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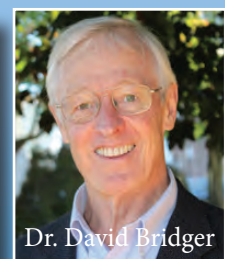
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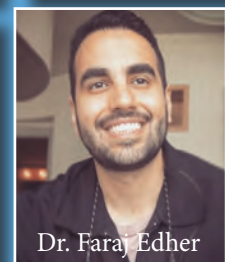
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Cover SUSAN MUSGRAVE
A lifelong writer, Susan Musgrave has penned fiction, non-fiction, children's books and cookbooks, but poetry is where she lives.

Photo by Regina Akhankina



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Susan Musgrave runs a guesthouse called Copper Beech House at her home in Masset, Haida Gwaii, the perfect place to delight in her love of cooking and food gathering.
Photo: Regina Akhankina

SUSAN MUSGRAVE: THE POET

by KATE ROBERTSON

Writer and poet Susan Musgrave's life is a far cry from the mundane. In fact, she says her role as a "social misfit" started early in life, when she was kicked out of her kindergarten class for laughing.

Susan's love of putting words to paper also started early and by Grade 8, she had already won her first poetry competition with a piece about Jackie Kennedy visiting her husband's grave by moonlight. Not long after, Susan dropped out of school and ran away from home to gain life experience, before being committed to a Victoria hospital psych ward. It was while in the hospital that renowned UK poet Robin Skelton dropped by for a visit after reading her poetry. He declared, "You're not mad, you're a poet." At age 19, Susan's first book of poetry, *Songs of the Sea Witch*, was published.

In 1969, Susan received a Canada Council Grant of \$1,500 and spent the next two years living on the remote west coast of Ireland.

"I feel nostalgic about my time in Ireland," she says. "I've gone back there just about every year since I left. I feel at home when I'm there. But my family is in British Columbia and four generations of roots. I suspect if I moved to Ireland, I would pine away for the west coast of BC, and particularly for Haida Gwaii. So best just to visit Ireland, for the nonce."

When Susan returned to Canada in 1972, it was to Haida Gwaii, where she spent the next few years until she married

a criminal defense lawyer. Then, in the courtroom in 1981, when her husband was defending five Americans and 23 Colombians for smuggling 30 tonnes of marijuana into Canada, Susan says she fell in love, from across the courtroom, with one of the accused smugglers. He was acquitted, and she left with him for Mexico, then lived in Colombia and Panama for two years, until her first daughter was born.

When Susan returned to Canada, she became a writer-in-residence at the University of Waterloo. It was there that her next love story began, when she received a manuscript from convicted bank robber, Stephen Reid, who was serving a 20-year sentence at Millhaven Penitentiary.

"I read the manuscript, fell in love with the protagonist, and married the author in 1986, when he was still in prison," she says. "His novel, *Jackrabbit Parole*, was released the same year."

After Stephen was granted parole in 1987, the couple moved to Vancouver Island. A few years later, they began building their house on Haida Gwaii, and were featured as *The Poet and the Bandit* on CBC's *Life & Times*, which aired in January 1999. Just six months later, Stephen was arrested again for a Victoria bank robbery.

Susan has often found herself in the media and has even been described as eccentric.

"I was once asked to be on a television show featuring 'eccentrics.' I figure, if I'm lucky, that's a label I will have earned by the time I'm well over 110, so I insisted I wasn't

Snapshot

with Susan Musgrave

If you were to meet your 20-year old self, what advice would you give her?

You fall in love and live with another human being, and that is too painful."

you the most and why?

"I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence, or insanity to anyone, but they've always worked for me." – Hunter S. Thompson

What are you most grateful for?

"Grateful tends not to be a word I use in my vocabulary. We cheapen and diminish real gratitude by relegating it to bumper sticker status. Am I generally grateful? Yes, I am. I am grateful that I still love writing books, and that other people write books – grateful I have eyes so I can read every day and night.

I am grateful for the north-westerly wind that blows on Haida Gwaii; I am grateful for having two legs that can still walk me to the beach and back. I have a house, two daughters and two granddaughters whom I love and who love me. I travel to Ireland once a year. I have clothes, food in the fridge; I don't live in Syria and I am not a refugee.

But I am not grateful that when the north-westerly blows where it will, and I hear it, some nights I am lonely as f%@. I am not grateful for feeling like there has been way too much loss and not enough pleasure for, oh, I don't, maybe my whole life? I am not grateful that my last love, Stephen, died a year ago June 12th, and May 26th, me, Robert Garfat (from Grade 7), died."

What does success mean to you?

"When your banana cream pie doesn't fail and doesn't have to be eaten with a spoon." |



the right person for the show. The other two guests were a man from Newfoundland who cured hiccups by lighting his nightgown on fire, and a yogi from Manitoba who ate a car over a period of 10 years. What had I done, in comparison? Married a bank robber?"

Sadly, Stephen passed away in June 2018. While she grieves, Susan is working on his memoir.

"The working title for it is *A Grief as Pure as This*," she says. "I have spent the last year reading books about grief, and I find most of them very helpful. Poetry of bereavement is especially good. You can count on poets not to sugar-coat anything, least of all death."

When asked about her choice of complicated partners, Susan answers candidly, "Someone asked me recently to describe my life in two words. I said, 'sad' and 'busy.' Whose life is easy? There were elements of my life that made good copy for the press, and those parts of my life were lived out loud, as it were. I'm easily bored – I'm learning to live with that now and call it something else – like 'quiet enough,' which is how an Irish writer described his Christmas."

"I've always been attracted to what I perceived as excitement," Susan continues. "However, being married to an international drugs wholesaler was not very exciting – mostly sitting in vans at the sides of roads in Colombia waiting for 'the men' to finish their 'negocios delicados.'"

"Being married to a bank robber who spent two-thirds of our married life behind bars wasn't all that exciting either," she admits. "I loved the men behind the masks, not their occupations. I loved Stephen because he could make me laugh. I feel I have lost my best laughing friend, and that makes me enormously sad. So, I keep busy."

Despite what has or has not happened in Susan's personal life, she has always written.

"In Panama and Colombia, it was harder to write because I wasn't 'at home.' I wrote about wanting to be 'where the vulture is only an image.' I don't like hot countries. Heat doesn't help you think. I sat in an air-conditioned apartment in Panama and worked on a novel set in Duncan, British Columbia. On Haida Gwaii, I wrote a novel set in Colombia. When my daughters were young, I kept writing. I had to. It was (and is) my livelihood."

"My literary work is affected by everything I do, and some of what I don't. Certainly, Stephen gave me the grief I seem to thrive on. 'Like grief, there's never enough,' the last line of a poem I wrote called 'Here it Comes – Grief's Beautiful Blow-Job.' I am still not sure I agree with that line. How can there never be enough grief?"

Throughout the years, Susan has published prolifically – not just poetry, but also fiction, non-fiction, children's books and a cookbook called *A Taste of Haida Gwaii: Food Gathering and Feasting at the Edge of the World*.

"I like to call my cookbook a 'love story with recipes,'" Susan says. "It's definitely my bestselling book. That and the board books Orca publishes for the 0-2 set. My latest is called *My Love for You*. I have twin granddaughters who are now nine. I wrote three board books for them, but I had written other books for children before I even had kids of my own."

Those might be the bestsellers, but Susan admits that of her own literary works, poetry is what she loves best.

"Right now, the favourite of my poems is *Rain*, one of the last – maybe the last – poem I wrote before Stephen died. If you were to ask me tomorrow, or six months from now, I would probably tell you something different," she says. "Whatever I happen to be working on is usually my favourite work. So currently my favourite work is the memoir about Stephen."

Naturally, a poet loves to read poetry, and many different poets have influenced Susan at different stages in her life.

"Tennyson was the first poet I read because my parents had his *Collected*

Poems in the house. Then came Bob Dylan, who, to this day, is a huge influence. One critic called me ‘the chance daughter of Sylvia Plath and Allen Ginsberg,’ so I guess the influence, in those cases, showed!”

Over the years, Susan’s own poetry style has evolved. “I used to write very skinny poems. The subject matter was elemental, too – blood, bones, earth, rain, sex and death. My lines are longer now, and I am probably less self-involved,” she admits. “I am not much interested in a self, but I haven’t yet learned how to completely slough it off.”

As for her favourite contemporary poets, Susan says the list is almost endless: Ai, Tess Gallagher, Norman Dubie, Alden Nowlan, Brian Patten, Tom Wayman, Lorna Crozier, Stephen Dobyns, Mary Oliver, Stevie Smith, Paul Durcan, Sharon Olds, Jane Hirshfield and Patrick Lane.

“I tend to read novels by Irish writers, like Colum McCann and Paul Lynch, because of the language and the black humour,” she says. “I also love novels by Jim Crace, Anthony Doerr, James Sallis, Don Winslow and Jordan Harper. I don’t read a lot of chick-lit. There’s always the afterlife, which I hear is long!”

For many of us, poetry continues to be a misunderstood art. Since 2005, Susan has taught an online poetry course through UBC’s Optional Residency in Creative Writing MFA Programme, and even her students complain that poetry is “so hard.” Her response?

“Why shouldn’t it be hard? Pretty well everything worthwhile is difficult – relationships, marriage, making a good hollandaise sauce, writing a libretto. If it were easy, what would be the point, ultimately? Nothing I know is easy. From the moment I try to get out of bed in the morning, it is all hard,” she says half-joking.

Susan also runs a guesthouse called Copper Beech House at her home in Masset, Haida Gwaii, the perfect place to delight in her love of cooking and food gathering.

“For example, this May, when the spruce tips were out, I made a batch of



Susan on a couch in Kettle River.
Photo: Steph Gillis

BELOW | Susan spent 10 years gluing toys all over her grey Mazda 626SL. She says it started with one yellow rubber duck hood ornament, and it grew from there.

