridge Meadows, an award-winning Oregon nonprofit that operates intergenerational housing, bringing together families raising children who have been impacted by the foster care system, with adults ages 55 and older.

“Embracing a more intergenerational approach,” she says, “can enrich one’s life with varied insights, opportunities for growth, and broader social connections.” Elly Katz would agree. She is the founder and executive director of the California-based nonprofit Sages & Seekers, which

pairs an older adult (“Sage”) with a high-school or college student (“Seeker”) in an eight-week series of online or in-person conversations “to develop empathy, combat social isolation, and dissolve age-related segregation within our communities.”

According to Katz, the main ingredient necessary in intergenerational friendships is “Curiosity! I also believe they must have respect and empathy, and enter into the relationship *knowing* they each have something to receive from the other.”

What makes the Sages & Seekers program so successful is one basic rule. “My biggest advice,” explains Katz, “is to *never* call an intergenerational program a mentoring program, as that sets the stage for one person to have power over the other. Only when both generations enter the relationship as equals, can they learn and grow from each other—a win-win situation.”

Established programs run by organizations such as CoGenerate, Bridge Meadows, and Sages & Seekers are only a part of the solution to loneliness, social isolation, and ageism. Everyone should feel encouraged by the fact that it can be very easy to incorporate intergenerational experiences into their everyday lives.

“I’m a big fan of third spaces that bring together

people of all ages, places like public libraries, dog parks, farmers markets,” Oh says. “The problem is that to form a relationship, especially a meaningful relationship, we need more than one-off encounters, more than pleasantries. We need interdependence, we need to need each other.”

Adds Schubert: “Schools and senior centers can intentionally incorporate and implement programs that bring together young people and elders for mentorship, volunteer work, and shared activities.”

For older adults who are seeking new adventures that can expand the horizons of their lives, is there any journey more readily available to embark on than to create a relationship with someone younger or older also looking to explore life through another’s experience?

“Intergenerational relationships between older and younger people are win-win opportunities,” Schubert concludes. “Children can never have too many people believe in them, and older adults can never have too many reasons to live with meaning and purpose.” ③

Jeanette Leardi is a Portland-based social gerontologist, community educator, and author of *Aging Sideways: Changing Our Perspectives on Getting Older*. She promotes older adult empowerment through her popular presentations and workshops in journaling, memoir writing, ethical will creation, brain fitness, creativity, ageism, intergenerational communication, and caregiver support to people of all ages. Learn more about her work on her website.

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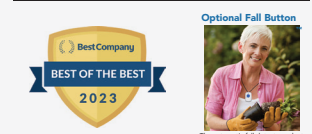
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Outdoor Education

BY JAMES BOGAR

"It was from this spot, in 1805, that William Clark first glimpsed the Pacific Ocean," she said.

"Yes, you would hallucinate, but you would also be violently and desperately ill," he warned, wagging the mushroom.

"Stop paddling!" she ordered, as the dorsal fins cut through the water toward us.

"When an eagle landed above him, the young warrior waiting in this trap would reach up through the branches and grab it by the talons," he said.

"We aren't too far from where the famous cannibal, Alfred Packer, stumbled out of the mountains in 1874," she told us. "When people found out what he'd done and brought him before a judge, the judge said, 'There was only seven Democrats in Hinsdale County, and you done et five of them!'"

Many of my most memorable experiences have occurred because I was out of doors and in the company of a knowledgeable guide. You needn't go to Tanzania or Machu Picchu to produce indelible memories—there are many excellent opportunities much closer to home. If your friends and acquaintances aren't recommending outdoor educational adventures to you, consider using some of these strategies to find one.

Join educational and civic organizations

Many retreat centers and outdoor opportunities are open only to groups—so join one! Membership will give you excellent opportunities for socializing and expose you to interesting subjects that you might otherwise have overlooked.

Perhaps the best such organization is the Osher

Lifelong Learning Institutes, which maintains 125 lifelong learning programs all over the country. Osher programs often include unparalleled opportunities for field trips and outdoor education. Another good possibility is the Sierra Club, the country's premier environmental organization. Sierra Club offers many appealing outdoor programs for curious older people, including outings that are specifically tailored for people who are age 50+. Finally, you can be sure your favorite local park offers guided walks. Check for ranger-led expeditions in places such as Joshua Tree National Park, Death Valley National Park and Channel Islands National Park. Look for ancient rock art in places like Death Valley's Muratango Museum and the nearby Coso Rock Art District, where you can see more than 100,000 prehistoric petroglyphs.

Take a chance on new interests

There are many outdoor-oriented groups whose interests naturally accommodate older people, even if the groups are not explicitly tailored to our demographic. Your fellow members are often experts in their fields. You're sure to find their enthusiasm contagious.

- **Birding:** The National Audubon Society has almost 500 local chapters devoted to the conservation of birds and bird habitat. Joining your local chapter is one of the best ways to meet outdoor-oriented people and learn about the environment. Los Angeles Birders is a thriving club that offers classes and many field trips to interesting locations.
- **Boating:** Almost every hamlet with navigable water has a boat club. You can use that club to learn how to sail—or, if

you're handy, you can learn how to build a kayak or small boat. There are many national organizations where you can start your nautical adventure, including The Carefree Boat Club and The American Sailing Association. A local company, Bluewater Sailing, has been introducing people to sailing in southern California since 1978.

- **Mushrooming:** This is one of those enthusiasms that can seem slightly eccentric to the uninitiated, but which pays big dividends. Getting involved in a local mycological society will take you outdoors on easy walks, educate you about a fascinating part of nature, give you a chance to meet science-minded experts, and take home delicious wild food. The Los Angeles Mycological Society is a great place to begin this fascinating outdoor hobby.
- **Dude or Guest Ranches:** You needn't be wild about horses to have a wonderful time at a dude ranch—where you help with ranch life—or a guest ranch—where your activities don't necessarily involve punching cows. Check out RanchSeeker.com to find a ranch in your area.
- **Meetups:** If you already have an interest that takes you outdoors, consider using Meetup.com to find people who share that interest. A group dedicated to astronomy, plein air sketching, wildlife photography—or any other outdoor interest—is sure to include people whose experience and abilities can expand your knowledge.



A friendly group of Osher participants.
Photo by James Bogar

Join a tour

Many organizations offer international tours that are specifically designed to appeal to older adults, with interesting destinations, well-informed guides, and activities for a range of physical abilities. You already know this, of course, but you may not have considered using an international adventure-travel organization for a trip that stays close to home. Among the companies offering tours in the western states are such big names as Road Scholar and National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions Cruises.

There are many local organizations that are eager to take you on a tour that teaches you about the natural world. One is Newport Coastal Adventure, which takes small groups of curious people out into the Pacific to find and learn about dolphins, whales, and more. You needn't be an athlete to enjoy a trip with Channel Islands Adventure Company, which gives guided kayak tours in Channel Islands National Park, offering "a dream-come-true for marine nature lovers." Most of their tours are appropriate even for beginners. Another excellent possibility is Onward Industries, which offers overnight educational trips on their World War II-era sailboat, with shared duties at mealtimes and a focus on "building community outdoors through arts and science exposure and education for people of all ages."

Your search for a good outdoor educational opportunity will be guided by whether you're a solo traveler or part of a group, preferred activity level, budget, and schedule—but none of these considerations stand in the way of having an adventure you will never forget.

"Look!" she whispered. "There, just to the right of the trunk. Take my binoculars. Two baby owls!"

Go outside with expert guides. You'll have a wonderful time. 🌀

James Bogar is a writer, traveler, and outdoorsman. After a career in tech, he has devoted his time to good books and seeking out the company of his betters. When he is not planning his next outdoor adventure, he is living through the current trip or recovering from the last one.



Outdoor opportunities come in all sizes.
Photo by James Bogar



Some of nature stares back at you.
Photo by Francine Miller



Late In Life Care

BY DR. ERIC B. LARSON

Today more people in the Boomer Generation are living longer and at higher levels of functional well-being than ever. Their parents also lived longer, often unexpectedly and unprepared for living to advanced old age. So more and more of this so-called activist generation are thinking about care later in life.

The menu offered in today's medical care can seem miraculous. And there is also strong evidence that from this extensive menu, there is much care that doesn't benefit patients due to overdiagnosis and overtreatment.

As we age, we inevitably get closer to dying. That said, aging is good. It's

clearly better than dying! But we are approaching death later in life than previous generations. "Late in life care" is not end-of-life, palliative, or hospice care. It's the concept that later in life we should carefully consider what care will really help us and how we can get it.

A patient I cared for over many years immigrated to the U.S. in 1968. A former teacher and lawyer, he worked at Boeing and following retirement provided notary and informal legal services to his large ethnic community. I saw him regularly and frequently over many years for management and treatment of chronic conditions such

as diabetes and hypertension, and various acute problems. He loved life, his close family, and his work. He lived fully and had fun—going to nightclubs and casinos, line dancing, playing his saxophone and clarinet, and entertaining kids with magic tricks.

But, as he aged, over time his vision, hearing, and memory slowly worsened. Otherwise, he was in surprisingly good shape, thanks to caring relationships and mutual devotion within his large family. By all accounts, he still enjoyed his life.

Although I was his longstanding primary care doctor, I didn't see him as often as you might think and certainly less than in the past. He had reached the stage where he preferred what I call "late-in-life care."