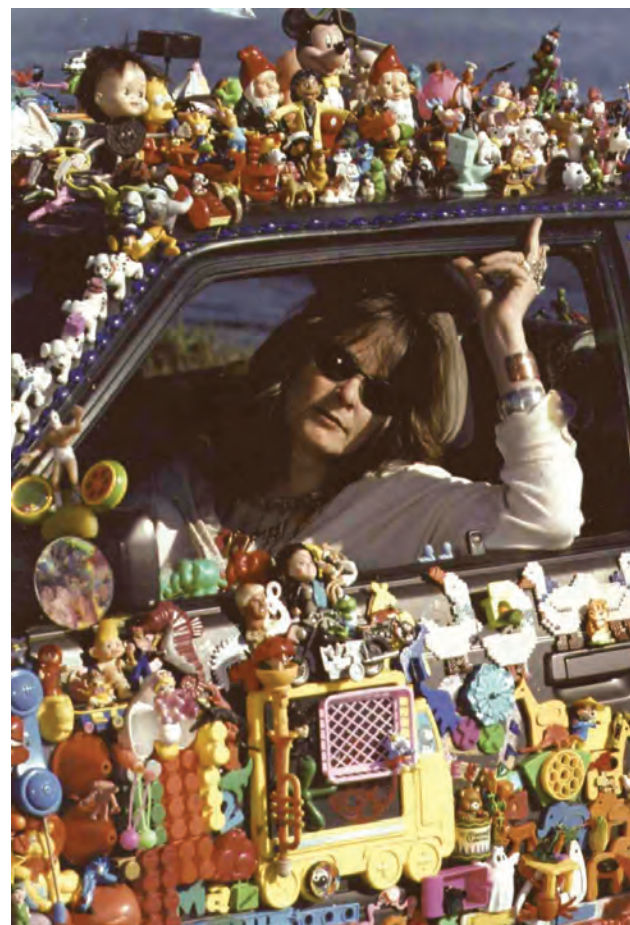
Photo: Barbara Pedrick

spruce tip vodka and Elderflower syrup,” she says. “After that, it was rhubarb season and, after that, sea asparagus. I like to cook vegetarian dishes, and Yotam Ottolenghi’s cookbooks are my favourite. Middle eastern cooking is a challenge where I live – I have to buy most of the ingredients online or in Vancouver or Victoria.”

“I’m not a huge fan of seafood (having grown up on the coast),” Susan continues, “although I have learned from my friend Bob Fraumeni (who operates the Finest at Sea Seafood Shop) that if fish is fresh, it is a different kettle of fish.”

Susan also takes time to slow down and smell the roses.

“I read, watch Netflix series and take naps with my cat. I cook meals for friends, make four loaves of sourdough bread every other day (for the guesthouse) and go agate picking on Rose Spit. I sit back and watch the river flow.” |





REDEFINING EXOTIC IN CHURCHILL

by KATE ROBERTSON

My travel dreams have always been of exotic, far-off lands. Foreign-ness is alluring to me, like the tropics with 365 days a year of hot weather or camels in the Sahara Desert. But on a recent learning vacation with Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC), my definition of “exotic” was redefined.

Evidence of indigenous habitation in the Churchill region dates back at least 4,000 years. European settlement began in the late 17C, initially as a fur-trading base for the nearby Hudson’s Bay Company and later as a grain-shipping port and military base, both now defunct.

The Churchill settlement has survived, thanks in part to CNSC, a non-profit research and education facility. Initially established in 1976, the CNSC’s modern LEEDS-certified (ultra-innovative water and energy-saving features) 2011 building is juxtaposed amongst a strange collection of deserted 1950s rocket research buildings and launching pads built by the military, 23 kilometres outside of town.

With a vision to understand and sustain the North, the CNSC offers university credit courses and learning vacations for the public. These week-long programs, led by professional scientists and expert guides, focus on studying the local environment and culture. During your stay, you share the comfortable 84-bed dormitory (each room

has two bunk beds and bathroom facilities are shared) with experts from around the world.

Home-cooked, cafeteria-style meals are included and, even though fresh ingredients can be a challenge to obtain in the North, at CNSC they grow their own delicious greens and herbs in a 40-foot long, heavily insulated shipping container equipped with a hydroponic growing system.

When I arrive in Churchill in October, it’s the start of prime polar-bear viewing season. The terrain isn’t covered with snow yet; as far as I can see is a rusty landscape like a diorama composed of golden-burnished ochre and cognac wools, dotted with muskeg ponds. But already, the wind-chill is biting (thank goodness CNSC has parkas, snow pants and heavy boots available).

ABOVE | Polar bears look cute and cuddly but precautions are put in place in Churchill to protect residents and visitors. *Photo: CNSC*

RIGHT | Aurora Borealis. *Photo: CNSC*

PAGE 10 | Tundra Buggy with Polar Bear in front. *Photo: Kate Robertson*

TOC | Churchill’s summer tundra. *Photo: Travel Manitoba*

Churchill is unique in that it is positioned on the corner of three biomes: marine, boreal and tundra, fascinating to scientists and allowing for interesting learning vacations. More than 250 species of birds nest or pass through Churchill on their yearly migration, including hundreds of snow geese and rarities such as Ross' gull and the Bohemian waxwing. In the spring, the tundra comes alive with boreal and arctic wildflowers and, in the summer, the Bay is the feeding "ground" for over 3,000 belugas, the largest population in the Arctic.

Another northern phenomenon is the aurora borealis (the CNSC has a program for this as well), best viewed in late winter. However, Churchill is under the auroral oval, where a high level of geo-magnetic activities from the north pole offers visibility at least 300 nights of the year (you haven't lived until you see these swirling arcs and rays of light).



What's really put Churchill on the map is that it has become the polar bear capital of the world, due to its location on the annual migration path of approximately 1,000 of these massive creatures. In fact, CNSC's most popular learning vacation, the one I'm participating in, is the Lords of the Arctic, which is all about studying them.

In the fall, the bears congregate on the shoreline of the Hudson Bay waiting for the ice to freeze enough to venture out on ice floes where they hunt as many ringed seals as possible. It's no wonder polar bears have become the poster children for climate change – with global warming, waters freeze later



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and thaw earlier, affecting their livelihood.

Not only bears and belugas survive in Churchill's unusual environment. There are also 900 hardy bipedal inhabitants. Winters here are long – about eight months of the year – and it's not unusual for temperatures to plummet to a frost-bite-inducing minus 45 degrees Celsius. After all, Churchill is located just below the Nunavut border. Like the gray jays' eggs that can withstand nearly -40 degrees and wood frogs that hibernate and freeze solid in the winter, these humans have adapted.

But Churchill folks aren't just surviving – most declare they're in love with the place. Evan Roberts, a CNSC program co-ordinator who came up from Winnipeg one summer four years ago, and never left, is one example of someone who has had the tundra and northern life take hold of his heart.

"A lot of the draw is the people and sense of community," he says. "When you ask for help, 15 people are waiting to assist."

How do people co-habit with the world's largest land predator? At the CNSC, you're not allowed out of the building without



an armed bear guard. The town itself has its own Polar Bear Alert Program, with a team who patrols the perimeter of town. Unless there's a bear alert, you're generally safe walking the streets to explore the gift shops and other attractions like the Itsanitaq Museum with its comprehensive collection of historical artifacts and contemporary Inuit art.

There is also a polar bear "jail," where habituated-problem bears are held until they can be flown further north. Painted on the outside of this holding facility is a giant sleeping polar bear, one of 18 murals scattered about town and along the 30-kilometre length of Churchill's driveable road – part of the 2017 Sea Walls



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Of course, there's no guarantee you will see a Lord of the Arctic on your learning vacation, but CNSC does its best to provide opportunities. On my second last day, the scheduled activity is a helicopter ride with a local operator, for a birds-eye view of the region. As our pilot sweeps over polar bear hang-out spots, I eye my first bear far below in some sand spits called "the lounge" – a favourite place for them to lay on kelp beds to rest and conserve energy. I'm hooked, now I want to see these amazing mammals up closer.

I get this thrilling opportunity the next day on a tundra buggy ride. Our driver, Jim, has been doing this for 14 seasons, so he regales the group with local folklore as we bump and grind along old military roads.

"All the bears have different personalities," says Jim. "Five per cent of them don't like the buggies and run away. Other bears, like Victor, who has a hashtag scar on his face (from fighting), are laid-back with buggies."



My group is fortunate to see several bears, close enough that we don't need binoculars, sleeping behind bushes and strolling the tundra. They glance at us with casual aloofness, not interested, for now at least, in checking us or the buggy out. Jim makes an observation, driving home that nothing here is familiar to me: "We're the ones in the cage – we're the primates in the zoo – this is their land."

My definition of exotic has been blown wide open. |

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FOREVER FIT

by EVE LEES

MEAT SUBSTITUTES: BUYER BEWARE

A focus on eating more plant-based foods is certainly a good health practice. Since meat doesn't offer health-boosting antioxidants or fibre, choosing to occasionally enjoy a meat substitute – like a meatless “burger” – is also a smart health move.

Plant-based meat substitutes can include burgers, sausages and bacon. They are usually made with legumes (beans) and grains like quinoa – both rich in protein as well as fibre. However, just because your meat substitute is plant-based, does not mean it is healthy. Many choices are highly processed, full of additives, colours, flavours and fillers.

Commercially-prepared meat substitutes can be high

in added sodium and added saturated fats. This makes them much higher in sodium than fresh meats. And if coconut or palm oils are in the ingredients, they can be higher in saturated fat. Read labels to determine the fat content.

Many meatless burgers contain common food allergens like wheat, soy and tree nuts. Read labels carefully. They also may contain food additives like artificial colours, flavours, gums, added sugars or sugar substitutes.

Your plant-based choice will be minimally processed if it is made from mostly whole foods such as whole grains like quinoa, sweet potato, mushrooms, nuts and seeds, peas, black beans and other legumes, or legume-based foods like tempeh and tofu, and with only herbs and spices for flavour.

Dietitians warn that plant-based meats lack vitamin B12, which is only found in foods of animal origin. This can be a concern for those who avoid all animal protein, or the elderly who may have difficulty absorbing this vitamin. In this case, supplementation becomes essential as Vitamin B12 is necessary for proper functioning of the nervous system, as well as other vital functions of the body.

Commercially-prepared meat substitutes can also be higher in price. It's cheaper – and healthier – to make your own, where you can control the ingredients. Meatless alternatives can be prepared in large amounts and frozen for later use. Surf the internet for healthful, creative recipes. Find one that appeals to you. |



Kris, lymphoma survivor, with his family.

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HOW CAN YOU NOT?

by CHARLOTTE SHELDRAKE

“How can you not?” is Dahlia Beck’s answer to the question of why she got involved in Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSR).

Images of a father and his 23-month-old daughter drowned in the Rio Grande seeking asylum in the north are a stark reminder of the 2014 death of Alan Kurdis, the Syrian child drowned in the Mediterranean en route to safety in Canada. With refugee numbers higher now than any time since the end of the WWII (70 million worldwide, Global Trends Report June 2019, UNHCR), the need is compelling.

Dahlia, a retired educator, emphasizes, “it’s not about giving back, no grand stories... We’re part of the human species doing this. We can’t fix it, but we can do something.”

Dahlia has been back and forth from Israel to Canada since 1980 and has raised her two children in Canada, but it wasn’t until 2012 she and her husband made the final decision to leave Israel and move permanently to Canada. In the past four years, she has worked with her synagogue and a variety of sponsorship groups and is now on a fifth refugee family. She is following a Judaic tradition of “repairing the world” as well as an internal compulsion, “something about the gut, a sense in the stomach. Not pity, partly shame, partly despair.”

At first, she was hesitant to tell the Syrians that she was Israeli, conscious of the long-embattled history between their countries, and aware that her vantage point was through the point of a gun – politically, geographically, in every way, Israel is at war with Syria. But now she tells them. One man responded, ‘Dahlia, we breathe the same

air, the same sun, eat the same tomatoes, we are cousins.’ She is “tickled pink” at these collaborations, this working together, knowing if this is possible, other things are possible.

Recently at the National Gallery in Ottawa, Dahlia came across a quote by James Baldwin: *It is a terrible, an inexorable, law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one’s own.*

“I was just standing there, reading this; it was something visceral. I saw the faces of all the various people, and it felt authentic and true.”

Sharon Lundahl, a retired property manager in the Cowichan Valley, remembers the two Dutch refugees her parents sponsored after the Second World War, “They were good Canadian citizens.”

Sharon and Vivian Dams, a retired teacher, are part of a sponsorship group working to reunite an extended family from Syria: one part settled and thriving in Duncan; the other subsisting in Jordan with no access to work or school.

This is Sharon’s first time working with a sponsorship group, but Vivian’s experience goes back to when she was 23 and sponsored a child in Hong Kong. That little girl now has a daughter of her own who has called Vivian grandmother her whole life.



ABOVE | Vivian Dams (left) and Sharon Lundahl are part of one BC sponsorship group working to reunite a Syrian family. Photo: Maki McPhee

In June 2019, the UNHCR reported that Canada had accepted over 28,000 resettled refugees in 2018, two-thirds of whom came through the PSR program: ordinary citizens gathering around a kitchen table to make a difference in the lives of strangers on the other side of the world.

The private sponsorship program is uniquely Canadian. Paul McCarthy and Lynne Keffer emphasize the direct action, “it allows you to do something.” Paul likens it to the starfish story, helping even one family, one person, makes a difference.

Paul and Lynne have been part of three sponsorship groups in Victoria.

“All families are the same,” says Paul, noting each has its own politics and dynamics. Lynne adds, “there are the cultural differences, but also, the basics in which we’re all the same – the need for safety, connection, a future for their children.”

“These people have nothing, they arrive with two suitcases, and to see them do well is the reward.” Lynne attended the citizenship ceremony of a sponsored refugee who “has embraced all Canada has to offer and will be a success.” Being able to contribute to that success is a key element for sponsors.

Jerry Shulman, a professional photographer, “just wanted to help.” Two years ago, he heard about an Eritrean refugee family who had settled in Israel, but now was at risk of deportation under Israel’s refugee relocation policy. Despite having started a business, learning Hebrew, and the daughter excelling in school, their only option was to leave. Jerry conscripted various friends and soon had the requisite five people for a sponsorship group.

When a family arrives, they are like “a fish out of water,” says Jerry. Everything is new. “It takes a while to adjust.” The sponsorship group is there for support and covers everything the first year. Fundraising goals are \$50,000 to \$60,000 for a family. “There is a definite need.” He wishes more people would get involved.

Barb Smart, a retired nurse in Victoria, had wanted to do something but didn’t know how until she connected with a group from her church. The plight of

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refugees struck her heart, she "couldn't not help."

"I can't imagine living through what they've gone through," says Barb. "The families just want to live in safety, with dignity. They want to get on with their lives."

Sponsors help with that: visits to doctors, schools, agencies, all of which must be done during the work week.

"That's why retired people can be really helpful," says Barb. Even with mobility issues, she can help with tutoring, driving, making calls, doing research. "Nurses usually act out their compassion and empathy," she says. The PSR program enables her to do just that.

Phil Lancaster has been putting his compassion into action for over 50 years, since he first volunteered for the Canadian army. His experiences ranged from clearing land mines to demobilization projects. He was in Rwanda and "spent months helping people just run." He's been in refugee camps and seen thousands of refugees. "When you see enough, you realize that could happen anywhere, quickly."

He likes the PSR program because "it's real, from the ground, all volunteers, no bureaucracy." One year into the process, Phil's group has raised 40 per cent of the funds required. He's impressed with how effective garage and clothing sales can be.

Nevertheless, "it's a bit like climbing a chimney," he says. "It takes a lot of people to ensure you have the depth of membership to do the work." Despite the challenges, he feels compelled to do this. "How can you not? I don't think I could live with myself if I didn't."

But it's not a one-way street. "I get much more from this than I give," is the common theme. The return outweighs the investment of time and effort. Dahlia is invigorated by the "fresh vantage point on being human."

For Marilyn Callahan, a former professor at the University of Victoria, the experience has deepened her appreciation for Canada; she feels passionate now about her country.

Asked what impact volunteering in the sponsorship program has had on her, Marilyn says she's "learning how to take risks. Especially after retirement, thinking you've kind of got it made – to jump off that track is so energizing... There are lots of other things besides steady as she goes."

"Age is in our own minds... When we're involved in something bigger than ourselves, we forget our age," she says. "It's more about what you can do or bring... What the Syrians have been through in their own lives puts things in perspective." |

For more information or to get involved locally in PSR:

Vivian Dams, Sharon Lundahl, Charlotte Sheldrake: www.go-fundme.com/Start-with-One-Family—The-Darawsheh-Family

Paul McCarthy, Lynne Keffer: www.thestarfishproject.ca

Phil Lancaster: <https://www.facebook.com/gorgetillicumrefugeesponsorship/>

The Gulf War in the early 1990s was followed by the exodus of 1.5 million Iraqi Kurds. Some refugees, including these children, were able to return home within weeks.

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MY FRIEND'S HOUSE

by MYLES SHANE

Linda Murphy, a 57-year-old real estate agent with Toronto's Royal LePage, has spent the last seven months hiking across the Pacific Crest Trail, which is over 4,000 km long and equivalent in length and combined elevation to climbing Mt. Everest 16 times.

The trail starts in California near the Mexican border and stretches to the Canadian border in British Columbia. The conditions range from snow-filled, slippery mountains to scorching desert heat, complete with bears, rattlesnakes and other animals who see humans as a quick snack.

Linda started her journey in March and expects to finish this month. Averaging 11 km per day, she continues her mission for one purpose: she is raising funds to eliminate domestic violence against women and children across Canada.

"I put clients in happy, safe homes," says Linda, "and I learned through our Royal LePage Shelter that there are thousands of women in unsafe homes."

Twenty-five per cent of the funds raised are going to her local shelter in Collingwood called, My Friend's House, while the remaining 75 per cent will be distributed by Royal LePage to shelters across the country.

Linda describes the physical and emotional journey she's endured to this point.

"The first week was a thrill of my lifetime. By the third week, and for several weeks thereafter, I cried buckets," she says. "I talked to God more than ever, but the heat, dehydration, extreme climbs to altitudes I'd never reached, limited food supply, natural threats such as rattlesnakes, mountain lions, bears, rock slides, snow cliff crossings and the lack of companionship all drew me further into psychological isolation."

"It wasn't until the sixth week when I bonded with two awesome women peers that I realized how far down the loneliness rabbit hole I had fallen," she says. "Within days of hiking, camping and laughing with these women, I bounced back to my old jovial self and soon the ascents didn't seem so steep, the burning sun not so hot and the hours in the day not so long."

With an unlimited number of charities that depend on donations, Linda's reason for picking women's shelters across Canada seemed like a natural fit.

"I am a realtor, so it's my job to place people in the safest and happiest of homes I can find for them," she says. "It seemed like a perfect parallel to my career, to do the same for those who suffer in fear in their own homes."



ABOVE & TOC | Linda Murphy challenged herself mentally, emotionally and physically on the Pacific Crest Trail. In the end, she says it was worth it. Photos: Courtesy of Linda Murphy

Another reason Linda decided to fundraise for Shelters Across Canada was that Royal LePage has its own charitable foundation, The Royal LePage Shelter Foundation. Linda had no experience with individual fundraising and was confident the RLP Shelter Foundation would guide her through the process. RLP set up her website, managed the donations, tax receipts and payouts to the shelters.

Still, a question lingers. What compelled Linda to even attempt the Pacific Coast Trail, when she could easily spend her time comfortably binge-watching Netflix?

“The timing was perfect... our three girls have all now graduated from university, moved out of the house and launched their careers,” she says. “My husband is retired and could handle things at home. My business is well established after 17 years, and I was sure I could ‘afford’ to step out for six months. As for my age, I think I was too busy and active to notice it!”

“But,” she pauses, “to tell you the truth... I think I may have been a bit naïve. Even though I had read all the books, played an active role in a broad social media PCT community and watched every video about trail life that I could find, I think ignorance was a bit blissful. For the year prior to my departure, I was filled to the brim with so much excitement about the fundraising and the wilderness adventure, that I may have underestimated the great degree of discomfort I was about to experience.”

Now, Linda is in the home stretch.

“The trail has tried to beat me up several times, but I just keep coming back at it from a different angle and I will succeed! First, I developed a tooth infection. Next, I acquired a horrible stomach infection.”

For days Linda felt like the walking dead. She suffered from diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea and severe dehydration. Luckily, she was able to get a lift into a small town where a doctor diagnosed her with Giardiasis, popularly known as beaver fever, which is a parasitic disease spread by contaminated food or water.

“Once I recovered from the Giardiasis, I tore tendons in my lower back. Then I was off trail for over a week with a stress fracture in my foot. Any one of these hardships could have sent me home and, indeed, have sent others home. I refuse to throw in the towel until there is no other option.”

Linda resolved along the way “to expect the unexpected and to roll with the punches.” When she first started the hike, she was an absolute purest. She was obsessed with not missing one step of the trail. She now believes that mileage is not the important thing. Her goal is to raise funds and awareness for those who have escaped violence in their own homes.