Late-in-life care is for people who live to advanced old age, typically without a life-threatening illness. They may need extra attention from family, friends, and care providers. They still need things like flu and COVID vaccines and treatments

for troublesome symptoms from conditions such as arthritis, anemia, skin problems, or perhaps a urinary tract infection.

But care can be harmful in late life. Too much care can upset homeostasis, that delicate sense of internal stability that often helps very old people stay active in their remaining precious years. Late in life most people don't need the stress and follow-up from diagnostic procedures such as colonoscopies, mammograms, Pap smears, PSA blood tests and others aimed at finding cancer, or certain treatments with great risks, which few would survive. Likewise, frail people do not need drugs that put them at risk for falls and foggy thinking. These are common side effects of many medications for anxiety, trouble sleeping, incontinence, and high blood pressure. Visits to emergency departments or urgent care can lead to high-tech medical tests and interventions causing stress and confusion from which they may not recover.

“Late-in-life care” is the concept that later in life we should carefully consider what care will really help us and how we can get it.

Late-in-life care for my patient was in-person in clinic every one to two years. In between visits, his daughter and I discussed his care via phone and e-mail, adjusting medications as needed to treat his diabetes and other chronic conditions. This allowed him

to spend his time the way he preferred, watching his favorite TV game shows, taking slow walks to buy lottery tickets, and occasionally having trips to a casino escorted by his grandson.

Near the end of his life at age 99 he began to fail. Antibiotics cleared a lung infection. His energy waned and he quit going downstairs for breakfast. He stopped eating. His daughters took turns being with him. Two months after he recovered from an otherwise mild pneumonia, after a restless night, he told his daughter “we have to go” and asked for a favorite old woolen cap he liked to wear when it was cold. His daughter put it on him. Then, this well-loved man stopped breathing and died.

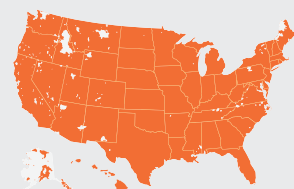
Late-in-life care is not absence of care. It is not asking people to “get out of the way and die,” so younger people can get care as (former Colorado) Governor Richard Lamm famously suggested in 1984. It's geared to the short term, immediate needs of a person who has lived a long life and avoiding care of little or only future value. As you might expect it involves planning and clearly expressing personal preferences, especially since health care systems are not typically geared to this kind of care. But with supportive family, friends, and a trusted professional like a primary care doctor or other care partner, it is possible. Most of us, if we are fortunate to live long enough, would want high-quality, late-in-life care. 📍

Eric B. Larson, MD, MPH, is a Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington. He was Co-Principal Investigator of the SMARRT trial and formerly Vice President for Research and Healthcare Innovation at Group Health and Kaiser-Permanente Washington. With colleagues he co-founded the long running Adult Changes in Thought (ACT) study in 1986. He continues research through the UW Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and other projects. He has participated in The Lancet Commission on Dementia since its inception. With co-author Joan DeClaire he wrote the well-received book, Enlightened Aging: Building Resilience for a Long Active Life.

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A CARE PARTNER'S JOURNEY

I never expected to be a caregiver. Mom warned us: “Keep your distance. Your father and I will be in a safe place. There is nothing more you can do, so walk away. We won’t remember you, so live your life and don’t sacrifice it for us.” I believed her.

In 2008, I became a very unwilling caregiver to Mom, who was living with dementia. Like so many, I approached it with dread, focused on the loss—not the person—hearing only confusion, not the thoughts. Then everything changed. Mom began to paint.

Her fascinating paintings invited me in—past the fear, expressing thoughts and emotions she was no longer able to articulate verbally. Instead of loss and sadness, we were sharing joy, confounding everything I thought I knew or had been taught about Alzheimer’s. Clearly, here was a mind at work, not an empty shell lost in the fog but a joyful and creative person with a life to live, filled with possibility.

I learned the first important care partner lesson. I let go of the woman I felt she used to be, embracing instead the wonderful woman who was with me in the moment—not suffering from dementia, but living with it.

I joined her in real time where there are no worries, no regrets, no deadlines, no hurry—just the moment, clear, precious, and lived as it comes, where everything is, to use Mom’s words, “just delightful.” My visits with Mom stopped being dutiful, becoming for me essential—a source of joy and a path of personal discovery.

Our life together was filled with hope, joy, and lessons learned—told as Mom lived, in moments, quickly forgotten

but filled with laughter and discovery. And me joining her, as a partner, learning how to navigate a life with late-stage dementia, helped build the best possible life for both of us.

BY
MARILYN
RAICHLÉ

It is the most rewarding thing I have ever done.

For every caregiver at the beginning of their journey, who may, as I once did, feel only dread, unsure about what to do, what to expect, asking “Now what?” take heart. Amid the sorrow there is hope. Begin with one small step. Find something you both enjoy. For me, it was Mom’s art, but it can be anything—singing a song, taking a walk, enjoying the view, playing a game, or just sitting together and smiling. Enjoy the moment and the person you love will emerge.

And for the far too many people who think of dementia only with despair, of people living with dementia as no longer there, not worth caring about, with lives not worth living, I invite them to discover a refreshingly different perspective. One that is a much-needed bridge to understanding that people living with dementia are valuable individuals with gifts to give

and lives to live, needing and worthy of our support to thrive and live with happiness. Thanks, Mom. 🌀



Marilyn Raichle began her career in the performing arts, founding the Seattle International Children’s Festival. In 2007, she received a Master of Public Administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and is currently the Executive Director of Maude’s Awards for Innovation in Alzheimer’s Care. Raichle’s new book, Don’t Walk Away: A Care Partner’s Journey, is available on Amazon.com.

April - June Events at BroadStage

April 4
Emmet Cohen Trio

April 26
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Ellis Hall:
"The Ambassador
of Soul"

April 27
Sunday Morning Music /
Santa Monica
Salastina

May 8
National Geographic Live:
Earth After Dark

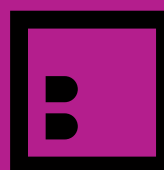
May 10
Chanticleer

June 7
Future Sounds of Jazz:
Julius Rodriguez

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Celebrity Opera:
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Connie McDougall (left) and Sarashri Bicknell (right) visit Seattle's Sakya Buddhist Monastery before leaving for India and Nepal. Photo by NancyEllen Regier

My Passage to India: Preparing to Find Buddha at Age 74

BY CONNIE MCDUGALL

“Most travelers I know, they’re proud to be known as a traveler as opposed to a tourist: I’m more thoughtful—I’m not just here to shop and get a selfie. I’m here to immerse myself in the culture and learn.’ That is a traveler, to become a temporary local. A traveler learns about the world, but I think a pilgrim learns about themselves, and you learn about yourself by leaving your home and looking at it from a distance.” —RICK STEVES

When I told a friend that I was going to India and Nepal, she was both happy for me and freaked out, her reaction going something like, “How exciting. How terrifying.” It was, she explained, way out of her comfort zone.

Mine as well, although I’ve done some challenging travel before. There was the time I rode a couple of days across Mexico by myself on a bus that

had a pulsating bust of Jesus on the dashboard. But I was younger then. Now at 74, I’m heading off with my friend Sarashri Bicknell, 66, a member of the Triratna Buddhist community, on a tour that follows the path of the Enlightened One. I’ve always been drawn to Buddhism and here is a chance to do a deep dive. In more ways than one.

Sarashri, Sara for short, has been to India twice, so I’m glad she’s no rookie. “It’s exciting,” she says. “There’s something different happening around every corner.”

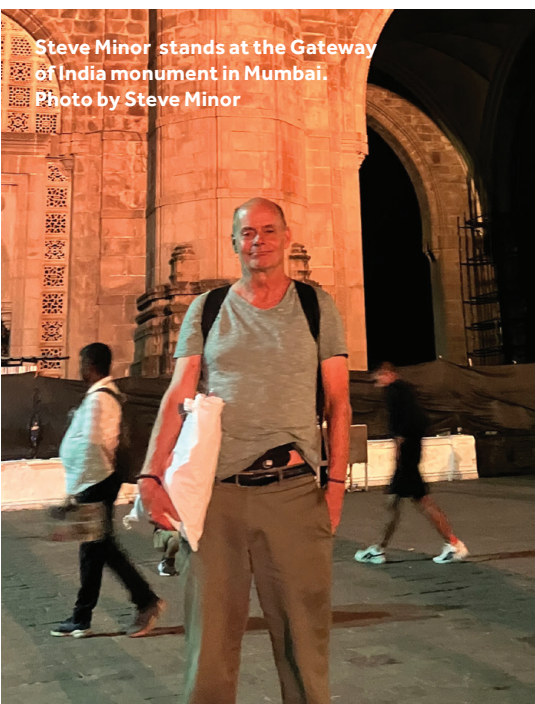
Steve Minor, 69, agrees. Also a member of the Triratna community, he took a similar tour last year and notes that it’s a near constant sensory experience. “India is a dynamic and roiling country and there will always be surprises,” he says. “Once I saw a monk walking down the road totally naked, wearing flip flops and talking on a cell phone.” His tour guide explained that there’s a sect of Jainism where the holy men go about “sky clad,” that is, naked.

As it is for Bicknell, Minor’s trip was a pilgrimage of a lifetime. “I wanted to see the places of Buddha’s origins, northern India, and Nepal where he was born. And being older, I knew there’s a limit on what I can do in the future, so this was the time to be in a really different environment. I also wanted to be protected so I took a tour.”