Whatever obstacles are still to come, Linda is determined she won’t go home until she’s finished. “What I’m doing is nothing compared to what those women have experienced.” |

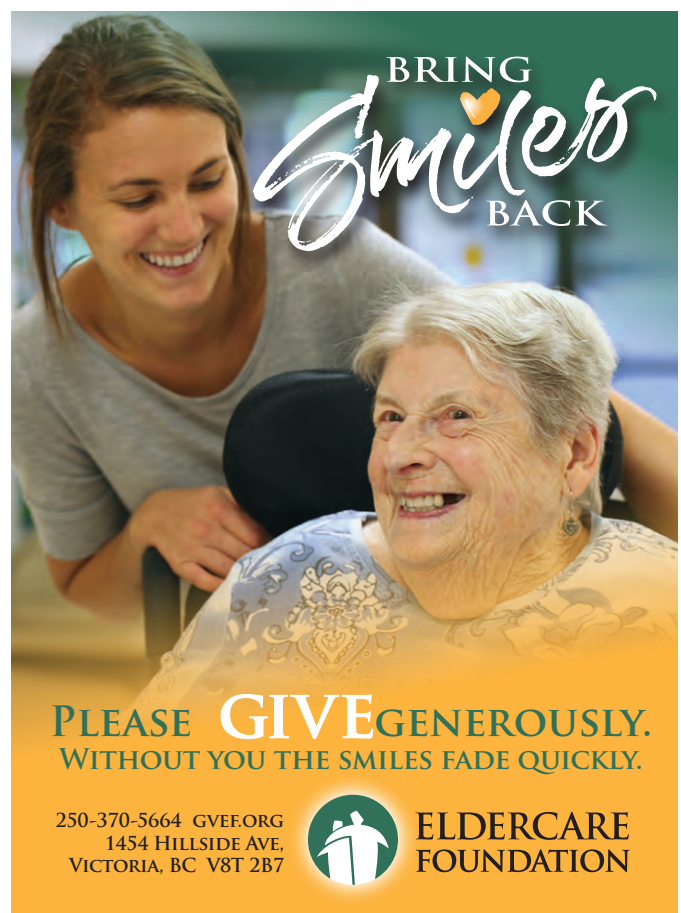
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FOR THE LOVE OF AFRICA

by KATE ROBERTSON

There's no shortage of Canadian charities doing important work. Most of us, however, want to ensure that the time and money we're donating are making a maximum impact and that our charity-of-choice is transparent, accountable and focused on results.

For the Love of Africa (FTLOA), a Victoria-based humanitarian non-profit society that establishes partnerships and engages in hands-on personal involvement, Tanzania, Africa, ticks off all these boxes. The society specifically focuses on two key areas – education and health – issues critical to the long-term development and stability of the country.

FTLOA was founded in 2004 by Ruth and Erich Schulz, a Victoria couple who decided, after they had raised their family, that they wanted to give back to others less fortunate. On one of their volunteer missions when they were involved in a fundraising campaign to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa, they met the Secretariat of the Council of Churches of Tanzania, who asked them for help to build a school in Dodoma, Tanzania.

The couple agreed and organized a volunteer team under the auspices of the Cordova Bay United Church Congregation. Funds were raised and a 14-member team dispatched to Tanzania to help complete the four-room school. Upon

the team's return, they decided to form FTLOA, their own non-profit society.

"Our introduction to working together with the Tanzanian community to build that first school had a profound impact on us," says Erich. "Sometimes problems that face the people of Tanzania can seem overwhelming and it may seem hopeless. But that hopelessness can be replaced by opportunities through education and health standards. Fortunately, FTLOA has made a positive difference to not just one or two people, but a whole community."

"It takes a lot of time and effort to gain the trust of the African people with whom our society works," Erich continues. "Of special importance is the connection we have with the office of the Council of Churches of Tanzania – they provide guidance and advice whenever we anticipate doing projects with various organizations. We ask if the organization is reputable, accountable and trustworthy and if the project is actually needed as outlined in the proposal.

ABOVE | The Nashipay school that FTLOA helped to build for the Maasai community in Makuyuni, Tanzania.

RIGHT | Victoria-based founders of For the Love of Africa, Erich and Ruth Schulz. Photos: Courtesy of Erich & Ruth Schulz

“These connections help us feel confident that the project work will be successful, that the funds our donors provide are spent expeditiously and will provide results that make a significant difference for the Tanzanian people. One of the main successes of the work that the society does in Tanzania is reflected in the fact that we revisit every project we have supported to ensure it still operates as outlined in the project proposal.”

Member Karen Schrey joined the society in 2017 because FTLOA’s organizational values aligned with her own.

“I strongly believe we cannot go to Africa and tell people what they need and how to go about getting it,” says Karen. “Projects need to be community-driven and this is how FTLOA operates. It’s also important to me that FTLOA is 100 per cent volunteer run and 100 per cent of donations go to the projects. People who travel to Tanzania on a team do so at their own expense.”



After that first school was built, FTLOA supported the establishment of a medical clinic that, since 2008, has served well over 180,000 patients.

The society has also diversified its project work to children’s and orphans’ centres, water/irrigation projects and a technical/trade school.

“It should be stated,” emphasizes Ruth Schulz, “that, except for the start-up of the Dodoma Tech Institute, each project is sustainable, and the society does not provide additional funding to the completed projects.”

The society has now expanded to a membership of more than 60, with members from across BC, Canada and abroad. There are no paid staff and the \$100-a-year-fee is used for the society’s management and operating costs.

“A member’s desire to share their talents, resources, and their love for humanity is key,” says Ruth. “Not everyone has an opportunity to join a team to go to Tanzania, however, if they support the vision of the society by contributing financially, by being involved in fundraising, or promoting awareness to others, they are contributing in a meaningful way.”

For Karen, the opportunity to learn new things, have new experiences and to be involved in a project from conception

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to completion have been sources of gratification.

"It's very rewarding," she says. "And I like that members can help a little or a lot – it doesn't have to be a huge time commitment, unless you want it to be."

FTLOA is an all-ages organization and age should not be a deterrent for anyone wanting to join the society, as 88-year-old Barb Waldner can attest. An avid volunteer for several Victoria organizations, she was one of the members that went on the first mission to Tanzania with the Schulzes.

Barb oversees membership and says new members are welcomed into the group – they bring new ideas and energy with them. She also serves on the Events Committee and has always been involved in fundraising events.

"I'm proud of the fact that we have been able to send a mission group to Tanzania nearly every year since our inception," says Barb. "And I'm glad we are able to contribute towards the education and health of the people we have met there – they are such happy, gracious and appreciative folks."

For Ruth and Erich, the rewards of membership are tangible: "Those children who attended the first school that we built have now graduated from various levels of schooling and are leaders in their community. That is the reward we bring back to our donors and that is the satisfaction we get for helping those in need so that they can help themselves."

"One of my most memorable incidents was when I asked a little boy after he had received some school supplies what his favourite gift was," confides Ruth. "He replied, 'I got a whole pencil for myself.'"

Want to get involved with FTLOA? Monthly meetings happen on the first Wednesday of each month at Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association room, in the Cordova Bay Elementary School at 7pm sharp.

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DIVING INTO BRITISH COLUMBIA

by ELIZABETH OLSON

Peter Vassilopoulos confesses to getting hooked on snorkelling and free diving early on, “at age 11, maybe 12,” while growing up oceanside in Cape Town.

“By my late teens, I was boating and using scuba gear in the south Atlantic and Indian Oceans, diving with friends who were into catching lobster.”

His paternal family hailed from the shores of Ithaca, off Greece, home of legendary Ulysses. They were a creative bunch: artists, carvers and chefs, all overachievers. Peter was a TV journalist and remembers being motivated to set sail when interviewing cruise liner captain Sir Sholto Douglas, commanding officer of the RAF during WWII.

The newsroom window overlooked the island of Robben, where Nelson Mandela was sitting in prison. Peter was feeling slightly imprisoned himself and, like his grandfather, suffered from wanderlust.

So, bumping (literally) into his future wife proved a serendipitous event. Rolling into Cape Town on her scooter, Carla fell head-over-heels and, after a whirlwind romance and marriage while cavorting around Europe, flew with her handsome, young Poseidon, scuba suit, typewriter and wit, over two oceans back home to BC.

“My first ocean dive in BC was at the waterfront home of friend, Terry Jacks, the ‘Seasons In The Sun’ singer. Towelling off, I reckoned this was the life for me.”

Dropping anchor in Vancouver, Peter was asked to write a scuba diving feature for Liz Bryan’s *Western Living Magazine* and the next leg of his voyage quickly became apparent. With great gusto, he did a deep dive into publishing.

“I created a mock-up of my vision of a diving magazine and ‘onboarded’ by showing local diving industry people, who introduced me to scuba diving manufacturers. In no time, our magazine had taken off and we began to attend dive shows in the States to promote it.

Headly days for the enthusiastic Vassilopoulos couple



had begun. *DIVER* promoted British Columbia as a diving destination: “bringing our coastal waters and its many attractions to the attention of readers throughout Canada. We travelled this country and the world to dive and promote diving sites. We’re proud to say that the magazine helped encourage marine life protection and was instrumental in having government proclaim a number of popular dive sites marine reserves to stop octopus and spear fishing.”

The couple became fast friends with Jacques Cousteau and his son Jean-Michel, Lloyd Bridges and Phil Nuytten, the “Nautilus man who plans to build a city beneath the waves” and who bought *DIVER* magazine from Peter in 2003, today publishing it quarterly.

While getting the magazine off the diving board, so to speak, Peter was on the masthead at *Pacific Yachting* magazine, testing and reviewing powerboats and producing numerous destination features, which, along with a number of cover photographs, were in *PY* regularly for nearly 46 years. His “Power Pitch” column was in every issue for a decade.

“A series of features on coastal classic boats became the subject of *Antiques Afloat*, which I both wrote and published.” The book was well received and is still in print.

ABOVE | For Peter Vassilopoulos, the sea has always been a source of inspiration and a way of life.

RIGHT | Peter at a recent book signing in Seattle, Washington.
Photos: Courtesy of Peter Vassilopoulos

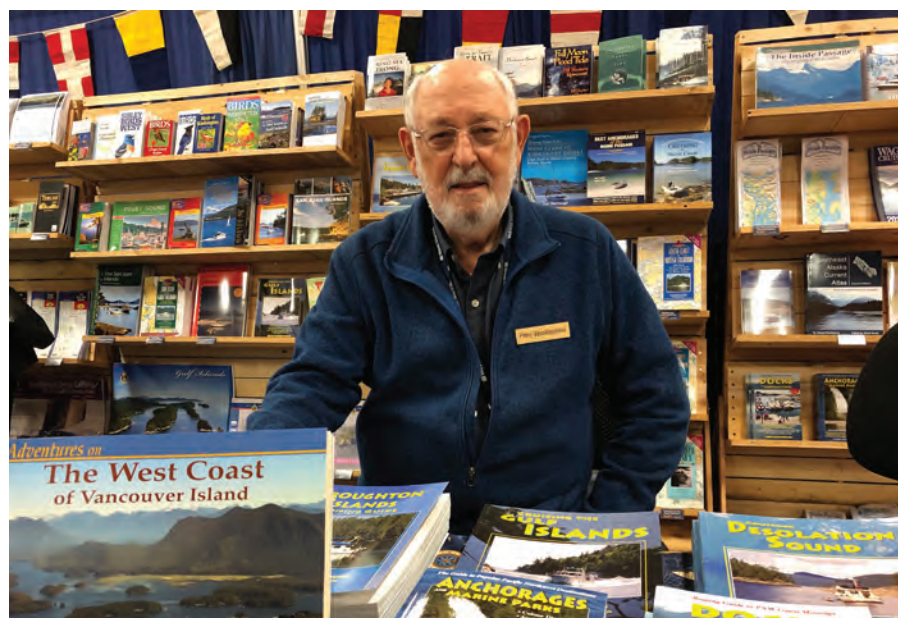
“Peter has been a go-to-resource since the 1970s and continues to provide interesting and informative content for the magazine,” writes *Pacific Yachting’s* managing editor Sam Burkhart.