Our tour guide is India-born and world traveler Akshaydeep, a 42-year-old living in Cambridge, England, where he runs his company, Joy Tours. A Triratna member, he revels in introducing visitors to the wonders of his country and religion. That’s reassuring, but we must also consider the little matter of physical needs. “There were squat toilets everywhere,” Minor tells me. “That was a first for me.”

To that end, Bicknell and I embarked on a program of strength exercises and squat dips because, of course, the consequences of weakness are too terrible to contemplate. We also purchased excellent travel insurance, paying special attention to emergency medical care including evacuation. We spent fistfuls of cash at a travel clinic, getting vaccines and treatments for various illnesses including typhoid, malaria, and intestinal issues. After much handwriting, we opened a financial vein for the huge expense of rabies protection, a series of two shots.

How, though, do I prepare for the realities that await? We'll travel by train at times, which Minor says reveals the divisions of caste up close. "Trains can be cramped, and some have deluxe swivel chairs, but then there are the cattle cars full of people." He also advises not giving money to outstretched hands. "It's heartbreaking but if you give, there's a price to pay." Thankfully, there are visits to organizations dedicated to the poor where donations can be made. And finally, be vigilant with food and water. "The guide helps," says Minor, "and listen for the snap when opening bottled water so you know the seal is intact."



Steve Minor stands at the Gateway of India monument in Mumbai. Photo by Steve Minor

If You Go: I've discovered, later in life, that travel has gone mostly paperless—online transactions, QR codes and apps are used for a variety of purposes. For instance, I reserved a ride from the Istanbul Airport to my hotel with an app called Welcome Pickups and communicate with the driver via WhatsApp. I've chatted with a fellow at an Indian hotel via app and email. It's pretty much unavoidable so I had to bite the bullet and drag myself into the 21st Century.

Another tip: Pepper your well-traveled friends with questions. I did and it helped relieve anxiety as well as allowed me to absorb their wise and experienced advice. Like these ideas: Don't forget Vitamin I (Imodium) and always take a hotel business card when out and about in case you get lost. Then, just hand it to a taxi driver for a ride home.

Tour guide Akshaydeep offers his perspective: "India is diverse. It includes a growing middle class, an educated sector, and a significant number of wealthy individuals," acknowledging that India can be a cultural shock for many Westerners. "It's bustling and lively streets are often noisy, and yes, you may encounter poverty and dusty streets. But India is also a beautiful country steeped in history, art, and vibrant spirituality. The warmth and hospitality of the people are remarkable, and they are welcoming to tourists." He encourages an open mind. "Embrace the new culture, enjoy the delicious Indian cuisine, and connect with people.



Tour company owner and guide Akshaydeep revels in showing visitors the wonders of his country, a diverse place of history, color and culture.

"At the same time, it's important to stay mindful. Safeguard your belongings, trust your instincts, listen to your tour manager and local friends, and you'll likely have a fantastic experience."

Perhaps that will include something that cannot be planned, defined, or even imagined—an encounter with the ancient spirit of Buddhism. "Going to the places where he lived, taught, and died, there is always a possibility of connecting with that," says Bicknell. "You see people from all over the world having the same experience and that creates an energy. There is no shared language but there is a shared humanity."

Bicknell and I are leaving comfortable routines for the unknown, not unlike the originator of Buddhism centuries ago. "This is where Prince Siddhartha, living in luxury, sought to understand suffering and ultimately discovered a path to happiness," says Akshaydeep. "Through this pilgrimage, you'll explore over 2,500 years of Buddhist history in India. You, too, can embark on your own transformative spiritual journey."

So, with lofty goals and thighs of steel, I think we're ready. 🌀

Connie McDougall is a former news reporter and current freelance writer of nonfiction and personal essays. A lifelong student and proud English major, she has pursued lessons in flying, scuba diving, tai chi, Spanish, meditation, hiking, and Zumba.



You Can Tour Great Museums of the World

BY ANN RANDALL

Recently from my sofa, I beamed 4,680 miles into Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum for a group tour of its Gallery of Honors. The tour included a stop in front of Flores Claesz Van Dijk's painting, *Still Life with Cheese*. There, the knowledgeable museum guide noted the painter had used an unusual pigment ingredient. The distinctive gray color of the uppermost round of the cheese stack, she explained, came from the juice of sheep feces. What? I zoomed in for a direct look and downloaded a free, high-resolution copy of the painting for closer study.

International Museum Day is May 18, an observance of the cultural role played by the world's museums and a day that encourages people to pay them a visit. Fortunately, some of the great ones have gone digital, creating online virtual tours to substitute for or supplement in-person visits. Like me, you don't even need to leave your sofa to meander through them.

The Rijksmuseum happens to be one of my favorites for a remote visit. An institution that believes in democratizing art, it's in the process of digitizing its entire collection—a total

of 1.1 million artworks and artifacts making it all available gratis on its website *From Home*.

The effort began in 2009 during the restoration of the museum's centerpiece, Rembrandt's 1642 painting, *Night Watch*. Using high-resolution photography, digital microscopes, molecular spectroscopy, and artificial intelligence, the restorers created in-depth images of every square millimeter of the approximate 12- by 14.5-foot painting. The advanced technology allowed analysis of Rembrandt's underlying sketches, the type of paint he used, and the discovery that he used arsenic to create the painting's sheen. The outcome of the still-in-progress effort is now available to the virtual public, allowing visitors to zoom into the painting's minute details, watch updates of the restoration, and learn about the findings made possible by technology.

A virtual visit also takes you to Rijksstudio. There, 840,302 high-resolution, digital, downloadable and free images include not only the renowned paintings of Vermeer and Rembrandt but also collection images

of statues, ceramics, metalwork, tapestry, and furniture.

From Home also includes five-minute segments on specific museum themes such as flowers, LGBTQ portrayal, female leadership, and secret doors and basements in the building, each presented by a Rijksmuseum curator, department head, or tour guide as they point out examples found throughout the 12,000 square meters of exhibit space.

Viewers can take art classes from RijksCreative, where you can participate in museum classes on charcoal, painting, sketching, and creating a photobook, with each class displaying six easy-to-watch lessons.

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London has also gone virtual, uploading beautifully photographed images of 1.25 million objects in the museum's collection, including manuscripts, photos, painting, and fashion. Additionally, V&A Academy online offers live stream and recorded lectures, discussions, and workshops. This winter, I took a free online course about V&A's large collection of hand-made Asian and African carpets.



from the Comfort of Home

Six of the 26 museums of Rome's Vatican Museums can be visited via a self-guided 360-degree virtual video tour. Using a keyboard or mouse, you can wander the apartment known as Raphael's Rooms while scrolling in closely to study the mosaic tiles in the floor or stroll around the Sistine Chapel zooming in to study the fresco walls and Michelangelo's handiwork in the ceilings. Similar 360-degree virtual tours of are available on the websites of the Louvre and Musee D'orsay in Paris and the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy. These four are part of the Google Arts and Culture website offering 60 museums of virtual tours.

If science is more your forte, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History has you covered. Its website is chock-full of information and high-resolution images. You can navigate a room-by-room tour of the exhibit spaces or select collections (fossils anyone?) and from there zoom in on specific artifacts or click links for more text information and explanatory videos. The website also allows you to take narrated tours with the museum's scientists and visit its laboratories and research stations. Similarly, in Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum you can float through galleries, stopping to study exhibits like

an iridium satellite or Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 lunar spacesuit.

All 21 museums of the Smithsonian are in the process of making their collections available online. At Smithsonian Open Access, visitors can view and download high-resolution images of 4.9 million artifacts in their collection including Charlie Parker's alto saxophone and Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Vega B5. The Smithsonian is currently experimenting with 3D scanning digitization, allowing objects like the plaster cast of Abraham Lincoln's hands and face to be viewed from different angles. Check out Smithsonian 3D for informative videos about the process.

A virtual museum visit is much like an in-person meander through a collection. Take the time to explore. Once online, click on all the links and sublinks to stroll into galleries or listen in on tours. Make return visits to view newly curated exhibits or tours. You can do it without the cost of an airline ticket to Amsterdam or Paris. In fact, for no cost at all. 🌐

Ann Randall is a freelance writer, organizational consultant and independent traveler who loves venturing to out-of-the-way locales. A former teacher and union organizer, she now observes international elections, does volunteer work in India and writes regularly for 3rd Act, Northwest Travel & Life, West Sound Home & Garden, Fibre Focus and Dutch the Magazine.

Type in these URL's or do a web search to get started:

- From Home: www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/from-home
- V&A Academy: www.vam.ac.uk/info/academy
- Vatican Museums: www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/tour-virtuali-elenco.html
- Louvre at Home: www.louvre.fr/en/online-tours
- Google Arts and Culture: artsandculture.google.com/partner
- Smithsonian Museum of Natural History: naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour
- Smithsonian Open Access: www.si.edu/openaccess



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TWO AGING LADIES

ON THE LAM

Bonnie McCune

BY BONNIE MCCUNE

Have I lost my zest for life, my willingness to take a risk, my passion for new experiences?

In this, my seventh decade of life, these worries periodically drift through my mind. Usually when a new ache in my body makes its presence known or I'm wondering if our investments will hold their value for another 20 years.

I was slapped across the face with an answer in the summer when I had a chance to take a road trip. My trip, really, a spontaneous adventure, started harmlessly enough. An old friend and I decided to drive together to an out-of-town memorial for another longtime friend, Melissa. A fairly short jaunt, about four hours according to Google. A perfect, leisurely trip, packed with stops for useless calories. Visit some locales where my friend and I had once created memories with Melissa.