Six guidebooks were produced: *Docks and Destinations*, *Anchorage and Marine Parks*, *Cruising The Gulf Islands*, *Cruising Desolation Sound*, *Cruising the Sunshine Coast* and *Broughton Islands Cruising Guide* plus *Cruising the Inside Passage* and *Adventures on the West Coast of Vancouver Island*.

Docks and Destinations, a compendium of all the marinas and facilities

painting and reading Wilbur Smith are other passions, although networking is his first love – he’s always looking for connections, reconnecting with friends, matching boaters with boats, introducing boaters to divers, writers to publishers, divers to diving spots and delivering new and used Monaros to their new owners.

Book publishing has suited Peter who always tries to collaborate and inspire others. Ask him a question and he’ll refer you to somebody else who does it better. His strength is as a great promoter for everyone and everywhere West Coast. He has inspired local



where boaters are able to stop and spend time while cruising the coast, “has been my best-selling marine guide, with nine editions and a total of 10 printings with over 30,000 copies sold. A new edition is in the works for 2020.”

Peter’s book *OOPS!* lets boaters in on how to avoid situations and keep from embarrassing themselves while out on the water, while a novel, *Turn of The Tide*, is a recently published “mash-up” of lobster poaching and a Mandela prison-breakout, inspired by his monitoring of Robben Island all those years ago.

A second novel about smuggling along the west coast of Vancouver Island is in the works, and Peter is loving every minute of massaging its plot-thickening. Marine photography,

writers for years and enjoys having his name show up in book acknowledgements. When Global TV asks for community photos for their weekend feature, he often contributes, sometimes with aerials, which he took while updating his guidebooks from his friend’s plane.

Pat Ardley, author of BC bestseller *Grizzlies, Gales and Giant Salmon: Life at a Rivers Inlet Fishing Lodge* tells of Peter’s intervention: “Peter and Carla visited George and I at Rivers Lodge many times over the years as they travelled up the coast. Peter was always so enthusiastic about our stories of living in the wilderness, combating loneliness, facing the challenges of living away from civilization with grizzly bears and

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cougars and surrounded by water.”

“From the very beginning, he inspired us to write a book. He loved to hear about the adventures we were living. Year after year, he would ask, ‘have you started your book yet?’ It was with Peter’s voice in my head that I signed up for a writing course and, after many stops and starts, I finally published my memoir in 2018. I thank Peter for his many years of encouragement.”

Peter and Carla are still active on the coast every summer, popping up in coves and inlets, at marinas and marine parks, in bookshops and street markets in coastal towns. They enjoy spending time with friends in every port. Peter’s joie de vivre is apparent in every expedition he mounts and in how he encourages others.

Most off-season days he is still hard at work at his desk in Tsawwassen updating his guides, networking, manning booths at boat shows, hauling his books to remote marinas, and preparing for speaking engagements in this province and

down south in the Seattle area, and delivering boats in and around the Salish Sea. Networking energizes him. His iPhone is always singing a nautical tune. Severe sciatica has slightly slowed him down and only temporarily. Carla says he’s finally made time to see the chiropractor on a regular basis.

“My favourite place to unwind is Hot Springs Cove on Vancouver Island’s west coast with its very appealing series of hot pools. When I get old, I’ll spend the rest of my days floating around in those magical pools reading Wilbur Smith all over again!”

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INSPIRED MAKEOVER NANAIMO EDITION

by **INSPIRED STAFF**

Qualicum resident Janice Whaley says her makeover made her feel 20 years younger. The retired high school teacher was looking for an adventure when she applied for the *INSPIRED* makeover.

"It sounded like a fun thing to do," says Janice. "And it was! I looked forward to trying something different."

Travel is a passion, so it makes sense that she now works as travel consultant for Uniglobe LGI in her post-retirement career.

"I have been on many cruises, various tours and independent adventures," says Janice. "In 2019, my husband and I visited both Antarctica and the Arctic circle. We have had the great experience of visiting 60+ countries (with plans for more!)."

When she's not globetrotting, Janice enjoys spending time with family and friends, volunteering in the community she adores and making fitness part of her daily life.

Of the makeover process, Janice loved it all.

"It was all such fun!" she says. "I felt sexy!"

And what did her family think of the results?

"Everyone – especially my husband – is so very flattering with kind, supportive and thoughtful comments."

"I think every woman should do something like this from time to time," says Janice. "We tend to look after everyone else and seldom, if ever, 'spoil' ourselves."

WHAT THE STYLISTS DID:

Hair by Hana Akai: Janice has a beautiful smile and a lovely, kind personality. She had not had her hair cut for many months, so I decided to take off a fair bit of length because her hair is fine. By taking off some length, it allows the hair to have more body and create more lift on top. I chose to go with a blunt, modern bob. Janice could then easily style her hair straight or with curls.

Janice's natural hair colour was a salt-and-pepper mix, which was looking a little drab. I wanted to give her a rich, natural-looking tone to bring out some more of the warm tones in her skin, so I decided to go with a warm gold colour all over with the New Color Gel Lacquers from Redken; they have such a beautiful, natural shiny finish. I then gave her balayage sun-kissed highlights with the Redken lightener with bond protector because it leaves the hair in such healthy condition. I toned Janice's hair with a champagne tone from Redken Shades EQ Hair Gloss to add a little highlight. The lowlights added some depth to give her hair the look of having more texture and movement.

For styling Janice's hair, I used the Pillow Proof Blow Dry Express Primer to protect her hair from the heat and Guts 10 Volume Foam to give her volume when blow drying. Finally, to hold the style in place, I used Triple Pure 32 neutral fragrance hairspray. All products by Redken.

Hana Akai of Akai Hair Design, 2559 Quadra St. Call 250-383-3227 or visit www.akaihairdesign.com



After photo: Ramona Lam Photography

Makeup by Jeanna Duke: To start, I ask all my clients key questions about colours they typically wear, how much makeup they normally wear and how much change they want to see in their makeover.

To prepare the face for cosmetics, I apply concealer to lighten any dark areas and then use primer to correct any discoloration. I select the foundation and powder based on skin type and natural skin tone. Eyebrows are shaped to maximize the eye shape.

Janice was looking for tips for everyday wear and wanted to feel more polished for special occasions. Since she has drooping eyelids, I applied one soft colour over her eyelid to make the eye brighter and more even. To give the lash line a fuller look, I applied dark brown powder between the lashes without having to apply eyeliner. Eyeliner can be difficult to apply as we age due to not being able to see so close.

For her cheeks, a soft, peachy-pink blush gave Janice a soft glow. Her beautiful smile was accented by a copper lipstick and a touch of gloss. All products by Tigi cosmetics.

Jeanna Duke of Simply Beautiful Spa, 6224 Siros Place, Nanaimo. Call 250-585-4070 or visit www.simplybeautifulspainc.com

Clothing provided by KC's Boutique and Petites, Nanaimo BC.

A SERENDIPITOUS LEGACY LIVES ON

by DARRYL WILSON

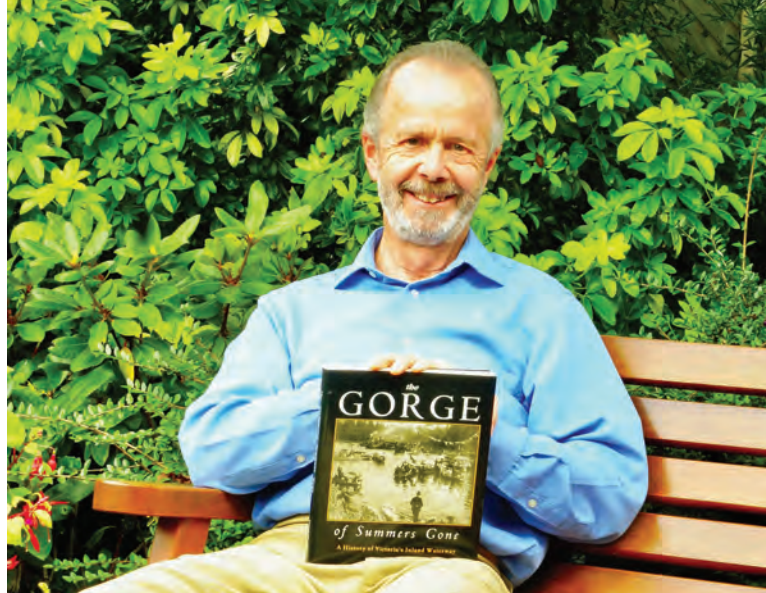
When Dennis Minaker was growing up in Coquitlam, he never envisioned he would one day become a writer. In fact, he pursued a profession in nursing. Drawn by the flexibility of the job and the opportunity to relocate anywhere, a nursing career had lots of potential. But as serendipity would have it, nursing would introduce him to his writing career. Although, even after publishing his book, *The Gorge of Summers Gone, A History of Victoria's Inland Waterway*, Dennis insists he is not a professional writer.

After graduating from the British Columbia Institute of Technology in 1973, Dennis moved to Victoria in 1978 with his wife and fellow nursing graduate, Val.

"I chose the Gorge-Tillicum neighbourhood purely because it was half-way between the old Victoria General and the new Victoria General," says Dennis. The couple had no prior knowledge of the historical significance of the Gorge neighbourhood, at the time.

Dennis spent the next 30 years working in the orthopedics ward of Victoria General Hospital. It was here that many Victorians in their twilight years would come for procedures such as hip replacements; and it was here that Dennis encountered people who were only too happy to share stories that would later become the inspiration for Dennis's book.

"I encountered some residents with memories that dated back to 1906," he says. "They still had photo albums from



their parents and souvenirs that were collected from the amusement park and swimming competitions that were once at the Gorge."

Dennis became fascinated by the stories of the Gorge that were shared directly by locals that grew up in the area.

"As I walked or paddled in my neighbourhood, the stories began to come to life," he adds. "I used to canoe in the Gorge with a homemade sail from a bed sheet I received as a wedding gift, envisioning the mansions that once lined the shores. I used to go underneath the Gorge-Tillicum bridge to compare versions of the structure with old photographs I had."

Unknown to most current residents of Victoria, the Gorge Waterway was once the social hub of the city between 1890

ABOVE | Author Dennis Minaker with his book about the history of the Gorge Waterway. Photo: Val Minaker

RIGHT | Local swimming star Audre winning the 1916 Three Mile Gorge Swim. Other bathers are seen in the distance enjoying the facilities of the "Free Bathing House," the city's most popular outdoor swimming hole from 1912-1945. Photo: Courtesy of Dennis Minaker

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Canuck Place child, Roz
photo by Dani Photography

and 1930. “The Gorge became Victoria’s backyard,” says Dennis. Young couples would rent a canoe to float up Portage Inlet for a romantic moonlit paddle. The BC Electric Railway Company built an amusement park in Gorge Park in 1905. The Gorge was a playground for all, where residents could enjoy fishing, swimming, sailing, dancing, and watch vaudeville shows or regattas. Even the father of surfing, Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku, a world champion swimmer once competed in the Gorge. There was also a Japanese teahouse founded by the Takata Family that some locals are now trying to resurrect.

After hearing many irresistible stories about the Gorge Waterway, Dennis could not believe nobody had previously documented the history and anecdotes. It was at that moment, in 1992, that he began a six-year journey to becoming an author.

“Somebody had to do something,” says Dennis. “I never envisioned being a writer. I simply enjoyed the encounters with the old folks. But I felt compelled to do it and, if I had waited another five years, the stories would have been lost. It would be next to impossible to write this book today because back then the network of people was so accessible.”



Indeed, nobody knows the stories like Dennis Minaker. He spent at least three of the six years conducting research, which included interviewing more than 200 individuals ranging in age from 80 to 105, while collecting photographs from their personal family collections.

“It was all serendipity. The stars must have been aligned,” he says. “Everyone seemed to come to me, and one interview would lead to another interview.”

One of his most memorable interviews involved Audrey Griffin, a Canadian swimming champion from Saanich.

“Victoria was once home to a 100-foot diving tower at Curtis Point. A couple of 19-year-old daredevil boys began twilight diving in 1920, plunging to the dark water below while flames from a burning cape trailed behind – purely a spectacle to entertain the swimming gala crowds,” says Dennis. “Unfortunately, one of them broke his back diving off the tower around two years later. But it was Audrey who rescued him, and she recalled the story as clear as day 75 years later.”

Audrey was a regular in the three-mile swims from the Empress Hotel to the Tillicum Bridge. It was a central area for the six swim clubs in Victoria, which lined the shores of the Gorge.

“It was all the stories of swimmers that inspired me to start

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Out here we raise spirits.

swimming in the Gorge," he adds, noting that it likely also inspired what has now become the annual Gorge Swim Fest.

The Gorge was also home to large mansions that lined the waterway starting in the 1890s.

"Most of them were built within a short period of around 10 years and this is when recreation started along the Gorge. Anybody who was anybody was living on the Gorge, from lawyers to politicians and even the Dunsmuirs themselves," says Dennis. "But much of that changed as Gorge Road became the Island Highway and the Upper Harbour became very industrial."

When Dennis was putting his book together, he became aware of a competitor. However, the competing book was primarily focused on archival history, rather than the anecdotes Dennis was gathering directly through his extensive personal network, along with photos from family collections.

"All my interviews were various anecdotes I was able to stitch together

within a historical context," he says.

In the end, the competing book never got published, and publishing Dennis's book would also prove to be a challenge.

"After six years, nobody wanted to publish my book. So, I took out a bank loan and used it to publish two editions, which later sold more than 4,000 copies," he adds. "There are few places in Victoria with history as colourful as the Gorge."

After living on the Gorge for 34 years, the legacy Dennis leaves transformed not only his own life, but many others as well.

"Although I continued nursing while writing this book, I became the 'Author-in-Residence' of sorts in the hospital ward. The publishing of the book led to many public speaking engagements, walking tours, the odd column in the *Times Colonist*, and various contributions to local history of the neighbourhood," he says. "Previous to that, I had merely written brief family histories."

On one of his Gorge walking tours, Dennis recalled that he was unexpectedly reunited with one of the ladies he interviewed 12 years earlier, a local singer that had performed a song in Gorge Park in 1923, when she was only three years old. During the tour, the 85-year old surprised everyone by singing the same song on the very spot she had originally sang it. "Without the tour, there is no chance that serendipitous moment could have happened," says Dennis.

Turning 71 this month, Dennis's legacy survives well beyond the recognition he received in the community as a local author and historian.

"I'd like to think I gave a gift back to the many old folks I interviewed, who felt important, listened to, and that their stories really matter," he says. "I feel as though I acquired something special and unique that is not ordinarily produced. It was a gift given to me and it has become my legacy and accomplishment in life – something that remains special about me."

Now retired from nursing, Dennis enjoys a colourful retirement as an avid volunteer and is currently working on a book of photographs in between his random engagements about the Gorge. |

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Single parents receive map to success

Samantha Magnus is a confident, active young woman who works as a health researcher. But that wasn't always the case for this single parent.

Samantha and her two children were barely scraping by when she learned she had been accepted into the University of Victoria's master's program in public health. She also learned that she had been awarded UVic's *Doris and Harry Stastny Bursary* and describes the moment as, "Magical. You can imagine the relief I felt."

Born in England, geographer Doris Stastny was one of the first women to graduate from Cambridge University. After a stint in Australia, she and her growing family settled in Campbell River, BC. There, Doris published maps of northern Vancouver Island for sportsmen and tourists.

When her marriage ended, Doris was unable to support her family with her mapmaking, so she decided to become a librarian. Over the next year she commuted back and forth from Campbell River to Vancouver to attend the University of British Columbia. "It was a very hard time for her," describes her daughter Linda.

Doris received her certificate, got a job at the UVic Libraries and moved her family to Victoria. There, she met and married Harry Stastny who also worked in the library.



The challenge of attending school as a single mother never left Doris. She decided to leave a gift in her Will to help ease the burden for future generations of single mothers committed to creating a better life for themselves and their children. *Doris and Harry Stastny Bursaries* are now awarded annually to single mothers pursuing their education at UVic.

"It is a really special feeling thinking that Doris Stastny was doing a very similar kind of juggle to mine" says Samantha. "Doris' gift taught me a lesson about paying it forward and about thinking of the future beyond your own."

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OUR NOT-SO-SMART HOME

by MYLES SHANE

In 2019, smart homes have become increasingly popular with people of all ages. Unfortunately, my wife, Naomi, and I are stuck in the dark ages. We're online, of course, and have iPads, iPhones and a voice-controlled television, which I have no idea how to use. As far as high-tech goes, we are practically still living like cavemen. Our home doesn't have a security camera. Heck, some days I forget to lock the door.

There's no nanny cam hidden away in the third teddy bear to the right in our children's rooms. We have no tracking mechanism to see what our kids may be discussing on Facebook, Snapchat, Fortnite or any other online social media group or game. We have no devices that feed our pets. When we clap, the lights don't turn on or off, and our house's temperature gauge can't read our biometrics. I'm okay with being old-school; my mom, on the other hand, is 100 per cent wired. It's like she's living in the Matrix. Last July, our family flew to Vancouver for a visit.

Mom lives in a swank house in North Vancouver with an apartment attached to it. This is where she sleeps when our crew comes to town. Who can blame her? We're a noisy bunch and, I admit, my snoring could wake the dead.

Mom's high-tech, decked-out house could be the set for a sci-fi film. When we arrive, she insists on providing us a tour to ensure we know how to work everything (read: not break anything). In truth, the house keeps her super organized and incredibly safe. I thought a dog would do the trick, but she insisted on a wi-fi home security system with cameras everywhere. Even the most seasoned crooks couldn't crack the code at Mom's house. The place is a modern-day Alcatraz, and that makes me feel safer knowing she's okay.

Our tour begins with the mirror in her master bedroom she's nicknamed Ayi (AI-Powered Smart Mirror). She provided us a quick tutorial. I'd always thought mirrors were used to style hair, brush teeth and apply make-up. Yikes was I wrong. Using your voice, you can access your entire smart home with Ayi. It can also handle complex voice commands such as

ABOVE | Smart home security technology can give you peace of mind, whether you're down the street or travelling abroad.

setting the temperature and turning on your music with one sentence. I attempted to use these cool features but wound up just combing my hair. Naomi was fascinated by the mirror and programmed events for our entire stay.

Next, we headed downstairs to check out Squishy the cat's litter box. A fascinating stop among vacationers the world over. But Squishy has no ordinary litter box. Mom has gone all out on this one; she never has to pick up litter again. The iKuddle Auto-Packing Litter Box is ground-breaking: it identifies when Squishy has used the litter box and will automatically scoop the clumped litter. The app can even help you keep track of your cat's health, providing a summary of its litter box usage. Naomi reveled in the potential of never scooping litter again.

On our first morning there, Mom insisted on preparing us her famous pancakes. Naomi and I sat on stools while sipping coffee and I couldn't help but comment on the spectacular view from her kitchen. Mom laughs, "That's not a window." I was staring at the Atmosph Window 2, which changes the view whenever you desire. This stunning 27-inch display offers an impeccable 4K view of the world. With over 1,000 scenes to choose from, you can update your view as often as you want. You can even live-stream locations from around the world. Incredibly, you can also book a dream vacation to these destinations – all from this device. Finally, the built-in camera module functions as a home security camera. Somehow, I had to pack the window into my luggage without Mom seeing it.

Letter to the Editor

As a long-time (senior) vegan, I was eager to read your story, "The Growth of Vegan Living: What's it all About?", in the September 2019 edition of *INSPIRED*. While a plant-based diet has positive effects on one's health and the environment, those are secondary aspects of veganism. The primary thrust of veganism is the minimization to the greatest degree possible of the use of animals. In addition to adhering to a plant-based diet, vegans also don't use products that are made of or contain animal products or that have been tested on animals. Vegans also oppose using animals in entertainment, sport, service, research or otherwise as slaves. Vegans are proponents of animal rights.

More broadly and increasingly, veganism is social justice advocacy, with the social extended to *all* species. The logic of oppression (of race, sex, gender, ability, sexual preference, age and species) is the same. So, veganism is personal, social and political. Yes, better health and a healthier environment are good reasons to shift to a 'vegan' diet. But eliminating human-caused suffering of all species, including humans, is what veganism is all about.