Little did we know we'd have the rose-colored glasses knocked off our optimistic faces. Call it fate, call it bad luck, or that ever-present demon of aging individuals—weak memories. Both of us were well acquainted with Colorado's twisting mountain roads. The cloudless summer day held not one threat of bad weather. No longer penniless students, we both had ample funds in pocket, the bank, and in credit. What could stop us?

However, as a dedicated, determined worrywart, surely, I would find some threat to challenge me. I've never prided myself on being fearless. As a child, I was terrified of dogs, monster movies, kidnappers.

When I was younger, a trip held ominous hints about getting lost, or breaking down on a mountain cliff, attacks by rabid bears or, my favorite, a sudden and unexpected stroke. But now I was an adult, infinitely more realistic about the slim chance of dangers and could tackle a short road trip with ease. Right?

The only trait stronger than fear in my personality is my intense curiosity about how other people negotiate their passages through life. Maturity has affected this quality. As I gained experiences, I became less curious. By my current age, creature comforts weighed in more heavily than experiences, while the thrill of discovery subsided to a faint twinge of inquisitiveness.

So the twin challenges of fear and vague curiosity motivated me. As my friend Cindi and I settled in our seats, a tremor of excitement filled the car. We both flicked out our phone maps and heard our disembodied hostesses greet us.

We sailed along with no problems for about an hour and

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

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a half on a wide, clean, picturesque highway. Our goal was the small mountain community of Paonia. Evergreens and aspens undulated in a gentle breeze, while bright lemony and white wildflowers waved to us from benign meadows. The highway had no traffic jams; every driver was cordial. Yet somehow, we lagged behind our partner SUV, Melissa's cousins. Finally, we noticed we'd lost sight of them. The other driver was more familiar with the route than we. We pulled into a wide, well-marked parking area near Copper Mountain resort, and called, agreeing to meet later at our destination. Then we set off down the road.

What we didn't realize is that I'd steered the car onto a completely different highway, the wrong one, a state highway that continued in the direction we'd been headed, south. But the interstate we needed swerved west at that point.

Something about the road's appearance made me uncertain. It was two-lane, the road bed was battered and worn. The farther we went, the more potholes we hit and we spotted nary a gas station, café, or rest stop. Both our cellphone maps continued to show what we thought was the correct information. That's because we could have circled the region and still reached our ultimate destination, Paonia. But we would totally miss our original guide in the other car and throw ourselves off-schedule by hours.

Finally, I offered, "I think we went the wrong way." We spotted a small town ahead that looked nothing like any of the towns I'd visited years gone by on my way to Paonia. An oncoming sign referred to a nearby town at a much higher elevation than was correct. The sign read "Leadville." When I saw two girls walking down the street, I jumped out and asked, "Is this Leadville?"

They confirmed my grievous error.

Although I'd driven us off-track, off-schedule, and off-kilter, I masked my apprehensions. To make Cindi as nervous as I would do neither of us good. "Still early in the day," I assured her. "No damage done."

That day, what was a four-hour drive became an eight-hour inconvenience. We missed the initial gathering of close friends and Melissa's family for the memorial at

the family ranch and winery, and almost lost our places at the burger cookout. Not all was lost. We swapped tales of our earlier visits to Melissa's cousin and relatives over the years.

Still ample time for our mini-vacation. The second day, in addition to the intimate, informal memorial, our trip was to include an outing in the town, a tour of wineries for which the area is noted. In fact, our host and hostess owned one of the wineries and graciously involved us in all the fun preparations for guests. However, our own personal Comedy of Errors continued as if Shakespeare himself were directing our holiday.

I wanted to be dressed correctly for an exhilarating schedule while on the tour ourselves and becoming familiar with this beautiful, mountainous corner of Colorado. So I chose to dress in a favorite sweater, pulsing with good vibes.

The day was sunny and clear. No guarantees about this continuing, for Colorado is notorious for its instantaneous, fickle weather, the very reason I carefully prepared for chills and winds by toting the gorgeous sweater. Heck, it even bore the word "Merci" in fancy lettering on the front. A perfect sentiment for my mood. Merci for friends, merci for excellent weather and wine, merci for simply being alive. Yes, I was missing my old friend, now gone, with whom I'd vacationed here several times years ago. But really, wasn't that the whole reason for the trip? To recall good memories?

Determined not to let one misalignment the prior day jinx our holiday, we participated enthusiastically in making refreshments, then trailed to local wineries to sample their wares. We learned about local specialties: Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir. We heard of the challenges of too much and too little rainfall, listened to a folk duo of familiar tunes, tasted cheeses, nuts, and sausages.

Weather continued balmy, even sweltering. I had long before peeled off the sweater in favor of the simple T-shirt I'd worn underneath.

For the evening, we were ready to feast on homemade pizza, baked in an outdoor oven. The temperature had dropped and my sweater would be perfect.

If only I could find it. Yes, somewhere it had disappeared. I remembered toting it to the car, then





nothing. After searching the car with no results, I considered had I dropped it out of the car? Left it at a winery? Draped it over lawn furniture outside? No answers.

The evening began with an intimate memorial ceremony next to the roaring mountain stream. Melissa's son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter spoke briefly about how much they missed her and her love for these mountains. One person recited a favorite poem and another recalled a failed attempt to fish in the rapids. Then we raised a glass of wine or beer or soft drink to Melissa.

Hour after hour passed that evening with no results for the missing sweater. I got more frantic. My husband had given the sweater to me the previous Christmas and he'd selected it completely on his own. My pointed, rude inquiries to all the guests at the festivities yielded no information. I braced myself to admit my failure to my husband when I returned home.

The next day, our final day, we said goodbye to our old friends. We checked our maps several times and were convinced we had the correct route for this venture. Adding to our general feeling of optimism, I vaguely recalled stuffing something into a deep glove compartment in the car. I opened it and there it was—the missing sweater! Surely nothing could go wrong now.

We made good time on our way to the final destination—Denver. The highway, yes, the correct one, wound over and around, up and down, as we tore through yet another fine day, old rock 'n' roll booming on the radio. “Me and Bobby McGee,” “(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction,” and, of course, “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair).” Yet another thing Cindi and I had in common with our departed friend Melissa. After graduation from college, we'd packed

our bags and took off for San Francisco, just in time for the Summer of Love. It missed us; we had to earn livings.

In the midst of these heartwarming reminiscences, Cindi and I took a break for coffee and pastries. Back on the road, we resumed burning rubber. About an hour later, we decided to fill up the tank. That was when Cindi discovered her purse was missing. Standing by the pump, she reached for a credit card, only to realize she had none. Nor any money, driver's license, cosmetics, tissues, or comb. Certainly not a purse or bag. Cell phone she had, safely tucked into a pocket.

We froze and stared at one another. “Look in the car again,” I gasped. “Between the seats, under the luggage, in the far back.”

“No, no, no,” moaned Cindi. “I think I left it in the last restaurant.”

“Do you mean back 60 miles behind us?”

“Yes. I remember hanging it over the headrest of the chair.”

“Call them. Call them.”

Thankfully, she remembered the name of the restaurant and also the waitress, who had a distinctive accent. We'd both agreed she was most pleasant and helpful. She continued by quickly advising Cindi the purse had been found and rescued from oblivion. It would be waiting for Cindi when we drove back 60 miles to collect it.

Despite the extra detour back, some 140 minutes passed before we circled and pulled into my Denver townhouse. We achieved a kind of fatalistic joy as we reviewed lessons learned. Among them, we were not too old to have an adventure. I envisioned Melissa peeping over our shoulders and having a great time. I like to think of her cracking up in giggles as we made error after error, the way good friends always do.

Most important, old friends present or remembered gift you with amazingly tender, warm feelings. Our trip had been a worthwhile pause in our normal routine.

Today, I add this adventure to the list of reminiscences I hold dear. I may not travel to foreign climes at my advancing age, but I still can challenge myself, build friendships, and treasure memories, including a final one in the collection that had begun in high school with Melissa, 63 years prior. 🌀

Bonnie McCune is a freelance writer with numerous credits in local, regional, and specialty publications for news and features. She is co-author of Recruiting and Managing Volunteers in Libraries (Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1995). She has written for Denver Woman, Sasee, 303 Magazine, Christian Science Monitor, and Denver Magazine.

A Walking Life

BY ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD

What friends said when I was young, they say now: “He is always walking.”

I see life as a journey by foot through time.

Is there such a thing as a “pilgrim gene?” Travel writer and novelist Bruce Chatwin wrote of the “sacramental” aspect of walking. These days, a lot gets written about its therapeutic value for seniors like myself.

I have never given much thought to the practical benefits of my obsession.

The post-war Bronx, New York, where I grew up, was haunted by a hushed word: Holocaust.

No Jewish home was without it, without the distancing silence it opened up between parents and children,



the loneliness contained in the unexplained.

I walked to get away from it, to map with my feet something that was my own, unshadowed: the soft spring light on gray buildings, the delicious silence of snow, the daggered wind. I bravely absorbed the wind. The wind absorbed me. Every gust I felt in my travels seemed a continuation of those first gusts in the Bronx.

Walking was the incubator of imagination. I’d find myself with Huck Finn, on his raft, navigating the Mississippi. Walking, you might say, on water. Passing the Chinese takeout as we oared deeper into the great river.

I was 80 when COVID hit. An inauspicious time to be an incorrigible walker. New York residents banded back and forth a brand-new word—*lockdown*. Everyone was urged to remain housebound. Virtually all work places, including public libraries, and my Poets House, were shut down.