—Mark Reed, Victoria

To learn more about adopting a vegan lifestyle on Vancouver Island, visit www.victoriaveg.ca
For Vancouver, visit www.vegexpo.ca



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Nov 21, The ACT, Maple Ridge
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Nov 24, Kay Meek Theatre, West Vancouver
Nov 27, Sid Williams Theatre, Courtenay
Dec 5-7, Vancouver Playhouse, Vancouver
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Next, Mom shows us the nanny camera. For visiting grandchildren and great nieces and nephews, the Amcrest IP2M-841 ProHD 1080p Wireless WiFi IP Camera doesn't disappoint. The video quality on this camera is remarkable (1080P at 30 fps). It has a broad 90-degree viewing angle and night vision for up to 32 feet. The camera has pan, tilt and zoom for broader coverage. Its most vital asset, however, is its ability to stream video on tablets or phones using the accompanying Amcrest View app. If Mom is down the street running errands, she can watch the nanny cam live on her iPhone. Naomi thinks the nanny cam could be a game changer. She plotted for half the vacation about potential hiding spots for it.

Perhaps Mom's most prized device, which she insisted we purchase, was the iKydz Home. This smart gadget enables parents and grandparents to determine when kids can go online and what content they're able to view. iKydz allow parents and grandparents to manage their phones, PCs, smart TVs, tablets, gaming consoles and other internet-connected devices in the home. iKydz Home also blocks apps, websites and pop-ups. The gadget even lets you know the location of your child's mobile devices. My wife insisted on this device since she believes television, video games and the internet are shaping our children's attitudes and personalities – and must be continually monitored.

Two weeks later, we bid Mom farewell and returned to our luddite home. When I woke up the next day, there was a techie at the door, a large van in the driveway, and Naomi directing everyone on where to install our new smart home. |

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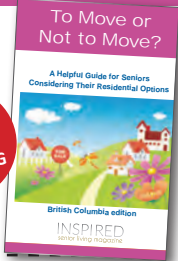
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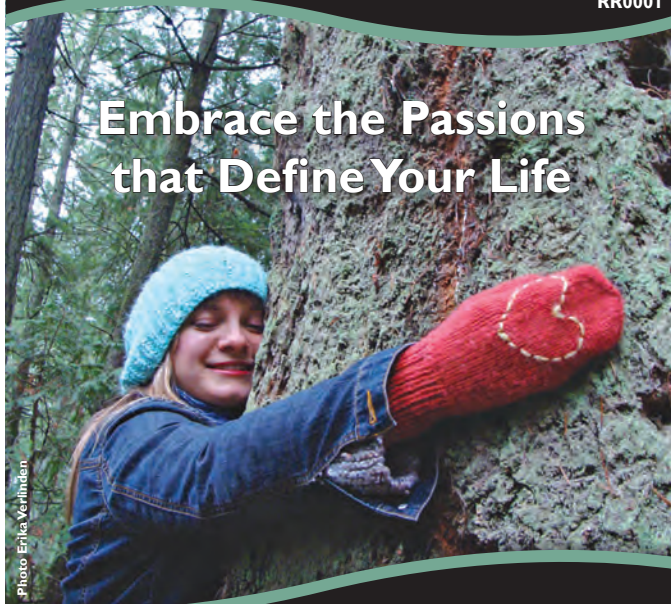


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SNEAKY SODIUM

by NANCY J. SCHAAF

Hypertension is a significant cause of heart disease, the No. 2 killer of Canadians after cancer. Over seven million Canadians have hypertension, and an additional seven million have high blood pressure that will lead to hypertension without preventative action. These statistics found in the *Sodium Intake of Canadians 2017* report are alarming.

But the good news is premature heart disease can be prevented. Factors contributing to elevated blood pressure such as stress, obesity, smoking, an unhealthy diet, and lack of exercise can be managed.

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, says "Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity and healthy eating, plays an important role in helping to prevent chronic diseases. Reducing the amount of sodium we consume can help reduce our risk of high blood pressure, a primary risk factor for heart disease, kidney disease and stroke."

The report stated that both adults and children consume an average of 2760 milligrams of sodium daily. This is above the limit of 2300 mg and almost twice the recommended limit by Health Canada at 1500 mg.

Sodium, an essential element, does help the body regulate fluid levels and blood pressure. However, the body needs only a small amount. Dietary changes are required to reduce sodium intake as research studies prove that excess sodium is detrimental.

Consuming more than the recommended daily limit is not difficult as just one teaspoon holds 2300 mg of sodium. In addition, sneaky sodium is found hidden in many foods. For example, a typical lunch might include a ham and swiss cheese sandwich with mayonnaise, one dill pickle spear, half a cup of cottage cheese with half a cup of blueberries for a total 1755 mg of sodium.

Imagine the daily total when breakfast and dinner sodium levels are included in the count. It is disturbing how easily one's diet reaches a high level of sodium.

The report affirmed that over 75 per cent of sodium consumed comes not from the saltshaker but ready-to-eat fast food and processed foods. Pretzels and potato chips are



certainly recognized for high sodium contents, but sneaky salt is present in some surprising foods.

Excessive amounts of sodium are present in bakery items, whole milk, cheese, fried foods, soups, smoked and canned meats, canned veggies, sauces, pickles and deli meats.

As salt hides in so many popular foods, how does one reduce intake? It is crucial to read the Nutrition Facts table to select healthier foods lower in sodium. Use the percentage Daily Value (% DV) on the Nutrition Facts table to check if the food contains a little or a lot of sodium. Choose products with no more than 15% DV per serving. Another measurement is 140 mg per serving.

Another strategy is to incorporate more fresh whole foods in daily meals. When shopping at the grocery store, avoid prepared and processed foods such as frozen dinners, deli meats, and prepared macaroni salad. Instead, buy low-sodium foods, such as fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables that are naturally low in sodium and packed with essential minerals and vitamins, including folate, potassium and vitamin C.

Beans, lentils, unsalted nuts and whole grains are not only low in sodium but are highly nutritious, which make these great choices to add to your diet. High in protein, fibre, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, these are a suitable addition, especially for a vegan diet.

If you consume dairy, choose low-fat or fat-free products, including milk and cottage cheese. Add fish to the menu a couple of times a week as it is rich in essential nutrients for healthy heart and brain functioning, including omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D and protein.

Salt seasons food, but low sodium foods do not need to taste bland. Add flavour with herbs, spices or lemon juice. A

The DASH diet promotes the following:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains, nuts and seeds
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy products
- Limiting sodium and foods high in saturated fat
- Reducing sugar-sweetened beverages and sugary foods.

homemade spice blend suitable for a whole grain pasta dish, fish and lean meats can be made by mixing fresh or dried herbs such as rosemary, oregano, garlic and thyme.

Research proves the flavourful spice cinnamon significantly lowers blood pressure. Sprinkle cinnamon on oatmeal, add to stews and chili, and flavour coffee and hot cocoa.

Eating a nutritious, balanced diet improves wellbeing. Try the heart healthy DASH diet, a flexible eating plan that has been shown to lower blood pressure and LDL ("bad") cholesterol. This diet plan promotes foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and sodium, and rich in nutrients, protein and fibre.

Using the nutritional label, discover low sodium processed and prepared products while adding more fresh whole foods. Your heart will thank you. |

Nancy Schaaf taught English/Literature for over 25 years. She also earned a Registered Nurse license and worked as a school nurse and at a correctional facility. She enjoys reading, writing, (not arithmetic!) travelling, exercise classes and riding motorcycles.

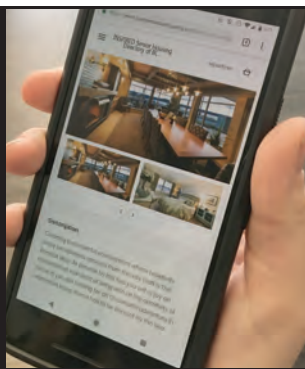
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THE ALLURE OF ITALIAN LIQUEUR

by DEBORAH SITTKO

Strolling shops on the Amalfi Coast, the omnipresent bottles of limoncello grab your attention. Neon yellow, tart but sweet, the zingy liqueur calls to you. It's the Amalfi Coast's signature flavour that every tourist brings home. Although served as chilled and frosty as possible, you'll remember it warmly, as bright, bracing, pure bottled sunshine.

The sfusato lemon, the super-sweet, gigantic citrus of the Amalfi Coast provides the base for limoncello. The coast's perfect terrain with layers of volcanic rock and limestone combine with the dominant sunshine to create the perfect climate for this "Sorrento lemon."

Though not all of them are huge, it's not unusual to see them the size of softballs or footballs. Gently sour, locals eat them straight, peel and all, in slices, often with a sprinkle of sugar.

The piquant tartness of the lemons adds a kiss of brightness to local beverages, pastries, candies, and entrees. But

they shine brightest in limoncello. Tiny, gigantic, whimsical, and elegant bottles of the popular digestivo are bursting out of every shop.

I want that extra special limoncello, however, the one that stands out. Pursuing a highly lauded maker of limoncello, I wind my way to the little village of Minori and the artisanal Liquorificio of Carlo Mansi.

"We make liqueurs from many things, but primarily sfusato lemons," says founder and owner, Mansi. Most limoncellos look and taste pretty much the same. But Mansi's

ABO

PAGE 40 | (l. to r) || Limoncello at "T

lemons are used at Carlo Mansi and each one is peeled by hand.

T

very imaginable shape and size.

"Only the outer peel of sfusato

enirs. Photos: Deborah Sittko

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techniques make his limoncello taste brighter and look somewhat less yellow.

By using lemons that are slightly less ripe, his brews can appear pale green. Mansi's workers painstakingly peel them by hand.

"Most limoncello factories use machines for peeling the sfusato because it's faster and cheaper," he says. "We do it by hand. This takes much more time but makes all the difference."

Mansi uses only razor thin peels from the very outermost layer, making his liqueur distinct.

As I meander further into his shop, my eye follows the playful parade of exotic, colourful elixirs. Yellow, pink, orange and green pastels contrast with deep, dark, mysterious syrups. Like other factories, Mansi produces numerous liqueurs. This region's enormous variety of aromatic herbs, fruits, vegetables, flowers, roots, barks and citrus peels inspire unlikely combinations. Some sound medicinal – until you taste them!

During my first trip to Amalfi, I wandered into a shop that offered Rucolino. Intrigued, I asked, "What is this made from?" The answer was arugula, the peppery salad green. A liqueur made from pungent and bitter arugula? My first reaction was "Yuck!" Then came the sample. The hypnotic, complex taste hooked me immediately.

Many such liqueurs come from single-flavour bases. Fruits create the foundation for Meloncello (cantaloupe), Fragoncello (strawberry) and Mandarino (orange). Nuts shine in Nocilino (hazelnuts) and Pistacchio Cream. Vegetables show up in Finocchietto (wild fennel) and Rucolino (arugula). Their straightforward simplicity has the immediate appeal of distinct, singular essences.