Immobility was more fearful to me than possible death. Immobility was death. Every morning I took my backpack and went out in search of a writing refuge. I’d pass block after block of empty streets and shops. The feeling of having wound up on an abandoned Hollywood movie set: New York at the end-of-days. My shadow was the only shadow I encountered. If I cried out, no one would hear me.

After much searching, I found what I was looking for: a bench along one of the promontories of the Hudson River. I still go there to write. The joggers have returned. The yellow kayaks are back in the water. The past is back as though it had never been away.

I still remember stopping cold in the middle of a line. I’d be sitting in the sun, in the cool breeze of the river, hand poised dynamically in midair, and be jolted by the sudden awareness that all over the city old people like myself were lying stiff on gurneys.

Why them and not me? Who does the cosmic math that decides such things? Who turns the sun toward my face and away from theirs?

I'd walk back home slowly, my shame leaning heavily against my feet. Survivor shame. The shame my family felt toward relatives who disappeared into ditches in Poland. Gone one day as if they'd never been.

When the war ended, there was an outbreak of desperate walking throughout Europe.

People looking for their past, for people who were part of their past, for homes and neighborhoods and hopes that needed to be reclaimed, or finally put to rest.

Is there such a thing as a "pilgrim gene?" I see life as a journey by foot through time.

Sometimes, walking in my old neighborhood, walking is the only familiar thing I find. New layers of ethnic skin have grown over the old. New histories have replaced the old. After a while, even the soft edges of one's nostalgia are blunted. You can't outwalk loss. Losing, as the poet Elizabeth Bishop wrote, is an art. One that isn't hard to master. It takes practice, she said. Aging gives us many opportunities for mastery.

I have lived for the past half century on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Since COVID, one sees fewer old people in the streets. There is an emptiness beneath the sheltering trees of the Village View housing complex where many seniors live. The habit of indoor living is like any other habit. It revolves around itself. It atrophies itself from

what is not itself. It sees the outside world from within and pronounces it dangerous.

At Village View there lives a woman, who like myself, turned 85 last year. She leaves her house only to shop, to go to the doctor. When we were young, we were lovers and great friends, and the cafes and movie theaters we walked to were the extensions of our love.

Visiting her, I connect with the strange intimacy of walking. We didn't walk as far as we thought we would. In my dreams, I walk without stopping. I am always walking. ③

Robert Hirschfield is a New York-based writer and poet. He has spent much of the last five years writing and assembling poems about his mother's Alzheimer's. In 2019, Presa Press published a volume of his poems titled, The Road to Canaan. His work has appeared in Parabola, Tricycle, Spirituality & Health, Sojourners, The Moth (Ireland), Tears in The Fence (UK) and other publications.

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Photo by Jülia Hubbel

Scouting for an Outing? It Might Be Time for An Adventure

BY JULIA HUBBEL

Did your “someday” slip by you? Have you decided that it’s too late, you’re too old for adventure?

Isn’t it time for some serious fun again?

Author Herman Melville gave us perhaps the single best piece of advice for a soul encased in a daily rut:

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet ... then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. —Ishmael, narrator, Moby Dick.

Many of us share such wanderlust. For most, life inevitably extracts its pound of flesh. We go to school, work, raise kids, and often forget the call of the wild.

But the call lives on and beckons still to the end of our days.

When is it time to give yourself an adventure? Now?

On one hand, some adventures may no longer be wise for an aging body. It’s remarkable how many thrilling, gratifying excursions exist even for those with significant mobility issues.

If you’re in the market for inspiration, read on.

Some of the very best adventures in the wilderness are within a reasonable

drive of cities where many of us live. River rafting is far more accessible to older folks than many may realize.

There are few outdoor sports better suited to all levels of mobility and age, which still offer quite a thrill. While the ads typically show people running big rapids, the truth is that much of the trip is on gentle waters, especially later in the season.

You can watch osprey, beaver, bear and deer, and enjoy custom-prepared foods along the river.

Over-60 Portland pickleball players

Laughing women gathered around the hatchback, selecting snacks and filling their champagne glasses. The group was made up of highly competitive, Portland-area pickleball players who had decided to celebrate a member’s 60th birthday on the river.

They wanted a different kind of party to celebrate the milestone, one that they’d always remember.

The summer day was crackling



Photo by Julia Hubbel

Where to Raft in the West

If you're in the market for a wilderness adventure, here are some suggestions to get you started:

- **First, ignore the epic photos meant to sell the Big Hairy Adventure. Prefer something that feels safer and more sedate? Plan accordingly.**
- **Raft later in the year when the spring runoffs have calmed. The months of August and September are better for milder trips.**
- **Start with a half-day or day trip to test the waters.**
- **Book early. The best outfitters start booking the year before and their best trips fill fast.**
- **Consider Road Scholar, ideal for the over-50 traveler.**
- **Get excellent advice from one of the top outfitters around at www.oars.com/blog/how-to-choose-the-right-adventure-travel-company/.**
- **Ask the outfitter how they accommodate older clients. Then ask for referrals. The best companies have people happy to brag about their adventures.**
- **Stop putting it off. The wild in you is calling and you'll be glad you answered.**

bright, the Clackamas River just off to our right, tumbling along energetically. In moments, Oregon River Experience would be ferrying us down to the “put-in,” where we’d gear up with helmets and personal flotation devices. A day of excitement lay ahead.

The pickleball players ranged from 60 to nearly 80. Once we launched, the oldest, game for fun, sat shotgun on the front of the raft.

She landed in the churning rapids and came up grinning and sputtering in the cool, clear Clackamas, ready for more.

One woman was terrified. Yet, by the second set of rapids, she was paddling for all she was worth, shrieking with joy. By the end of the day, tired, wet, and happy, the women toasted each other with the rest of the champagne.

A whole day of thrilling adventure, carefully guided, within an hour of the city.

These women had no idea that such an adventure could be had so close to

their Portland neighborhood. Some would be back for more.

In fact, especially in the Pacific Northwest and the West, such river experiences abound. Outfitters like O.R.E. and Row Adventures, based in Idaho, run lots of Road Scholar trips that are designed for the older traveler.

Many are specifically designed for grandchildren to join them on the journey.

Guides are accustomed to the needs and concerns of older folks. As a result, the trips offer a broad range of adventures adapted to those needs.

No limits

In August 2024, I was on the Rogue River in Southern Oregon with people from pre-teen to 86. Row Adventures’ trip include comfortable lodge nights at each day’s end, which is much easier on aging bodies and adds a touch of wilderness luxury to the experience.

One couple in their late 80s comfortably rode the rapids. Another

woman had lost her left leg in a terrible accident, but was fully engaged in every part of the trip. An elderly woman with compromised eyesight hiked as well and rode the rapids like a cowgirl.

People well past 60 chose to take small steps toward big fun. By the end of that five-day adventure, most of the participants had taken part in some activity that stretched and rejuvenated them.

When you’re supported by well-trained guides focused on safety, you can put down the phone, make new friends, and be immersed in the best nature has to offer.

Even better, you’ll come home transformed.

You are never too old for another adventure.

Let’s play. 🌐

Julia Hubbel is a prize-winning journalist and author of two books. An adventure traveler, she thrives on exploring the boundaries of the heart, soul, spirit, and humor. Horizons beckon for Hubbel, who launched her passion to take on challenging sports in the world’s greatest places in earnest at age 60.



Sitting on cramped airplanes can be debilitating. Here are my Top 10 remedies for surviving your flight.

By Kevin R. Stone, MD

1 Exercise hard before getting on.
Swim, bike, run, lift weights, do whatever you can before you fly. If possible, use the airplane time for rest and recovery from sports—not work.

2 Hydrate before and during the flight.
Drink only water, never alcohol or coffee. Alcohol dehydrates and debilitates. It is an anesthetic with a long post-infusion tail. Alcohol slows metabolism and increases weight gain as there is an increased desire to eat while drinking. Coffee and tea with caffeine accelerates both heart rate and metabolism. But, it adds stress anxiety and stimulates the bowels to move more often—leading to more hunger. So drink plain water, a full glass every hour.

3 Out-of-chair walking, every hour (at least).
Book an aisle seat and get up frequently. This movement decreases blood clot risk,

diminishes back pain caused by the poor seats, and reminds you to exercise. Set your phone alarm to vibrate every hour. The reminder is the key, as it's easy to be lulled into mindlessness by the airplane's drone.

4 Do these five exercises while sitting.
Ankle pumps: Do a set of 100 every flight. Posture adjustment: Roll your pelvis forward, suck in your abdominal muscles and set your shoulders behind your hips. Hold the position for a minute. Do this once every 15 minutes. You will be shocked by how much time you are slouching and this will help you discipline yourself to not do it! Simple biceps curls: Lift your computer (or your book) from the tray table to your chest. Do this 60 times. Repeat every few hours. Push-ups on the hand rests: Push down on the hand rests, lifting your body off the seat. Do this 15 times, every few hours. Shoulder muscle strengthening: Squeeze your shoulder blades together 30 times and hold them in that position for as long as you can. Suck in your abdominal muscles while you do this exercise.

5 Three exercises when standing in the aisle. Calf raises: See how many you can do before the flight attendant tells you to sit down! Single stance balance: Stand on one leg and count the number of rows on the plane. See how long you can go. Repeat each time you get up. Hip strength: Stand next to your seat, facing forward, and push your leg firmly against the seat. Hold the position for 15 seconds. Try 10 then switch legs.

6 If you are a frequent executive traveler, book hotels with gyms and pools—and book the gym trainer, every day. Put it on your schedule, just like any other business appointment. Best to book early in the morning, before your meetings start. If you book it, you are likely to keep it and much more likely to get a great workout in if you are supervised.

7 Bring your own food. It's easy to bring healthy fruits, vegetables, and even yogurt. If you prepare a meal the night before, make an extra portion and put it into a baggy with a plastic fork. You can control what you eat when you travel if you plan ahead. (If it is a multi-leg trip, order an

extra healthy dinner in the restaurant the night before and have them bag it for you. Cold shrimp, cut up steak, or lean pork works best.)

8 Travel with a friend. If your schedules include overlapping free time, organize sports and recreation activities together. Work travel should not be 24 hours of work.

9 Sleep. Sleep without sleeping drugs. Practice meditation and centering down. Use an eye shield and music if it helps you. Use the airplane time to increase your rest time.

10 Think. We tend to fill our hours with conversation, reading, working, and writing, and take too little time to just think. Close your eyes and tap into your most creative self. You are your own best cure. 🌀

Kevin R. Stone, MD, is an orthopaedic surgeon at The Stone Clinic and Chairman of the StoneResearch Foundation. Trained at Harvard University in both internal medicine and orthopaedic surgery and at Stanford University in general surgery, he is a world-renowned expert in biologic joint replacement. He is the best-selling author of Play Forever. Dr. Stone has served the U.S. Ski Team, the U.S.s Pro Ski Tour, the Marin Ballet, the Smuin Ballet, the Modern Pentathlon at the U.S. Olympic Festival, and the U.S. Olympic Training Center.



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Traveling with Intention

As a Former Expat with a Love for Foreign Cultures, I've Changed How I Travel as I've Aged

BY TERRY REPAK

I've probably visited as many countries as travel guru Rick Steves has. Unlike Steves, I chose to live in foreign countries instead of dropping in for a few days. Living in other countries allowed me to form relationships with people and insights into other cultures that I couldn't get on short visits. Now retired and living in the U.S. to be closer to family, I still yearn to broaden my horizons and encounter other cultures periodically.

My wanderlust knew no bounds when I was younger. That's why I agreed to move to West Africa with my husband in the 1990s at the height of the AIDS epidemic. His public health work in Ivory Coast would help save lives while mine—freelance writing—could be done anywhere.

It was a lonely venture, moving with two small children to a place with an

inhospitable climate where I didn't speak the language. I worried constantly that one of us might get AIDS or malaria, and we had to be vigilant in a high crime city like Abidjan, where carjackings and burglaries were common.

Like all expats attached to the U.S. Embassy, we had a guard posted at our house 24/7. We grew close to those men over the years and mourned one of them when he died of AIDS. I also got to know women who welcomed me into book clubs and professional women's groups. Like them, I was determined to embrace the local culture and help my children feel at home there.

We visited more than half of the 52 countries on the African continent when we lived in Ivory Coast and Tanzania. We climbed Kilimanjaro, snorkeled in the Zanzibari islands, and



did numerous treks and safaris with our children. When my husband took a job in Geneva for four years, we visited all the major European countries.

Now in my 70s, I'm more risk-averse and no longer like roughing it or starting over in a new country. Yet, my anxiety level is low when I travel. I don't worry about contracting a disease since I'm familiar with health precautions and get vaccines. I also take precautions against petty thieves and don't wear jewelry or carry much money in foreign cities.

While based in the U.S., I've had to be more intentional about travel and find new ways to encounter people of other cultures. One way is to do volunteer work—like teaching English at a summer camp in Lithuania as I did last summer.

I had never been to Lithuania and it sounded intriguing. The country ranked number one in the World Happiness Report last year—at least among young people—despite having Russian nuclear submarines based on its border. When a friend invited me to join her at the camp, I jumped at the chance.

I've taught English to Language



Clockwise from left: Giant Buddha in Japan; Rumiko at Crimson Gates; Kilimanjaro Group; Kilimanjaro Beckoning.

Learners as a volunteer for years. But teaching four short classes daily was a challenge since I was used to teaching adults and not teenagers. The hardest part was devising lesson plans for four different levels each day since some of the kids spoke English well, while others spoke only Lithuanian or Russian.

Lodging was provided at an international school and I had evenings free to swim in the Baltic Sea and explore the coastal town of Klaipeda. The job taught me to listen better and be more resilient in the classroom. It also gave me a deeper appreciation for teachers who work with young people year-round, and for a country that topped the World Happiness Report despite its precarious geography.

This year I plan to teach English with a different group in Spain. Then I'll reverse roles and work with a tutor to help me improve my Spanish.

Another way I can immerse myself in foreign cultures is to visit friends who live overseas. Recently, I toured Japan with my friend Rumiko who lives in Okinawa half the year. She arranged several hiking days for us in the mountains and tours in major cities.

When we visited a handful of temples and shrines in Kyoto, Rumiko related folk tales and explained local customs to us. At a theater one evening, we saw a demonstration tea ceremony, a short concert of Koto Music, and performances of traditional dances. We also sampled foods specific to each region we visited: Shirasu (tiny white fish) in Kamakura, soba noodles in Kyoto, and Okonomiyaki (a savory pancake dish) in Hiroshima.

It was in Hiroshima that I gained a deeper sense of Japan's traumatic history in the last century while touring the Peace Museum and viewing graphic photos of the atomic bomb's impact. The horrors of the second World War were also evident at the Okinawa Peace Museum where photos and testimonials chronicled the brutal battle that lasted 90 days. After hearing the perspectives of an insider like my friend, I came away with a deeper awareness of Japan's remarkable transformation from a war machine to a peaceful country and close U.S. ally.

A third way I can encounter other cultures is by going on retreats. I've attended yoga retreats in Nicaragua,

Cuba, and Mexico, and writing retreats elsewhere. Retreats allow us to disconnect from the noisy world for a week and meet like-minded people who also like yoga, travel, and writing.

Excursions are a big draw on such retreats. I've hiked up volcanoes and worked in soup kitchens on community service projects that provide golden opportunities to learn about village life. Yoga retreats in Cuba and Nicaragua also allowed me to see parts of those countries I wouldn't venture to on my own.

Such venues—volunteer work, touring with friends, and yoga (or writing or language) retreats—provide safe ways to experience new places and interact with local people. It's always enriching to see what life is like for people of other cultures, especially if you travel with open curiosity and leave expectations and judgments behind.

As Rick Steves said in a recent interview, "I want to come home a little different, a little less afraid, a little more thankful, and a little better citizen of the planet." 🌀

ROOTS, SHOOTS, AND FRUITS

An excerpt from *Aging Sideways:
Changing Our Perspectives on
Getting Older* By Jeanette Leardi

In the workshops I facilitate on journaling, memoir writing, stress management, caregiver support, and ethical-will creation, one particular exercise resonates quite deeply with participants. Based on the organic structure of a tree, which is a great metaphor for life itself, the activity is a fun and revealing way to explore the influences and inspirations in one's life and how they

are transformed into meaningful passions and productive actions. I call it Roots, Shoots, and Fruits.

Here's how to do the exercise:

1. On a piece of paper, draw the trunk of a tree. The trunk represents you.

2. Now, think about the people, experiences, and things that influence and/or nurture you in your life. For example, your faith, family members, and friends each might be a source of support. Perhaps you are greatly influenced by your experiences of travel, work, periods of crisis, or time in the military. You get the idea. Downward from the base of the trunk, draw and label a root that represents each such aspect in your life.

3. Next, consider your passions and actions. Toward what activities do you direct your energies and spend your time? For example, you might focus some of your energy on volunteer work. And it's highly likely that you spend time doing things for and/or with your partner and/or children. You might also enjoy a particular hobby or play a certain sport. Each of these channels of your energy

is a "shoot" or branch, of your tree. Upward from the top part of the trunk, draw these shoots and label each one accordingly.



4. Finally, look at each shoot on your tree. Ask yourself: “In what particular way am I living out this passion?” or “What specifically am I contributing to the world as a result of this effort?” In other words, what is the “fruit” of each labor? For example, if volunteering is one of your shoots, a fruit might be “tutoring a child,” “working at the food bank,” or “making quilts for shut-ins.” At the end of each shoot, draw and label one or more fruits that describe the results or end-products of your actions.

By now you may realize that a root (such as “my partner”) can also be a shoot. Or a shoot (such as “photography”) may also be a root because the activity nurtures you. Or a fruit (such as your child) can be a root because of the love they provide in your life. That’s great. It indicates full-circle aspects to your life.

As I said, this exercise is always a hit with my workshop participants. It provides a way for them to take stock of their lives and to recognize and appreciate the connections that help define who they are in the world. But the exercise has an additional benefit, one that has to do with proportion and balance.

Some people have greater difficulty identifying their roots rather than their shoots/fruits. They are clearly able to name their passions, as well as the many things that they do. But they can’t seem to cite specific people, events, or values that provide stability and inspiration in their lives. For others, it’s just the opposite. They have no trouble acknowledging the influences in their lives, but they aren’t clear about the ways in which they contribute to the world through their actions or gifts.

Another interesting effect occurs when someone recognizes a root, shoot, or fruit that has been withering for some time due to lack of attention or appreciation, and they resolve to invest more time and energy into nurturing that aspect back to life. Or perhaps a root, shoot, or fruit no longer provides positive energy in that person’s life and must be pruned away.