I find a whole other world of curious concoctions here. Popular alcoholic syrups can be both old, such as traditional favourites "Concerto d'Erbe" and Mansi's "Cicerenella" or new, like his latest creation, "Amaro del Monaco Amalfitano."

As I'm looking about, I'm confused by several different labels – apertivo, digestivo, amaro. What are the differences between them? Clear definitions don't exist, but the liqueurs are broadly divided into two categories.

An apertivo is sipped before dinner to stimulate appetite and digestion. Commonly more dry than sweet, they are often bright red or orange. Apertivos are typically blended with sodas, wine or champagne. Well-known examples are Campari, Aperol Spritz and Martini.

Legends and mysteries surround the other category: the digestivo. Much thicker, darker and complex, their recipes are frequently guarded secrets. Locals still sip creations developed in abbeys and convents centuries ago. Many regions of Italy have their own treasured favourites, like "Averna" from Sicily, "Vecchio Amaro del Capo" from Calabria, "Amaro Lucano" from Basilicata and many more. If you're looking for a bargain, buy them in supermarkets across Italy. Their common thread is the use of carminatives – essential oils or herbs intended to prevent or aid in the expulsion of gas.

Since digestivos often come from bitter sources, they are labelled "amaro," the Italian word for bitter. Blending these



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ingredients with syrups makes them thick and sweet. Traditionally served straight, chilled, in very small ceramic cups, digestivos follow the coffee course. Capping a night of great eating, you may even be offered the house specialty grats!

Looking to bring home a liqueur souvenir from this region but less known outside Italy? Stay in Campania but head a bit more inland. Between Naples and Rome, you find the source of “Liquori Strega” in the city of Benevento. With the train station directly opposite the factory, it is a great day trip adventure from the coast. Make a reservation for a free visit to this factory, which will open you to the captivating world of Strega.

After years of experimentation by Giuseppe Alberti, production of “Strega,” a rich golden liqueur, began in 1860. Tinkering with 70 local botanicals that included the strong, contrasting tastes of wild mint, juniper, cloves, star anise and Ceylon cinnamon, Alberti permanently put Benevento on the



map as the home of one of Italy’s most beloved liqueurs.

As you enter the factory, decades of artwork commemorate its storied history and sets the stage for your tour. However, it’s when you go upstairs that you start to understand Strega’s allure.

Ascending into the factory, you become instantly overwhelmed. Not a drop of alcohol, but one whiff of the crushed ingredients intoxicates you. The magical



fragrance of the potent aroma simply won’t let you go. The recipe remains a public mystery. Its secret is known to only two family members, at any time. Each employee knows only a few of the ingredients that they grind before putting them in grain alcohol to macerate.

Traditional swan-neck alembics preserve the essence of each ingredient as the mash slowly distills. After blending with simple syrup, the final addition of a tincture of saffron gives Strega its iridescent glow. Months later, the unique taste emerges, and the liqueur is sealed.

While over 400 verified knock-off attempts have tried to duplicate it, Strega remains distinct and unmistakable. Traditionally consumed straight, in recent years bartenders have begun mixing it into their newest cocktail creations. Exports now find their way into trendy bars worldwide.

Here in Strega’s factory gift shop, my souvenir shopping is complete. I filled my basket with gifts my family will never forget – bottles, chocolates and candies flavoured with sweet, beguiling Strega.

Saying goodbye to Campania and the Amalfi Coast, both my bags and my memories are filled. I take home the dreams of blue skies and captivating coasts, heart-stopping vistas, gentle breezes, the aroma of lemons, the warm sun on my face and the sweet flavours of the liqueurs of the Amalfi Coast. With my first sip of limoncello at home, I begin plans for my return. |


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by VERENA FOXX



GENISE GILL is a repeat rebooter. Between founding small businesses, travelling the globe to volunteer or furthering her formal education, she finds renewed inspiration by regenerating herself.

"I always need to do or make something, and I can't seem to do one without alternating the other," she explains.

Whether it's making her sought-after flannel pyjamas (Gill & Co.), house cleaning during undergrad studies (The Clean Machine), running a B&B after her children were grown (Third House Inn), or currently co-creating sumptuous cushions with business partner Judy Globerman (Lola & Olive), Genise says, "I've always worked for myself."

That's when she's not taking time off to earn a graduate degree in International Studies or learn Hindi. Over the years, she has volunteered on global aid projects in India for Vancouver-based CIVAID (Canada-India Village Aid) and for British-based VSO (Volunteer Services Overseas) on one of her at least 35 trips to her family's native India.

Now she volunteers at UBC's Botanical Garden Shop & Garden Centre, while she contemplates her next adventure... and still makes cushions and limited-run pyjamas.

KATHLEEN BRICKER relocated to Victoria in 2016 after leaving a 30-year career in the oil and gas industry in Calgary.

"I came because of my daughter, but being here has changed my life," says the single parent. "It's important that people have the opportunity to reinvent themselves," adds Kathleen, while doing just that.

After working in a so-called "left-brain" career as an engineering technician, Kathleen explored her intuitive "right brain" by first studying Hypnotherapy at Victoria's Horizon Centre School of Hypnotherapy. She then became a practitioner (KJB Hypnotherapy Services) supporting clients in dealing with anger management, addiction, grief, stress, anxiety and birthing fears.



"We all have stress triggers in our lives," she says. "Through hypnotherapy, we hope to find and identify their source."

Kathleen works with military clients suffering from PTSD and others from every walk of life and age group. Now settled in Victoria, she says she will "never ever" leave her welcoming Esquimalt community. |



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Technology Resources for Caregivers

By Wendy Johnstone

Although 71 per cent of caregivers are interested in using technology to support their caregiving tasks, only seven per cent are using care-related technology, according to AARP's 2016 Caregiving and Technology study.

Fifty-eight per cent of the caregivers surveyed in a 2018 survey by the Change Foundation said they used the internet for gathering additional information on how to properly care for their loved one. Only 28 per cent turned to formal care providers.

As with anything online, several services and supports exist for caregivers. A helpful researching tip is to see if the resource was developed with participation from a major university or hospital. This may mean the technology includes more scientific research and best practices than one developed by a software company alone. You can usually find this information in the "About Us" section on the website you're researching.

PODCASTS

Sometimes, it is nice to hear other voices and know you are not alone. And guess what? Family Caregivers of BC will be launching their own podcast in the next couple of months. Until then, you can tune into Caregiver SOS, a weekly podcast that delves into a wide variety of caregiving issues. This hour-long show provides essential caregiver information presented by gerontologist Carol Zernial and author Dr. James Huysman, PsyD. Topics range from end-of-life communication to new healthcare technology and can be found at <https://soundcloud.com/caregiversos>

FACEBOOK GROUPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Facebook abounds with groups for caregivers. Many are specialized by the disease or disorder of the person receiving care or by the roles of caregivers. Caregivers Hub Support Group is open to both family, friend and professional caregivers. It is both administered and moderated, though the "rules" are not visible to non-members.

SUPPORT TO GET (AND STAY) ORGANIZED WHILE ALSO ASKING FOR HELP

Carezone is a free app. You can keep all the care recipient's pertinent information on the secured app and invite family and friends to view and participate in his or her care. It has a place for notes and observations, a task list, medication logging, a place to upload photos, and you can even send a voice message to up to 100 recipients. The app is available for iPhone and Android systems.

Caring Village can be accessed from a computer or from a mobile device, though it does require you create a "home base" for the village on a computer before using the mobile app. Others can use the app to easily join your care village. The app's "virtual caregiving village" allows families to communicate using the secure in-app messaging feature and access everything they need in one place, including a shared calendar and the ability to upload important documents such as medication lists, legal, medical and financial documents.

The to-do lists allow you to see what needs to be done, assign tasks or request help from your volunteers. A wellness journal – updated by anyone who interacts with the care recipient – helps you easily share and keep track of how they are feeling.

Lotsa Helping Hands is an interesting concept where you can post requests for support - things like meals for the family, rides to medical appointments, or just stopping by to visit. Members of your community can quickly find ways to help, and it will send reminders and help coordinate logistics automatically, so nothing falls through the cracks.

You can find more about technology and caregiving by checking out FCBC's website under our FCBC's Top Tips for Caregivers. |

Wendy Johnstone is a Gerontologist and a consultant with Family Caregivers of British Columbia in Victoria, BC.



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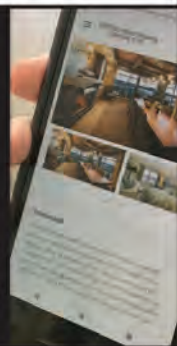
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SOMETHING TO SHARE

by PAT NICHOL



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Everyone has something to share. Right now, I am sharing a snuggle with a warm, purring cat. It can be as simple as this or it can be a project you begin and share with family or community. What talents and abilities do you have that others might benefit from? What have you accomplished that would be useful, helpful or delightful to others? What would you like to do in the future that you could share?

I have learned that the ability to sit quietly and simply lend an ear can be the greatest gift you can share with another. My children have taught me that it is not necessary to have an answer to every problem they share with me.

When I attempt to interrupt with a solution from my life-long experience, they respond with, "Mom, I'm not finished. Please just listen." Hard advice to hear, but I am learning. That learning is helping with my friends and peers, too. In other words, keep your mouth shut until it is your turn to share.

The more we share of ourselves, the more we are loved and remembered. But only if what we share is something others want and need. Have you asked children and grandchildren which of your treasures they would like to have? Either now or when you are no longer here?

What do you have in the way of "stuff"? Too many of us have become "collectors" as we add more and more "must-haves" to our lives. I have often bemoaned the fact that I did not invest in the storage business. Every day, I see another set of units being built and know they will be filled to the brim with our "stuff." I'm as guilty as the next person as I have a large unit that I use as a closet. Time for a clearance sale.

So, sharing. As simple as a smile, as complex as a legacy. Begin now, make lists of what you can do and what you would like to share with others – smiles, time, heirlooms, books, treasures, meals. Or consider combining some of them: invite people for a potluck meal and have them bring a book they have finished reading or a piece of clothing they no longer wear and share smiles, talk and time while you're at it. |

Pat Nichol is a speaker and published author. Reach her by email at mpatnichol@gmail.com

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COURTENAY • Fri. Nov 29 • 7:30pm • Sid Williams Theatre
250-338-2430 • sidwilliamstheatre.com

CAMPBELL RIVER • Sat. Nov 30 • 7:30pm • Tidemark Theatre
250-287-7465 • tidemarktheatre.com

NANAIMO • Sun. Dec 1 • 7:00pm • Port Theatre
250-754-8550 • porttheatre.com/events

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