Over the years, I’ve done this exercise in many workshops with participants of all ages. What is particularly remarkable is how much easier this activity tends to be for older adults than for young adults and middle-agers. Perhaps it’s because of the greater perspective elders have about

their own lives and the longer amount of time they’ve had to develop it. And the trees of elders who are not isolated or depressed tend to be balanced between downward and upward entries.

I’ve noticed, too, that the trees of young adults often have more roots than shoots/fruits. This is to be expected, since they are still evolving as individuals and discovering the ways they can contribute to the world. Middle-aged adults, on the other hand, sometimes have more top-heavy trees. They can label many shoots and fruits, but they

tend to lose awareness of their roots, influences, and sources of support. And maybe that’s a symptom of the drive to achieve that often preoccupies people in mid-career.

But here’s what I’ve found most valuable about introducing my participants to Roots, Shoots, and Fruits. Since I began noticing these generational differences, I have encouraged my students to take this exercise beyond the classroom and do it again with family members of different ages. How, for example, might grandparents help their grandchildren to identify their gifts? How might they help their middle-aged children restore themselves by tapping

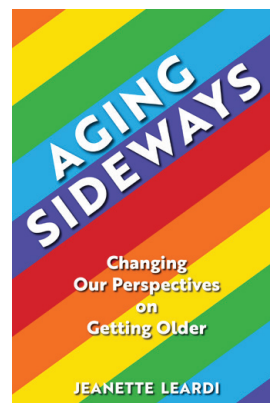
into their root influences? And how might grandkids and their parents better appreciate and aspire to grow the sturdier, more balanced tree of an engaged elder? And how different might a person’s own tree look as they repeat the exercise from time to time throughout life?

Try this exercise and pay attention to what it teaches you about yourself. I hope you’ll agree that if more of us spend time thinking about our Roots, Shoots, and Fruits

(and encourage others to do the same), we will begin to cultivate a lush new forest of personal and social growth. 🌳

*Jeanette Leardi is a Portland-based social gerontologist, community educator, and author of *Aging Sideways: Changing Our Perspectives on Getting Older*. She promotes older adult empowerment through her popular presentations and workshops in journaling, memoir writing, ethical will creation, brain fitness, creativity, ageism, intergenerational communication, and caregiver support to people of all ages. Learn more about her work on her website.*

**A FUN AND
REVEALING WAY
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INTO MEANINGFUL
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In Pursuit of Protein

BY REBECCA CRICHTON

When we look at the endless advice available about what constitutes healthy behaviors, it is obvious that what is healthy and what we need to stay healthy changes according to new information. Where and how we get that information can drop us into the quagmire of opinion vs. fact, anecdote vs. data, and your own dietary history vs. anybody else's.

If you want to start a lively conversation with a group of people over age 65, ask someone about their sleep. I'd place a bet on hearing the variety of mainly difficult experiences represented in any given group.

While that discussion might just give you the tip you need for a good night's sleep, I have a new favorite topic for discussion, which elicits more curiosity than sad stories: I ask how people get the necessary amount of protein in their diets.

According to AARP, older adults need to have more protein than most earlier guidelines suggest. Their recommendations include at least 25

grams of protein, per meal, for women and 30 grams for men. Plus, at least 5 grams for women and 10 grams for men per snack.

For most of us, that represents far more protein than we regularly have.

To add to the equation, not all proteins are equal. "Perfect Proteins" have all nine essential amino acids. The good news is that there are more sources of protein than most of us know, spanning the spectrum from animal to plant-based to supplemental.

Remember how eggs were excommunicated because of their cholesterol content? They are now rehabilitated and show up on the top of the list of proteins that qualify as complete proteins.

A recent addition to protein-rich pantry staples is an expanded variety of canned fish. You'll find Harissa and other spice mix varieties, smoked, and fish packed in water or oil. Sardines are among the most nutrient-rich proteins you can find. Smoked trout and mackerel, salmon, and of course tuna

add healthy protein to salads, spreads, and as toppings for pasta. Do a web search for sardines and pasta and you'll be impressed by the many delectable variations.

Two easy ways to up your protein intake start with eggs. Frittatas and quiches can include multiple protein sources along with vegetables and preferred seasonings. Leftover meats, cheeses, yogurt, and other dairy added to the egg mixture will boost the protein count and deliver sustenance and satisfaction.

Eggs also make an easy topping for beans and grains, whether poached, fried, or hard boiled. They can go in salads, casseroles, or top roasted sheet pan mixtures. Chickpeas can be roasted with salmon or chicken to add more protein along with texture.

The many things you can do with tofu span the range from stir-fry and baked to whipped tofu to use as a dip or spread. One other staple that adds variety to diets is hummus made from beans and lentils. These recipes are easy and delicious and will help up your daily protein intake. 🍳

Rebecca Crichton is executive director of Northwest Center for Creative Aging and presents programs on that topic in the Seattle area. She worked at Boeing for 21 years as a writer, curriculum designer, and leadership development coach.

These Top 10 protein sources will fuel and energize your path toward optimal wellness: Eggs, Lean chicken, Greek Yogurt, Salmon, Lean Beef, Lentils, Quinoa, Chickpeas, Tofu, and Pistachios.

Anytime Frittata

This recipe demonstrates my basic approach to food. I see what I have in my refrigerator, freezer, or pantry and go to work. I live alone, so whatever I make I plan to get at least two meals out of it. Once you realize the versatility of frittatas, they will become among the go-to meals for whipping up something in a hurry.

Ingredients for base

- 2-3 potatoes (leftovers work well), cut into ½ inch dice
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cup washed greens (spinach, kale, chard, or mixture)
- ¼ cup chopped sun dried tomatoes or olives (or both)
- 1 cup mushrooms – Trader Joe’s has a terrific frozen mushroom mixture that just needs heating
- 1 cup protein – Diced chicken, bacon, cooked edamame or any other protein you have on hand
- Salt and pepper to taste

Ingredients for egg and cheese layer

- 4 eggs
- 2 T milk or cream
- 2 T chopped fresh herbs – dill and tarragon are both terrific with eggs
- 1 tsp. of dried oregano or basil
- 1 cup grated cheese (cheddar, feta, swiss, jack, or crumbled goat cheese; can use separately or mix together)

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a 10" oven-safe frying pan, sauté potatoes and onions until the potatoes are cooked through and the onions translucent. Add the other ingredients and let cook for a few minutes until the greens are wilted and cooked, and the rest of the ingredients heated through.

Mix together eggs, cream, herbs and dash of hot sauce if you feel inclined.

Pour egg mixture over the cooked base and sprinkle cheese evenly.

Leave the eggs on the burner until the bottom sets.

Transfer pan to the middle shelf of heated oven.

Cook for 10 minutes until the eggs are almost set.

Turn broiler on and pay attention while the cheese melts and browns slightly.

Remove from oven and let sit for a few minutes.

Serve hot or at room temperature.



Lentil Soup with Fennel, Spinach and Sausage

Ingredients

- 1 lb. spicy Italian sausage (chicken or any other kind you like; I prefer uncooked sausage, but you can use already cooked)*
- 1 lb. dried lentils or one package pre-cooked lentils
- 2 T fennel seeds
- 2 T dried oregano
- 2 T olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 medium onion
- 1 cup small or three large carrots
- 1 12 oz. package frozen chopped spinach
- 1-12 oz. can diced tomatoes or ½ can tomato paste
- 1 qt. chicken stock
- 2 cup red wine
- 1 cup half and half

Salt and pepper

Directions

Chop the onions, carrots, and garlic in food processor and sauté in oil with the fennel seeds until vegetables are softened.

Add cut up sausage and cook until meat is no longer pink.

Rinse lentils and add to vegetables

and sausage. Stir to combine.

Add broth, wine, and canned tomatoes (if using them).

Cook until lentils are soft, about 40 minutes.

Add more wine or broth if needed to keep the mixture soupy.

Add spinach and tomato paste if you haven't used canned tomatoes.

Cook at least 15 minutes.

Tip: Keep tasting to get the flavor balance you like. The fennel should be a subtle tone under the sausage and tomato/wine broth.

Ten minutes before serving, add half and half and keep warm on heat (but don't let it boil).

Serve with shredded parmesan cheese.

The soup improves its flavors over the following days and freezes well.

You can make this vegetarian by eliminating the sausage and using vegetable broth instead of chicken.

Hearty Bean Breakfast

From my friend Griggs Irving, this is a fast approach for a perfect protein breakfast to get your day started. It can work for any meal of the day:

Ingredients

- 1 can fava beans
- 1 can garbanzo beans
- ¼ cup pesto (dill, basil, or chimichurri)
- 1 egg
- ½ cup grated cheese
- Hot Sauce, optional

Directions

Poach one egg to desired softness.

Rinse two or three tablespoons (each) of fava and garbanzo beans and place in a glass bowl. Cover and microwave for two minutes.

When beans are still hot, add two tablespoons of pesto.

Add soft poached egg and top with grated cheese.

Local Getaways

A quick weekend trip is a refreshing escape for the soul. Why not explore somewhere close to home, within a few hours' drive or ferry ride, to soak in new sights and vibrant local culture? Here are some exciting events nearby that are worth experiencing:

Laguna Beach: Pageant of the Masters at Festival of Arts

July 5–Aug 29

foapom.com

Watch art come to life right before your eyes at Pageant of the Masters, one of the most unique productions in the entire world. You will be amazed and enchanted by tableaux vivants (living pictures), incredibly faithful re-creations of classical and contemporary works of art, with real people posing to look exactly like their counterparts in the original pieces. This year's theme is masterpieces from California's most revered museums and monuments. Your pageant ticket includes entry to the Festival of Arts fine art show, with more than 100 artists.

Temecula: Wisteria Viewing

Late April–Early May

visitemecula.valley.com

Immerse yourself in the beauty of the Temecula Valley as vibrant purple wisteria blossoms cascade across the landscape. From late April to May the blossoms offer a sweet scent to savor. Spend your day at a number of local wineries strolling among the gorgeous trees. Our favorite location to see them is at the South Coast Winery Resort and Spa where you can enjoy a weekend brunch at The Vineyard Rose Restaurant. Another option is a wine tasting and lunch at Wilson Creek Winery, known for their quality wines and warm hospitality.

Catalina Island: 19th Annual Taste Around Avalon

May 29

lovecatalina.com

Enjoy the most scrumptious tastes of delectable food and beverages at Avalon's finest dining establishments. Sip, sample and savor your way through

town, and then vote for your favorite "tastes" of food, drink, and dessert as the Best Taste of the Year! This culinary event showcases the island's vibrant food scene with tastings, signature drinks, and entertainment.



Channel Islands Harbor: The Celebration of Whales Festival

April 13

channelislandsharbor.org

Celebrate the annual gray whale migration with a day of festivities at Channel Islands Harbor. Activities

include a concert in the park, interactive art projects, chalk art, and shopping. Don't miss the Maritime Museum and farmers market for more fun.

Solvang: Rancheros Visitadores

May 3

solvangusa.com

Be there to witness one of Solvang's most cherished traditions, the Rancheros Visitadores Parade! The charming streets of Solvang transform into a celebration of history, culture, and cowboy spirit. The parade marks the end of a 60-mile ride from Santa Barbara into Solvang along Alisal Road to Old Mission Santa Inés. The event brings to town more than 750 cowboys from across the globe riding through town in pink for breast cancer awareness. Enjoy the charming backdrop of Solvang's windmills and half-timbered buildings and explore the Hans Christian Andersen Museum for a touch of literary nostalgia. <https://solvangusa.com/events/rancheros-visitadores-annual-equestrian-parade/>

San Luis Obispo: SLO Film Fest

April 24–29

[slofilmfest.com](https://www.slofilmfest.com)

Discover cinematic treasures at the



SLO Film Fest, which showcases contemporary and classic films in unique venues such as the art deco Fremont Theater and the independent Palm Theatre. Wrap up your film screenings with a visit to Saint's Barrel, voted "Best Wine Bar" in SLO county the last three years. <https://www.slofilmfest.org>

Santa Barbara: Taste of Santa Barbara

May 12–18

[sbce.events](https://www.sbce.events)

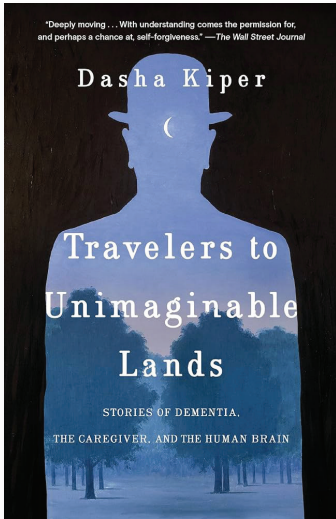
The Santa Barbara Culinary Experience, in partnership with The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts, is an annual celebration of all things food and drink in Santa Barbara County. This weeklong celebration features panel discussions, creative pop-ups, film screenings, farm tours, tasting events, and more. Through the week you will experience the region's best offerings from local farms, ranches, vineyards, and fisheries. 🍷



Travelers to Unimaginable Lands: Stories of Dementia, The Caregiver and The Human Brain

BY DASHA KIPER

REVIEWED BY VICTORIA STARR MARSHALL



It’s a journey we hope we’ll never take—becoming a traveler in the land of dementia or the caregiver to a friend or loved one traveling that path. Each journey is unique—there are no maps or guides, and no caregiving friend or family member on this journey is unaffected.

In Travelers to Unimaginable Lands, Dasha Kiper writes, “Dementia disorders may bring chaos, devastation, and loss, but the mind is not without its defenses. It continues to weave a meaningful narrative, even from events that threaten to diminish essential parts of our loved ones and ourselves.” She masterfully describes the workings of a healthy brain and its need for continuity as it tries to reconcile the inconsistencies, behavior, and personality changes encountered when caring for someone with a diseased brain, and how this affects the caregiver.

Our emotions, our “intuitions,” can create what she calls the caregiver’s dilemma: “Caregivers may realize their parents or spouses suffer from dementia, but in many cases it does not inhibit them from reacting emotionally and erratically to their [loved ones’] misconduct or delusions.” That’s due in part to how a healthy brain works and because, “When we think of Alzheimer’s, we usually think of it as erasing the self. But what happens

in most cases is that the self splinters into different selves; some we recognize, others we don’t. As with memory, the self is not an ‘all or nothing’ affair.”

We’ll often get glimpses of the person or personality we recognize, so it’s easy to believe the person we love is still in there and is acting intentionally, even though we know their brain is damaged. Because of this, caregivers will often berate themselves for not responding with more patience and understanding. Kiper seeks to help us understand how difficult it is to not respond with frustration, or argue, or fall into the same traps again and again when dealing with a diseased brain. She wants caregivers to forgive themselves.

I loved this book and count it as one of the best I’ve read on caregiving someone with a dementia disorder. I found her exploration of defining consciousness fascinating and revealing. “Consciousness may be the ultimate lottery prize of evolution,” Kiper writes, “allowing us to adapt and change as our environment changes, but it is also quite capable of deluding itself ... Consciousness in human beings is accompanied by the intuition that we have volition and free will. And this intuition is continually reinforced by the story consciousness invents, the one in which consciousness is responsible for all our actions. It’s why people who are not in control continue to act as though they are”—even when they have dementia.

Travelers to Unimaginable Lands is a must-read for anyone caring for a loved one with a dementia disorder and anyone who knows a caregiver. I cannot recommend this book more highly. 🌀



GAMES FOR YOUR BRAIN ANSWERS (Puzzles on page 64)

Change a Letter

1. C – Cell, Cable, Camper
2. J – Jail, Jingle, Jacket
3. R – Rookie, Reach, Rhyme
4. G – Gnarled, Glue, Germs
5. S – Slight, Sense, Soot

6. Q – Quest, Quite, Quilt
7. T – Timed, Touch, Twine
8. G – Grate, Golf, Goal
9. D – Deaf, Drain, Drafty
10. W – Wasp, Wraps, Whopper

Endings and Beginnings

1. Glass
2. Cash
3. Corn
4. Soda
5. Egg
6. Cross
7. Food
8. Saw
9. Candy
10. Bean

Looking for Love

1. Olive
2. Solve
3. Vowel
4. Novel, Hovel
5. Evolve
6. Loaves, Louver
7. Grovel, Shovel
8. Revolt
9. Develop
10. Violent, Violets
11. Novelty
12. Elevator
13. Loveseat, Lovesick, Lovelorn, Loveless, Lovebird
14. Boulevard
15. Marvelous
16. Voicemail



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Exercise your brain and have some fun with these puzzles designed to stimulate different cognitive functions.



Change a Letter (easy)

Change the first letter of the three words in each list to create three new words that all start with the same letter. For example, given the words *whine*, *plant* and *reason*, what one letter can replace the first letter of each word to make three new words? The answer is S—*shine*, *slant* and *season*.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Bell, Fable, Pamper _____ | 6. Guest, Suite, Built _____ |
| 2. Mail, Mingle, Racket _____ | 7. Aimed, Pouch, Swine _____ |
| 3. Cookie, Peach, Thyme _____ | 8. Irate, Wolf, Coal _____ |
| 4. Snarled, Blue, Terms _____ | 9. Leaf, Brain, Crafty _____ |
| 5. Flight, Dense, Boot _____ | 10. Gasp, Traps, Shopper _____ |



Endings and Beginnings (harder)

In this game, we provide the first half of a two-word phrase or compound word and the second half of another. For example, given *Credit* _____ *trick*, the one word that completes both clues is *Card*, i.e., *Credit card* and *Card trick*.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Plate _____ ceiling | 6. Red _____ walk |
| 2. Petty _____ register | 7. Frozen _____ stamps |
| 3. Sweet _____ flakes | 8. Chain _____ dust |
| 4. Club _____ fountain | 9. Cotton _____ cane |
| 5. Nest _____ noodle | 10. String _____ bag |



Looking for Love (hardest)

Each word in this list is missing all its letters except L-O-V-E. Can you fill the blank spaces with letters that make a common English word? For a more vigorous brain exercise, try to solve this quiz in three minutes.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. OL ____ VE | 9. ____ ____ VELO ____ |
| 2. ____ OLVE | 10. V ____ OLE ____ ____ |
| 3. VO ____ EL | 11. ____ OVEL ____ ____ |
| 4. ____ OVEL | 12. EL ____ V ____ ____ O ____ |
| 5. ____ ____ OLVE | 13. LOVE ____ ____ ____ ____ |
| 6. LO ____ VE ____ | 14. ____ O ____ LEV ____ ____ ____ |
| 7. ____ ____ OVEL | 15. ____ ____ ____ VELO ____ ____ |
| 8. ____ EVOL ____ | 16. VO ____ ____ E ____ ____ ____ L |

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ANSWERS
ON
PAGE 62

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